

# PLANNING OVERLOAD

REPORT TO GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL

## GUNNEDAH LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

### BRIDGING REPORT

**2010**

*Planning Overload Pty Ltd ABN 18 051 132 257  
25 Neville Morton Drive Crescent Head 2440  
Tel: 6566 1820 fax: (02) 65661825 mobile: 0412 862 109  
Emails: [planover@bigpond.com](mailto:planover@bigpond.com)  
[planovertwo@bigpond.com](mailto:planovertwo@bigpond.com)*

# **GUNNEDAH LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY**

## **BRIDGING REPORT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Gunnedah Shire Council resolved on April 17, 2002, to review the existing Local Environmental Plan for the Shire. For the preparation of the new plan, Council undertook the following:

- Gunnedah Shire Review of Local Environmental Study 2003
- Gunnedah Shire Rural Strategy 2004 (and Addendum to Gunnedah Shire Rural Strategy)
- Gunnedah Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy 2008

With the time that has lapsed since the preparation of the Study Review and Strategies, a Local Environmental Study – Bridging Report is required to give the most accurate picture of the present circumstances affecting the Shire, so that decisions regarding the Draft Gunnedah Local Environmental Plan (GLEP) are made with the best available information.

The Local Environmental Study - Bridging Report will be an overarching document, bringing together the Gunnedah Shire Review of Local Environmental Study 2003, Gunnedah Shire Rural Strategy 2004 (and Addendum to Gunnedah Shire Rural Strategy) and Gunnedah Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy 2008. The Bridging Report will also ensure that the Draft GLEP is prepared in accordance with the New South Wales Department of Planning Standard Instrument Order 2006.

The objectives of the Bridging Report are:

- combine the outcomes and recommendations from the Gunnedah Shire Review of Local Environmental Study 2003, the Gunnedah Rural Study 2004 (and Addendum to Gunnedah Shire Rural Strategy) and Gunnedah Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy 2008; and
- to provide a report which would aid Council to make strategic decisions to promote community and economic growth and facilitate regional development, whilst implementing sound environmental management principles.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

The Bridging Report highlights the outcomes and recommendations from the Study and Strategies and provides the Bridging Summary as outlined:

- Review of Local Environmental Study, September 2003 – Planning Workshop Australia
  - Background
  - Key Issues
  - Gunnedah Context
  - Planning Recommendations and Principles
  - Specific Policy for Statutory Recommendations
  
- Gunnedah Shire Rural Strategy – Edge Land Planning
  - Background
  - Introduction
  - Strategic Analysis
  - Designating Rural Land
  - The Strategy
  - Conclusion
  
- Gunnedah Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy, August 2008 – Collie Pty Ltd
  - Background
  - Development in Gunnedah Township
  - The Town Centre
  - Industrial Context
  - Retail and Commercial Context
  - Recommendations
  
- Planning Overload’s Bridging Summary
  - Planning Overload Conclusions

## **Review of Local Environmental Study, September 2003 by Planning Workshop Australia**

### **Background**

Gunnedah Shire Council resolved on April 17, 2002, to review the existing Local Environmental Plan for the Shire. To assist in the preparation of the new plan, Council appointed Planning Workshop Australia to review the Environmental Study undertaken in 1982. The objectives of the Study included:

- *Assist in the formulation of appropriate discussions, objectives and strategies for a Draft Local Environmental Plan.*
- *Provide the community with sufficient information by which to base discussions and decision making.*
- *Provide a reference document for use by Council and others.*

Council highlighted rural, urban and development control plan issues to be considered as part of the assessment in the Local Environmental Study and Review of the Local Environmental Plan.

### **Key Issues**

1. This Local Environmental Study Review ('the review') was undertaken in 2003 in anticipation of proposed changes to planning legislation in order to modernise the existing planning system. It was referred to as '*PlanFirst*'. These prospective changes are generally those that have now come to fruition under the Standard Instrument Order 2006. ***Comment:*** *The Draft GLEP 2010 is consistent with this.*
2. In technical terms, the aim was to simplify the planning system by reducing the number of layers of plans applying to any one piece of land, and to make the system more user friendly. ***Comment:*** *The Draft GLEP 2010 applies the Standard Instrument and rationalizes local clauses.*
3. The original objective was to "promote economic development and job creation in order to help achieve an ecological, sustainable future". ***Comment:*** *The Draft GLEP 2010 proposes to adopt those that are an extension of the above over-arching aim. As an aim of the Draft GLEP 2010, it appears more succinct and possibly more efficient.*

4. The supplementary objectives were twofold — (i) to give clear rules in accessible, user friendly plans, and (ii) to provide a more versatile planning ‘toolbox’. *Comment: These can only be outcomes. Measurement and monitoring will be required after implementation of the Draft GLEP 2010.*

## **Gunnedah Context**

5. In 2003, the mining industry was a valuable contributor to the Gunnedah area if not the region, and (at that time) was worth between \$15 and \$35 million net. It was the second largest industry to traditional agriculture.
6. There were two major future economic development opportunities identified, the first being development of an ethanol production facility and the second being expansion of the existing coal mining industry. It was anticipated that expanded extraction from the Gunnedah coal seam would have conservatively employed an additional 200 people.
7. Pursuing these two identified economic opportunities would require expansion of the transportation system, particularly the rail infrastructure system.

