Jervis Bay Road Community Title Planning Proposal (PP035)

Visual impact assessment

envisage

Jervis Bay Road Community Title Planning Proposal (PP035)

Prepared for Shoalhaven City Council

DATE: 16 September 2019
PREPARED BY: Stacey Brodbeck, *MEnvPlan, BLArch, CPP, MPIA*
Registered Landscape Architect
& Alison Dodds, *PGCert Public Policy, BPlan, BLArch*
Registered Planner

ENVISAGE DOCUMENT NO.: 14119
REVISION: 02

ENVISAGE CONSULTING PTY LTD
ABN 89 139 313 296
envisageconsulting.com.au

Revision number	Date of issue	Revision details	Prepared by	Reviewed/Approved by
00	06 August 2019	N/A	S Brodbeck	A Dodds
01	22 August 2019	Following Council officer review	S Brodbeck	S Brodbeck
02	16 Sept 2019	Minor edits to finalise	S Brodbeck	S Brodbeck

Contents

FIGURES

APPENDIX A

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

Shoalhaven Council commissioned Envisage Consulting to prepare this Visual Impact Assessment to assist their determination of a planning proposal for a large lot residential community title subdivision in a rural area. The site of the planning proposal is 48 Jervis Bay Road in the area of Falls Creek.

As defined in the project brief, the aim of this Visual Impact Assessment is:

> 'To ensure that the proposal will not have any significant visual impacts on landscape character and quality of the locality including, without limitation, its presentation to Jervis Bay Road'.

1.2 Brief site description and location

The legal description of the site is Lot 3, DP 846470. The site is currently zoned RU2 Rural Landscape (forested area) and R5 Large Lot Residential (mostly cleared area).

The site is located on the western side of Jervis Bay Road in the vicinity of Falls Creek, approximately 4km from the intersection of Jervis Bay Road and the Princes Highway (refer **Figure 1-1**).

1.3 Brief description of Planning Proposal

The planning proposal seeks to rezone the land from a mix of RU2 - Rural Landscape and R5 - Large Lot Residential to a mix of R5 - Large Lot Residential and E2 - Environmental Conservation and to enable a community title scheme subdivision. The scheme would create a large lot residential precinct on the cleared part of the site and a community lot principally for environment conservation on the remainder of the land.

A subdivision application was lodged by the proponent with their initial planning proposal (rezoning) request in 2017 (SF10637). At the time of preparing this report, the status of the subdivision application is "incomplete", i.e. the 'clock has been stopped'. In December 2017, the proponent agreed to the subdivision application being held in abeyance pending Council's consideration of the planning proposal.

The proponent's conceptual subdivision proposes 15-lot rural-residential lots ranging in size from 4,047m^2 to 8,755m^2 (refer to **Appendix A**) and a collectively owned 15.26 ha lot that would be managed for conservation purposes. No dwellings are proposed on the community title lot.

One access is proposed into the subdivision from Jervis Bay Road. A loop road is proposed around the lots which would separate them from the bushland on the western and northern parts of the site, and a narrow firetrail is located in the southern corner. The main bushland area is proposed to be retained under Community Title. Wastewater would be treated and disposed on-site on individual properties.

