

Ms Olivia Hyde
Acting Government Architect
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Ms Hyde

Draft Urban Design for Regional NSW

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW. I understand that this document builds on the previous document Better Placed and has been developed for local councils in Regional NSW.

Council would like to make the following comments in respect of the draft guide.

South East Tablelands Region

- The document discusses the importance of historic assets and places and specifically mentions towns in South East Tablelands Region such as Berry and Milton as 'being characterised by main streets lined with historic buildings' (Illawarra-Shoalhaven region). It may benefit by also referring to Braidwood, a State listed heritage town in this region. Braidwood is a mid-way point between Canberra and the South Coast – therefore likely to experience growth pressures. Some discussion of the competing demands for affordability, quality modern urban design and the retention of historic heritage architecture would be useful.

General comments

- Generally, the draft guide appears to assume that councils have an urban design team or specialist professional in house. This is usually not the case in regional areas. The document would benefit by acknowledging that for most NSW regional councils and local urban design projects, the design practitioners are the council staff. Whilst these officers have an interest and experience in planning and building most are without specific design qualifications. The use of the term 'urban designers' implies that design practitioners are readily available. Frequently, regional councils are without the funds or access to design practitioners (architects and landscape architects). There are some regional NSW councils without a qualified planner or civil engineer. Engaging urban designers in this context is a challenge.
- A key component of implementing the proposed guide should include an increase in government grant funding to support the engagement of a design practitioners when required.

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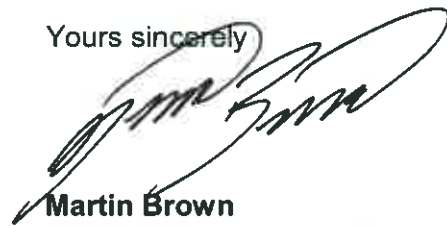
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- It is unclear if the guide will have any legislative weight. Whilst there is no statutory obligation to apply the draft guide it is probably unlikely to influence design outcomes in regional areas. Including it as a matter for consideration under section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* would ensure its implementation.
- Council's ability to influence urban design outcomes through consent arrangements is increasingly limited by the expansion of additional exempt and complying development provisions. Further information as to how the draft guide might work with complying development arrangements would be useful.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Mark Lodder on (02) 6286 6276.

Yours sincerely



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Program Co-ordinator
Land-Use Planning
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council

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