*Comment: ARTC have undertaken work to increase the capacity of the line to approximately 15 million tones pa of coal and this addresses the immediate demands of all coal operators.*

*At this stage the ethanol plant EA is suggesting that almost all product will be transported by road. The EA is currently on hold due to emission issues in the design of the Kwinana plant that is the prototype for Gunnedah and Brisbane.*

*It is suggested in the Belmont Mine DA, that it will generate only 13 new positions in Gunnedah. The ethanol plant will employ about 30 people. However other “service type ancillary industries” have come to town with the mining activity and these have generally moved into existing industrial premises – most have between 6 – 10 employees. There are about 10 of these types of new businesses. This means an increase in employment of approximately only 103 since the coal expansion began thus not a big*

*demand on residential development. This means anticipated demand for new housing may follow the more modest scenario with existing residential and future urban zones suffice to meet demand in the near future.*

8. The third area of economic opportunity was tourism especially as it relates to the increase in the retired age population. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 anticipates this with the inclusion of permissible uses that encourage B&Bs, farm-stay as well as increased motel accommodation.*
9. The promotion of the shire as a prime location for any number of new agricultural activities and production was seen as an incremental benefit from continuing viable agriculture. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 adopts rural zones that encourage retention of prime agricultural land with a nexus to appropriate lot sizes via a lot size map.*
10. It was also identified that the shire could also benefit from established conference facilities and, in particular, a substantial facility able to accommodate up to 140 people in Gunnedah town, would cross-pollinate into tourism, agribusiness, mining and regional conferences for other activities. **Comment:** *In 2007 the “Mackellar Motor Inn” (18 rooms and conference facility) was approved and has been constructed. The “Gateway Inn” (28 rooms) was also approved in 2007 and is awaiting construction. The “Harvest Lodge Motor Inn” has added 12 units. The Draft GLEP 2010 will retain a flexible commercial zone supported by a Commercial Section in the Gunnedah Development Control Plan (GDGP) that identifies the hospitality precinct whilst allowing elsewhere in that zone on-merit.*
11. Gunnedah has an array of natural features and recent *development and zoning* history has protected the natural environment from any overt pressures from urban development. An Environmental Protection Zone could create linkages and biodiversity corridors connecting these tracts to provide for movement of wildlife and continuous flora and fauna throughout the shire. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 accommodates an environmental protection zone that concentrates on scenic ridges and habitat forested*

*slopes. Extension into prime agricultural land zones of these controls is yet to be formalized.*

12. The Shire suffers from outward migration of young people that is symptomatic of a number of towns and settlements in rural New South Wales, however, the existing age profile in 2003 indicated the Shire had high proportions of children between 5 and 9 and teenagers between 10 and 14 years. Adults 40 years and older also represented a higher proportion. An opportunity to make the age profile more balanced is linked to identifying reasons for them to remain in the shire, i.e. employment, amenity and social and recreation facilities. **Comment:** *The opportunity to utilize technology and satellite (off-base) work practices should be explored. This is more a social support and work experimentation policy rather than Land use planning responsibility. Flexible interpretation of the land use policy can help but not create.*
  
13. The increase in the proportion of older residents is easily identifiable in Gunnedah because it provides an affordable lifestyle, with ramifications for Council in terms of service provision. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 maintains the 'Mornington area' in the streets of Hunter, Beulah, George and Edward. The land is generally zoned for medium density development. The DCP allows 2(b) land to be subdivided down to 450 sq metres to encourage in-fill development, permit retention of the existing housing stock (much of which still has 30-40 years life) and allow for a variety of housing choice viz >450 – dwellings only; >650 – dwellings and dual occupancies; >1000 – medium density flats, dwellings and dual occupancies. These areas however are limited in terms of storm-water drainage and inter-lot drainage. The increase in density means that these issues need to be addressed.*

### **Planning Recommendations and Principles**

The following are those that relate particularly to the statutory requirements of a new Gunnedah Shire LEP:

1. There is an oversupply of residential land within the existing settlements. Future residential development should utilize infill and consolidation techniques for increased accommodation.

**Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 retains existing residential areas with judicious acceptance of future urban land - no new or indications of new residential areas.*

2. Fragmentation of existing agricultural holdings should not be promoted nor encouraged, so that agricultural activities are not pushed to less productive areas. This would also mitigate land degradation. **Comment:** *The lot size map to the Draft GLEP 2010 achieves this.*
3. The existing network of vegetation and introducing biodiversity corridors should be maintained and expanded within the context of the identified areas. **Comment:** *Linkages may not be able to be created within the Draft GLEP 2010 with any statutory force. This is an urban design issue.*
4. The attraction of new industry to the shire is identified as imperative to provide diversification in employment, which would also address shrinking population trends. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 has adequate industrial land, with for bulky goods, industrial/retail or new activities to service the mining industry provided for in the B5 zone.*
5. Specific land use Recommendations:
  - i) No further rural residential land should be released on the fringe. **Comment:** *Achieved by RU4 small holdings only.*
  - ii) Prohibit further fringe expansion due to the current sufficient supply of residential land to cater for demand. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 will not have any zone replicating future urban opportunities.*
  - iii) Introduce Residential 2C Lifestyle Zone in place of existing 1(d) Future Urban Zone. **Comment:** *Achieved via 1(d) future urban being converted to either rural or residential zones.*
  - v) Encourage residential development through consolidation and infill development. **Comment:** *Available via R3 medium density zone.*
  - vi) Maintain, build and strengthen the existing Gunnedah CBD. **Comment:** *Available via B2 Local Centre and supplementary DCP.*
  - vii) Attract diverse businesses to the CBD. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 adopts new B5 business development zone and DCP has this objective.*
  - viii) Attract new industries to the shire and diversity industry base. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 intends to widen industrial land availability and flexibility of uses.*