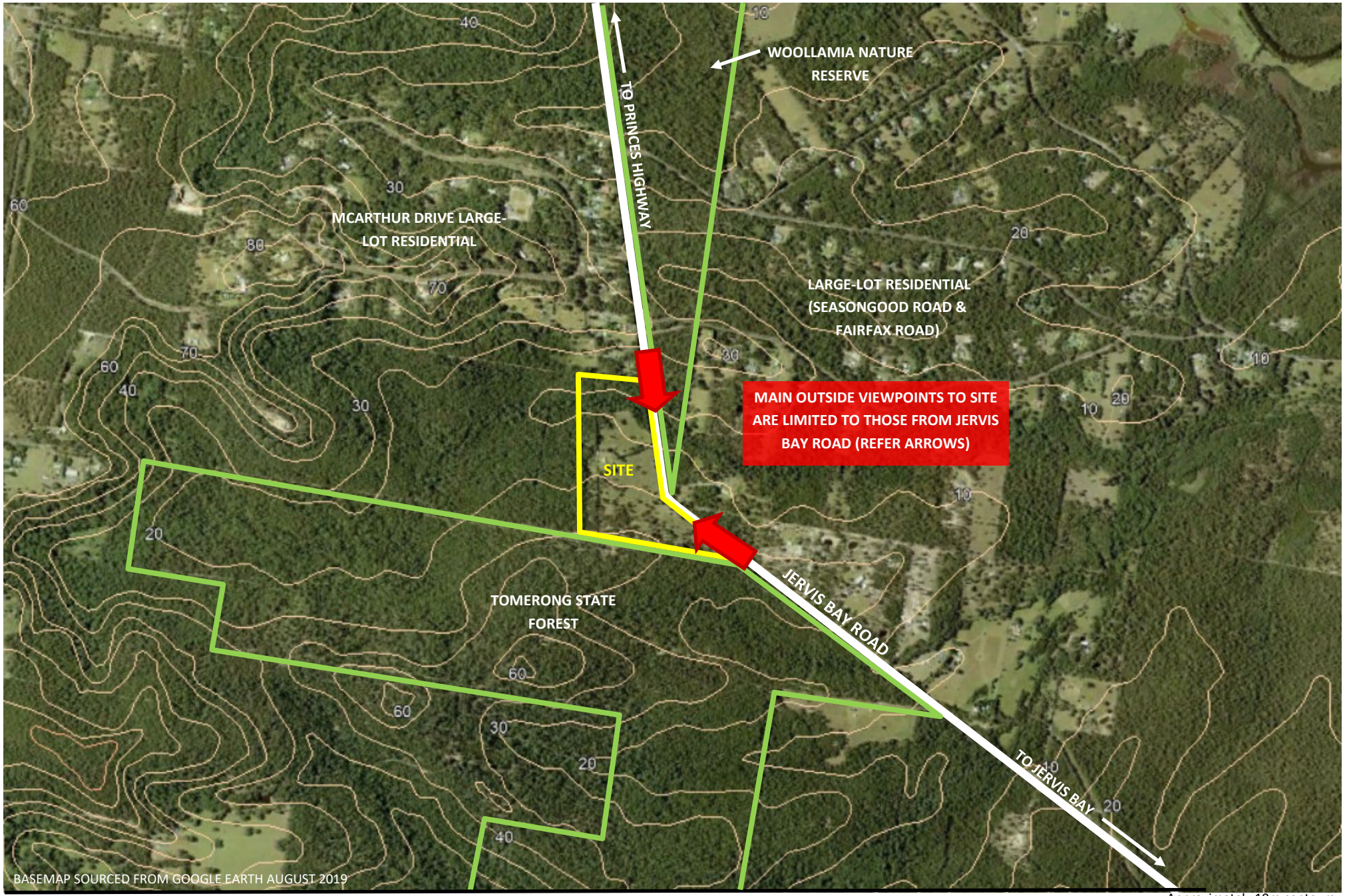

FIGURE 1-1: SITE LOCATION & VISUAL CONTEXT

2. Contextual analysis

2.1 General context

The site is located along Jervis Bay Road which is the main vehicular access to the northern side of Jervis Bay, the townships of Huskisson and Vincentia, Jervis Bay National Park and the Royal Australian Navy base. The site is approximately 4km south-east of the intersection of Jervis Bay Road and the Princes Highway.

The area surrounding the site is dominated by dense bushland interspersed with small rural holdings. The bushland character and undulating landform are the most prevalent characteristics. While travelling along Jervis Bay Road, glimpses of rural properties are seen, however, most are partially screened by existing vegetation and built elements.

The Jervis Bay area is valued by residents and visitors for its inherent natural and scenic attributes. Visual changes along Jervis Bay Road have the potential to adversely affect the visual experience of travellers along this entry road, and thereby affect perceptions of the wider area. **Figure 1-1** illustrates the site context.

