



NORTHERN NEWS

ISSUE 11 - MARCH 1997

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AFFAIRS & PLANNING GRAFTON

Rural Settlement Guidelines Win RAPI Award

The Department's "Guidelines on Rural Settlement on the North Coast of NSW", released in December 1995 received the Award for Excellence in Rural Planning at the 1996 Royal Australian Planning Institute Awards on 8 November 1996.

The Guidelines, which promote a strategic approach by which local government can plan for rural residential development, were described as "very sound and likely to deliver sustainable rural living opportunities for the North Coast Region".

The Guidelines promote a catchment approach to identifying areas suitable for rural residential development, as well as supporting a hierarchy of settlements in each local government area. They also promote 'best practice' in rural settlement incorporating "cluster" planning and "themes" for rural settlement.



Trevor Prior (Regional Manager, Grafton) and Gabrielle Kibble (DUAP Director-General) with the RAPI Award.

The Director-General, Mrs Gabrielle Kibble, said that the award confirmed the importance and worth of the Guidelines to the North Coast.

The award follows the successful introduction of the Guidelines in September 1995, and the subsequent development of local policy to reflect them.

Northern Regions Councils Feature in RAPI Award Nominations

Armidale City Council was the most successful Northern Regions Council at the 1996 Royal Australian Planning Institute Awards.

Armidale City Council received an Award for Excellence for the "Single Approval Solutions - A Comprehensive Approach to Local Approvals". Armidale City Council also nominated "The Attunga House" for an award.

Tamworth City Council was also successful in receiving commendation

for "Tamworth Community Portrait". This project combined population statistics with a community photographic competition to demonstrate life and work in Tamworth. Tamworth City Council also nominated "Tamworth's Peel Street Beautification Project".

Other nominations from Northern Regions councils included:

- Bellingen Shire Council - "South Urunga Development Area Water Pollution Control Management Plan"
- Casino Council/GeoLINK Groups - "Casino Council Planning Handbook"
- Coffs Harbour City Council - "Coffs Harbour Urban Development Strategy"
- Hastings Council - "Port Macquarie Town Centre Masterplan", and
- Tweed Shire Council - "Draft Tweed Shire 2000+ Strategic Plan".

The extent of these nominations demonstrate how innovative and energetic councils are in the New England and North Coast regions. It is a credit to the councils in the Northern Regions and serves as an encouragement to strive for excellence in planning.

STOP PRESS

Integrated Development Assessment White Paper and Exposure Draft Bill

Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 1997

If you have any questions about the draft Bill or the White Paper please contact the Regulatory Reform Unit of the department on (02) 9391 2000 or Freecall 1800 358 886.

Australia – Canada Job Swap

One has traded kangaroos and koalas for black bears and cougars. The other has swapped glacial peaks and conifers for surf, beaches and rainforest.

This past September, Mike Svikis, Town Planner with the Department's Grafton Office and Brian Allaert, a planner with the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, swapped jobs, homes and vehicles as part of a one year job exchange.

Having now spent six months in his exchange position, Mike has discovered the challenges of working for local government in one of the fastest growing areas of Canada.

Problems not uncommon to councils in the North Coast, such as balancing rapid population growth with the desire to maintain small town character, protection of the natural environment, and the provision of adequate water supply and waste disposal systems are among the issues Mike and other planners on Vancouver Island are facing.

Regional districts in British Columbia are similar to county councils in NSW, although regional districts are charged with planning responsibilities for all rural

areas lying outside municipal boundaries.

At the Regional District, Mike is the lead planner on a two person team responsible for an area of more than 150,000 hectares. He is responsible for the preparation of local community plans, the review of a master plan for a rapidly expanding ski resort, the processing of development applications for rural residential settlement, overseeing the review of building applications and responding to daily enquiries from councillors, developers and residents.

As an avid fisherman Mike has especially enjoyed, despite the rain and snow, the field inspections required to ensure development does not threaten salmon habitat in local streams. For Mike there could never be too many inspections.

Mike is living in the City of Courtenay, a coastal community with a population of approximately 17,000 people located at the foot of a large glacier. He describes living in Courtenay as "living in a postcard."

Meanwhile, here in Australia, Brian has taken up residence in Mike's Grafton home and is quickly adapting to the North Coast lifestyle. At the office Brian has tackled numerous State Environmental Planning Policy No. 1 objections and draft local environmental plans. He has also assisted with ongoing projects in the Northern Regions office,

including development of planning policy to protect regionally significant extractive and mineral resources on the North Coast.

In British Columbia, planning authority comes under one provincial act, *the Municipal Act*, which covers all local government functions. In place of local environmental plans planners in British Columbia use official community plans. These are implemented by zoning bylaws and development permit areas.

One thing that has really impressed Brian has been the lack of strip development and the strong central business districts in most North Coast communities. Brian says strip malls and 'big box' retail outlets are popping up almost overnight along the main highway on Vancouver Island.

