



Murrumbidgee Council



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All correspondence to be addressed to:
Interim General Manager

File 04.25
Name Environmental Services

5 July 2016

Department of Planning and Environment
PO Box 58
DUBBO NSW 2830

Attention: Ashley Albury

Dear Ashley

RE: MURRUMBIDGEE COUNCIL'S SUBMISSION REGARDING THE DRAFT RIVERINA MURRAY REGIONAL PLAN

Council would like to congratulate the Department on the production of the Regional Plan. Following is Council's submission regarding the plan. Please note that the submission is the same as the report presented to the Local Advisory Committee and the Council meetings in June 2016.

Goal 1 – Growing economy supported by productive agriculture and sustainable use of natural resources

Direction 1.1 Grow the economic potential of the agribusiness sector

Action 1.1.1 Provide enabling planning controls to facilitate diversification and attract investment in the agribusiness sector

Action 1.1.2 Encourage value-add manufacturing opportunities across the region to increase regional economic diversification

Direction 1.2 Manage productive agricultural lands in a sustainable way

Action 1.2.1 Identify and protect regionally important productive agricultural lands

Action 1.2.2 Establish a strategic planning framework that protects the productive values of agricultural land and manages land use conflict

Action 1.2.3 Encourage the increased use of bio-security measures to protect the region's agricultural assets

Direction 1.3 Manage and use the region's natural resources sustainably

Action 1.3.1 Support the sustainable use and conservation of water sources.

Action 1.3.2 Protect areas of mineral and energy, extractive and renewable energy potential

Action 1.3.3 Avoid urban expansion and rural residential development on productive agricultural land identified mineral and energy resources

Action 1.3.4 Implement the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan to increase renewable energy generation

Action 1.3.5 Support the protection of native plantation forests from encroachment.

Comment: The key actions for Murrumbidgee Council have been highlighted under Goal 1. Page 19 states:

The NSW Government will:

- *Work with Councils to identify potential local planning impediments to agribusiness industry diversification;*
- *Require Councils to undertake local strategic planning to protect the agricultural supply chain; and*
- *Work with key stakeholders across a number of sectors to identify opportunities and barriers to supply chain infrastructure investment to facilitate the growth of agribusiness.*

Murrumbidgee Council has a proactive approach to new development in the Council area, and developed their Standard LEPs to allow for the maximum flexibility available under the current planning system. Since the implementation of the LEPs

in 2012 and 2013 there has been adequate flexibility to allow developments in the former Shires of Jerilderie and Murrumbidgee to occur. However the key areas to promote diversification of agribusinesses into the future will be the access to secure water supplies and the provision of adequate infrastructure to service new developments i.e. road network that can accommodate road-trains and B-doubles, power infrastructure, telecommunications infrastructure and transport access and accommodation for seasonal workers. These actions and issues will require a whole of State Government approach, along with input and co-operation with a number of Federal Agencies, i.e. the Murray Darling Basin Authority and the Federal Transport Authorities.

Murrumbidgee Council would like to see a stronger emphasis in the Plan regarding water and infrastructure in all goals, directions and actions.

Goal 2 – Improved regional transport networks and utility infrastructure to support economic activity

Direction 2.1 Enhance the region's freight networks through coordinated investment

Action 2.1.1 Identify and prioritise pinch points in the freight network.

Action 2.1.2 Identify and protect intermodal freight terminals to facilitate growth in the freight and logistics sector.

Action 2.1.3 Identify and prioritise opportunities to improve regionally significant local road connections.

Action 2.1.4 Work with the Australian Government on the proposed Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Rail Corridor.

Direction 2.2 Improve inter-regional transport services

Action 2.2.1 Implement local planning controls that protect regional airports from the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

Action 2.2.2 Identify and protect future rail corridors.

Direction 2.3 Coordinate infrastructure delivery to facilitate economic opportunities.

Action 2.3.1 Coordinate the delivery of infrastructure to support the future needs of residents, business and industry.

Action 2.3.2 Establish monitoring mechanisms to enable better demand forecasting to inform infrastructure coordination.

Comment: Again, the relevant actions for Murrumbidgee Council have been highlighted. The biggest issue facing a number of Councils in NSW is the cost of maintaining their road networks in the face of pressure to open the road networks up to larger and larger vehicles, permanently and seasonally. For irrigation companies, the major cost is maintaining the supply networks and the amount of water that is available on the market (seasonal allocations). For the energy companies it is the ability to maintain the network and upgrade the network to supply new developments especially in rural locations, i.e. the Carrathool Cotton Gin.

Murrumbidgee Council would like the Plan to include 3 additional directions:

1. A review of the provision of water infrastructure and upgrade of existing infrastructure to improve water resource delivery
2. Identification of 'black spots' for power and telecommunications infrastructure in the region, which in turn will determine the best location for alternative energy supplies, i.e. solar farms.
3. Identify local roads that require upgrading to allow producers to get their product to key regional terminals or processing plants.

