# Rural Hay Shed

Please see below information pertaining to the rural shed that has been constructed on our property at 22 Wattletree Road Marshdale.

This is on the property owned by John & Therese McIntyre.

Therese is writing this document collectively with both John and Therese providing the information.

We purchased this property in July 2020, and immediately commenced planning to ensure viability and productivity of this 206-acre rural property as a quality breeding enterprise of Angus cattle.   
We had previously done so very successfully for 25 years in the Liverpool Plains region  
We moved to the Dungog Shire to be closer to family and to work opportunities for our youngest son.

Many things were identified upon purchasing the property that needed attention and these included water, drainage, soil quality, shedding, cattle yards, fencing, creek protection & weed control.

The first thing we did was apply and gain approval to put in a Bore - which proved to be very successful as we have excellent water supply and water quality to ensure the farms viability and to provide the reticulated water system for the cattle.

The second thing we did was look at storage of cattle feed and we found a good location for a hay & feed shed that was also located near to the other outbuildings on the property – to provide a symmetrical approach. We believe this was a good location and we noted historical materials under the ground which appear to be where a shed may have been located in the past. The slope of the land here was also minimal.

Within 12 months of purchase we had the footings in, however we did not finish the shed at that time because the season was very good and we weren’t buying feed, we instead focused our energies on building the new cattle yards, erecting new internal fencing, fertilising and rehabilitating paddocks and applying for and getting approval to put in the swimming pool.

By June 2022 we completed framework and foundations for the shed. January 2023 saw the cladding completed.

The shed is a usual rural construction that you find all over every country town in NSW including Dungog, I only noted today to on the Alison Road on either side and close to the fence, both were of similar size and construction to ours.   
This is the second rural shed on our property – the first was here when we purchased. The building materials are consistent with construction of rural sheds being steel frame, solid timber posts and clad in iron.

We often speak to other farming people around us, and these conversations at no time alerted us to thinking that we were not doing anything we should not be and that the erection of a rural shed on rural land did not require any approvals as this is what had been happening here in this area historically.

You will note that we obtained approvals for our pool construction and sinking of the water bore, however we were advised back when we purchased the property through the Agent that a rural shed did not require the same approval when we discussed many things with them at purchase.   
That is because this is a rural outbuilding and Council’s document on outbuildings states that a DA is not required when size of shed and land size meet the guidelines.   
We now know differently that there is also a requirement of setbacks – this is the information we were not given.

John being an experienced contractor that has worked in all areas of both water retention, rehabilitation, drainage and construction both civil and residential, ensured that the location would not cause any issues in the areas of drainage or erosion, with good all-weather access which is critical in the location of a rural shed, and close to other outbuildings.

As already noted, the area prepared was finalised well over 18 months ago and with a view that any water that would come off a roof once constructed would flow along the rear drainage area and disperse out into our large horse paddocks, thus ensuring no erosion, impact to neighbours and most importantly the water was used wisely to gently flow onto our paddocks.

We had conversations with our nearest neighbour (the west side of the shed is parallel to their boundary) back in January when the sheeting was being completed and there was no objections at all, and we had no reason to believe they would be as we did not believe that we were doing anything that was non-compliant.

This Rural Hay Shed it has now been completed for 10 months, and the complaint to Council we believe was made in September when I spoke to a Council employee on site, which is nine months after completion.

This brings us to our question about the complainant - Why Wait?   
if there’s an issue with something like this and it was so critical, why would you not raise it at the time?   
We believe that this is only been done now out of spite, unknown to us why, but one of our neighbours has made it no one quite clear that they don’t like us and they have gone out of their way to speak to other persons in Dungog who have come to us to advise of their nastiness.  
And as Council would know this happens all the time and often with no real reason.   
Neighbour disagreements are commonplace and can escalate from nothing.

However - what we are focused on is the very real and impending drought.

We live in a rural part of New South Wales and we are surrounded by properties and Farmers, and all of us are focused on the drought, the cattle market, cattle food supply, water supply, and basically - the health and well-being of our cattle.

We have already received one order of a semi-trailer load of cattle Hay and we’ve been eagerly waiting for the second to arrive and this order was done long before the complaint was submitted. Like all farmers in this area, cattle feed is hard to obtain and we all have had to wait for the spring growth and supply to start filtering through.

This rural hay shed is imperative to supporting these cattle and their health and their health and well-being is reliant upon this Hay delivery which needs to be under cover to protect it and our tractor and hammer mill which is also located in the feed shed.

Complaint?

\*If the complaint is based on spite and nothing else, then an order to remove the shed seems hypocritical with the ethos of the Council and this rural faming region. This is a region of prosperity and rural living.   
\*If the complaint is based on a person’s physical view, then this shed is placed a long way from anyone’s home, well over 150 - 200 metres and is certainly not in anyone’s front yard, or near a council road. It is at the rear of the properties along Marshdale Road and can only be seen if the residents there walk up to the back of their properties which is an uphill sloping topography.

\*If the complaint is based on water course, then we have the drainage information to support the water not eroding any property. And a visual view of the surrounding area shows that as well as using a laser level to support.

\*If the complaint is based on construction, the materials used are typical on all Rural roof sheds in this area. It has been constructed by licensed builder, and is a structurally sound and well built.

\*If the complaint is purely based on spite and disgruntled neighbour relationships, then this should not be a sound reason to demolish a rural shed that is not causing any issues and more importantly is providing vital cover for stock feed.

Many of our other neighbours are also rural farmers and farming cattle and have no issue or complaint with our hay shed and they too have sheds similar on their own properties.

We respectfully ask the Dungog Shire Council to view our DA as a Rural Hay shed providing storage for Hay and tractor for our cattle, and note that would be for anyone else’s cattle if the property was to change hands at any time.

Upon viewing our property at Marshdale, you will see how proud we are and how well we care for everything here and in our surroundings. We would never construct or do anything that was not structural or visually negative or illegal.

The only attention to detail we have not completed and will declare right now are as follows;

The guttering along the back wall of the shed on the West side has not been placed yet and to be honest was forgotten about especially with our dry Winter here and no rain. This is being completed this month.

Landscaping - The trees intended along the same West facing wall has not yet been completed.  
 We were going to plant in March and then Winter hit early and it was a very harsh Winter and the Nursery advise us was to wait until spring. The start of spring proved to be very unpleasant, however we can commit to getting those trees done immediately as we were going to plant a row of advanced Lilly Pillies – these are great trees which are visually attractive, non-deciduous and grow very quickly – and they also provide shade and will be of a suitable size for the shed as the Council’s control plan.

Our conversations one-on-one with senior Council members was around that they acknowledge there are many Rural sheds like ours throughout the Shire, and they don’t need to act upon anything unless a complaint is put in.   
We therefore ask Council to view our shed construction and application to legalise with this DA, with that in mind.   
Rural properties like ours are the lifeblood of wonderful Shire is like Dungog.

In Closing Points

* We feel totally discriminated against by being told that we will need to demolish our hay shed when the shire is full of similar rural sheds that do not comply – with all due respect to Council
* We are a farming property, providing income, community contribution and employment and are currently navigating a very difficult season when decisions like this one could break a farmer.
* We need our hay shed – we are Primary Producers – and it is necessary to our continued viability at this very difficult time in agriculture.
* This hay shed is not affecting any person’s ability to live and enjoy this area and their home; there is no impact on anyone else’s property, it is not within close vicinity of homes, the closest being about 150 metres away.

However this hay shed will affect us financially if we are not able to continue to use and access it.

With Thanks John and Therese McIntyre