- x) Manage the environmental and economic impacts of new development and new industry. **Comment:** *This requires a mix of zoning boundaries, a rigorous DCP and a development management and promotion strategy. Therefore, the first two parts relate to statutory planning and the determination of an environmental protection zone. Zone boundaries have been determined that facilitate this objective.*
- xi) Promote employment opportunities. **Comment:** *Flexibility in permissible uses in commercial and industrial zones required via DCP.*
- xii) Preserve existing production of our agricultural lands **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 will adopt new rural zones supported by a lot size map and has a nexus to the Rural Strategy by Edge Planning recommendations.*
- xiii) Preservation and promotion of heritage. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 will retain heritage provisions.*
- xv) Preserve the scenic and rural landscape **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 will adopt the E2 environmental conservation zone and this could expand to ridgelines in agricultural areas.*
- xvi) Preserve and increase awareness of Lake Goran. **Comment:** *E2 zone available.*
- xvii) Maintain expanding existing vegetation linkages. **Comment:** *Can be incorporated in E2 environmental conservation zone.*
- xviii) Promote koala habitats. **Comment:** *To be incorporated in E2 environmental conservation zone. (Note: Koala habitat is protected via SEPP 44 - a planning document of superior power)*
- xix) Implement actions in the Liverpool Plains Catchment Investment Strategy. **Comment:** *A strategy requiring inclusion in the Corporate Plan.*
- xxi) Future and existing residential development should be prohibited within flood liable areas. **Comment:** *Addressed by in-house zoning boundary review.*

### **Specific Policy for Statutory Recommendations**

1. Provide more flexible 'placed based' zones. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 accommodates range of permissible uses and lot sizes, based on strategy recommendations.*
2. Pursue a range of re-zones in line with Appendix A to the Review Report. **Comment:** *See attached Schedule 1.*
3. Council allow the removal of trees within the OLS area. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 will not include a TPO facility. Best approached via DCP.*

4. Incorporate user-pays divisions. **Comment:** *To be reviewed and subject to DCP.*
5. Combine 3(a) and 3(b) Business zones. **Comment:** *The Draft LEP 2010 introduces a B2 Local Centre zone, B4 Mixed Use and B5 Business Development to provide flexibility within the business community and consistency with the Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy.*
6. Maintain existing minimum rural allotment sizes. **Comment:** *1(c): 0.6 ha min with 1.2 ha average; new 10ha small holdings; RU 1 - 40ha or 200ha. The Rural Strategy proposed to permit development of 10 ha lots on marginal rural land, whilst increasing the minimum allotment size of land subject to mining exploration to 200ha. Council resolved to adopt a modified Addendum Plan (attached). The modified plan clarifies the location of the 10ha, 40ha and areas subject to mining exploration.*
8. Maintain the strength of the Scenic Protection Zone. *The zone boundaries need to be proof tested against the tree line and also how it relates to water supply provision. The zone be primarily environmental and not used as a sterilization zone to control water supply to development.*
9. Improve access to planning controls. **Comment:** *The new mapping approach provides more user friendly provisions, easily seen and understood especially in relation to wider Gunnedah context and environment.*
10. Rationalise existing Exempt and Complying Schedules. **Comment:** *Schedules prepared, removing all development identified in SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008.*

# **Gunnedah Shire Rural Strategy by Edge Land Planning**

## **Background**

Council resolved to prepare of Rural Lands Study & Strategy in November 2004, to provide a future direction for rural areas of the Shire, including subdivision sizes within the rural zones and settlement patterns. It was prepared to supplement the information provided in the Local Environmental Study prepared by Planning Workshop Australia in 2004.

The Strategy provides a description of the physical, social and economic environment of the Shire as well as the planning context, which allowed Council to gain a better strategic vision for the future of rural areas in the Shire. Funding for the Strategy was provided by the former Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, Planning Reform Fund.

## **Introduction**

This study identifies environmental opportunities and restraints, and social and economic factors that are complex as well as complementary to the rural environment. The study objectives were:

1. To identify suitable locations to be included in the Rural 1(a) and 1(b) zones.
2. Identify appropriate 1(a) zoned land that may be suitable for further subdivision and closer settlement.
3. Formulate appropriate strategic planning provisions for the Rural 1(a) and 1(b) zoned land.
4. To consider strategic implications in the Rural 1(a) zone.
5. To examine the current settlement patterns in the 1(a) and 1(b) zones.
6. To examine land management units in relation to good quality agricultural land.
7. Consult stakeholders.
8. Examine the implications of fragmentation of agricultural land.

## **Strategic Analysis**

This analysis identified options that could be pursued in planning strategies as follows:

- Preserving rural lands.
- Rural land uses and lot sizes.
- Settlement and hierarchy.

- Rural residential development.
- Biodiversity conservation.
- Incentives, particularly development and social sustainability.

### ***Preserving Rural Land***

The study identified the economic, environment and social equity components of environmentally sustainable development of rural land. The preservation of agricultural land and the size of existing holdings were seen as important as it had been shown that continuous subdivision into smaller lots renders prime agricultural land non-productive and non-viable. ***Comment: The Draft GLEP 2010 achieves this via the lot size review and subsequent map (modified Addendum to Rural Strategy Map).***

### ***Rural Land Uses***

The two rural land uses of primary concern were agriculture and tourism. The strategy identifies deficiencies in existing definitions in terms of relevance to current agricultural practice and types of activities and their impacts. New definitions for sustainable agriculture should be incorporated, and these are suggested. It is recommended that extensive agriculture be permitted without consent in the agricultural areas, but that horticulture and intensive animal establishments should require consent. ***Comment: The Draft GLEP 2010 adopts compulsory definitions.***

