

**DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICES REPORT**

13 June 2006

**DSDS6            PROGRESS REPORT ON ECOLOGICALLY  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)  
STRATEGY  
FILE: 298 NDH****SUMMARY:**

Reporting to Council on the progress of the Draft ESD Strategy.

**Background:**

In a report to Council in July 2004, it was recommended that following the adoption of the ESD Policy, a Local Agenda 21 Working Group be formed to provide advice and assistance to Council in the development of Action Plans and ESD Performance Indicators.

Community positions on this Committee were subsequently advertised with the finalisation Community members in May 2005. The Committee, now known as the ESD Committee, first met in September 2005 and has met on a regular basis since to discuss the development of an ESD strategy for the Shire. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a means of establishing goals and achievable targets to aid in the long-term coordinated approach to effective environmental, social and economic management within the Shire.

**What is Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD)?**

The notion of 'sustainable development' has been used to describe the need for development that is sustainable in the longer term and which takes into account the pressures placed on environmental and social systems as well as economic systems. In 1987 the Brundtland Report "*Our Common Future*" popularised and defined the term sustainable development as:

*"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*

In 1992 Australia developed our National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (NSES). The NSES defines *ecologically sustainable development* (ESD) as:

*'using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased'.*

The definitions provided above and the many other definitions of sustainable development recognise that Council needs to link development with the protection of the environment in order to protect manage ecosystems and natural resources which are essential for fulfilling basic human needs and improving living standards for all.

## **Why is Council Preparing an ESD Strategy?**

Like the rest of the world, Australia, and indeed the Mid North Coast of NSW, the Kempsey Shire is approaching a critical turning point in its history. For many years economic, environmental and social goals have been pursued in isolation from one another. However more recently there has been an increased realisation that our long-term well-being depends as much on the promotion of a strong, vibrant society and the ongoing repair and conservation of our environment, as it does on the pursuit of economic development. Indeed, it is becoming obvious that these issues cannot be separated. The challenge is to find new approaches to development that contribute to our environment and society now, without degrading them over the longer term.

Not only is this important for today, it is essential to ensure the quality of life we presently enjoy will be available to future generations of the Kempsey Shire. An ESD strategy offers a process whereby these goals can be achieved simultaneously.

## **Legislation**

There are a number of legal requirements for implementing the principles of ESD.

The first stated purpose of the NSW Local Government Act (Section 7a) is "to provide the legal framework for an effective, efficient, environmentally responsible open system of local government in NSW". Another stated purpose of the Act (Section 7e) is "to require Councils, Councillors and Council employees to have regard to the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development in carrying out their responsibilities".

The Local Government Act 1993 (as amended 1997) (Section 8) sets out the charter of a local council in NSW and includes the requirement for a Council to "properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible in a manner which is consistent with and promotes the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development" and "have regard to the long term and cumulative effect of its decisions". So

taking into account the principles of ESD is a legal requirement for all Councils under the Local Government Act.

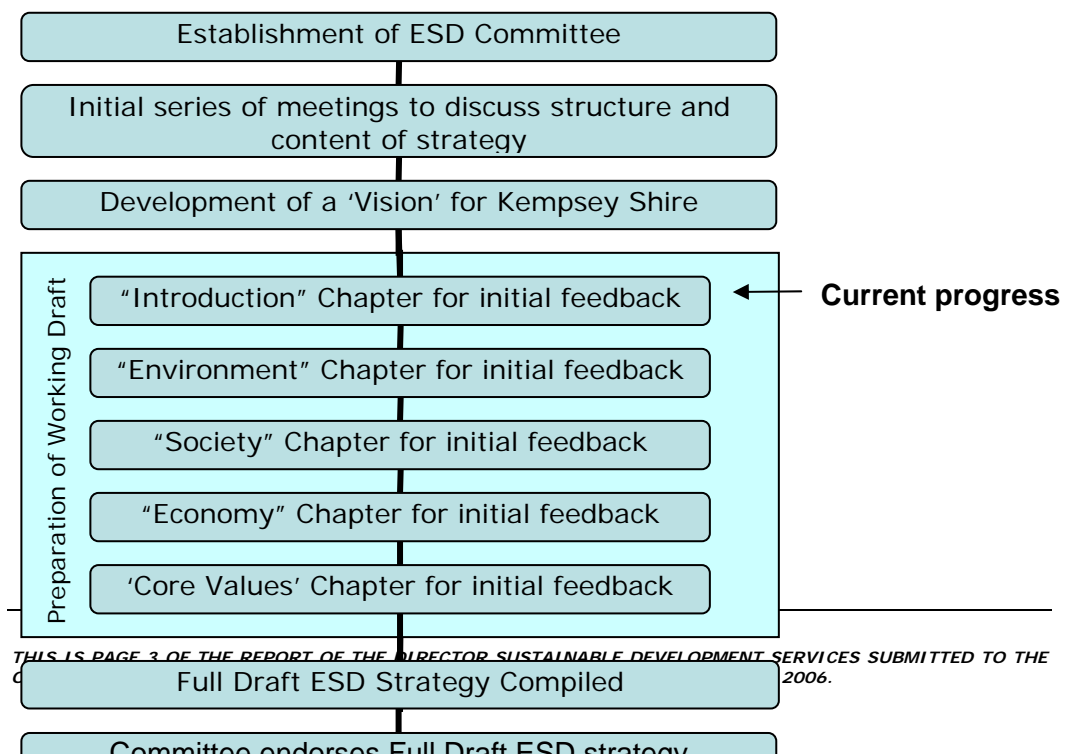
One of the stated objectives of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979) is also "to encourage Ecologically Sustainable Development". By inference, therefore, planning instruments which are developed under this Act should be founded on the principles of ESD.

