

Contamination of Australian Defence Force facilities and other Commonwealth, state and territory sites in Australia

I am one of several owners of approx. 30ha of land at the corner of Cabbage Tree Road and Nelson Bay Rd. My firm is also the project manager of planning and development on the land. This is a significant 'single ownership' landholding, and is strategically important in Port Stephens in terms of realizing employment and economic benefit from airport related activity.

Our group of owners has been working on a planning proposal since we acquired the first parcel (1801 Nelson Bay Road) in 2007. Our planning work has included examination of constraints such as flora and fauna, heritage, indigenous archaeology, geotechnical capacity, and traffic and road networks. We have undertaken independent retail catchment capacity analysis, and provided Council with our analysis of Port Stephens' relative lack of large format retail and other services. We have also provided comprehensive submissions to a range of planning strategies and instruments that have been developed during this time, including :

1. Planning NSW Draft Centres Policy 2009;
2. Port Stephens Community Settlement Strategy 2010;
3. Port Stephens Commercial and Industrial Lands Study 2010 (CILS);
4. Peer review of Port Stephens CILS 2010;
5. Port Stephens Planning Strategy 2011;
6. Planning NSW Lower Hunter Regional Strategy Review 2011.

The key impediment to sensible development around the airport precinct has been the absence of adequate strategic land use planning for the area. Until recently, there has been no detailed analysis of stormwater and floodwater issues in the area. We understand that Port Stephens Council has recently been completed that work, as an input to sensible land use planning in the area.

The dedication of a significant portion of our landholding to the purpose of stormwater management (retention) has been an important element in our own land use plan. This would provide for stormwater management for development proposed on our land, and will help manage the impact of stormwater impacts from upstream development on our land. This significant opportunity for stormwater retention and management may also be worthwhile in the localized management of contamination from the RAAF Base.

Whilst working on our planning proposal over these years, we have also received development approval for fast food facilities and a tourism facility. Over the past 12 months, market interest in our land and development approvals has increased markedly. We have received proposals to lease and operate facilities within the approved fast food + tourism portion of our site, and offers to purchase other portions of our land. We have substantially advanced commercial negotiations with end users. Offers to purchase have been at a price that reflects the proposed land uses and approvals.

Whilst we expect that all parties involved will work toward a sensible and prompt resolution of the contamination issue and the various impacts on all landowners, we believe that it is important that any response is carefully considered, reasonable and equitable.

Port Stephens and the Hunter Region need to capitalize on every opportunity to create jobs and to attract and retain new residents, investment and prosperity. Indeed, the Port Stephens and Hunter communities deserve both a direct dollar return and an 'in kind' return on their significant investment (both financial and non-financial) in the airport. The 'in kind' return can be measured in jobs created, and investment attracted.

It will be important that our collective response to the contamination issue both **minimises harm**, and **maximises benefit** to the communities affected.

Sincerely,

Edward Crawford