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**Helensburgh planning proposals referred to Joint Regional Planning Panel**

Two planning proposals for Helensburgh in the northern Illawarra have been referred to the Southern Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) for independent review.

NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure Deputy Director General Richard Pearson said there have been a wide range of views on the future of Helensburgh, highlighted by the two competing planning proposals under consideration.

“The central issue is whether new urban development on the fringe of Helensburgh should be allowed and whether this would impact the area’s significant environmental values,” Mr Pearson said.

“Consideration of the proposals by the JRPP will ensure the merits of each plan are thoroughly, independently and transparently reviewed.”

Mr Pearson said the two proposals were:

- Wollongong City Council’s plans to rezone the majority of land at Helensburgh for environmental conservation. In addition, a variety of other zones – including environmental living, tourist, enterprise corridor and light industry – would be implemented in small pockets of land within the Helensburgh area.

- Ensile Pty Ltd and the Helensburgh Land Pooling Group’s request for a pre-Gateway review for plans to rezone land for up to 400 residential lots at Helensburgh’s Lady Carrington Estate South and the Land Pooling site. Under the plans, just over 280 hectares would be dedicated to council and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

A pre-Gateway review has been requested because Wollongong Council has not supported the proposal and it is appropriate that an independent review of that decision now occurs.

Mr Pearson said planning for the Helensburgh area has been an issue for more than 30 years.

“Following its review, the JRPP will provide advice to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure on whether either of the proposals should proceed in their current form, or whether further amendments are required,” he said.

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