Figure 2-1: View along Jervis Bay Road approaching site from direction of Princes Highway

2.2 Description of site physical features

Landform and drainage

According to the proponent's Flora and Fauna assessment (Ecological, 2017):

> 'The subject land occurs on a gentle slope with a northerly aspect between about 30m AHD in the south west, to about 10 AHD in the north. An unnamed ephemeral watercourse occurs in the north of the subject land, draining to the east, eventually joining Currambene Creek about 3 km downstream. The subject land is underlain by Wandrawandian Siltstone, comprised of fine-grained quartz lithic silty sandstone and siltstone.'

Vegetation

According to the Flora and Fauna assessment (Ecological, 2017):

> 'Around half of the subject land has been cleared for rural purposes… Cleared areas are regularly grazed and slashed, but contain scattered trees and other vegetation. Exotic groundcovers occur in most cleared areas, along with natives. A range of exotic landscaped plant species occur around the dwelling, some extending into the surrounding paddocks. Beyond the cleared areas the subject land contains largely intact native forest, much of which has been logged and parts are regenerating from previous clearing' (refer **Figure 2-2** and **Figure 2-3**).

Figure 2-2: View toward rear of site showing rural land in foreground and denser bushland at the rear

Dominant canopy species within the lower elevation (northern and eastern) parts of the subject site were *Eucalyptus pilularis* (Blackbutt), *Eucalyptus globoidea* (White Stringybark), Eucalyptus eugenioides (Thin-leaved Stringybark), *Eucalyptus resinifera* (Red Mahogany), *Corymbia gummifera* (Red Bloodwood) *Syncarpia glomulifera* (Turpentine), and Angophora floribunda (Rough-barked Apple) towards the creek. Higher sections of the site (south and south west) were dominated by *Corymbia maculata* (Spotted Gum), *E. paniculata* (Grey Ironbark).and *E. eugenioides*. A distinct change in canopy species is evident with increasing elevation within the subject site. Intact vegetation in the northern half of the subject land is mapped as: Blackbutt - Turpentine – Bangalay moist open forest on sheltered slopes and gullies, southern Sydney Basin and intact vegetation in the southern half of the subject land is mapped as Spotted Gum - Grey Ironbark - Woollybutt grassy open forest on coastal flats, southern Sydney Basin and South East Corner'.

Impacts to the vegetation as a result of the current proposal are described as including:

- 'Clearing of scattered remnant trees and patches or regrowth vegetation through the subject site of 11.5 ha

- Removal of negligible amounts of heavily disturbed groundcover vegetation'.

Figure 2-3: Scattered native trees towards rear of more open grassed area

2.3 Bushfire

A Bushfire Protection Assessment has been prepared for the proposed development (Ecological, 2017a). Based on the existing vegetation, landform and other site conditions required Asset Protection Zones (APZs) vary from 32 – 25m. The most relevant findings of the assessment were:

> 'The APZ is already in place for the proposed subdivision… The APZ is to continue being managed to Inner Protection Area standards as follows:
>
> - No tree or tree canopy is to occur within 2 m of the future building rooflines
> - The presence of a few shrubs or trees in the APZ is acceptable provided they:
>   - Are well spread out and do not form a continuous canopy;
>   - Are not species that retain dead material or deposit excessive quantities of ground fuel in a short period or in a danger period
>   - Are located far enough away from the building so that they will not ignite future buildings by direct flame contact or radiant heat emission.
> - Any landscaping or plantings should preferably be local endemic species or other low flammability species;

In summary, the proponent's bushfire assessment concludes that no additional clearing of any existing vegetation is required in terms of maintaining the existing APZ areas, suggesting that no further tree removal will be required.

Under Section 5.2.3 of Council's DCP Chapter G4 (Tree & Vegetation Management) approval is not required to remove trees within 45 degrees of an approved dwelling, garage or outbuilding. While the bushfire report states that the land is already

managed as an APZ, it cannot be assumed that that future landowners of the subdivision would want to retain all, or even some of the remaining trees.

