

AMENDED ITEM

Item No: 4.1
Title: Questions with Notice
Department: Governance

22 June 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting

Reference: F2020/00039 - D14016122



4.1 Questions with Notice

The following question was submitted by Councillor Kyle MacGregor at Ordinary Meeting 25 May 2020:

Arable Land or Agricultural Land Use Studies

Are Council staff aware of any arable land or agricultural land use studies that have been conducted within the Central Coast LGA in the past decade to identify issues such as optimised agricultural yields, crop compatibility, soil studies and the best possible land uses for the farmland on the Central Coast? If this data/studies exist are they freely or publicly available or able to be shared with Councillors or the Central Coast Community?

Response provided by the Director of Environment and Planning:

Council Staff, utilising the services of Edge Land Planning Consultants, are currently preparing the Central Coast Rural Land Use Study and the Central Coast Rural Land Use Strategy. Council staff have undertaken detailed audit mapping of all rural lands as part of this study.

The Study examines areas of productive soils, vegetation, slopes, sand and gravel resource lands, lot size, access, population characteristics, employment, markets, transport and logistics. The different types of agricultural uses have also been mapped and their relative economic importance to the Central Coast economy.

The project will also examine how agriculture is changing and which agricultural and rural industries are likely to grow in the future. The Study assesses the suitability of the existing planning controls, demand for alternate land uses, including rural tourism and how to manage development pressures for rural-residential development. The Study will also have regard for the planning considerations identified within the *Central Coast Regional Plan 2036* (CCRP). (Goal 2, Directions 8 – 14).

The primary objective of the project is to undertake a strategic assessment of the rural zoned lands of the Central Coast Local Government Area (CC LGA), in particular the rural lands of the (former) Gosford City LGA. This is required as a similar Study was completed

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(June 2017) for the northern areas (former Wyong Shire LGA), and it is important that this analysis is expanded to the former Gosford City LGA, to a gain a Central Coast perspective to properly plan for it's rural lands.

The Study will also draw from NSW Government Agency studies and findings. The NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE), on behalf of the NSW Industry (DPI-Agriculture), and NSW Environment Energy and Science (EES) - formerly OEH, advised in March 2020 that it has undertaken mapping which will be released as part of it's draft agricultural mapping program, due for exhibition in June 2020, and consisting of two sets of maps:

1. Biophysical Evaluation of Soil and Terrain (BEST) mapping; and
2. Important Agricultural Land (IAL) mapping.

These are explained as follows:

1. The BEST mapping looks at the biophysical features of land (such as soil type, slope, salinity, erosion) and ranks them (1-8) to identify the capability of supporting a range of different agricultural activities. The maps are provided at a local scale (1:25,000) which makes them useful for local planning and land management. The Central Coast arable areas are included.
2. IAL mapping considers biophysical aspects of land (using regional scale Land and Soil Capability data at a 1:100,000 to 1:250,000 scale) as well as factors such as infrastructure, socio-economic context and agricultural industry approaches. These maps will provide useful insights to agricultural development at a regional scale, but will not necessarily provide the fine grain detail useful for local planning.

These mapping projects are intended to support and update the 'Prime Agricultural Land' mapping which formed the basis for the *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 8 – Central Coast Plateau Areas* (SREP No 8). This SREP (now referred to as a "Deemed SEPP") has formed the basis for our rural land zonings and helped protect the fertile Central Coast Plateau agricultural lands, the bushland adjoining, as well as the sand and gravel resources existing within the area, since SREP No 8 came into force on 22 August 1986.

In order to address the requirements of the CCRP 2036, during 2018 Council staff contributed to the NSW Inter-Agency Working Group tasked with analysing the soils, resources and issues relevant to Rural and Environmental Lands west of the M1 Motorway. A 'NSW Agency and Council Action Plan' was scheduled for release in late November 2018 by the NSW DPIE. However, this is currently being finalised following departmental restructure and impacts from the COVID 19 pandemic impacting the work program.

Council will be responsible for the implementation of a number of these Actions when the Plan is released, in some cases in partnership with relevant Agencies, to implement Goal 2

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of the CCRP 2036: "Protect the natural environment and manage the use of agricultural and resource lands".

