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8 August 2008

Ms Jennie George MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

INQUIRY INTO CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ON COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Dear Ms George

I refer to our brief discussion at the Coastal Management Forum held in Brisbane on 28 and 29 July 2008 and the invitation to make a late submission.

Introduction

Wellington Shire Council is working with the Victorian Government to develop an implementation program for the Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy.

The Strategy, which was adopted by Council in 2005, may need to be modified following consideration of new information relating to the land capability and suitability including potential climate change induced sea level rise.

The proposal

The proposal is to progressively re-arrange land ownership and development controls within the large inappropriate subdivisions on Ninety Mile Beach between Paradise Beach and The Honeysuckles. This is to address recognised land management issues whereby:

- critical coastal values of natural ecology and landscape are threatened by inappropriate development;
- some land zoned for development, is at risk from inundation and erosion due to potential sea level rise and subsidence; and
- development of defined township areas is being held back by lack of services.

This proposal represents Strategic Option 3 - 'Land Capability' which was presented and evaluated at the Project Implementation Workshop conducted with all government stakeholders on 25 February 2008.



Background

The Ninety Mile Beach inappropriate subdivisions were undertaken during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Over that period, twenty-three (23) subdivisions were approved comprising approximately 11,500 standard suburban allotments spread over twenty-five (25) kilometres of the sensitive barrier dune from The Honeysuckles, six kilometres east of Seaspray, to the eastern extent of the Paradise Beach Township. The subdivisions took no account of topography, incorporating mobile ocean beach dune systems, sensitive ecosystems and flood prone land.

The allotments were actively marketed to new arrivals to Australia. All were sold and except for some that have been bought back, remain in largely disaggregated private ownership to this day.

The subdivisions were recognised as inappropriate almost as soon as they were completed and by the early 1970s the Victorian Government and the then Rosedale Shire Council were making efforts to control development within the subdivisions whilst avoiding the issue of large scale buy-back and re-incorporation into the public estate.

Efforts to control development through the planning scheme alone have led to a daunting array of zones and overlays that are confusing to the public, difficult to administer, in some cases ineffective.

The current Wellington Shire Council, created by amalgamation in 1994, and the Victorian Government commissioned the development of a comprehensive strategy to deal with the issues in 2000. The Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy was adopted by Council in September 2005. This Strategy aims to provide for the orderly development of the Ninety Mile Beach inappropriate subdivision area and it was prepared in response to property owner concern that their development rights were being compromised and that the controls, which had been in place for more than 30 years, had not resolved the issue. In broad terms the Strategy proposed that development should occur in the township areas of Paradise Beach, Golden Beach and The Honeysuckles and low scale development should occur in Glomar Beach.

In April 2006 the State Government recognised the Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy in the Coastal Spaces Recommendations report with a specific recommendation that it work with Wellington Shire Council to implement the Strategy. Further, the State announced \$100,000 to assist Council with the implementation process.

A joint project was subsequently initiated and a Project Control Group established with representatives from Council, the Victorian Department of Sustainability & Environment (DSE), Victorian Department of Planning & Community Development (DPCD), and Victorian Department of Infrastructure (DOI).

The objective of the project is to provide advice to the Victorian Government and Council on implementation of the Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy.

A Project Director was subsequently recruited and the work plan was endorsed by the Project Control Group.

The adopted work plan called for, amongst other things, a land capability and suitability assessment to be prepared. Accordingly two workshops were held, one in May 2007 and the other in August 2007, to prepare the scope for this assessment of land capability and suitability. These workshops were attended by representatives of various government stakeholders. The land capability and suitability assessment for the entire Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy area was completed and presented to a Project Implementation Workshop of all government stakeholders held on 25 February 2008. This assessment includes climate change impact assessments based around several sea level rise scenarios. Issues addressed during the preparation of the land capability and suitability assessment include commissioning of detailed aerial surveying, lack of servicing in the township areas and ambiguous planning controls. The Workshop adopted Strategic Option 3 - 'Land Capability' as the preferred option. This strategic option modifies the "Urban Nodal" option adopted by Council in 2005 to take into account land capability and suitability assessments including potential climate change induced inundation, erosion and subsidence. This option proposes that Golden Beach and Paradise Beach continue as viable seaside townships and that services, including sewer, streets, drainage and community infrastructure, be upgraded. This option also proposes land outside the defined townships be appropriately managed and that little or no development occur.

