

**Submission
No 2**

INQUIRY INTO TOURISM IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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Lake Jindabyne Village

"Rabbits Corner"

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New South Wales Legislative Council
General Purpose Standing Committee No 3

Inquiry into Tourism in Local Communities

SUBMISSION

RE: Lake Jindabyne Village Tourist Development at "Rabbits Corner"

In October 2012 the NSW State Government called for submissions into the NSW Planning Legislation Review. Our submission dealt with the need to identify Tourism and the importance of Tourism development in the structure of planning legislation.

Tourism development is a critical part of the economic fabric of any planning review; however the standard Local Environmental Plan (LEP) template does not have tourism as a separate category. Local Government in the Snowy River Shire addresses tourism in its LEP as a mapping overlay, secondary to the primary land use of "General Rural". This then allows Council to direct tourism development towards "Eco-Tourism" and enforce their narrowly defined interpretation of tourism.

The net result of these Local Government planning practices is that the supply side of tourism development is restricted and contained so that investment and innovation is lost. Land use LEP mapping in this region has ignored future tourism development.

Tourism development proposals of a determined value are of regional, state and national significance; therefore they should be considered at Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) level in the first instance, and then reviewed by the Planning Assessment Committee (PAC). At all levels the Local Government Authority should have submission and a participation role. Public consultation and participation would encourage transparency and ownership. The members of the Relevant Planning Authority (RPA) should be required to have previous experience in the Tourism industry and have private/public involvement as part of their qualifications as a committee member.

Local Councils and individual Councillors should not be the RPA, responsible for decisions on regional, state and national planning matters. The economic value of any significant tourism development to a Local Government body needs to be independently and transparently assessed and the creation of capital investment, permanent/construction jobs, and social benefits need to be considered and excluded from local political and social relationships.

SRSC Public Consultation

The SRSC has just completed the public consultation process into their new Local Environmental Plan. After six years of submissions this is the Councils response; no mention of the creation of the 200 new jobs, the \$96m. Project Development cost or the \$250m. CIV. The ten year staged construction program; or that the site was a previously a successful tourist attraction or that the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure's recommendation was that the project may have merit and should be further considered.

"One submission requested that Council reconsider the Jindabyne land strategy to accept the new Jindabyne town structure. This submission related to the Rabbits Corner – Lake Jindabyne Village site and recommends a tourist zoning change. The rezoning of the "Rabbits Corner" site has been considered by Council and the Department of Planning's Joint Regional Planning Committee (JRPP) which did not support the rezoning of the site. No zoning change is supported through the draft LEP

2013 and the site is to be zoned RU1 Primary Production in line with the general transfer of the Rural Localities in the Rural LEP 2007."

Any new planning policies should allow all proposals the provision to appeal based on merit to a professional planning forum independent of local politics and inexperience.

NSW Government Department of Tourism, Planning & Investment Taskforce

Summary:

The NSW Government established the Tourism, Planning and Investment Taskforce to recommend ways to:

- *Develop a more strategic approach to planning for tourism development within the State; and*
- *Identify opportunities to attract new investment and development for Sydney and Regional NSW*

The Strategy identified the importance of addressing issues impacting on tourism supply, including tourism infrastructure, product development and investment attraction.

The NSW Government will establish an Inter-departmental Committee to:

- *Develop and co-ordinate a detailed implementation plan*
- *Develop a destination planning framework for NSW that applies best practice destination planning to key regions of the State*
- *Co-ordinate advice on policy and/or technical issues related to the recommendations; and*
- *Develop a preferred model for industry engagement on Taskforce recommendations*

The findings and recommendations of the Taskforce will also contribute to the development of the NSW Tourism Industry Plan.

The Taskforce recommends that Government articulate a clear and comprehensive business case outlining the value of tourism for incorporation into the NSW Tourism Industry Plan.

This Standing Committee could meet on a six monthly basis to:

- *Work with Government on implementation of the findings and recommendations of this Taskforce*
- *Provide advice on initiatives commenced as part of the work of this Taskforce*
- *Ensure co-ordination between the implementation of recommendations from the Tourism, Planning and Investment Taskforce, Tourism and Local Government Taskforce*
- *Upon Government endorsement of the broad strategic intent of this report, the Taskforce recommends the development of a detailed action plan in consultation with the Department of Planning and key industry stakeholders to;*
- *Progress implementation of its findings; and*
- *Progress further investigation into policy matters identified in this report requiring further investigation and resolution*

The Case for Government Intervention

In order to more accurately account for the economic and non-economic return of government investment in tourism, the Taskforce recommends that Government adopts a government financial projection framework for tourism investment decision making that recognises that:

Despite inherent short-term disadvantages in profitability and competitiveness, public and private tourism development is essential "economic infrastructure" to the State.