### ***Rural Tourist Development***

The ‘tourist facilities’ definition stops at the traditional definition and it would seem the best option is to separately define the component parts and not have the definition of ‘tourist facilities’ at all. The suggestion is to have a definition for:

- ‘bed and breakfast; ***Comment: Compulsory definition.***
- camping ground or caravan park; ***Comment:” Caravan park” is a compulsory definition.***
- eco tourism facility; ***Comment: Compulsory definition of “environmental facility”.***
- farm stay; ***Comment: Compulsory definition .***
- hotel; ***Comment: Compulsory definition of “hotel or motel accommodation”.***
- motel; ***Comment: Compulsory definition of “hotel or motel accommodation”.***

- rural tourist facility; **Comment:** *Not included in compulsory definitions - too vague.*
- tourist accommodation building; and
- tourist accommodation unit. **Comment:** *Compulsory definition of “tourist and visitor accommodation”.*

## **Designating Rural Land**

1. This strategy calls for identifying rural land units, these being agriculture, agricultural landscape, native vegetation, rural residential, and villages. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 adopts compulsory zones and definitions. Rural land units are incorporated in these zones. However, the RU2 Agricultural Landscape zone has not been adopted. This issue is therefore inconsistent with Edge Land Planning report.*
2. This strategy recommends the rationalisation of Rural 1(d) zone boundaries on the basis that there is a need to address the current over-supply of land in that zone, and it identifies a list of matters that should be considered when assessing land for rural residential development. This strategy proposes new boundaries and these are indicated on Map 75 of the strategy, and a new designation has been termed ‘Rural Small Holding’. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 adopts compulsory zone “RU4 rural small holdings” and is supported by Clause 4.2 and the lot size map. The matters for consideration of development could be applied when assessing a DA under Section 79C of EP&A Act.*
3. The current Rural 1(c) was mainly for large residential blocks, and the new proposed boundaries are also in line with the Draft GLEP 2010. The land in question is steep and covered in vegetation and would now include the same restrictions as the current Environmental Protection — Scenic Zone, and should be called ‘Environmental Management’. **Comment:** *The Draft GLEP 2010 adopts compulsory zone “RU4 rural small holdings” and is supported by Clause 4.2 and the lot size map.*
4. Water supply to these lots would be in the form of on-site sources only. In this regard, Clause 15 of the current LEP was identified as relating to the provision of water supply being satisfactory to Council at the time of applying to construct a dwelling. However, the strategy suggests it would be appropriate to insert a clause in the LEP that is similar but relates to the

subdivision stage. **Comment:** *Recommended that supply of water be addressed at subdivision stage, with provisions in DCP.*

5. The demand for dwellings in the current Rural 1(b) zone was two dwellings per year over the previous five years. However, it was considered that this could be increased as the level of development in Gunnedah continues was continuing at that time. This is pertinent if the coal industry expands. A supply of 175 lots was identified as being a realistic potential, and would be adequate for a 20 year period. **Comment:** *Draft GLEP 2010 now subsumes previous 1(b) into RU1 and is supported by RU4 and lot size map.*
6. The main issue of concern was current lots less than 200 hectares. The strategy identified there were a number of approved subdivisions in Rural 1(a) zone that have not had a dwelling constructed on them and which are below the 200 hectare threshold. The strategy vetted these lots and reduced them to 59 as viable lots for dwellings to be placed thereon. They ranged in size from 3 hectares to 188 hectares.

The strategy suggests there should be a sunset date for the clause of two years. This means that if no Development Application for the construction of a dwelling is submitted within two years from gazettal of the new LEP, the applicant forfeits eligibility for a dwelling. If Development Consent for a dwelling has been issued, a sunset of five years would be placed upon that consent, and after that time without substantial commencement, the eligibility would be withdrawn. **Comment:** *Draft GLEP 2010 identifies these lots on the lot size map and a sunset clause is to be included.*

7. Addressing the issue of biodiversity, a zone is proposed for the LEP entitled 'Nature Conservation Zone'. This would preserve significant habitats identified by diversity values. Boundaries of these zones would need to recognise the topography and vegetation boundaries rather than a cadastral lot boundary. **Comment:** *Draft GLEP 2010 will adopt E2 "environmental conservation. Previous 7(d) land can be moved across. Additional land (i.e. ridgelines, Goran Lake, review of existing zone boundaries) will require scientific "ground-truthing" that is not available at present. Thus changes will have to come later.*

## The Strategy

1. This identifies the purpose to be: “Provide for sustainable rural living whilst recognising economic, social, environmental, rural matters and purposes”.  
Specific strategies would lead to growth management philosophy, development principles, objectives, implementation of the strategies and policy actions.  
*Comment: This is a mix of land use zones, protection areas if not zones, supporting land use tables and definitions, comprehensive DCPs and corporate planning and promotion. In terms of land use zones the Draft GLEP 2010, the lot size map and vigorous zone objectives, is all that the LEP can achieve. The remaining objectives can only be achieved via corporate and urban planning.*
  
2. For Gunnedah Shire this is seen as actioning the following:
  - i) Limited expansion to those towns that have capacity for growth. *Comment: Expansion proposed for industrial land/activities only.*
  - ii) Provide for new rural residential development where appropriate services can be provided and impacts can be minimized. *Comment: Achieved via RU4-Rural Small Holdings. Additional rural residential development area provided where appropriate services are existing, in-filling areas adjoining existing rural residential development.*
  - iii) Encourage a wide range of agricultural and complementary rural uses. *Comment: Possible to achieve via range of permissible uses BUT constrained by limit on definitions.*
  - iv) Encourage and promote a diverse range of agriculture and other rural uses. *Comment: Not a statutory responsibility except to the extent permissible uses should be flexible. Similar issue/outcome to (iii) above.*
  - v) Embody the concepts of ESD and TCM. *Comment: To be incorporated in a DCP.*
  
