

ECCO GENERAL MEETING 28th JANUARY, 2009

PRESENT: Stephen Nugent, Marlene Farrell, Haidee Nelson, Peta Danley, Colin Foster, Charles Everett, Yvonne Everett, Kerry Lloyd James, Jeannie Pearce, Brian Phillips, Susan Sanders, Jennifer Smith, Bob Hill, Glyn Carpenter, Ron Savage, Linda Cruikshank, Bill Trimmer, Cindy Toedter, Yvette Black, Tony Davidson, Dennis Murphy, Jeremy Buckingham, Colin Young, Phillip Stevenson. Neil Jones, Nick King, Paul Johnson, Rob O'Brien

APOLOGIES: No apologies called for.

PUBLIC MEETING: Prior to the official ECCO general meeting, a public meeting was conducted concerning the proposed selloff of DPI land.

Introduction: President Neil Jones introduced the topic for discussion, covering the following points:

1. The purpose of the public meeting, which was:
 - a). to provide a public forum for the discussion of the implications of rezoning 67 hectares of Department of Primary Industry land , making its sale possible.
 - b). to provide information for a proposed ECCO submission on the proposed rezoning and sale of the land.
 - c). To provide a forum to allow members of the public to engage in public debate on the issue.
2. Provision of an overview of the site, its location and the issues of significance associated with the site. Issues of significance mentioned included:
 - a). Description of the land in question which consists of 67 hectares of prime agricultural land. A concept study has been done which indicates a proposed mix of dwelling styles of a suburban residential nature.
 - b). Environmental concerns raised by Field Naturalists which include concerns about the impact of urban settlement of the presence of the blur billed duck, the freckled duck and the superb parrot which have been observed in the area under consideration.
 - e). The Department of Primary Industry has chosen to bypass the usual process required for land reclassification by proceeding straight to the 3A option, which is of great concern, as it makes it difficult to engage in appropriate debate on the subject, and does not allow the involvement of stakeholders.

Concerns expressed: The meeting was addressed by members of the public who had expertise in the areas of rural management, agricultural research, council infrastructure and surveying and development. Concerns expressed were as follows:

Agricultural Concerns

- a). Agriculture is currently facing huge environmental challenges which require research if they are to be met successfully. The Orange DPI will require increased land resources rather than less to meet these challenges. This includes the retention of prime agricultural land, such as the land in question.

b). There are currently many research programs being conducted at the Agricultural Research station. Reduction of land available could jeopardize the expansion of these projects, as well as having the potential for conflict with residents concerning such rural activities as spray drift, the outcome of which could be further erosion of use of rural land for rural research.

c). The sale of land could also result in reduced buffering which has the further problem of human interference with experiments, causing the loss of valuable data which can take years to accumulate.

d). The sale of valuable viable rural land is in violation of the DPI's own policy, which is not to surrender valuable food producing rural land to urban development.

Urban Infrastructure Concerns

a). Concerns were expressed about the expense incurred if such a development were to occur. Orange has elected to develop to the North and West because of its relative proximity to water and sewage facilities. To provide such essential services to a subdivision in the South of Orange at this time was considered as costly and unnecessary at this time. Included in this increased cost would be road access and the necessity for the upgrade of bridge access.

b). Council staff available for advice on the issue stated that Orange had enough land available to be developed at the current rate of demand for approximately another 15 to 18 years. The argument was advanced by members of the meeting that it was premature to consider the development of the land in question with such land resources being currently available for development.

Those present at the public meeting unanimously endorsed the following:

That the public meeting does not support the Department Of Primary Industry's proposal for rezoning of said land and does not support the 3A process adopted regarding this land.

The public meeting was then adjourned, after which a short ECCO general meeting was convened.

BUSINESS ARISING:

1. **DPI land submission:** Moved Stephen Nugent, seconded Jeremy Buckingham that the ECCO meeting directs its committee to prepare a submission based on the information and recommendation obtained from the public meeting.

2. **Earth First Articles:** Peter West to co-ordinate the contributions to the Earth First column, which appears in Saturday's edition of the Central Western Daily. Many thanks to Peter for volunteering to undertake this task.

3. **Clean up Australia Day:** Peter West to organise ECCO's involvement. ECCO to register for several sites around Orange. To be finalized at next committee meeting.

4. **Draft LEP:** On public display in March. Will require careful examination. Suggested approach is for the LEP to be divided into zones. A request will be made

for interested ECCO members to be responsible for each zone. Tony Smith has met with Rob O'Brien to discuss the differences between the 2009 and the previous Local Environment Plan.

5. Climate Action Summit: To be conducted from Saturday 30th January to Tuesday February 3rd. Nick to attend the summit. Neil, Jeremy, Brian and Jan Phillips to attend the Action Day on Tuesday 3rd February. Further action as the result of this summit to be discussed at a later date.

Next Committee meeting: Wednesday, February 4th 8pm 6 Pasadena Place.

Next General Meeting: Wednesday, February 25th 7.30 at the Environmental Learning Centre.

Don't forget **Bubbles and Berries** at the ELF Community Garden next Wednesday, 11th February, commencing 5.30pm.

Also don't forget Orange's **Slow Summer Festival** commencing this weekend. This has been widely advertised, and is supported by ECCO.

Nick King Secretary.