More recently Council has become aware of CSIRO reports on coastal subsidence, which are currently being mapped.

The Victorian Coastal Council is currently updating the Victorian Coastal Strategy. The draft proposes that planning authorities use a range from 0.4 to 0.8 metres when planning for sea level rise. It is understood that the Victorian Coastal Strategy will be finalised and released in August 2008.

Council is aware that the Victorian State Government has commissioned a detailed aerial survey of the entire Victorian coast to 120 mm intervals which will allow for detailed mapping and will indicate the most vulnerable areas of coast. This work has been commissioned as part of the Victorian Government's *Future Coasts* project, which aims to provide tools for coastal land managers, including Councils, by the end of 2009.

The Gippsland Coastal Board also released its report "*Climate Change, Sea Level Rise and Coastal Subsidence along the Gippsland Coast*" on 10 July 2008.

In 2007 Council sought Ministerial intervention to stop development outside the township areas while the implementation plans are developed. This amendment, known as C48, was approved in December 2007 with a temporary prohibition on development in place until July 2009.

Council's program is for a comprehensive business case to be submitted to the Victorian Government for consideration by the 3rd quarter of 2008. Wellington Shire Council will also consider a detailed implementation

proposal in the same time frame. This is likely to include changes to the Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy largely as a result of detailed Land Capability and Suitability assessments including the impact of predicted sea level rise and coastal subsidence.

Response to Inquiry terms of reference

Council notes the terms of reference for the Inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities and makes the following comments:

- *Existing policies and programs related to coastal zone management, taking into account the catchment-coast-ocean continuum*

It has become evident through the Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy project that a comprehensive coastal management policy response is required. While the release of the final Victorian Coastal Strategy will assist, a comprehensive policy response is required to potential inundation and coastal erosion hazards as a result climate change induced sea level rise and land subsidence.

It is suggested that the Commonwealth and State work with Wellington Shire Council to develop policies and programs specific to coastal zone management and taking into account the catchment-coast-ocean continuum. The Wellington coast provides an excellent range of examples where mitigation and adaptation strategies and actions could be trialled.

- *The impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation, particularly in response to projected sea level rise*

The implementation plan for the Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy currently being prepared proposes to progressively rearrange land ownership, development controls and infrastructure in a way that reflects evolving coastal planning policy including flora/fauna and landscape preservation and sea level rise; promotes sustainable development of defined settlement areas; and delivers transparency and equity. This will require innovative adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Again, it is suggested that the Wellington coast provides an excellent opportunity to trial model mitigation and adaptation strategies.

- *Mechanisms to promote sustainable coastal communities*

The implementation plan for the Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy proposes sustainable development of defined settlement areas. This will require progressive rearrangement of land ownership, new development controls and infrastructure to reflect evolving coastal planning policy, including innovative adaptation and mitigation strategies.

- *Governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone.*

The implementation plan for the Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy proposes to progressively rearrange land ownership to reflect evolving

coastal planning policy, promote sustainable development of defined settlement areas and deliver transparency and equity. Council envisages that property ownership in the defined settlement areas will remain private and that land ownership outside the defined settlement areas will be largely public. The process and institutional arrangements required to progressively rearrange land ownership have yet to be defined but will be required as part of the response to the Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy implementation plan.

It is suggested that the Wellington coast does provide an excellent opportunity to trial model governance and institutional arrangements in this important coastal zone.

Public Hearings

Wellington Shire Council understands that the Standing Committee is undertaking a series of public hearings as part of the current Inquiry process. Accordingly, Council formally invites the Committee to visit Gippsland to see first hand the matters under consideration and to consult with stakeholders.