2.4 Existing visual environment

Landscape character of site and surrounds

The current landscape character of the wider area is dominated by dense bushland interspersed with small rural holdings. Along Jervis Bay Road the bushland character and undulating landform dominate, with the existing vegetation on the site contributing to the broader landscape character. Trees along the Jervis Bay Road edge serve to partially screen views into the site at present and add to the road corridor's bushland character.

Along most of Jervis Bay Road some built elements are visible, including glimpses of rural homes. Most homes seen are relatively small and blend into the bushland and rural landscape.

In the McArthur Drive area (situated less than a kilometre to the north-west) there are some larger, more contemporary rural homes, yet most of these properties still retain substantial native bushland. There is a mix of more contemporary homes and older homes on the semi-rural properties on the opposite, eastern side of Jervis Bay Road, around the area of Seasongood Road and Fairfax Road. **Figure 2-4** and **Figure 2-5** illustrate typical images of the surrounding semi-rural area. Most other development in the vicinity cannot be seen from Jervis Bay Road, due to a combination of intervening landform and existing native vegetation.

Figure 2-4: Existing rural-residential area along McArthur Drive, with bushland prevalent

Existing visibility and main viewpoints

The site is located at a bend in Jervis Bay Road which means that when travelling from the direction of Jervis Bay toward the Princes Highway there are some direct views of the site when approaching the bend on which it is situated. There is a similar opportunity to look in the direction of the site, when near the road bend, when travelling in the opposite direction (i.e. toward Jervis Bay).

The view from the road principally comprises green pasture in the foreground and scattered trees over the site and along the road boundary. Existing large native trees that line the current driveway to the existing site house form a strong visual component. Encircling the pasture area on all sides is dense bushland which presents a strong, dark background.

Overall, the site is quite visually enclosed from distant outside views due to the combination of landform, roadside trees and existing dense surrounding bushland.

Apart from views from Jervis Bay Road, no other significant views or vistas, or views from other stakeholders, have been identified.

Figure 2-5: Some larger homes situated in bushland away from Jervis Bay Road

2.5 Development likely under current planning environment

The area of the site proposed for development is within an R5 Zone. The proponent's proposed rural-residential lot sizes range from 4,047m^2 to 8,755m^2.

The following are the most relevant controls that would apply:

- A maximum building height of 11m
- One dwelling generally per lot, yet secondary dwellings are possible (maximum floor area of 60 m^2) and dual occupancies are also permissible
- Maximum gross floor area of all buildings (other than farm buildings – see below for definition) is 500m^2
- Allowance for garage with a floor area of up to 140m^2
- Any dwelling house and ancillary development must have setbacks of:
  - Front setback - 20m
  - Side setback – 10m
  - Rear setback – 7.5m.
- At least 50% of the area forward of the building line to the primary road must be landscaped.

In the Shoalhaven Local Environmental Plan (SLEP 2014) a farm building is defined as *'a structure the use of which is ancillary to an agricultural use of the landholding on which it is situated and includes a hay shed, stock holding yard, machinery shed, shearing shed, silo, storage tank, outbuilding or the like, but does not include a dwelling'*.

Figure 2-6 and **Figure 2-7** illustrate contemporary large lot residential development in the Hunter Valley NSW, with lot sizes similar to that in the current proposal. Such development has become prevalent over the last twenty years or so. These images illustrate that the look of the development can be quite residential with substantial homes and ancillary elements such as water tanks, sheds and fencing that increase the extent of built elements. It is acknowledged, however, that the development in this photograph displays few trees, and that the likely establishment of future trees could soften the appearance over time.