3. A key part of the strategy report is to table an action plan for growth management. The matters within that table (Section 8.5, p.143) that relate to the Standard Instrument, are as follows:
  - i) Prepare a hierarchy of settlements. *Comment: Achieved via new zone classification system.*
  - ii) Ensure that land is released in an effective and efficient manner. *Comment: No further residential land rezoning until current “future urban” land taken up as residential land.*

- iii) Develop a new suite of land use designations. **Comment:** *Constrained by compulsory zones and definitions.*
- iv) Include Desired Future Character statements. **Comment:** *Not a requirement of the template LEP and not supported because they create inflexibility.*
- v) Identify minimum lot sizes. **Comment:** *Achieved via lot size map.*
- vi) Provide for tourist facilities. **Comment:** *Achieved via compulsory definitions.*
- vii) Prepare a Development Control Plan. **Comment:** *This may mean creating a stated nexus between the Draft GLEP 2010 and any DCP. But this sometimes fetters flexibility or merit inherent in a DCP.*
- viii) Incorporate the preservation of the landscape into a Development Control Plan for rural areas. **Comment:** *To be incorporated in a DCP.*
- ix) Ensure the heritage resources of Gunnedah Shire are protected. **Comment:** *Heritage provisions retained.*

## **Conclusion**

This growth management philosophy espoused in the strategy reinforces the aim to remain sustainable. **Comment:** *The Rural Land Strategy is a blueprint for a wide range of actions recommended to be initiated by Council, and will require a wide range of resources. Some matters for statutory land use planning (and the Standard Instrument in particular) need to be refined further.*

# Gunnedah Shire Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy

by Collie Pty Ltd-August 2008.

## Background

Council was granted funding in April 2006, through the Department of Planning's 'Reform Funding Program' (RPF), for the purpose of developing a Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy for the Gunnedah Local Government Area.

The intention of the Strategy was to provide a strategic platform on which to base Council's future direction in respect to the zoning and management of industrial and commercial land in the development of the Gunnedah Local Environmental Plan.

## Introduction

This strategy is based on a study of the prevailing and projected industrial and commercial environments of Gunnedah leading to potential actions. The study brief required sound strategic justification of each recommended action.

The policy context for these lands, and in particular in the context of preparing the 2010 Draft GLEP 2010, identifies the following as being the most relevant:

1. Future settlement should be focussed on the township of Gunnedah. **Comment:** *Achieved via zone consolidation to one B3 zone and supported by DCP.*
2. The CBD precinct (one of four) should retain primacy as the focus for retail and commercial activity. Development should enhance the public realm. **Comment:** *Achieved as above plus and urban design and landscape strategy.*
3. The reuse of vacant land and derelict sites that contribute to the public realm is favoured. **Comment:** *Potential for such needs to be identified prior to any commitments. A corporate plan responsibility.*
4. Public and private development opportunities can answer any need for car parking. **Comment:** *No change to existing situation ..... S94 Contributions Plan.*

5. Improvement to the public realm can be achieved via urban design projects and consequently contribute to maintenance of the historic character. **Comment:** *Combination of existing and future Council public realm strategies.*
6. Significant areas have environmental constraints. **Comment:** *Identified on zoning map and supported by DCP.*
7. There is a high level of economic and social reliance on agricultural production. **Comment:** *Achieved by protection and enhancement of RU1 land and review and consolidation of lot sizes in conjunction with zone boundaries.*
8. There is a range of natural resources and attractive physical environments with high amenity. **Comment:** *Identified in E1 & E2 zones. There maybe a need for a supporting DCP.*
9. Employment generation should be a key objective for any future development. **Comment:** *Can be achieved via flexible zoning provisions.*
10. Resource industries have the potential to develop further thus a reasonable approach to services and infrastructure requirements are required. **Comment:** *Achieved via Corporate Plan.*
11. Some industrial activities have significant amenity impacts. **Comment:** *Matter for DCP if not protected by new zone boundaries. Matters suggested by Edge can be used in assessment under S79C of EPA Act.*

### **Development in Gunnedah Township.**

The strategy provides and relies upon three land use maps these are: 1)-Major Township Activity Precincts; 2)- Industrial Precincts Context Map; and 3)-Town Centre Sites Consolidation Plan.

These maps clearly define the precincts to which the strategy relates and through which it will work. These are supplemented by population and housing statistics, assumptions and projections. Table 2 on page 11 of this strategy report succinctly summarises these and there is no need to reiterate them.

The main indicators are:

- a) There is recent housing activity to suggest a growth phase is underway however its strength remains unclear. **Comment:** *At time of finalising this bridging report the growth faze has stabilised although the mining sector continues to prepare for further growth and it anticipates being early out of these economic difficulties. The moderate growth scenario remains relevant.*
- b) The approach to projections reflects local conditions more than traditional modelling although these projections are reliant on 2007 housing approval data only. **Comment:** *It needs to be said that since that time economic conditions have stabilised and so the projections need to be*

*considered cautiously BUT it also means being based on local conditions is the best approach as the local economy is significantly influenced by coal production.*

c) The strategy assumptions are:

- Conversion of approvals to constructed dwellings would remain historically consistent at 85%;
- The majority of dwellings will be located in the township;
- Occupancy rates of dwelling stock will increase to 89% in the township and 86% in rural areas;
- From a low of 32/pa between 2001 and 2006 approvals for dwellings is increasing post 2006. This is a high growth scenario based on high mining and resource growth;
- The medium growth scenario is based on a balanced view of approvals reflecting changing population and housing trends. **Comment:** *It is suggested with the benefit of recent economic change together with optimism for coal and resource development that this is the more likely scenario and one that will result in a sound, planning outcome. This appears to be reflected in the current approach.*
- The low growth scenario would suggest a return to long-term negative growth in the foreseeable future.
- The actual growth achieved will depend on stimulus by regional industrial economy; future occupied dwelling yield rates; and future housing occupancy rates.
- The adopted forecast rates then determine the retail and commercial floor-space requirements.