NSW DPIE has released the *SEPP Primary Production and Rural Development 2019*, which aims to protect agricultural lands and rural industries, in particular facilitating aquaculture. DPI-Agriculture have also prepared a "Living and Working on Rural Lands" Handbook and an accompanying Brochure – providing guideline documents for living in harmony with agriculturally productive enterprises on rural lands. Further, the NSW EES and DPI-Agriculture websites contain significant resources to assist agricultural production, weed control and rural lifestyles, which may be used for relevant background information.

Council is also hosting a Climate Action Program (CAP) throughout 2020 and early 2021. The program involves a workshop with the agriculture sector stakeholders to identify opportunities to support the sector to adapt with the changing climate. The Central Coast Green Grid project will also include an Agricultural Grid which includes all lands currently zoned as RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape under the relevant Local Environmental Plan. The Green Grid plan will integrate with the Central Coast Rural Land Use Study.

The Central Coast Rural Lands Strategy will be developed in consultation with Councillors, the community and relevant stakeholders. Some initial targeted community consultation is proposed to occur in 2020, but the timing and methodology is currently under review (having regard to COVID 19 considerations). This information will be used to finalise the Strategy and produce the Implementation Plan, which will inform the future Central Coast Comprehensive Local Environmental Plan (CCCLEP).

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The following question was submitted by Councillor Smith

Councillor attendance at Briefings / Updates

Is Council able to provide a table showing the total amount of briefings that have been held since the inception of the current Council and how many of this total number have been attended by individual Councillors (either the number attended or a percentage of the total number attended) and publish in response to this question on notice? Could the table also please show separately the number of CEO / Councillor Updates since they commenced during the COVID-19 crisis and similarly show the Councillor attendance at these updates?

Response provided by the Unit Manager, Governance and Business Services:

A total of 94 Councillor Briefings have been held between 18 September 2017 and 15 June 2020. Attendance for Councillor Briefings have been recorded each week since October 2018. There were 16 Briefings held in 2017 to 2018 of which there are no attendance records.

A total of 13 CEO Weekly Updates have been held between 20 March 2020 and 11 June 2020. Attendance has been recorded for all CEO Weekly Updates, with the exception of the first

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update on 20 March 2020. It is noted that the audio recording of the CEO Weekly Update is made available to all Councillors via the Councillor Hub.

Individual Councillor attendance at the 78 Briefings and 12 CEO Weekly Updates where attendance was recorded is detailed below:

Councillor	Briefings (of 78)	CEO Weekly Update (of 12)
Best	17	1
Burke	58	8
Gale	42	5
Greenaway	64	9
Hogan	64	12
Holstein	60	11
MacGregor	61	9
Marquart	20	0
Matthews (Mayor)	48	9
McLachlan	58	3
Mehrtens	59	3
Pilon	43	6
Smith	72	12
Sundstrom	70	8
Vincent	38	9

The following questions were submitted by Councillor MacGregor

Money spent on amalgamation of Council

Can Council staff provide an update on how much council money has been spent on the amalgamation of council from the proclamation until the present day, including a year by year spend if possible to ascertain and report to open council?

Can council staff provide an update on the progress of the amalgamation of council including an estimation of the time to truly complete amalgamation and how far council has currently come in regards to achieving this goal?

Response provided by the Executive Manager, Innovation and Futures:

This is a complex question requiring research and resources to provide an appropriate response. As a result it is not possible to provide a response for this Council meeting, however a report titled Amalgamation Process Update will be considered by Council at the 27 July 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting, which will provide a response to your questions.

The following questions were submitted by Councillor Gale

Davistown's current sewerage and water infrastructure system

Can Council expedite a comprehensive audit of Davistown's current sewerage and water infrastructure system to assess its efficiency? Following recent heavy rain 415 homes were without sewerage, and some with water issues, for up to eight days.