Figure 2-6: Large lot residential development in Hunter Valley of a similar lot size to that proposed

Figure 2-7: Large homes are likely, similar to this large lot residential in the Hunter Valley

2.6 Desired future character

Based on the project brief and discussions with Council officers, the desired future character of the general area surrounding the site, and particularly the landscape seen from Jervis Bay Road, is to maintain an approach to Jervis Bay characterised by bushland and limited development. Specifically, the intention is to ensure that any new development is effectively screened with native trees prevalent and landscape screening to break-up direct views from Jervis Bay Road, and that the development does not overly dominate the existing landscape character and remains visually subservient to it.

It therefore seems preferable for any future development to have an aesthetic that is more semi-rural than residential. Components that tend to visually distinguish a semi-rural visual environment to one that is more typically urban are:

- ample distances between houses so that the built elements do not read as near continuous at a distance
- large trees breaking up views of built elements such that not all development is seen from outside viewpoints
- rural-style fencing
- housing constructed from materials that are more commonly found in rural settings rather than urban.

3. Assessment of current proposal

3.1 Current proposal

Evolution of the Current Proposal

The proponent's conceptual subdivision proposes a 15-lot rural-residential lots ranging in size from 4,047m^2 to 8,755m^2 (refer to **Appendix A**). One two-way vehicular access road is proposed into the subdivision from Jervis Bay Road. A loop road is proposed around the lots which separates them from the bushland on the western and northern parts of the site, and a narrow firetrail would be located in the southern corner. The main bushland area is proposed to be retained under Community Title. Wastewater would be treated and disposed on individual properties.

The current conceptual subdivision design considers environmental features of the site and avoids direct disturbance to intact vegetation or higher value habitats. It is understood that the most fundamental design consideration was to locate the proposed development footprint entirely within cleared parts of the property. Bushfire asset protection zones are contained within the perimeter roadway/firetrail and adjacent lots, and it is understood from the proponent's bushfire assessment that no additional clearing of intact native forest is proposed. A minimum 30m vegetated riparian buffer to the creek is included, and any currently cleared areas within that 30m riparian buffer are proposed to be regenerated. The main dam on the property would be retained for its frog habitat values.

Access Road

The width of the proposed access road as shown on the current plan is 20m wide including the road verge. It is understood that the total pavement width required is 8m, which may comprise a 7.0 m pavement with a 0.5m gravel shoulder on either side, therefore leaving a total verge outside of these areas of approximately 12m.

Treatment of Jervis Bay Road edge

The proponent's conceptual subdivision proposes a setback of approximately 6-7m between the Jervis Bay Road boundary and the nearest edge of the internal roadway. It has been assumed that a small number of existing trees within the road corridor will be retained. At this stage no detail has been provided on whether additional planting is proposed along this boundary or on other parts of the area proposed for development.

3.2 Potential visual effects of current proposal

As part of this report, conceptual images of two possible scenarios have been prepared to illustrate the potential look of the proposal: one with partial landscape screening along Jervis Bay Road (refer **Figure 3-1)** and a second with more dense landscape screening (refer **Figure 3-2**).

Figure 3-1: Conceptual image of current proposal with partial landscape screening along Jervis Bay Road

Figure 3-2: Conceptual image of current proposal with denser landscape screening along Jervis Bay Road

The purpose of these conceptual images is to depict the likely scale of future dwellings, their approximate set-out based on the lot plan and possible landscape screening effects.

On the basis of the planning proposal and the proponent's conceptual subdivision, the general look of the development would comprise:

- 15 large houses (up to 500m^2), some two-storeys high, constructed across the site, with seven houses along the side closest to Jervis Bay Road. The closest houses could be approximately 46m from the Jervis Bay Road edge.
- Most existing individual trees would be cleared across the area occupied by the residential lots, including the line of large native trees that trace the existing house's driveway.
- Other ancillary buildings, such as sheds and garages, would also likely be built on individual properties and other built elements such as water tanks would be seen.
- It is likely that some new trees and gardens would be planted on individual properties, yet the extent is unknown.

