

22 March 2010

General Manager
PO Box 12
GOSFORD NSW 2250

**RE: GOSFORD CITY COUNCIL
DRAFT LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2009
LOT 133 DP 1976, 331 TERRIGAL DRIVE, ERINA**

I write with reference to the Gosford Council's standardised LEP currently on public exhibition and advise of my concern over the potential consequences of the adoption of this Draft LEP on our church congregation.

Our site is currently zoned 7(c2) Scenic Protection where non-residential uses are permissible within the zone. **Under the exhibited Draft LEP our site will be rezoned to an E3 zone and the construction of places of public worship will be prohibited.** This is a localised exclusion nominated by Council, as I understand.

This will cause significant limitation on the development of our church. As Council will be aware our land is located within 500m of the commercial and retail core of the Erina business district, and is surrounded by commercial development, residential development, and non-residential uses such as the adjoining Hammond Care (Dementia care) facility and child care centre. It is therefore our opinion that this land does not represent a typical 'Scenic Protection' locality and the zoning of this precinct should be re-considered to be more appropriately zoned.

The development exclusion as provided in the DLEP would be more appropriate in areas of high scenic value with an immediate nexus to the local environmental attributes.

You will recall that the development consent for our site was granted with unanimous support from elected Councillors, and without attracting any community opposition.

We anticipate construction of Stage 2 of the facilities in 2011. A facility that will be the first of its kind in the local government area, and one we envisage will be an asset to local schools, organisations, businesses and Council.

Upon moving into our new facilities we have experienced significant growth and long term we will not be able to cater for the congregation within the facilities that we have approved. **Where does the Draft DLEP make provision for modern church developments?** It is unrealistic to expect that churches would build in industrial areas (which are not at all appropriate for people gathering together as community), to compete for prime commercial/retail locations, and similarly to be economically competitive with large residential developments.

I therefore would respectfully request that you address the following particular concerns with regard to the DLEP 2009;

* With the localised exclusion of churches from the E3 zone, this practically excludes churches such as ours from the local government area. How does the DLEP provide for the emerging trend of church development that no longer fit into the 'wedding cake' style building?

* In creating the current DLEP can you please identify the Council's strategic plan for the location of emerging church congregations that support families of up to and exceeding 1000 people.

* Could you please explain the seemingly inconsistent approach to the zoning of some church facilities to SP2 while most are excluded? Does this not discriminate amongst religious faiths?

* It does not appear that the E3 zoning adequately describes our site, or the locality within which we are located. Is there a more appropriate classification of zoning?

* What is the lifespan of this document? If this is the planning document that provides for the next generation, it will effectively prohibit churches from the development and planting of new church congregations on the coast. Is this the intention of the Council?

Yours