



18 November 2015

Ms Carolyn McNally  
The Secretary  
The Department of Planning & Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Ms McNally

## **GREATER MACARTHUR LAND RELEASE INVESTIGATION**

This letter and the accompanying attachment comprise the formal response of the Lendlease Bingara Gorge project with respect to the Greater Macarthur Land Release Investigation (GMLRI) documentation, currently out for public exhibition. Please note, additional responses are also being lodged by Lendlease with respect to other interests within the GMLRI at Mt Gilead.

### **Summary**

The Lendlease Bingara Gorge team has analysed the GMLRI documentation, prepared by and on behalf of the Department of Planning & Environment (DP&E), in terms of its specific references and potential impacts on the Bingara Gorge project.

The DP&E is to be congratulated in pulling together a comprehensive assessment of the development potential of the GMLRI in a relatively short timeframe – as per the commitment in *A Plan for Growing Sydney*.

Lendlease acknowledges that the assessment undertaken is a snapshot in time and may be further influenced by events at any moment (for example the announcement of a preferred route alignment for the Outer Sydney Orbital and South West Rail Line extension). That is the nature of planning. As a result, it is recommended that the GMLRI be:

- finalised within the next 6 months; and
- reviewed regularly, say on a 5 year cycle, against a series of clear objectives, targets and timeframes.

Lendlease also acknowledges the background analysis and technical studies prepared on behalf of the DP&E are, by their very nature, “broad brush”. This is understandable given the size and breadth of the investigation and the objective of seeking to understand the development potential of the GMLRI as a whole (rather than any single parcel of land as would be the case in a more detailed rezoning application).

As a result, Lendlease suggest the GMLRI review cycle take account of any approved rezoning studies as detailed, site specific “updates” to the existing background analysis and create, over time, a comprehensive public library of material for the area as a whole.

Lendlease supports in principle the State Government’s proposals for the GMLRI, and the identification in particular of the “Wilton Priority Precinct” as a potential Growth Centre, within which Bingara Gorge is identified as a specific Precinct. This is addressed in more detail below

### **GMLRA and Bingara Gorge**

As the DP&E is aware, Bingara Gorge is a master planned community located near the township of Wilton. The project comprises approximately 450Ha of land zoned R2 Residential and includes over 110Ha of environmental protection and recreation lands, an 18 hole golf course, a public primary school and village retail centre.

The Bingara Gorge lands were rezoned in 2005 and are subject to State and Local Voluntary Planning Agreements. The project currently has approval for 1,165 residential allotments with lot sizes varying between 250sqm and 4,000sqm.

To date, approximately 800 residential lots have been approved by Council and over 350 homes completed on site. The current average lot size is approximately 900 sqm. Lendlease is currently seeking to increase the development yield at Bingara Gorge to 1,800 dwellings - without any increase in the approved development footprint. The resultant average lot size will remain relatively high at c800sqm to avoid any diminution of the high quality environment already established on site.

The Bingara Gorge project lies within the area known as "Wilton Junction". As Bingara Gorge is already zoned for development and being implemented, Lendlease is not a formal "proponent" of the Wilton Junction proposal, however it participated fully in the master planning exercise which resulted in Council's in principle endorsement in December 2012.

Lendlease notes that to aid proper planning and apply consistency, all relevant studies for the Wilton Junction proposal have assumed Bingara Gorge comprises a maximum of 1800 dwellings. Lendlease supports this approach.

Lendlease supports the identification of the "Wilton Priority Precinct" as a potential Growth Centre, within which the Bingara Gorge project and adjoining Wilton Township is identified as a specific Precinct. Lendlease acknowledges the "broad brush" approach in many of the background studies and understands the general lack of "ground truthing" to reach this stage. However, this has resulted in a number of inconsistencies and discrepancies between the GMLRI background studies and the approved situation at Bingara Gorge.

Examples where such "inconsistencies" arise include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Ecology & Biodiversity: does not reflect the precise location of areas of acknowledged ecological importance;
- Bushfire / APZs: does not reflect their physical location and width (often as a result of their reflecting erroneous ecological information);
- Riparian: does not reflect their physical location and classification;
- Archaeology: does not reflect the location of known PADs;
- Mining: does not reflect that technical requirements are already in place at Bingara Gorge;
- Utilities and Services: suggested utility networks do not always reflect current approvals at Bingara Gorge; and
- Community Facilities: excludes some of the facilities already in place or approved at Bingara Gorge, ie the Wilton Primary School.

Lendlease believe the inconsistencies can be addressed easily through the provision of additional information, should this be required by DP&E. A more comprehensive list of identified inconsistencies will be sent to the DP&E for its reference.



As a result of the background studies, the majority of the Bingara Gorge project is identified in the GMLRI Structure Plan as “Development Land”. However, what is shown does not fully reflect the environmental planning instrument approved for the Bingara Gorge project lands.

Lendlease notes that the “Development Land” is identified as being a “framework plan” and as such is not definitive. However, to avoid any unnecessary confusion, Lendlease suggest that footprint of “Development Land” for Bingara Gorge shown in the GMLRI draft Vision and Structure Plan be amended to fully reflect the approved development footprint of the project, ie as set out in the State Voluntary Planning Agreement (State VPA), executed by the Minister of Planning in 2012 (refer **Attachment A**).

Further, as the Bingara Gorge project is already zoned for development and fully in the implementation stage, it is suggested that the differentiation between “unencumbered land” and “encumbered land” also be amended to reflect the approved situation as per the State VPA which clearly shows the limits of residential development (refer **Attachment A**).

Lendlease would welcome the opportunity to discuss the above with the DP&E, as a matter of urgency, so that any final GMLRI report is more properly reflective of the approved planning framework covering the Bingara Gorge project – and/or any proposals considered on their merits with the relevant agencies. This would increase the detailed understanding of the actual situation on the ground and perhaps better inform the development potential of the broader area.

I look forward to receiving your response. Please do not hesitate to call me on 0402 349 149 if you would like to discuss this issue in more detail.

Yours sincerely

**Robert Bennett**  
**Planning Manager NSW, Communities**

cc Mr Brendan O'Brien, DP&E  
Tamara Rasmussen, Lendlease Communities

**ATTACHMENT A: BINGARA GORGE STATE VPA (Oct 2012): Schedule 4, Annexure B**

