



Media Release

Wednesday 11 May, 2011

Committee recommends council apply for funding to purchase Heritage Estates, Worrowing Heights

The Property Steering Committee this week has recommended Shoalhaven City Council submit a funding application to the Australian Government's "Caring for Our Country" program, to purchase the land in the Heritage Estates at Worrowing Heights for addition to the National Parks System.

The controversial 'paper subdivision' known as the Heritage Estates (located between Vincentia and Errowal Bay) consists of approximately 1,100 rural zoned lots in separate ownerships and has a total area of approximately 180 ha.

In 2009, the Federal Environment Minister, refused a rezoning proposal for up to 730 dwellings and associated infrastructure under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Since then, Council has been seeking support from the NSW and Federal Governments to acquire the land for addition to the National Park system.

The land contains habitat for a range of threatened species but is under threat from illegal dumping, trail bike and 4WD use and firewood collection. Addition of the land to the National Park would deliver significant social and environmental benefits.

It would allow sensitive habitat to be managed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service; strengthen the regionally important habitat corridor between Booderee National Park and the Jervis Bay National Park; and provide closure for the many landowners.

Under the Commonwealth Government's "Caring for Our Country" program, the Government can provide up to two thirds of the purchase price for property on the condition that a partner organisation/s contribute the rest (government, conservation organisations and community groups).

The Property Steering Committee recommended that Council prepare a joint application in partnership with the NSW Parks & Wildlife Service and any other bodies such as the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife, by the deadline of 30 May 2011. The Committee also recommended that Council donate its land in the Heritage Estates and seek a contribution from NSW Government.

The funding process is competitive and the result is not assured. Shoalhaven City Mayor Councillor Paul Green said he wants to see this issue resolved and hopes we can receive a positive outcome from the submission.

"There are considerable hurdles to be overcome in this application, and one of high importance is the land owners" Cllr Green said. "I am pleased the committee has made a step towards an outcome for all those involved"

Any letters of support from the community would be gratefully received and will be added to the application if received by 30th May.

Extensive background information on the Heritage Estates is available on Council's website at

<http://shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/council/pubdocs/communityissues/default.htm>

For further information, you can contact the Media Manager on (02) 4429 3595, or visit Council's internet site at www.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au.

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