Tourism investment facilitates long-term, direct and indirect economy-wide benefits upon which the tourism industry can capitalise continually over usable life of the facility or infrastructure; and

Tourism investment facilitates a multitude of non-quantifiable benefits that contribute to the achievement of government policy, including social development, cultural identity and best-practice natural resource management.

Strategic Tourism Destination Planning

The Taskforce proposes a process for the Minister for Tourism to ensure that focused strategic tourism development and planning occurs for identified strategic tourism regions and destinations of state significance. Accordingly, the Taskforce recommends the identification of “State Tourism Regions” by the Minister for Tourism. This nomination would initiate a comprehensive tourism and destination planning process for these regions focusing on attractions, accommodation development priorities and the supporting visitor infrastructure requirements for that region.

The Taskforce recommends that destination plans prepared for State Tourism Regions, and State significant tourism assets and precincts, are directly reflected within the Department of Planning Metropolitan Strategy and/or Regional Strategies (as appropriate), thereby ensuring they are enacted within local planning instruments in accordance with the plan-making requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

The Taskforce recommends that delivery and implementation for destination plans for State Tourism Regions is incorporated into service provision and infrastructure priorities into all government policy with a role in developing and delivering tourism. These include, but are not limited to:

- *NSW State Plan and Regional Delivery Plans*
- *Metropolitan Strategy and Regional Strategies of the Department of Planning*
- *NSW Tourism Industry Plan*
- *10-year State Infrastructure Plan*
- *NSW Metropolitan Transport Blueprint*

The Taskforce recommends that Tourism NSW, Industry & Investment NSW, take a lead co-ordination role in preparing destination plans for State Tourism Regions. In addition, this work will also require appropriate commitments resources from the following project partners/stakeholders:

- *Industry and government representatives assembled through the Ministerial Taskforces into Tourism, Planning and Investment, and Tourism and Local Government, as part of its ongoing role as a standing committee*
- *State government agencies including the Department of Planning*
- *Industry organisations*
- *Local government; and*
- *Local tourism industry groups and operators*

Planning should also be undertaken in consultation with Commonwealth agencies (Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Tourism Australia), implementation and delivery bodies related to the National Landscapes Program, and appropriate interstate tourism and planning authorities where identified regions cross borders.

The Taskforce recommends that a destination planning process initiated by the Minister of a State Tourism Region should address the following considerations for incorporation into a Tourism Destination Plan:

- *Assessment of markets trends amongst existing visitors and emerging markets*
- *Assessment of visitor accommodation supply and demand, and planning incentives to facilitate investment*
- *Economic infrastructure such as visitor information, business and/or education tourism facilities, regional and local transportation*
- *Strategic sites identified for “catalyst” tourism investment projects in visitor accommodation, attractions and supporting infrastructure/facilities packaged up as private development opportunity sites or for public partnerships*

- *Consideration of innovative infrastructure funding arrangements involving state, local government and industry project partners*
- *Planning initiatives foreshadowed for the region within existing Commonwealth, State and regional tourism development planning initiatives and policies*
- *Identifying State significant tourism assets and precincts within the region*

The Taskforce recommends that Government allocate funding for a rolling five-yearly review program for Accommodation Supply and Demand Studies prepared for identified State Tourism Regions

The Taskforce recommends that the Minister for Planning endorses the concept of State significant Tourism Regions. These require consultation and decision-making role for the Minister for Tourism and supporting agencies. Such consultation and decision-making requirements would occur when State significant assets and precincts are involved in:

- *LEP plan-making*
- *Decision-making around the ongoing management of identified assets and precincts, including management plans for individual assets and plans of management for public lands*

The Taskforce recommends that work commence with the Department of Planning on the development of an appropriate mechanism that suitably formalises specialised tourism inputs in development assessment for major tourism projects, while not undermining the efficiency of the assessment processes.

The Taskforce strongly recommends that additional staff resources with expertise in Destination Planning and investment facilitation be allocated to Tourism NSW to co-ordinate the effective delivery of the tourism supply-side priorities identified in this Report.

The Taskforce recommends that it continued its work and consultation with the Department of Planning on the issues of short term holiday letting as it works towards finalising its policy position over the first half of 2010

Destination Planning for the Sydney Region

The Taskforce recommends that the Minister for Tourism initiate the preparation of a strategic tourism destination plan for Sydney & Surrounds Region, as the first State Tourism Region for NSW

The Taskforce recommends that the methodology and principles adopted through the development of a destination plan for the Sydney Region Tourism is used as the basis of future destination planning exercises for State Tourism Regions in regional NSW.

The findings and recommendations of the Taskforce are commendable and deserve careful examination, and I further refer you to their full report for consideration.

Tourism industry development requires expert planning by suitably experienced practitioners and cannot be treated as a form of alternative use for surplus land. SRSC does not have a plan for Tourism and has not included any provision for future Tourism development in their proposed LEP.

Yours sincerely,
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