Response provided by the Director Water and Sewer:

Council has completed an audit of the Vacuum Sewer System for Davistown and works will soon commence on the repairs and recommendations from this report. As Davistown is susceptible to flood events, there will always be challenges around the operation of the sewer system when it becomes inundated with flood water. The works identified in the audit will ensure that the duration of any outages will be minimised. Furthermore, Council is also reviewing its vacuum sewer system network across the Central Coast, and is in the process of replacing the vacuum system in South Tacoma with a low-pressure system. The outcomes of this project will assist Council in determining the best options for any future upgrades of the remaining vacuum systems in Davistown, St Huberts Island and Tacoma.

Please provide an update on the progress of the water and sewer infrastructure as part of the \$52 million NSW State Government announcement.

Response provided by Director Water and Sewer:

The NSW State Government announced \$52 million in funding to upgrade infrastructure in the Gosford CBD on 28 May 2018.

This funding announcement was in response to Council's submission to the then Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) under the Housing Acceleration Fund (HAF) and consisted of \$42m for water and sewer infrastructure in the Gosford CBD and \$10m for the Leagues Club Field and waterfront upgrade projects.

Funding has been made available for the preparation of the business cases required under the Infrastructure NSW (INSW) Assurance Process which is the process required to access the full amount of funding for construction. Council has completed preconstruction activities to inform the business cases as requested by INSW and the Department of Planning Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE), under the INSW gateway assurance process. The preliminary works Council has claimed under the funding agreements include environmental assessment, design, survey, geotechnical investigations and stakeholder communication.

The funding received to date is as follows:

- Gosford CBD Water - \$638,564.97

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- Warnervale - \$917,586.95
- Gosford CBD Sewerage - \$1,512,087.99 claimed to date. Final costs for business case are still to come through, including INSW Assurance costs. Total is expected to be \$2m.

On 9 June 2020 Council received notification from DPIE advising \$11,861,435 of funding will be made available to Council for Gosford CBD Water infrastructure, pending execution of deeds between Treasury and Council. Council has been working with INSW to draft these deeds and anticipate funding being available in August 2020.

The remaining \$28m for the Gosford CBD Sewerage is still to be approved by INSW and DPIE and will be forwarded to the NSW Treasury Expenditure Review Committee by INSW. This is expected to be August 2020, with funding available October 2020.

There is an additional \$7,582,413 funding in the 9 June correspondence for Warnervale Town Centre Work.

Please refer to the below table for a brief summary of the history of the HAF submission:

Timeline for Central Coast Council Housing Acceleration Fund Application

Date	Action
Nov 2017	Initial Housing Acceleration Fund (HAF) submission by CCC. This was well received by DPE (Department of Planning & Environment). DPE (now DPIE, Department of Planning, Industry & Environment) suggested the CCC submission fitted well with the HAF objectives and DPE plans for Gosford. DPE suggested a proposal with more aggressive acceleration could be submitted and would be reviewed favourably.
February 2018	Second HAF submission with increased acceleration submitted.
May 2018	Funding to Make Gosford Great was announced 28/5/2018. Included \$42m to upgrade "vital infrastructure in Gosford City Centre" and \$10m for Leagues Club Field. (Please see Attachment 1)
December 2018 (estimated)	Letter provided by DPIE asking CCC to accept funding for Warnervale Town Centre and Gosford CBD Water and Sewerage. (Please see Attachment 2) \$7.5m for business cases and \$51m for total project value.
10 December 2018	Council writes acceptance letter for funding.
Feb 2019	Funding deeds for business cases signed.
10 October 2019	Gosford CBD Water Business case submitted.
19 October 2019	Warnervale Business case submitted.
November 2019	Gosford CBD Water and Warnervale Town Centre assurance process completed.
March 2020	Gosford CBD Sewerage Business Case submitted.

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April 2020	Gosford CBD Sewerage assurance process completed.
9 June 2020	Grant funding allocation letter for Warnervale Town Centre and Gosford CBD Water projects received. (Please see Attachment 3)
August 2020	Timeframe by DPIE and Infrastructure NSW when project funding deeds will be signed for Gosford CBD Water and Warnervale.
October 2020	Councils expected timeframe for Gosford CBD Sewerage funding to be allocated.
December 2024	All construction works completed for the three funded projects.