**Comment:** *The current economic climate precludes making any definitive forecasts, however the Draft GLEP 2010 is a more, simple plan with inherent flexibility. Detailed performance of development can be controlled by flexible DCPs.*

*While the precious environmental, heritage and rural values are protected the Draft GLEP 2010 will not inhibit growth when market forces return to the positive.*

### **The Town Centre.**

The role of the town-centre is likely to remain a district level centre with a component of about 24% escape expenditure. The centre is compact and provides efficient pedestrian access with links to the main street and to major stores ancillary to main-street.

## **Industrial Context.**

Additional coal mining will alter the land use mix. Several coal producing projects have the potential to produce to \$500M per annum and this could lead to about 400 additional jobs. This could modify land use patterns and develop a regional node in Gunnedah servicing these developments. **Comment:** *Again caution is suggested given economic change since 2007/8. But given coal demand indicators are that this may only be a slower development rate rather than a halting of that rate.*

Table 4 (page 22) summarises the demand will require 104 ha of land. However, this is not straight forward and is subject to 5 variables.

**Comment:** *Accordingly caution is again recommended in the application of these projections.*

## **Retail and Commercial Context.**

Table 3 (page 21) summarises the increase in GLFA to the year 2030 to be some 15,210m<sup>2</sup>. This will require 7 ha of land at an FSR 3:1. In addition bulky goods retail requires an additional 3,420m<sup>2</sup> of GFA.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Town Centre Precinct**

- (i) Review DCP to clarify precincts, their roles and structure. **Comment:** *Does not require LEP changes but can be accommodated in the Standard Instrument via zone provisions.*
- (ii) Review DCP to initiate a site consolidation program for car parking and future developments. **Comment:** *This requires a strategic plan and fiscal budget by Council and can be accommodated in the Standard Instrument via zone provisions.*
- (iii) Prepare a “new” S94 plan to obtain funds for the acquisition of lands for car parking to cater for existing demand. **Comment:** *Possible review of S94.*
- (iv) Provision of stormwater drainage be levied via S64 servicing plan. **Comment:** *S64 is of the LGA and not a statutory planning matter.*
- (v) Continue the creation of linkages from CBD to Little Conadilly and Little Barber Streets. **Comment:** *This also requires inclusion in a strategic plan and fiscal budget by Council. Again the Standard Instrument zone provisions ensure such activity is not prohibited.*
- (vi) One commercial zone in the CBD as a “Mixed Use” zone. This zone to outline the previously adopted commercial precincts. **Comment:** *The proposed B2 zone will accommodate this approach.*

- (vii) An Urban Design and Landscape Framework Plan to be created. **Comment:** *The proposed zones do not prohibit these actions although they are part of Council strategic and fiscal planning.*

### **Supporting Services Precinct.**

- (i) Review DCP to clarify precincts, their roles and structure. **Comment:** *Does not require LEP changes and can be accommodated in the Standard Instrument via zone provisions.*
- (ii) Review DCP to initiate a site consolidation program for car parking and future developments (figure 3). **Comment:** *This requires a strategic plan and fiscal budget by Council and can be accommodated in the Standard Instrument via zone provisions.*
- (viii) An Urban Design and Landscape Framework Plan to be created. **Comment:** *The proposed zones do not prohibit these actions although they are part of Council strategic and fiscal planning.*
- (iii) Prepare and Implement a Residential Framework Plan to identify multiple unit and special accommodation needs. Prepare and Implement a Residential Framework Plan to maintain the character of existing residential areas and those areas to be retained for foreseeable future.
- (iv) Prepare and Implement a Residential Framework Plan that also ensures enhancement and improvement of those areas by way of an integrated landscape and traffic management program.  
**Comment:** *Three new residential zones are similar to existing and are adequate to accommodate special needs accommodation and do not prohibit streetscape works inherent in an Urban Design Strategy.*

### **West End Precinct.**

- (v) Review DCP to clarify precincts, their roles and structure. **Comment:** *Does not require LEP changes and can be accommodated in the Standard Instrument via zone provisions.*
- (i) Review DCP to initiate a site consolidation program for car parking and future developments. **Comment:** *This requires a strategic plan and fiscal budget by Council and can be accommodated in the Standard Instrument via zone provisions.*
- (ix) An Urban Design and Landscape Framework Plan to be created. **Comment:** *The proposed zones do not prohibit these actions although they are part of Council strategic and fiscal planning.*

- (ii) Prepare and Implement a Residential Framework Plan. *Comment: Three new residential zones are similar to existing and do not prohibit streetscape works inherent in an Urban Design Strategy.*
- (iii) Prepare and Implement a Bulky Goods Framework Plan to provide retail choice.
- (iv) Prepare and Implement a Bulky Goods Framework Plan to facilitate bulky goods stores to improve structure of town centre and enhance pedestrian amenity.
- (v) Prepare and Implement a Bulky Goods Framework Plan to ensure car parking is provided therewith.
- (vi) Prepare and Implement a Bulky Goods Framework Plan with minimum allotment size of 2500 sq m for each development.  
*Comment: Zones B5, IN1 and IN3 facilitate Bulky Goods Retail however (iv) appears non-relevant to town centre. Could be applied via specific DCP.*

