Land rezoned for 5,000 new homes in the Lower Hunter

Around 650 hectares of rural land at Lochinvar, near Maitland, has been rezoned to accommodate up to 5,000 new homes and protect key environmental areas, in addition to some new land for commercial development and recreation.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure approved the rezoning through an amendment to the Maitland local environmental plan (LEP).

The department’s Deputy Director-General Tom Gellibrand said the rezoning would help provide much needed land for additional residential development in the Lower Hunter.

“The Lochinvar urban release area was identified as a proposed urban area in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, and Lochinvar was identified as an emerging town centre,” Mr Gellibrand said.

“The rezoning is also consistent with Council’s own land release strategy, the Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy, as well as the 2007 Lochinvar Structure Plan.

“The future development of the Lochinvar release area over the coming years will make a significant contribution towards achieving Maitland City Council’s projections for 26,500 new dwellings by 2031.”

The LEP amendment zones key riparian corridors and remnants of Central Hunter Riparian Forest and Hunter Lowlands Redgum Forest for environmental protection.

Around 10,000 square metres of land will be zoned as General Business, allowing for commercial development to support new employment.

Maitland City Council’s Mayor Peter Blackmore said the rezoning of the land was the next step in the development at the Lochinvar release area and was the culmination of considerable work over a number of years by Council, the department and, in particular, the Lochinvar Community Reference Panel.

Cr Blackmore said Maitland City Council would shortly have a local infrastructure contributions plan in place for the area, which will fund recreational and community facilities to meet the needs of the increased population, together with an upgrade of the local road network.

The rezoning also stipulates that landowners must make arrangements, to the satisfaction of the department, to provide for regional infrastructure before subdivisions are approved.
Mr Gellibrand said the Lochinvar site was close to existing infrastructure, and would also benefit from future upgrades to roads and transport facilities.

“This rezoning is the result of significant planning work which has been undertaken by Council, including the development of the Lochinvar Structure Plan, and I congratulate Council for reaching this milestone,” Mr Gellibrand said.

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