Visual changes to site, surrounding landscape character and views from Jervis Bay Road

With only partial landscape screening from Jervis Bay Road (refer **Figure 3-1**) there would be clear views into the site when directly opposite. When travelling from the direction of Jervis Bay toward the Princes Highway there would be direct views when approaching the bend on which it is situated, and there would be a similar opportunity to look at the development from near the road bend, when travelling in the opposite direction (i.e. toward Jervis Bay).

Views would be of large homes with some ancillary elements such as sheds/garages, water tanks and fencing. The site would change in character from essentially an undeveloped rural property to one that is dominated by houses and other built elements. At the outset there would be noticeably less vegetation (it has been assumed that the majority of existing large native trees would initially be removed to enable construction of buildings and onsite effluent management etc). Over time it is likely that some visual softening would occur as new trees and gardens are established.

Increasing landscape screening would reduce the extent of built elements seen from Jervis Bay Road and hence the visual impact to the main public viewpoint to the site.

Effect on desired future character

As described previously (refer **Section 2.5**), the desired future character of the general area surrounding the site, and particularly the landscape seen from Jervis Bay Road, is to maintain an approach to Jervis Bay that is characterised by bushland and limited development. Built elements should not dominate and development should be more semi-rural in nature than urban.

Under the proposed development scenario there is likely to be a negative visual impact on the desired future character, particularly when viewed from Jervis Bay Road, which is the main outside viewpoint. Built elements would be quite close to

the viewer and so the area would appear quite residential and contrast the bushland setting. For example, the minimum separation distance between houses would be 20m, based on assumed 10m side setbacks, and a line of seven potentially large houses (and sheds etc) could be seen within 50m of Jervis Bay Road).

3.3 Recommendations to improve visual outcomes

Visual concerns

As part of this assessment, a number of potential visual concerns have been identified:

- Limitations in the generic controls to influence the types of dwellings and ancillary development that is possible, and the potential for relatively large homes that are visually incompatible (scale is notably larger than other nearby development currently seen from Jervis Bay Road). This visual effect could be exacerbated by the inclusion of large ancillary buildings such as sheds within the site.
- The clustering of 15 lots means that the visual changes associated with the new housing would be amplified in terms of the contrast with the existing landscape character
- Visual changes seen from Jervis Bay Road have the potential to reduce the visual experience of travellers using this road and affect perceptions of the wider area.

Main recommendations for next stage

Recommendations to improve the visual outcome that could be applied at the next stage of the planning process are:

1. **Jervis Bay Road boundary** - The setback to the internal access road to the Jervis Bay Road site boundary should be a minimum of 15m, which would allow for quite a dense landscape screen along this boundary. A denser landscape screen would noticeably improve the extent of built elements seen from Jervis Bay Road and maintain a more bushland character along this entry road edge. **Figure 3-3** (prepared as part of this report) shows the likely visual effect of this recommended increase in setback and increased screening).

   This increased setback means that the new houses would also be set further back (approximately another 10m) from Jervis Bay Road (also shown in **Figure 3-3**). The landscape screening should comply with any APZ requirements and include a variety of local native species to achieve a dense screen over time. A landscape plan should be provided at the subdivision stage.

2. **Reducing number of lots**
   Reducing the number of lots would reduce the potential impact to landscape character and views from Jervis Bay Road. There are six lots that are less than 5,000m^2. Setting a minimum lot size of 5,000m^2, combined with an increased setback to Jervis Bay Road (recommendation 1 above), would reduce the number of lots. This would in turn reduce the number of future dwellings and other built elements and allow for a greater space between buildings, creating

a more rural look and more opportunities to retain trees. Such a lot realignment would also assist with recommendation 4 (below).

Figure 3-3: Conceptual image of recommended changes – i.e. increased setback (15m) & screening along Jervis Bay Road

3. **Retaining existing large trees** – The subdivision design should aim to maximise retention of substantial/important trees. This could be achieved by:
    - Surveying large trees and locating them on plans so that planning for their retention can occur and DA plans be designed to retain those trees as far as possible.
    - Defining building envelopes in light of the above information, including allowing some flexibility in where on-site effluent areas are located so as to avoid the loss of any major trees from those areas
    - Considering lot realignment, such as combining proposed lots 11 and 12 (see below).

