

Our Reference: 1127 GR:MR

Director, Assessment Policy, Systems and Stakeholder Engagement
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

11 November, 2013

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (MINING, PETROLEUM PRODUCTION AND EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES) AMENDMENT (COAL SEAM GAS) 2013

Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) Amendment (Coal Seam Gas) 2013 (the SEPP).

Council has reviewed the proposed amendments and makes the following comments:

1. While the proposed "additional rural village land" exclusion zone for coal seam gas exploration does not affect Wollondilly Shire, it is supported as a positive way to protect rural communities.
2. The proposed amendment to include buffer land as a coal seam gas exclusion is also supported as it will protect the rural villages of Wollondilly from many of the direct adverse impacts of this mining activity.
3. The amendment to include Critical Industry Cluster Land as a coal seam gas exclusion is also supported. Council submits that the Maldon locality within our LGA should be included under this provision to ensure the protection of the Allied Mills Flour Mill and proposed bakery facility.
4. Council is a proponent for the encouragement of sustainable agriculture within our LGA. The identification of Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) is seen as a positive way to contribute to sustainable agriculture and is supported by Council.
5. While the BSAL provisions are a positive step to protect the highest quality agricultural lands, Council considers that these lands should be excluded from future coal seam gas exploration to provide certainty to farmers and local Councils when planning future development and also to ensure impacts on farming are minimised.

6. Where coal seam gas is proposed on land in which there is an existing agricultural enterprise, provisions in the SEPP should ensure that the existing productivity of farming practices is not adversely impacted.
7. Agriculture has a significant standing in Wollondilly in terms of heritage. These values need to be considered in the SEPP and we recommend buffer distances prescribed for coal seam gas development near heritage agricultural areas.
8. It is noted that sites have been included in the Future Residential Growth Areas provisions based on the planning proposals currently before Council. We consider that it would be better if these areas were identified based on Council's Growth Management Strategy as this gives a clearer and more complete picture of where growth is likely to be accommodated in our LGA.
9. It is noted the Potential Homesites Program sites have not been included in the Future Residential Growth Areas provisions. This is a significant oversight and should be corrected so that Wilton Junction and other key sites for future housing delivery are protected.
10. The amendments have not addressed the risk of Coal Seam Gas exploration and extraction on the supply of drinking water. The amendment should add an additional exclusion to Coal Seam Gas exploration on any land that forms part of a physical catchment for the harvesting of potable water.
11. The amendments have not addressed the risk of Coal Seam Gas exploration and extraction on the supply of bore water for agricultural production. The amendment should include a requirement to assess this prior to exploration and, in cases where there would be significant adverse impacts, the exploration should be prohibited.

Should you require clarification on any of the matters discussed please contact Mark Ruddiman on (02) 4677 1192 between the hours of 8:00am and 4:00pm Monday to Friday or alternatively via email at council@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au

Yours faithfully



Grant Rokobauer
ACTING MANAGER PLANNING