Mike is not the first planner from the Northern Regions office to do a job exchange. In 1988/89 Craig Bellamy did an exchange to England. Debra Wray came over from England in that exchange and has since immigrated to Australia. She now works as a planner with Maclean Council. Also having done a job swap to England is Northern Regions Manager, Trevor Prior. He went over to England in 1986/87. In 1995, Senior Planner Greg Yeates participated in a six week exchange to western USA/Canada, sponsored by the Rotary Foundation. During this exchange Greg visited the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona and was instrumental in helping Mike establish contact with Brian at that office.

Exchanges are an excellent opportunity for planners to build new skills, seek out innovative ideas for universal planning problems and experience the lifestyle of an overseas nation. In Mike's case the experience includes salmon fishing, downhill skiing, a white Christmas and a very long rainy season, while Brian gets an endless summer of beaches, surf and rainforest treks.

During the exchange, Mike and Brian hope to discover ideas which they will be able to integrate into their respective planning systems upon their return home, while also taking time to enjoy the sights and activities of their adopted homelands.



Brian Allaert and Mike Svikis.

Manilla Shire Attracts Major Recreational Activities Through Strategic Planning

Like many inland councils, Manilla Shire is greatly concerned about the diminishing level of rural economic activity. Whether it is the removal of government services, a downturn in primary industry returns, or any other cause, the impact experienced in a small community can be quite severe.

In response to this situation, the Manilla Shire Council has developed an innovative strategy, based on the significant assets the area has on offer. Already, the strategy is paying dividends in economic activity in the Shire.

Council's efforts in undertaking an analysis of the situation focused on the following areas:

- existing development control planning activities (are procedures and conditions too restrictive?)
- strategic planning opportunities as they relate to recreational activities;
- the interdependence of recreational activities with neighbouring larger population centres
- the known national and international following of some of the identified recreational activities
- analysis of how and why these activities have evolved in this locality and what impact they have on the historical agricultural based activities, and
- how can Council encourage and support the continued growth and development of identified desirable activities?

Recreational Activities

The following recreational opportunities were identified:

International

- paragliding and hang gliding activities
- fixed wing gliding (soaring at Lake Keepit Soaring Centre)
- farm stay activities (four currently operating in Manilla Shire).

National

- jet boat sprint racing
- country music and line dancing
- aquatic activities including fishing, sailing, water skiing etc, on larger water bodies or in the river system
- vintage machinery exhibitions
- fish hatchery - Manilla Fishing Club - West Manilla; Warrabah National Park.

Regional

Manilla's heritage main street and museum (day trippers from neighbouring centres); sprint car racing; Pistol Club Championships; junior sports annual carnival; touch football regional carnivals; swimming club regional carnival; regional bowls invitation events; Pony Club camps and gymkhanas; regional cricket participation; rugby league group competition; regional tennis participation; annual Arts and Craft Festival; Annual Manilla Country Festival - main street procession; invitation motorcycle club rally; annual Pastoral and Agricultural Society Show; Manilla markets; fossicking areas; passive recreation areas (especially Manilla's water supply weir and Rotary Park Bird Aviary).

In addition to this prepared list of activities, major attractions in neighbouring centres were included.

Currently, recreational activities are supported by farm stay, backpacker accommodation, and function and entertainment venues. In the future, Council anticipates that some of the following activities could eventuate:

- hang glider and paraglider launch venue with a training school
- glider (soaring) repair facility
- marine activities, sales and repairs, and
- possibility of a Field Day covering recreational activities especially fishing (currently being investigated by the Manilla Business Retention and Expansion Committee).

Council's Strategic Plan

Council saw the opportunity to foster economic development through encouraging and enhancing activities already occurring in the area. To achieve this Council has currently listed some of the major activities on the Internet via a Sister Council arrangement with Hurstville Council.

It has also encouraged the "Big Sky Country" Tourism Promotion (New England/ North West Regional Tourism Organisation), as well as seeking further community support and involvement in ongoing promotion.

Council has also encouraged development of existing support services especially:

- quality food outlets
- hospital and ambulance services
- presentation and entertainment venues
- varying standard of accommodation facilities
- good cross section of retail outlets
- good cross section of repair facilities
- and good quality public amenities such as public toilets, passive parks and the appearance of Manilla generally.

The strategic plan includes monitoring for illegal activities such as sub-standard accommodation and poor quality service to visitors. There are proposed infrastructure improvements, supporting private operations and initiatives where possible, and proposals to actively protect the amenity of the area.

Council has received significant community feedback acknowledging recreational activities as a most welcome component in Manilla local economic development which gives much needed support to the more traditional rural activities.

Council can foresee significant opportunities in the future to capitalise on international visitors to Australia in the lead up to the Year 2000 Olympics.