### **Blackjack Road Precinct.**

- (i) Development of an integrated and consolidated industrial precinct in the identified area.  
*Comment: Zones IN1 & IN3 to be adopted and provide expansion in an integrated manner.*
- (ii) Support development of the disused abattoir site. *Comment: Site included in IN3 zone.*
- (iii) Develop a regional node in this precinct for industrial activity via
  - Attractive and functional layout;
  - A range of lot sizes;
  - Attractive landscaping and gateways;
  - Main road frontage and high visibility.*Comment: Lot sizes controlled via clause 4.21 and lot size map. Zone boundaries facilitate road frontage and urban design matters can be achieved via specific DCP.*
- (iv) Prepare a DCP and S.94 plan for the Blackjack Road Precinct.  
*Comment: Requires further separate strategic planning and incorporation in the Corporate Plan.*
- (v) Carry out a strategic assessment of Industrial land in Curlewis in order to
  - Potential for take-up of land given the additional mining activities;
  - Likely future population of the township;
  - The costs of transforming and maintaining the land as public open space.

***Comment:** Rezoning of Curlewis Industrial land recommended, based on small lot sizes for industrial development and limitations on water supply.*

In conclusion the Collie Report states implementation should be:

- ❑ Recognition and adoption of the vision and objectives statement.
- ❑ Updating the CBD DCP to more accurately reflect the current and future preferred land use patterns.
- ❑ Prepare an Urban Design and Landscape Framework Plan.
- ❑ Develop a planning and management approach for the new industrial precinct.

***Comment:** These are captured by comments above.*

## PLANNING OVERLOAD'S BRIDGING SUMMARY.

The purpose of this report is to bridge these environmental planning studies carried out on behalf of, and for the benefit of Gunnedah Shire, to the Standard Instrument Order 2006. These have been carried out by three different sets of expert consultants.

- (i) Planning Workshop in 2003 and specific to the local environmental planning provisions;
- (ii) Edge Planning in 2007 specifically to a rural strategy; and
- (iii) Collie Pty Ltd in 2009 specifically to commercial and industrial strategy.

The relevant recommendations, strategies and initiatives contained therein need to be differentiated in order to determine the relevant conduits for implementation. Not all are relevant to the architecture of the Draft GLEP 2010. However, this bridging report differentiates and ensures there is a nexus to the resultant statutory plan for those that are not relevant. The following are also qualified by any comments within this report.

The recommendations from the Study and Strategies have been consolidated into the following categories:

- A. *Statutory (Standard Instrument) LEP.*
- B. *Council Corporate Plan.*
- C. *Landscape and Urban Design Strategy.*

### A. *Statutory (Standard Instrument) LEP.*

#	Recommendation	Standard Instrument Provision
1	Fragmentation of existing agricultural holdings should not be promoted nor encouraged, so that agricultural activities are not pushed to less productive areas. This would also mitigate land degradation.	Rural zone boundaries have been reviewed and dwelling entitlements on substandard lot sizes provided with a "sunset". Zone RU1 now the primary agricultural zone.
2	The existing network of vegetation and introducing biodiversity corridors should be maintained and expanded within the context of the identified areas.	Zone E2 applicable.
3	The attraction of new industry to the shire is identified as imperative to provide diversification in employment, which would also address shrinking population trends.	Industrial (IN) zones provided, require enhancing and integrating.

4	No further rural residential land should be released on the fringe.	RU4 and R5 accommodate this demand without inhibiting agriculture.
5	Prohibit further fringe expansion due to the current sufficient supply of residential land to cater for demand.	The Draft GLEP 2010 will rezone existing future urban land to R5, whilst maintaining minimum 40 ha lot size in identified future urban areas.
6	Introduce Residential 2C Lifestyle Zone in place of existing 1D Future Urban Zone.	RU4 and R5 accommodate this demand.
7	Encourage residential development through consolidation and infill development.	Available via R3 medium density zone.
8	Maintain, build and strengthen the existing Gunnedah CBD.	Available via B2 local centre zone.
9	Attract diverse businesses to the CBD.	Available via B5 Business Development zone.
10	Attract new industries to the shire and diversify industry base.	Industrial (IN) zones provided, require enhancing and integrating.
11	Manage the environmental and economic impacts of new development and new industry.	Review of zoning boundaries to manage environmental land.
12	Promote employment opportunities.	Flexibility of permissible uses in commercial and industrial zones required.
13	Preserve existing production of our agricultural lands	Rural zone boundaries have been reviewed and dwelling entitlements on substandard lot sizes provided with a “sunset”.
14	Preservation and promotion of heritage.	The Draft GLEP 2010 will retain heritage provisions.
15	Preserve the scenic and rural landscape	Draft GLEP 2010 will adopt the E2 environmental conservation zone.
16	Preserve and increase awareness of Lake Goran.	Possibly via E2 zone, but requires ground-truthing.
17	Maintain expanding existing vegetation linkages. .	Zoning maps identify and protect existing vegetation.
18	Promote koala habitats.	Zoning maps identify and protect existing vegetation. SEPP 44 also applicable.
19	Provide more flexible ‘placed based’ zones. A merit based approach.	The Draft GLEP 2010 accommodates range of permissible uses.
20	Pursue a range of re-zones in line with Appendix A to the Review Report.	Incorporated in zone review and new boundaries.
21	Combine 3A and 3B Business zones.	Draft GLEP 2010 provides for B2, B4& B5 zones to provide flexibility within commercial precinct.
22	Maintain existing minimum rural allotment sizes.	Achieved via clause 4.1 of Draft GLEP and supporting Lot Size Map. Dwelling entitlements on substandard lots provided with a “sunset”.