Attachments

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| 1 | Funding to make Gosford great 2018-05-28 | D14033281 |
| 2 | Letter of Offer to Central Coast Council | D14033282 |
| 3 | HAF5 - Gosford CBD water and Warnervale TC projects - construction funding | D14033283 |



Anthony Roberts
Minister for Planning
Minister for Housing
Special Minister of State

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 28 May 2018

FUNDING TO MAKE GOSFORD GREAT

Minister for Planning and Housing, Anthony Roberts, today announced an investment of \$52 million in funding for infrastructure and public space in Gosford.

In a watershed moment for the capital of the Central Coast, the funding will see well overdue work being done to upgrade the infrastructure and public domain, which will attract development, improve business opportunities and attract residents.

"The time for Gosford to shine has finally arrived. After listening to the community, we have developed a multi-pronged, design-led delivery to ensure the Central Coast has a regional capital it can be proud of," Mr Roberts said.

"Today's announcement involves \$42 million to upgrade this vital infrastructure in Gosford City Centre, plus \$10m for public domain upgrades in Gosford City Centre.

"That will include the creation of a significant regional playground as part of a major renewal of the parklands and streetscapes near the Gosford waterfront.

"This funding is in addition to the \$406m that has been invested by this Government on the hospital redevelopment, associated infrastructure and other city centre upgrades, further to the 300 Office of Finance and Services jobs we are bringing to the City."

In tandem with the funding, the NSW Government Architect released its next recommendations, in two reports now available for the community to view and comment on.

Place Report 2 focuses on connecting the greatly expanded Gosford Hospital to the city across the rail corridor over the train station, while *Place Report 3* focuses on linking the city to the waterfront parklands in the city's south.

"The Government Architect's recommendations focus on connections between Gosford Hospital and Mann Street, as well as making the waterfront parklands a destination for visitors and the community," Mr Roberts said.

In another milestone, Minister Roberts announced the new draft Gosford City State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) to provide design-led, streamlined, flexible and efficient statutory development controls.

"The new State Planning Policy will be supported by a new development assessment and approvals framework and case management process," Mr Roberts said.

“A Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC) will also be applied to Gosford City Centre to enable the Department of Planning and Environment to collect contributions for revitalisation of infrastructure that supports growth as the program continues to roll out.

“The proposal is that the overall amount to be collected will reduce from 4% of the value of development to 3%.

“The reduction in contributions will encourage investment and is a big vote of confidence by the NSW Government in Gosford and a demonstration of our commitment to delivering a revitalised city centre.

“The planning policy and the infrastructure contribution will align with the Government Architect’s recommendations to drive the continued renewal of Gosford City Centre.”

The new planning framework will remain a stand-alone state policy until the Central Coast Council completes its comprehensive LEP.

Mr Roberts also unveiled the City of Gosford Design Advisory Panel, a body that brings together the highest calibre planning and design minds in the country to assess, advise and ensure design excellence of proposed developments in Gosford City Centre.

The Panel comprises NSW Government Architect Peter Poulet, Coordinator General for the Central Coast Lee Shearer, NSW Chief Planner Gary White and two additional panel members drawn from an established group of practitioners.

The Department – in close collaboration with Central Coast Council, Roads and Maritime Services and Transport for NSW – has also formed a Traffic and Parking Subcommittee to tackle the issue of car parking in Gosford City Centre.

Place Reports 2 and 3 and a Consultation Paper on the Gosford City SEPP and SIC are available at <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/Central-Coast>

For artists’ impressions of the revitalised City North and City South, visit <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kemhb2cddv0og59/AACr-pcCYVfH1TLq-vkswSkQa?dl=0>

Media: Norm Lipson 0429 081 428



IRF18/5462

Ms Louise Fisher
 Special Projects Coordinator - Funding
 Central Coast Council
 PO Box 21
 GOSFORD NSW 2250

Dear Ms Fisher,

Thank you for your on-going support in the preparation of funding submissions for the Housing Acceleration Fund (HAF) Round 5. The detailed project nomination, selection and strategic business case process has been completed.