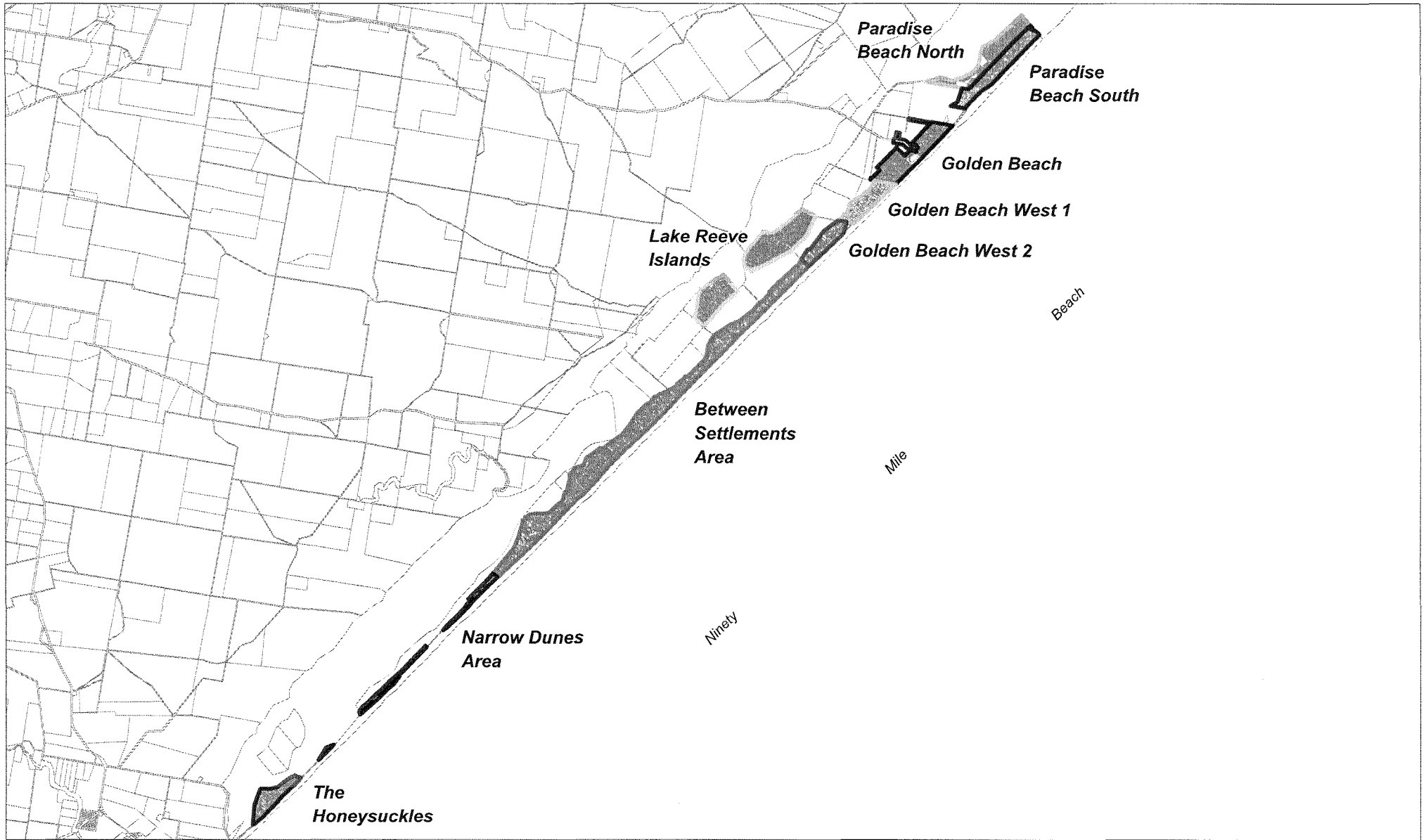
Council would welcome the opportunity to expand on its submission at a public hearing should that opportunity be made available. Should any further information be required, please feel free to contact me on 03 5142 3320 or our Director Strategic Development, Bruce Graham, on 03 5142 3491.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Webb', written in a cursive style.