23	Limited expansion to those towns that have capacity for growth.	Achieved via new zone boundaries.
24	Provide for new rural residential development where appropriate services can be provided and impacts can be minimized.	Achieved via zones RU4 and R5.
25	Encourage a wide range of agricultural and complementary rural uses.	Possible to achieve via range of permissible uses BUT constrained by limit on definitions.
26	Prepare a hierarchy of settlements.	Status quo maintained.
27	Develop a new suite of land use designations.	Constrained by compulsory zones and definitions.
28	Identify minimum lot sizes.	Achieved via clause 4.1 of Draft GLEP 2010 and supporting Lot Size Map.
29	Prepare a Development Control Plan.	This means creating a stated nexus between the LEP and any DCP.
30	Ensure the heritage resources of Gunnedah Shire are protected.	The Draft GLEP 2010 will retain heritage provisions.
31	New Proposed Rural Definitions: ‘bed and breakfast; camping ground or caravan park;  eco tourism facility;  farm stay; hotel; motel; rural tourist facility; tourist accommodation building; and tourist accommodation unit.	Included in instrument. Included in instrument as ‘caravan park’. Included in instrument as ‘environmental facility’. Included as ‘farm stay accommodation’. Included in instrument. Included in instrument. Not included in instrument. Included as ‘tourist and visitor accommodation’.
32	One commercial zone in the CBD as a “mixed use” zone. This zone to outline the previously adopted commercial precincts.	The proposed B4 zone will accommodate this.
33	Prepare and implement a residential framework plan to maintain the character of existing residential areas and those areas to be retained for foreseeable future and to provide retail choice.	Three new residential zones R2, R3 & R5 are similar to existing.
34	Prepare and implement a bulky goods framework plan to facilitate bulky goods stores to improve structure of town centre and enhance pedestrian amenity.	Zones B5, IN1 and IN3 facilitate bulky goods retail.
35	Prepare and Implement a Bulky Goods Framework Plan to ensure car parking is provided therewith. Development of an integrated and consolidated industrial precinct in the identified area Support development of the disused abattoir	Zones B5, IN1 and IN3 facilitate bulky goods retail.  Zones IN1 & IN3 to be adopted and provide expansion in an integrated manner.

	<p>site.  Develop a regional node in this precinct for industrial activity via Attractive and functional layout;  A range of lot sizes;  Attractive landscaping and gateways;  main road frontage and high visibility.</p>	<p>Former abattoir site included in IN3 zone.   Lot sizes controlled via clause 4.1 and lot size map. Zone boundaries facilitate road frontage.</p>
36	Rationalize existing exempt and complying schedules.	As per SEPP (Housing Code)

**B. Council Corporate Plan.**

1. Incorporate user-pays divisions.
2. Improve access to planning controls.
3. Encourage and promote a diverse range of agriculture and other rural uses.
4. Embody the concepts of ESD and TCM.
5. Ensure that land is released in an effective and efficient manner.
6. Include Desired Future Character statements.
7. Provide for tourist facilities.
8. Review DCP to clarify precincts, their roles and structure.
9. Review DCP to initiate a site consolidation program for car parking and future developments.
10. Prepare a “new” S.94 plan to obtain funds for the acquisition of lands for car parking to cater for existing demand.
11. Provision of stormwater drainage be levied via S.64 servicing plan.
12. Prepare and Implement a Residential Framework Plan to identify multiple unit and special accommodation needs.
13. Prepare a DCP and S.94 plan for the Blackjack Road Precinct.
14. Carry out a strategic assessment of Industrial land in Curlewis in order to
  - Potential for take-up of land given the additional mining activities;
  - Likely future population of the township;
  - The costs of transforming and maintaining the land as public open space.

**C. Landscape and Urban Design Strategy.**

1. Council allow the removal of trees within the OLS area.

2. Maintain the strength of the Scenic Protection Zone.
3. Incorporate the preservation of the landscape into a Development Control Plan for rural areas.
4. Continue the creation of linkages from CBD to Little Conadilly and Little Barber Streets.
5. An Urban Design and Landscape Framework Plan to be created.
6. The existing network of vegetation and introducing biodiversity corridors should be maintained and expanded within the context of the identified areas.

### **Planning Overload Conclusions**

1. All the review work to date has primarily been to provide the relevant studies/strategies and justification to facilitate the Draft Gunnedah LEP 2010 (i.e. Standard Instrument) and it has been shown this has been achieved. Utilising these Studies and Strategies, the Draft GLEP is able to promote environmental conservation, protection of agricultural development, flexibility within the commercial precinct, maintenance of the commercial centre, adequate land available for future industrial development, provision of rural residential development, whilst retaining heritage conservation.
2. An underlying outcome however, is a range of further work required by Council.
3. A holistic DCP is required. This DCP requires separate chapters for each land-use zone and should have a statutory nexus to the Draft GLEP 2010. This DCP should have a nexus to the Urban Design and Landscape Plan.
4. The proposed Residential Framework Plan should be the relevant chapter in the DCP.
5. The Bulky Goods Framework Plan should be the relevant chapter in the DCP.
6. Council's Corporate Plan should encompass those matters requiring strategic decisions and capital expenditure identified within these studies.

*Paul F. Drake.*

Paul F. Drake.

# Modified Addendum to Gunnedah Shire Rural Strategy

