

1 July 2010

Mayor to meet with Minister on Jerberra

Shoalhaven City Mayor Councillor Paul Green will meet with the NSW Minister for Planning Tony Kelly in the second week of July, to progress discussions on the rezoning proposals for Jerberra Estate.

Clr Green said that he hoped that Minister Kelly would show a little more compassion than previous Ministers when discussing this issue and hoped he would be open to understanding the plight of the current landowners and the social outcomes of the Government's decisions.

"The Minister's press release issued on 29 June was a bit short on history and while Mr Kelly referred to the Department of Planning and DECCW letter to Council on 31 May, he neglected to mention that this stemmed from Council's representations to the Department of Planning in early December 2009," Clr Green said.

"It took six months to receive a response which advised that the proposal submitted by Council was not acceptable.

"It is important that the general public, as well as the current landowners, have a full appreciation of the history surrounding the possible rezoning of the Jerberra Estate, to allow residential development."

Council first began rezoning investigations and relevant studies from 1992 onwards. In 1994, a consultant's report recommended up to 47 dwellings could be sited on the entire estate and this was not accepted by the owners or the Council of the day. In 1997 further Flora and Fauna studies resulted in a report to the then Council recommending 59 dwellings and substantial conservation areas. Again these were rejected by landowners during 1998, who requested that Council undertake further lobbying of the State Government on the issue.

In 2000 the Council was advised by the Department of Urban Affairs & Planning that it could not progress the rezoning proposal further until the Jervis Bay Settlement Strategy was completed. This Strategy was completed and adopted by the Minister in 2003 and the rezoning moratorium was lifted.

In 2004 Council undertook an audit of unauthorised structures on the Jerberra Estate and discovered that more than 60 lots had existing structures on them, including substantial housing. Rezoning studies and investigations recommenced shortly afterwards. In November 2006 former Shoalhaven Mayor Councillor Greg Watson and the General Manager met with NSW Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor, and Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus, to further appeal to the Government to allow rezoning to proceed. The Ministers agreed to establish a working party between Council and the Department of Environment & Climate Change.

In 2007 the working party was unable to reach agreement over preferred options and the impacts of the Federal Government's Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act [EPBC Act] came into play. In June 2007, Council resolved to accept the constraints relevant to the EPBC Act and to make further representations to the Government to allow dwelling entitlements on lots outside those environmentally constrained areas. During this time, Council officers continued to meet with senior