LYNDON WEBB
Chief Executive Officer

Our Ref: BDG:pld
Reply To: Bruce Graham



Scale 1:125,000
 0 1.5 3 4.5
 Kilometres (@ A4)

Map Projection: Universal Transverse Mercator
 Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994
 Grid: Map Grid of Australia, Zone 55



LEGEND



Wellington Shire Council
 Implementing the
 Wellington Coast Subdivision Strategy:
 The Honeysuckles to Paradise Beach

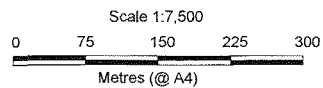
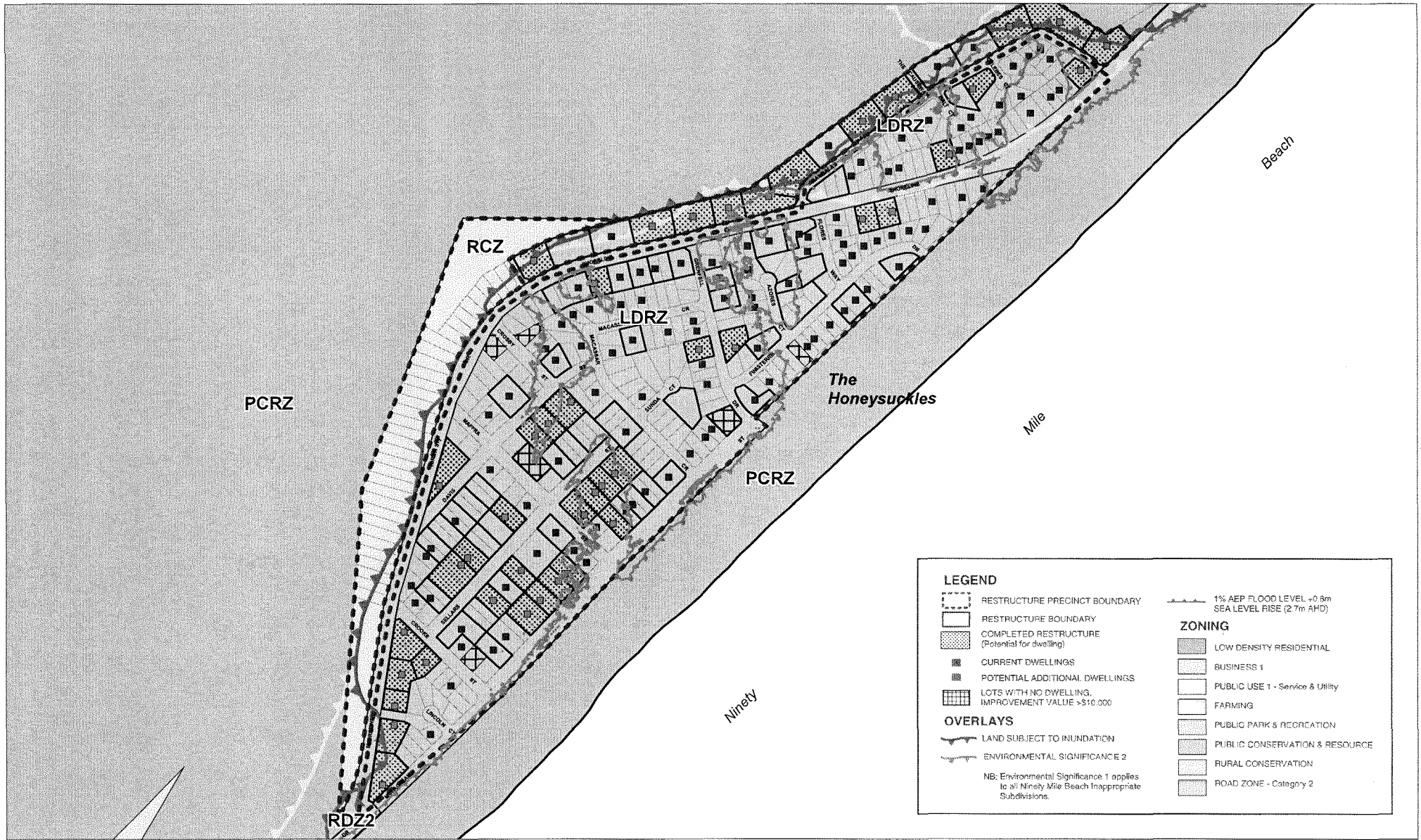
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Revision	A
Date	6 May 2008

Precincts for Implementation
 Recommendations

G:\3120287\CADD\GIS\Projects\Precinct Maps\Precinct Overview map

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Map Projection: Universal Transverse Mercator
 Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994
 Grid: Map Grid of Australia, Zone 55



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Current Characteristics
 The Honeysuckles

