

Mr Anthony McMahon
Chief Executive Officer
Bega Valley Shire Council
PO Box 492
BEGA NSW 2550

eschindler@begavalley.nsw.gov.au

Attention: Ms Elizabeth Schindler

Scoping Proposal for Lot 5, DP750207 & Lot 1, DP 130034, 299-300 Mount Darragh Road, Lochiel

Dear Mr McMahon

Thank you for your email of 15 February 2024 and the opportunity to provide comment on the scoping proposal for Lot 5, DP750207 & Lot 1, DP 130034, 299-300 Mount Darragh Road, Lochiel.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Agriculture collaborates and partners with our stakeholders to protect and enhance the productive and sustainable use and resilience of agricultural resources and the environment.

We note that agriculture is a key industry for the Bega Valley, where the total gross value of agricultural commodities is \$100.1M, milk being the number one commodity (\$61.29M) and cattle and calves number two (\$29.44M)¹.

According to the scoping proposal, the subject site has been part of Cobandrah Farms for over 50 years. The Land and Soil Capability of the site includes Class 3 land with an Estimated Inherent Soil Fertility of moderately high. These characteristics provide land suitable for pasture cropping, grazing and some horticulture. Aerial imagery suggests that the locality is still used for agriculture. We note there is an area (2.57ha) of Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) and identified draft State Significant Agricultural Land (SSAL) along the north of the subject site, which is part of a larger contiguous area stretching west of the subject site.

The scoping proposal is not inconsistent with the South-East and Tablelands Regional Plan, however, we would suggest that Direction 8 to protect important agricultural land; and Direction 28 (Action 28.3) to manage land use conflict that can result from cumulative impacts of successive development decisions, should be addressed in the planning proposal.

¹ DPI Agriculture, AgTrack – Agricultural and Land Use Dashboard, 2024 (using ABS data for FY20/21):
<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/lup/agriculture-data-for-planning/dashboard>

DPI Agriculture recognises the Bega Valley Rural Residential Land Strategy 2020 has identified the subject site, which is within Area 3, as a proposed rural residential area. We note the objective of the scoping proposal is to rezone the subject site from RU2 Rural Landscape to C4 Environmental Living and amend the minimum lot size (MLS) to 1ha for the whole site. DPI Agriculture supports applying a MLS which maximises housing opportunities when rezoning rural land to C4 Environmental Living or R5 Large Lot Residential. Smaller lot sizes also increase the likelihood that the land will be used for residential purposes thereby reducing the risk of land use conflict.

Land use conflict has not been addressed in the scoping proposal between existing agriculture and new residential development. We recommend a Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) should be undertaken by a suitably qualified consultant to identify any potential risks and mitigation measures that may be required during the transition of the area from agricultural land uses to rural residential use.

Should you require clarification on any of the information contained in this response, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at landuse.ag@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely



Milo Kelly

Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer
Soils and Water | Agricultural Land Use Planning
South East and Tablelands Region

14 March 2024