Industrial Land Audit

An audit of all land zoned for employment purposes in the Northern Rivers region has been undertaken as part of the Northern Rivers Regional Strategy.

The primary aim of the audit is to establish a data base on industrial land and associated infrastructure within the region to assist in attracting economic development which best fits the needs and opportunities of each sub-region.

The Northern Rivers region consists of the twelve local government areas situated from Grafton northwards to the Queensland border and includes the Clarence, Richmond and Tweed sub-regions.

The industrial land survey and data base preparation was carried out between July and October, 1996 by Ian Pickles Town Planning Pty Ltd and Steel & Associates Pty Ltd.

The industrial land included in the audit is located within 29 industrial estates which are situated in ten of the twelve local government areas. (Ulmarra and Nymboida Shire Councils do not have land zoned for industrial purposes, although some industrial land uses are permitted, and do occur, within the villages and rural areas of these two Shires.)

Within the Northern Rivers region there are 435 hectares of developed industrial land and 94 hectares of zoned land which has been subdivided and where infrastructure has been established. An additional 468 hectares are zoned but not yet developed, representing just over half of the total 997 hectares available for industrial development.

Lot sizes vary considerably within the region. The minimum lot sizes available for subdivided vacant land are typically within the range of 600m² to 900m² within the more recently developed industrial estates serving the fast growing coastal or near coastal townships. The largest industrial lots in these areas vary from 3400 m² to 32000 m².

In the inland industrial estates such as South Grafton, South Lismore and Murwillumbah, lots tend to be much larger, ranging from about 11400 m² to over 25 hectares. Many of the larger vacant industrial lots are poorly serviced.

Industrial Land Survey – Northern Rivers Region						
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	DEVELOPED IN USE LAND		DEVELOPED VACANT LAND		UNDEVELOPED LAND	OVERALL AREA
	Area (ha)	No. of Lots	Area (ha)	No. of Lots	Area (ha)	Total Area (ha)
Ballina	50.83	287	11.25	48	47.2	109.28
Byron	22.28	131	10.75	69	26.27	59.3
Casino	29.35	100	3.2	9	37	69.55
Copmanhurst	76	29	8	10	89	173
Grafton	75.1	112	26.27	31	32	133.37
Kyogle	8.6	27	3.9	3	8.7	21.2
Lismore	64.96	397	8.38	77	24.9	98.24
Maclean	15.72	67	1.75	6	36.56	54.03
Richmond River	2.7	10	1.33	13	10.1	14.13
Tweed	88.91	236	19.44	51	154.5	262.85
Totals for Region	434.45	1396	94.27	317	466.23	994.95

In seven of the ten council areas, the zoning of the land is 4(a) Industrial, whilst in Kyogle, Maclean and Casino, industrial land is designated under a development control plan within a Village or Township zone. At South Tweed and Greenway Drive (Tweed LGA), the whole or parts of the industrial estate are located within a 3(c) Commerce and Trade zone, where light industry is permitted.

The largest areas of zoned industrial land are located within the Tweed, Copmanhurst, Grafton and Ballina local government areas. As a simple ratio of population per hectare of total zoned industrial lands, the local government areas of Copmanhurst, Grafton and Casino have the highest ratio of industrial land per person. The least well provided council areas are Richmond River, Kyogle, Lismore and Byron.

The audit also includes details of available services, physical attributes and constraints, access and land value.

The data base has provided a useful base-line (1996) inventory of zoned industrial land within the Northern Rivers

region. It will enable comparison between local government areas of land availability and development costs. It will serve as a useful data base for the Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, linking local and regional environmental planning policies with economic development policies. It is anticipated that the data base will be updated on an annual basis.

The highest land values per square metre for serviced vacant industrial land are those in industrial estates closest to the main coastal urban areas experiencing the highest population growth rates. Land values in these estates range from \$50 – \$100 per square metre.

The land value in industrial estates serving smaller coastal communities or hinterland centres experiencing some population growth are typically in the range of \$12 – \$45 per square metre. The lowest land values for industrial land occur in the more remote hinterland estates, some with servicing constraints, having typical land values of \$5 – \$12 per square metre.

Contributions to this issue provided by: Trevor Prior, Fran Toomey and Ron Van Katwyk.

Information for this issue provided by: Manilla Shire Council.

Editorial and Design: Roy Hayward and Liz Williams.

Contributions to future issues of this newsletter are invited.

Disclaimer: Any representation, statement, opinion or advice, expressed or implied in this publication is made in good faith but on the basis that the State of New South Wales, its agents and employees are not liable (whether by reason of negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person for any damage or loss whatsoever which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking or not taking (as the case may be) action in respect of any representation, statement, or advice referred to above.

© Crown Copyright March 1997

DUAP Publication No. 97/14

ISSN 1320-5072

Printed on recycled paper.