4. **Breaking-up views across site** – In addition to the above, the existing driveway (to the current house on the site) has some of the largest trees lining it. With a minor lot realignment (such as combining Lots 11 and 12) these trees could potentially be retained by placing them on the lot boundary. This would substantially break-up views to the northern part of the site from Jervis Bay Road.

5. **Internal road design** – Specify the inclusion of native street trees along at least one side of the access road, with these planted at irregular intervals (e.g. closer

clumps separated by differing distances) so that over time tree cover is increased. These plantings would need to take account of the APZ requirements, with street trees on the western and northern sides (i.e. adjacent to the existing forested edge) would need to be located on the furthest side of the street.

6. **Fencing** – Fencing along Jervis Bay Road should be of a rural style, such as post and wire or post and rail, as should any fencing on the frontages facing the internal access road and along the side boundaries within the front setbacks.. 'Colourbond' style fencing, and other solid metal fencing, is not visually suitable - it would prevent views into the site and change the character of the road and site. Solid timber fencing could be allowed between properties (e.g. sides behind front setback and rear boundaries).

Other recommendations for built elements

It may not be practical to include specific measures to address the final style of buildings, however, as this a community title subdivision it may be possible. The following recommendations would improve the final visual outcome and are considered relatively non-restrictive and could be encouraged:

7. **Limit roof materials** - to sheet metal/'colourbond' style rather than more suburban-like tile materials. A mix of roof colours would also serve to break-up the overall look of the housing, with suitable colours being those that do not visually contrast, such as various grey shades and various shades of green. Colours like terracotta, beige and blue would strongly contrast and are not considered desirable.

   If this more rural-style roof material were required, then even with a mix of other building materials the roof treatments would serve to visually unify the dwellings and present a less urban treatment.

8. **Any ancillary structures** - such as water tanks and sheds would better blend into the landscape if limited to a maximum height of 4m and coloured in darker tones. A maximum dwelling height of 8.5m would also lessen the possible scale of buildings and the potential for visual impact.

3.4 Conclusions

It is concluded that with the adoption of the report recommendations that a development could be achieved that is acceptable in terms of visual impact, particularly in terms of views from Jervis Bay Road.

The recommendations focus on:

- Increasing the setback to Jervis Bay Road (to 15m) and ensuring dense landscape screening within this setback
- Reducing the number of lots and/or extent of built elements
- Retaining existing large trees to break-up views across the future development and maintain a more bushland character.

4. References

Ecological, 2017. Flora and Fauna Assessment Lot 3 DP 846470 48 Jervis Bay Road, Falls Creek

Ecological, 2017. Bushfire Protection Assessment Lot 3 DP 846470 48 Jervis Bay Road, Falls Creek

Appendix A: Current Proposal

NOTES

1. LOT AREAS AND DIMENSIONS ARE SUBJECT TO
2. DETAIL OF AREA AROUND HOUSE AND DRIVEWAY ARE BY GROUND SURVEY. REMAINING DETAIL HAS BEEN SCALED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY.
3. CONTOURS ARE INDICATIVE OF SURFACE TOPOGRAPHY ONLY
4. BACKGROUND IMAGE FROM SIX MAPS

leslie&thompson
SURVEYORS
52 Berry Street NOWRA
PO Box 778 NOWRA NSW 2541
www.lesliethompson.com.au
Tel 02 4422 1233
Fx 02 4422 1352
mail@lesliethompson.com.au

PROPOSED COMMUNITY TITLE SUBDIVISION

LOT 3 DP846470
JERVIS BAY ROAD, FALLS CREEK
FOR COWMAN STODDART

SURVEYOR	GB TD	1: 3000 A3 SCALE	
DRAWN	SL		
DATE	23 MAY 2019	SHEET 1 OF 1	
DATUM	AHD APPROX		
ORIGIN	SIX TOPO MAP	REF	12604–2
RL		REV	4