

Kanimbla
675 Coxs River Rd
Kanimbla Valley NSW 2790

The General Manager
Lithgow City Council
PO Box 19
Lithgow NSW 2790

9 August 2013

Dear Sir

Re: LEP 2013

Our comments relate to the RU1 and RU2 zonings: permissible & prohibited uses.

The LEP is too prescriptive and inflexible to enable the LCC to take full advantage of the potential of nascent, evolving technologies and capitalise on what they can offer.

1. Energy Generation, in particular small scale local installations which can contribute by feeding in to an already well established grid network: eg: solar, wind, geothermal and developing combinations of the above.
2. Small-scale onsite businesses that capitalise on improved communications offered by, say, the NBN and better wireless systems which enable decentralisation. These should not be limited by such tight space constraints (30 sq m2) that are based on current perceptions of small, supplementary home business.
3. Low impact, small scale private consultancy, professional services, research and testing facilities which could be conducted on a private basis rather than by large scale institutions.

Such enterprise should be encouraged, subject as appropriate to planning consent rather than prohibited outright as they are under this LEP.

As it presently stands, even to install an array of solar panels that feed into the grid and thereby generate a supplementary income would appear to contravene the proposed LEP.

There is a growing trend towards consultants and other professionals in knowledge based small businesses, to set up in more attractive rural and semi-rural areas, in preference to urban areas. Such enterprises fit in well with Lithgow's promotion as a centre for Education. While potentially providing employment opportunities, they are very unlikely to be attracted to business parks or such like.

To permit such activities and small businesses to operate within the rural zonings could be wholly consistent with the objective of promoting the sustainability of agricultural production. This is especially so in the Lithgow council area, where previous decisions have led to a proliferation of so-called agricultural rural lots (eg 10 and 25 acres) which are too small to provide a viable agricultural income. But agriculture could continue, if supplemented by other sources of income. Indeed with the fluctuations of the Australian environment, the operational viability of properties of vastly larger scale can depend on alternative supplementary sources of income to be sustainable over time.

By allowing such small-scale, low infrastructure businesses to be situated on rural lots has the significant added benefit of encouraging engagement with the local community to the benefit of all, including the local towns. There are far too many small land holdings in the district where maintenance is largely neglected by unengaged owners with, for example, a long range retirement plan but little interest in the interim. This has a directly negative impact on the sustainability of existing agricultural businesses.

The current LEP will have applied for over 20 years before LEP2013 is finally gazetted. A great deal has changed in that time and technologies are emerging at an accelerating rate, especially in the critical area of mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change. While the intent may be to shorten the interval between LEP revisions, who knows what the future holds. Progressive businesses may well decide to base themselves in other shires rather than wait for the next iteration of Lithgow's LEP, with no certainty that a relevant amendment will be gazetted.

It is important that LCC does not lock itself into precluding its ability to consent to as yet unforeseen possibilities of evolving technologies and the need to respond urgently to mounting environmental pressures. Or to prevent existing knowledge based businesses and professions (eg engineering, IT, accountancy, environmental design etc) to be conducted in a rural setting even if they are successful enough to have more than 2 employees or need a slightly larger space to function.

Such operations would have far less impact on the visual rural amenity of other residents than the likes of freight handling facilities and heavy industrial storage establishments.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Stoneman and Christopher McLelland