

PART 1 Introduction

This environmental profile and study for the Shire of Temora is released as a precursor to a new Local Environmental Plan. It embodies information collected by the Shire Council to assist with the preparation of the new plan, and includes comments, corrections and suggestions which followed its public circulation during 2004.

Currently, development in the area administered by Temora Shire Council is governed by a Local Environmental Plan (LEP) which was gazetted in 1987 and has since been augmented by 12 amendments and 7 associated Development Control Plans (DCPs). In addition, there are numerous State government instruments and policies which apply to a lesser or greater extent throughout the Shire.

In 2002 the Council resolved to review the 1987 LEP and prepare a fresh instrument better suited to contemporary conditions. Council was also strongly influenced by the work being undertaken at that time by the Department of Planning (then Department of Urban Affairs and Planning) in developing the since-abandoned *PlanFirst* concept and promoting major reforms to the NSW planning system.

Local community involvement was seen as being a necessary and ongoing part of the new planning process. As a consequence, the Council embarked on an extensive community consultation process which produced some firm observations about existing conditions in the Shire as well as numerous suggestions for change and improvement. Valuable input to the first stage of the planning review - this being the local environmental study - was gained from this process.

The results of that consultation and research exercise are presented herein. Essentially, this document is an attempt to describe the existing environment, both built and natural; to take stock of the existing situation; and to offer provisional planning strategies for the future. In short, it is the platform upon which new environmental plans and strategies for the Shire and its urban areas will be constructed.

The primary purposes of this document can be summarised thus.

- It reflects community interest in and support for the current plan review - a project which was foreshadowed in the report of the *Temora Shire Main Street / Small Towns Strategy* report of 2002.
- It helps to clarify the process which the Council is pursuing to achieve a new LEP.
- It provides a 'snapshot' profile of the Temora Shire community and resources.
- It presents visions and goals for the future of the Shire as they emerged from the recent community consultation program and from earlier studies.
- Consistent with the visions and goals, it presents strategic planning options for handling future growth and change within the Shire, the town and villages.
- It presents in summary form the policies and planning requirements of State agencies as they might affect the process of land development and environmental management in Temora Shire.
- It presents Council's current intentions regarding land use zoning and the likely contents of the new LEP, consistent with the standard instrument released in March 2006.

This LES is as much about change as it is about growth as such. Demographic evidence, if taken at face value, points to a scenario of continuing population decline in the Shire, coupled with a loss of young people and an increase in the number of elderly persons. Council is not able to refute that evidence. Council can, however, take the view that a vigorous and imaginative program to encourage investment and economic growth in both the urban and rural sectors will do much to relieve any fears which the development community might have to the effect that its resources might best be placed elsewhere. Such a program will be enhanced - not hindered - by a new LEP which invites development, which presents itself to the world as an optimistic and visionary framework for investment, and which is reasonably generous in its allocation of urban land resources to future needs.

An absolute reliance on the continuing health of the agricultural sector will be central to the Shire's new LEP. It follows that the priority of protecting prime farmland must remain secure. However, Council also sees it as vital that it encourages investment in agricultural enterprises whose land needs may be less than what is regarded as a viable standard in the broad-acre farming country.

At the same time, Council wishes to encourage new residents and businesses by ensuring that the property market enjoys a degree of differentiation - which would include the small-acreage sector as part of its attractions. In the urban sector, Council's aim is to attract and encourage investment, to reduce if not remove any barriers to such investment, and to take an optimistic view of future urban land needs.

Ideally, there would be a direct correlation between supply and demand. In the real world, such is not the case. Demand cannot be quantified with confidence. Indeed, reliance on recent demographic projections might suggest that demand will collapse completely over the next couple of decades. The Council is determined not to become a victim of such a negative scenario. This position underpins its intention to do what it can to invigorate the urban sector by loosening certain controls, by creating incentives for large-lot residential development in line with growing demand, and by 're-badging' certain zones to accommodate a broader array of land uses

Council sees no adverse environmental, social or economic consequences arising out of this approach. Indeed, all signs are positive. In the town, a very small loss of agricultural land (much of which has in any case seen marginal productivity in recent year) will be balanced by a wider range of choices for urban and 'lifestyle' housing and related activities. Overall, anomalies in the current zoning regime will be removed as part of what is unashamedly an optimistic scenario for managing change over the next couple of decades. In part, this scenario addresses the need for the agricultural sector to attract young graduates and professionals, some of whom may well demand a rural residential block as a condition of settling in Temora. There is also the need to cater for rural families and farmers who have (perhaps unwittingly) become victims of farm aggregation and amalgamation and who see the rural-residential option as the best way of making the transition from life on the farm to life in town.

Through its various agencies, State Government support will be vital, and Council hopes that the strategies and planning policies presented herein will be given a fair assessment by the agencies concerned. But if local planning is to mean anything, local needs and aspirations must also be accorded proper weight. The strategies presented herein have solid grass-roots origins and have been endorsed by the Council after a lengthy community consultation phase in accordance with government requirements. This LES, strategy and the plan which is to follow are based on that earlier work.

NOTE: Appendix D lists all information sources used in the preparation of this document. In addition, the following State Government Agencies and official bodies were consulted pursuant to Section 62 of the EPA Act.

- Goldenfields Water County Council
- TransGrid
- Dept of Community Services
- Roads & Traffic Authority
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- Dept of Water & Energy
- Dept of Environment & Climate Change
- Dept of Planning
- Dept of Housing
- Heritage Council of NSW
- Dept of Lands
- Dept of Primary Industries

Council acknowledges with the thanks the input received from all the above parties, and from the various community organisations throughout the shire.



**TEMORA SHIRE COUNCIL
LOCAL PROFILE STUDY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY 2007**

Fig. 1: Map of Temora Shire in relation to NSW river catchments

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