



ORDINARY COUNCIL

ORD07

SUBJECT: DRAFT CAMDEN RURAL LANDS STRATEGY AND STUDY
FROM: Director Planning & Environmental Services
TRIM #: 17/98883

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the draft Camden Rural Lands Strategy (provided as **Attachment 1 to this report**) for the purpose of public exhibition.

BACKGROUND

The Camden Local Government Area (LGA) has historically been known for its productive rural land and agricultural activities.

The connection of the Camden community to its rural land is clear through the draft Camden Community Strategic Plan (draft CSP). The draft CSP identifies the need to effectively manage urban development and population growth while protecting the rural and heritage character of the Camden LGA.

In considering a number of planning proposals to rezone rural land, Council has reinforced the importance of protecting our rural land. Major infrastructure projects, including the Western Sydney Airport and the M9 Orbital may have implications for our rural land and rural identity.

To address these issues, Council commissioned a rural land use planning specialist to prepare a Rural Lands Study (provided as **Attachment 2 to this report**). The rural Lands Study has informed the draft Rural Lands Strategy (the draft Strategy) (provided as **Attachment 1 to this report**).

The draft Strategy provides a strategic framework that will inform Council's decision-making with regards to the protection of rural land and identifies priority actions to proactively manage rural land and its interface with non-rural land uses.

The draft Strategy aims to protect rural lands at the rezoning stage and to ensure that development controls provide sufficient guidance on matters such as land use conflict and scenic protection.

A Councillor briefing on this matter was held on 7 February 2017.

MAIN REPORT

Draft Camden Rural Lands Strategy

The draft Strategy has been prepared by Council officers taking into account the findings of the Rural Lands Study. The draft Strategy largely reflects the recommendations of the Rural Lands Study.

The draft Strategy includes seven broad planning principles to inform future land use decision-making and an action plan for implementing the principles.

Key Planning Principles

- P1. Protect Camden’s remaining rural lands;
 - o Camden’s rural land is important, not only because of its role in providing Sydney with fresh food, but because of other benefits which arise through the protection of rural land. These benefits include tourism and scenic and cultural landscape values which provide a positive contribution to Camden’s identity and social fabric.

- P2. Retain Camden’s valued scenic and cultural landscapes;
 - o The rural heartland of Camden is composed of landscapes which clearly demonstrate historic settlement patterns and associations. The main components of Camden’s landscape are hills and ridges, flood plains and remnant native vegetation. These are prominent in the visual gateways and routes in the area and deserve special consideration and protection.

- P3. Provide certainty and avoid rural land fragmentation;
 - o Agricultural productivity relies upon land use planning controls to protect land from inappropriate development and speculation. The existing minimum lot sizes are an effective tool to avoid further land fragmentation and manage land use conflict.

- P4. Minimise and manage rural land use conflict;
 - o Land use conflicts between rural producers and residents surrounding them can be an impediment to agricultural production.

- P5. Enhance Camden’s Rural Economy;
 - o There is a need to identify potential activities through which Camden Council can support and promote viable and sustainable agriculture.

- P6. Minimise unplanned non-agricultural development; and
 - o This principle is in line with the draft South West District Plan which highlights the need to discourage urban development in the metropolitan rural area and to carefully consider environmental, social and economic values.

- P7. Maximise opportunities for relocation of rural enterprises.
 - o There is a need to maximise the opportunities for the relocation of rural enterprises displaced by the South West Priority Growth Area (SWPGA).

Draft Actions

The planning principles have a corresponding set of actions which will be linked to Council’s Operational Plan. The draft actions are outlined below.

Table 1 – Strategy Actions

Principle/s	Proposed Action
P1	Provide an advocacy role that the preferred M9 corridor option minimises impact on rural zoned land.
P1, P4	Investigate the potential introduction of appropriate zones within the South West Priority Growth Area to provide a long term buffer between rural land uses and urban development.

Principle/s	Proposed Action
P2	Undertake a detailed visual study of Camden's rural lands (excluding SWPGA) in conjunction with key stakeholders.
P2	Investigate options to incorporate scenic protection controls in Camden Local Environmental Plan 2010.
P2	Review existing development controls to provide additional guidance on scenic protection.
P3, P7	Retain the existing 40ha minimum lot size (Camden LEP 2010) for rural land to avoid further land ownership fragmentation.
P4	Review existing development controls to provide additional guidance on land use conflict.
P4	Prepare informative / educational material for the community about farming impacts and conflicts.
P5	Investigate potential activities to support and promote viable and sustainable agriculture.
P6	Monitor the implementation of the criteria for planning proposals seeking rezonings on rural land (excluding SWPGA).

Criteria for Assessment of Rezoning Proposals

The draft Strategy includes criteria (see Table 2) to assist in the assessment of rezoning proposals for non-agricultural development in rural zones outside of the South West Priority Growth Area.

The assessment criteria are intended as a guide and proponents will still be subject to the assessment processes that apply to all planning proposals under NSW planning legislation and guidelines.

Table 2 – Criteria for Rezoning Proposals

ID	Assessment Criteria	Key considerations (Pre-Gateway)
1	Proposals must be consistent with state and local strategic plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement /ongoing maintenance of biodiversity, ecological, scenic and productive values; Agricultural land production value; Rural economic benefit; Net community benefit;
2	Proposals must not adversely impact on the operation of existing rural enterprises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing intensive agricultural land uses. Land use conflict – utilisation of the Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) tool developed by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.
3	Proposals must be a logical extension to existing urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to public transport and other community services.; Essential services availability (including cost of extending services or upgrading

ID	Assessment Criteria	Key considerations (Pre-Gateway)
		roads and other infrastructure).
4	Proposals must not reduce the quality of scenic landscapes, vistas, ridgelines, or heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siting and design impacts. • Natural and physical constraints and opportunity of rural land, including high value vegetation, bushfire and flooding.