## Where is the strategy up to?

Currently Council, in consultation with the ESD Committee, has prepared a preliminary working draft of the first introductory chapter, [\(Appendix H, part 1, part 2\)](#) outlining the history and concepts of sustainable development and ESD. An information brochure [\(Appendix I\)](#) was also produced to provide some further background information on ESD and also to outline the process to be taken in the development of the strategy, including community involvement. The information brochure and first introductory chapter was sent directly to key community groups for initial feedback and posted on Council's website for broader community feedback. A copy of the brochure and introductory chapter are provided in [\(Appendix H, part 1, part 2\)](#) and [\(Appendix I\)](#) respectively.

## Next Steps

Following the preparation of the first introductory chapter, each remaining major chapter of the strategy ("Environment", "Society", "Economy" and "Core Values") will progressively be produced and made available for initial feedback, until such time that each chapter has been reviewed to include the feedback and also undergone an internal review by Council. An overall draft ESD strategy will then be produced for endorsement by the ESD Committee and Council, before the full draft is placed on formal public exhibition for further public comment. This process is outlined in the following flowchart.



## **REPORT IMPLICATIONS:**

- ***Environmental***

***The preparation of the ESD strategy will highlight the problems facing the natural environment in the Shire and the actions required to manage and rectify these problems. Specifically, the ESD strategy will propose actions to:***

- ***Identify, protect and enhance significant heritage sites***
- ***Minimise disturbance to vegetation and conserve biodiversity***
- ***Prevent, control and repair land degradation***
- ***Promote and encourage the responsible use and consumption of water***
- ***Minimise the generation of waste and implement further recycling activities***
- ***Reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted from the Shire***
- ***Plan, develop and maintain safe and cost effective transportation infrastructure, including enhanced public transport options***
- ***Reduce pollution incidents to natural and man made environments.***

- ***Social***

***The strategy is being prepared for Council and the broader community of the Kempsey Shire and therefore an important part of the process of developing an ESD strategy is to involve the community. A successful ESD strategy is one whereby the community embraces and takes ownership of the principles of ESD. A community that is fully aware and embraces ESD principles is likely to live more harmoniously and sustainably within the Shire. Specifically, the ESD strategy will propose actions to:***

- ***Foster a vibrant, secure and inclusive culture in which equality, individual creativity, understanding, respect and diversity flourish.***
- ***Promote and develop strategies that provide health services to all demographics of the shire***

- *Foster community and civic pride and return to the community a sense of safety*
- *Provide high quality education and educational facilities to all members of the community*
- *Economic (Financial)*

*The preparation of an ESD strategy will identify the type of business and industry the Shire wishes to attract for a sustainable future. Also in the longer term Council should expect significant cost savings from the increased efficiencies resulting from application of ESD principles to key operational areas. Specifically the ESD strategy will propose actions to:*

- *Maintain and extend a broad based economy to service local needs.*
- *Create a healthy and vibrant business environment that is competitive and encourages innovation*
- *Encourage skilful and innovative enterprise that has national and / or international significance*
- *Ensure that development takes place at a sustainable rate and is relevant to the Shire's capacity to service that development.*
- *Encourage and promote development that uses best practice energy and water saving designs.*
- *Policy or Statutory*

There are a number of legal requirements for implementing the principles of ESD. The Local Government Act (1993) and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979) are the main pieces of legislation driving ESD as discussed above.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the information be noted.

.....  
**R B Pitt**  
**DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**