Goal 3 – Strong regional cities supported by a network of liveable towns and villages that meet the community's changing needs

Direction 3.1 Grow the regional cities of Albury, Wagga Wagga and Griffith.

Action 3.1.1 Develop a regional cities strategy for Albury, Wagga Wagga and Griffith.

Action 3.1.2 Implement an industrial land monitoring program to maintain a supply of well-located and serviced industrial land.

Action 3.1.3 Develop and deliver strategies that strengthen the commercial function of CBDs and town centres.

Direction 3.2 Enhance the liveability and economic prosperity of the region's towns and villages.

Action 3.2.1 Deliver improved tools and partnerships to build community capacity in towns and villages to strengthen community resilience.

Action 3.2.2 Support the continued identification and protection of the region's heritage.

Action 3.2.3 Deliver enabling planning controls to diversify regional tourism markets and increase tourism opportunities.

Action 3.2.4 Deliver regionally specific urban design guidelines

Action 3.2.5 Identify opportunities to provide improved and increased transport connections between the region's towns and villages to the regional cities.

Direction 3.3 Enhance the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities

Action 3.3.1 Conduct a strategic assessment of land held by the region's Local Aboriginal Land Councils to identify priority sites for further investigation of their economic opportunities.

Direction 3.4 Provide a continuous supply of appropriate housing to suit the different lifestyles and needs of the region's population.

Action 3.4.1 Deliver enabling planning controls that facilitate an increased range of housing options, including infill housing close to existing jobs and services.

Action 3.4.2 Facilitate a more diverse range of housing for seniors.

Action 3.4.3 Develop a framework to facilitate a range of accommodation options for seasonal and itinerant workers.

Action 3.4.5 Facilitate the delivery of more affordable housing options through improved planning policies.

Direction 3.5 Enhance connections and planning between cross-border communities to improve service quality and infrastructure delivery.

Action 3.5.1 Investigate opportunities to improve cross-border planning outcomes, including infrastructure and service delivery.

Action 3.5.2 Develop a cross-border land monitoring program.

Comment: Again the relevant actions to Murrumbidgee Council have been highlighted. Goal three and its directions and actions, at first read comes across as being very Murray River and larger town centric. Murrumbidgee Council understands that the three centres are key to the future development and provision of large scale services in the region and that the Murray River focus is due in large part to the controls in the former Regional Environmental Plan No.2 – River Murray, however the Council would like to see the role of the rural communities strengthened in the document to ensure that services are maintained and improved not only in the regional centres but in the towns and villages as well, i.e. banking services are maintained, Doctors and multipurpose medical facilities are maintained.

Goal 4 – A protected environment and a community resilient to natural hazards and climate change.

Direction 4.1 Protect the naturally significant Murray River.

Action 4.1.1 Actively manage settlement and competing land uses along the Murray River.

Direction 4.2 *Protect the region's environmental assets and biodiversity values*

Action 4.2.1 Facilitate improved access to quality information relating to high environmental values, to avoid, minimize and mitigate the impacts of development on significant environmental assets.

Action 4.2.2 Maintain healthy waterways and wetlands, including downstream environments.

Direction 4.3 Increase the region's resilience to natural hazards

Action 4.3.1 Review and map natural hazards to inform land use planning decisions.

Action 4.3.2 Support communities to build resilience to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.

Action 4.3.3 Minimise the potential impacts of naturally occurring asbestos on communities.

Comment: Again the actions that will most affect Murrumbidgee Council have been highlighted. As with goal 3, goal 4 names the Murray River and no other waterways in the region. While this is known to be due to the planning controls on the Murray River, the Murrumbidgee Council would like to see Direction 4.1 and Action 4.1.1 changed to include the Murrumbidgee River and all tributaries of the Murray and Murrumbidgee River Systems.

General Comments:

The Regional Plan is a good starting point for the region. Murrumbidgee Council congratulates the Department of Planning and Environment on getting the document to exhibition.

As a newly merged Council, Murrumbidgee would be happy to work with the Department on some pilot programs to see how the actions in the plan can be turned into deliverable outcomes on the ground. Areas of interest to the Council include:

Action 1.3.1 Support the sustainable use and conservation of water sources

Action 1.2.1 Identify and protect regionally important productive agricultural lands

Action 1.3.4 Implement the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan to increase renewable energy generation


Action 2.1.3 Identify and prioritise opportunities to improve regionally significant local road connections

Action 3.1.3 Develop and deliver strategies that strengthen the commercial function of CBDs and town centres

Action 3.2.3 Deliver enabling planning controls to diversify regional tourism markets and increase tourism opportunities

Action 4.3.1 Review and map natural hazards to inform land use planning decisions

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Susan Appleyard', written in a cursive style.

Susan Appleyard

DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