Relationship to Council plans and policies

The draft Strategy has been informed by the Rural Lands Study and links to Council's CSP as well as Council's Delivery and Operational Plans.

The draft Strategy will also inform future reviews of the Camden Local Environmental Plan 2010 (Camden LEP 2010) and Camden Development Control Plan 2011 (Camden DCP 2011).

Rural Lands Study

Undertaken in 2016, the Rural Lands Study considered our existing rural lands, the potential impacts to their future viability, and opportunities to preserve and protect them.

In summary, the Rural Lands Study found:

- Camden's rural scenic amenity and character is significant and should be protected.
- Agriculture is a significant industry for the Camden LGA with the value of production in 2010 being \$43.5M.
- The majority of agricultural value arises from intensive agriculture including poultry at 50% and nurseries, cut flowers, turf and vegetables at 42%.
- Intensive agriculture accounts for only 3% of rural land use area in the Camden LGA, a significant portion of which is located in the SWPGA.
- In order to minimise further loss of agricultural production in light of the SWPGA, protection of the remaining rural land in the Camden LGA is necessary.

Draft South West District Plan

The draft District Plan includes a 20-year vision that promotes the South West District as Greater Sydney's urban parkland, where urban lifestyles meet rural living and residents enjoy the best of both worlds. The vision highlights a strong and progressive rural sector will continue to help feed greater Sydney while leveraging the export opportunities from the new Western Sydney Airport.

The draft Strategy aligns with the draft South West District Plan. The draft District Plan uses the term 'Metropolitan Rural Area' to describe the non-urban areas at the periphery of Greater Sydney. The draft District Plan has three priorities for the Metropolitan Rural Area:

- Sustainability Priority 6 – Discourage urban development in the Metropolitan Rural Area;

- Sustainability Priority 7 – Consider environmental, social and economic values when planning for the Metropolitan Rural Area; and
- Sustainability Priority 8 – Provide for rural-residential development while protecting the values of the Metropolitan Rural Area.

Draft Camden Community Strategic Plan (CSP)

The draft Strategy aligns with the draft CSP which includes the following objectives:

- Urban development is managed effectively.
- Rural land is adequately administered.

The actions identified in the draft Strategy will provide a framework to achieve these objectives.

Public Exhibition and Way Forward

There is no legislative requirement to publicly exhibit the draft Strategy. However, given it provides strategic direction for the future management of Camden's rural lands and will inform future planning instrument (Camden LEP 2010) reviews, it is recommended that the draft Strategy be publically exhibited for a period of 28 days.

During the exhibition, a notification will be placed in the local newspaper and the exhibition material will be available at Council's Administration Centre, website, and libraries.

A copy of the draft Strategy will be forwarded to the Greater Sydney Commission, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, NSW Department of Primary Industries and adjoining councils.

If submissions are received, a further report will be provided to Council that outlines the results of the public exhibition. If no submissions are received during the exhibition period, it is recommended that Council adopt the draft Rural Lands Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. However, if adopted, the implementation of some of the actions, such as the preparation of a detailed visual study, may require a future budget allocation.

CONCLUSION

The draft Rural Lands Strategy seeks to protect Camden's remaining rural lands and address emerging pressures and land use conflicts. The draft Strategy is in line with the draft South West District Plan which highlights the need to discourage urban development in the Metropolitan Rural Area and to carefully consider environmental, social and economic values.

RECOMMENDED

That Council:

- i. endorse the draft Rural Lands Strategy for public exhibition; and**
- ii. if submissions are received, consider a further report that outlines the results of the public exhibition; or**
- iii. if no submissions are received, adopt the Rural Lands Strategy.**

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Draft Rural Lands Strategy**
- 2. Camden Rural Lands Study (Prepared by Booth Associates)**

ORD07 DRAFT CAMDEN RURAL LANDS STRATEGY AND STUDY

Resolution: Moved Councillor Fedeli, Seconded Councillor Sidgreaves that Council:

- i. endorse the draft Rural Lands Strategy for public exhibition; and
- ii. if submissions are received, consider a further report that outlines the results of the public exhibition; or
- iii. if no submissions are received, adopt the Rural Lands Strategy.

ORD90/17 THE MOTION ON BEING PUT WAS **CARRIED**

(Councillors Sidgreaves, Symkowiak, Fedeli, C Cagney, A Cagney, Mills and Morrison voted in favour of the Motion. No Councillors voted against the Motion.)

ORD08 DETERMINATION OF COUNCILLOR FEES - 2017/18 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL

MOTION

Resolution: Moved Councillor Morrison, Seconded Councillor Sidgreaves that the level of fees payable to Councillors and the Mayor for the 2017/18 financial year be increased by 2.5% as recommended by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal.

ORD91/17 THE MOTION ON BEING PUT WAS **CARRIED**

(Councillors Sidgreaves, Symkowiak, Fedeli, Mills and Morrison voted in favour of the Motion. Councillors C Cagney and A Cagney voted against the Motion.)

ORD09 INVESTMENT MONIES - MARCH 2017

Resolution: Moved Councillor Fedeli, Seconded Councillor Sidgreaves that Council:

- i. note that the Responsible Accounting Officer has certified that all investments held by Council have been made in accordance with the *Local Government Act, Regulations, and Council's Investment Policy*;
- ii. note the list of investments for March 2017; and
- iii. note the weighted average interest rate return of 3.28% p.a. for the month of March 2017.

ORD92/17 THE MOTION ON BEING PUT WAS **CARRIED**

(Councillors Sidgreaves, Symkowiak, Fedeli, C Cagney, A Cagney, Mills and Morrison voted in favour of the Motion. No Councillors voted against the Motion.)