I am pleased to advise that the following projects are eligible for a grant to prepare a detailed design and final business case in anticipation of a future construction funding application.

Project Name	Estimated Project Value	Funding Approved for Preparation of Final Business Case
Warnervale Town Centre - New Sewer Pump Stations & Sewer Mains & New Water Supply Trunk Mains	\$8,500,000	\$1,200,000
Gosford City Centre -Water Supply Infrastructure Improvements	\$12,500,000	\$1,800,000
Gosford City Centre - Sewerage Infrastructure	\$30,000,000	\$4,500,000

The Housing Acceleration Fund, managed by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, was established in 2012, with \$1.466 billion reserved to deliver critical enabling infrastructure to stimulate and accelerate housing development in NSW. Restart NSW has funded this latest round of HAF with budget available to selected NSW Government and local government projects.

Funding will be by grant in accordance with the Restart NSW Funding Deed and the attached HAF Grants Guidelines. The Restart NSW Funding Deed can be found on the Infrastructure New South Wales website¹. If you are interested in accessing this

¹ <http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/1707/restart-nsw-funding-deed-agr.pdf>

grant, I request that you confirm in writing your formal acceptance of these terms and conditions.

Grant funding is provided for the purposes of developing a final business case; with funding for construction subject to a second application. Funding for the preparation of a final business case does not commit the NSW Government to funding the full project. Upon completion of the final business case, an assessment will be undertaken to determine whether the project aligns with the Restart NSW Fund eligibility and the objectives of the HAF program.

The grant funding for these projects is provided as a capped contribution where Council is responsible for all aspects of project delivery including the funding of any project expenditure over the capped grant contribution amount.

The grant funding identified in this letter will be made available to Council once the Deed of Agreement has been executed. I ask that no public announcements be made in relation to these projects until after the deed of agreement has been executed and the project has been announced by the NSW Government.

The next step is for Council to meet with Infrastructure NSW within the next two (2) weeks to discuss the process involved and the funding arrangements. Please contact Infrastructure NSW at restartpmo@infrastructure.nsw.gov.au to arrange a suitable time for this meeting.

Should you have any further enquiries, please contact Jackie Bosnich, Director, Housing Acceleration Fund, at the Department on 8275 1252.

Yours sincerely



Martin Reason
Executive Director
Infrastructure and Delivery

Encl: Housing Acceleration Fund – Grants Guidelines



Mr Daniel Kemp
Unit Manager, Water Construction and Project Management
Central Coast Council
PO BOX 21
GOSFORD NSW 2250

Dear Mr Kemp

I am pleased to advise that the NSW Government has approved a new allocation of grant funding from the Housing Acceleration Fund (HAF) to enable construction of important infrastructure in the Central Coast Local Government Area.

The projects and the grant funding allocation approvals are listed in the table below:

Project Name	Funding allocation approval	Purpose of funding
Warnervale Town Centre - New Sewer Pump Stations & Sewer Mains & New Water Supply Trunk Mains	\$7,300,000	Project construction
Gosford City Centre -Water Supply Infrastructure Improvements	\$10,700,000	

I note that Central Coast Council's project team delivered the required business case for each project under budget. The savings made during the planning and design phase may be redirected to the construction phase for each respective project.

Based on advice received from Council regarding total project expenditure, the table below outlines the savings which may be utilised during the construction phase and combined with the latest funding allocations.

Project Name	Planning and design phase allocation	Actual expenditure	Savings available for construction
Warnervale Town Centre - New Sewer Pump Stations & Sewer Mains & New Water Supply Trunk Mains	\$1,200,000	\$917,586.95	\$282,413.05
Gosford City Centre -Water Supply Infrastructure Improvements	\$1,800,000	\$638,564.97	\$1,161,435.03

Funding will be made available to Council once deeds of agreement have been executed. Infrastructure NSW will be in contact with Council's project team to execute these deeds.

If you have any questions, please contact Stuart Melville, Program Manager, at the Department on (02) 9373 2814.

Yours sincerely



**Martin Reason
Executive Director
Infrastructure and Place**