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Civic Centre, 68 Elizabeth St,
Moss Vale NSW 2577
PO Box 141, Moss Vale

02 4868 0888

mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au

ABN 49 546 344 354

SUBMISSION TO EIE FOR DESIGN & PLACE SEPP

Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the EIE for a Design and Place SEPP.

Council strongly supports the Department's ongoing commitment to a simplified NSW planning system and the view that the planning system can provide a positive influence over new development to enable the design of healthy and prosperous places that support the wellbeing of people, community and Country through a place-based approach. This is especially important within areas such as Wingecarribee which retains a rich indigenous and European heritage highly valued by both residents and tourists.

Council also supports the development of a principle-based SEPP which integrates and aligns good design and place considerations into planning policy thereby supporting the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* which addresses the design and amenity of the built environment, sustainable management of built and cultural heritage, and the proper construction and maintenance of buildings.

Council supports the five key principles of the proposed SEPP and, in particular, the intention of the SEPP to "provide a single reference point for design-related considerations and performance criteria in the planning system" and to "introduce a robust and consistent design process through requirements for design skills, design evaluation and review, and design excellence."

Council supports the designation of development scale as a useful delineation both between city and regional areas and between town and village areas within regional localities. However, the requirement that suitably qualified design professionals only be required for developments of three or more storeys would exclude most forms of regional development.

Council strongly supports the increased focus on better design outcomes, however, is concerned that other State Government initiatives, both past and present, will contradict and undermine well intentioned reforms such as these.

Development Control Plans (DCP) have traditionally played an important role in protecting local character and delivering quality design outcomes. However, the reduced weight given to DCPs in the assessment process was a significant backwards step in achieving responsive and positive design outcomes at a local level. Further, the expanding availability and reliance on exempt and complying development pathways is considered a significant threat to good design outcomes, particularly for an industry which at times appears to maintain a baseline development and building standard of 'minimum viable product'.

Working with you

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and Council looks forward to further consultation and SEPP details are developed.

If you require any further information in this regard, or would like to discuss the matter further, please contact me on 4868 0830, or Michael.Park@wsc.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MP', followed by a period.

Michael Park
Coordinator Strategic Land Use Planning