

The Director

Department of Planning & Environment

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### **North Coast Environmental Zones Review**

Further to my original submission re the E Zones in the Tweed Shire in particular, I welcome the opportunity to comment on the E Zones Review.

I support the Review's endorsement of environmental zones and overlays in Far North Coast Council Local Environment Plans.

The Tweed Shire, with its World Heritage National Parks, has the highest biodiversity in NSW with many endangered and endemic species. At present, the current E zones (Both E2 & E3) need to be expanded to include biologically diverse areas that are not currently covered.

- The E Zones in the Tweed LEP 2012 were developed via direct translation of former environmental zones from the Tweed LEP 2000. Much of the research, records and planning by Tweed Shires Natural Resources staff that was to be in the Tweed LEP 2012 were abandoned for the LEP 2000, which was not indicative of what the majority of the community desired.
- 1,100 submissions, (one of which was mine), to Council from landholders and residents in Tweed on the Draft LEP 2012 and 450 submissions to the Draft LEP 2010, showed that the overwhelming majority favoured extension of E zones and greater environmental protection than what Council proposed.
- Again, in March 2013, 194 Submissions from Tweed Shire residents to the consultants on the E zone Review expressed the view that there was inadequate protection of environmentally significant areas in the Tweed including habitat, flora & fauna, especially coastal Koala habitat.

The level of environmental protection on many significant areas in Tweed has been reduced from E2 to E3 zoning or RU2, Rural Zoning

#### I request that the below areas are rezoned:

- All high conservation lands that border onto and buffer National parks and Reserves be zoned E2 (including Wollumbin, Border Ranges, Mt Jerusalem and Mebbin National Parks and Couchy Creek & Cudgen Nature Reserve)
- Documented Wildlife corridors linking National Parks, conservation areas and private land should be dedicated as E2 zones, or at the very least E3. Corridors include: Cudgen, Byrrill Creek, Tweed Border Ranges/Mt Clunie, Billinudgel/Mooball, Limpinwood and Couchy Creek areas
- Much of the Tweed Shire hinterland is steep, rugged & forested, and is classified as scenic steep escarpment, and should be preserved as E2 zoning. (eg land surrounding Wollumbin National Park). I was dismayed to see that the NSW P & I deferred all land zoned E2 Environmental Conservation and E3 Environmental Management and removed the clauses on Terrestrial Biodiversity, Steep Land and Riparian Lands and Watercourses from the instrument. Many people have worked hard and contributed a lot of money to develop such riparian areas to protect the environment of this special area.
- Due to their endangered status, all documented koala habitat and koala corridors along the Tweed Coast coastal strip, (Wooyung, Pottsville, and Cabarita) should be immediately zoned E2. Similarly, koala habitat areas in the western areas of the shire (Byrrill Creek, Mt Chowan, Doon Doon, Hopkins Creek) should be classified E2.

- Tweed's high conservation Riparian areas alongside tributaries to the Tweed River at present have no protection and should be protected with either E2 or at least E3 zoning. (two examples are Couchy Creek and Byrrill Creek)
- The Department of Planning's recommendation that "*extensive agriculture should be allowed without consent in E3 zones*" is of concern in many areas of steep land adjoining National Parks in the Tweed which are not suitable for agricultural pursuits.
- I do not support that land mapped as "*State significant Farmland*" is converted to rural zoning, as this may pave the way for inappropriate urban development on our most productive agricultural land.

In conclusion, I support the use of Council overlays, particularly the Tweed Biodiversity overlay, which the Department of Planning does not support the use of "*other than for matters of health, safety, risk & hazard*" This is a narrow perspective and the environment needs to be protected for its own value. This is a unique area and should not be bundled with other areas in the state using a standardized format. Because of its uniqueness, the north coast and in particular the Tweed Shire should have its environmental zoning increased, **not reduced**. I believe the majority of the land mapped on the Tweed Biodiversity overlay should be classified as E3 Zones.

I sincerely hope that the Department implements these changes to preserve the biodiversity of this special area, the Tweed Caldera.

Yours sincerely,

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