

**PTW Planning**

**Pacific Bay Western Lands  
Korora, Coffs Harbour**

**Prepared for  
Thakral Pty Ltd**

**Preliminary Concept Plan  
July 2006**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

This report is submitted to the Department of Planning (DOP) under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EPA Act) as part of the proposed outline and preliminary environmental assessment for a residential development on the Pacific Bay Western Lands site at Korora, Coffs Harbour (the site).

The site is located approximately 4.5km north of Coffs Harbour on the New South Wales North Coast. It is intended to redevelop the site for residential purposes and as it is within the coastal zone the redevelopment project is subject to the provisions of State Environmental Planning Policy 71 – Coastal Protection (SEPP 71).

It has been prepared by PTW Architects & Planning on behalf of the applicant and proponent, Thakral Holdings Limited, and is based on the plans provided by PTW Architects.

This report also accompanies a letter to the Director General of the Department of Planning required under clause 6 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005* seeking the Minister's opinion as to whether the proposal is a Major Project as described in Schedule 2, clause 1(i) of the SEPP.

The purpose of this report is:

- to describe the site, outline a preliminary proposed development concept and provide a preliminary environmental assessment to enable the Minister to form the opinion that the proposed project is a major project to which Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EPA Act) applies;
- enable the DOP to establish the level and scope of the environmental assessment to accompany the Part 3A Application; and
- to request the Minister to authorise the proponent to submit a Concept Plan for the proposed development under Part 3A of the EP&A Act.

## 1.2 The Project and Its Cost

The project is for a residential development including a mix of building types. It is proposed to subdivide the site to accommodate the development and it is estimated that up to approximately 200 residences could be developed. As part of the concept plan, it is proposed to develop detailed design guidelines for the future development of the site. The total project is estimated to have a development cost of \$90 million.

### 1.3 Relevant Planning Requirements

The current zoning of the site does not permit the development concept presented in this submission. However, the site has been identified in Coffs Harbour Council's Residential Strategies as having potential for urban growth and on 20 April 2006, Council formally resolved to commence the preparation of a Local Environmental Study and draft Local Environmental Plan to rezone the lands in the West Korora area. The subject site is included within these lands. Following discussions between Council, the DOP and the land owner, it was agreed that the preparation of a Local Environmental Study (LES) and the preparation of a concept plan under Part 3A of the EPA Act could proceed concurrently. As a result, the environmental assessment of the project would be used both as the LES and to support the concept plan.

It is anticipated that the site will be rezoned to permit residential, open space and neighbourhood retail uses. The residential uses should permit both low and medium density housing.

The proposed development of the site will be subject to the following relevant planning controls:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005
- State Environmental Planning Policy 71 – Coastal Protection (SEPP 71)
- State Environmental Planning Policy 65 – Design Quality of Residential Flat Buildings (SEPP 65)
- State Environmental Planning Policy – (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004
- State Environmental Planning Policy 11 - Traffic Generating Developments (SEPP 11)
- The North Coast Regional Environmental Plan 1988 (NCREP)
- Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000 (LEP 2000)
- Coffs Harbour Off- Street Parking Development Control Plan
- Coffs Harbour Subdivision Development Control Plan
- Coffs Harbour Low Density Housing Development Control Plan
- Coffs Harbour Medium Density Housing Development Control Plan
- Korora Rural Residential Development Control Plan

### 1.4 Consultation

During the preparation of this report, consultation was carried out with the following:

- Department of Planning
- Roads and Traffic Authority
- Coffs Harbour Council Mayor and Planners

## **2 PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 North Coast Regional Strategy**

The North Coast Regional Environmental Plan was gazetted on 15 January 1988 and provides local government with guidelines on preparing local environmental plans for certain types of development. The plan sets the basis for new urban and rural development with an emphasis on progress and careful management. It also includes matters for consideration in the determination of development applications and requires concurrence of the Director of the DOP for buildings over 14m in height. The plan applies to the whole of the Coffs Harbour Council area and is therefore a consideration in the preparation of any amending local environmental plans for the subject site.

### **2.2 Coffs Harbour Residential Strategies**

In 1996, the Coffs Harbour Urban Development Strategy was adopted by Council and endorsed by the State Government. The area west of the current Pacific Highway, from the railway line in the south to The Mountain Way in the north, was identified as a Special Investigation area. The subject site described in Section 3 of this report formed part of the Special Investigation area.

In 1999, Council adopted its Rural Residential Strategy. This document identified an area west of the existing Highway, from West Korora Road in the south to The Mountain Way, in the north as the Korora Investigation area. Council progressed LEP Amendment No.3 which included the subject lands and aimed to rezone them to a rural residential zoning allowing for one and two hectare subdivision.

The DOP then requested Council to review its 1996 Urban Development Strategy. The review, "Our Living City" Settlement Strategy looks at social, environmental and economic issues in the area and proposes three possible development scenarios for the city – a compact city, an expanding city and a dispersed city. All of the scenarios envisage some future urban expansion in the West Korora area

The subject site is included in the West Korora area and is identified in the Land Capability assessment as having potential for urban growth. Noted as PRL 1, the study notes that the land is steep and difficult to service with water at higher grades and provides a green backdrop to the city. It would seem that the settlement strategy has concluded that the western land has potential for urban development but the scale and density of any such development has not been examined at this stage.

### 2.3 Coffs Harbour Resolution to Prepare an LEP

On 20 April 2006, Coffs Harbour Council resolved to formally commence the preparation of an amendment to the Coffs Harbour LEP 2000 for the North Coffs area, in accordance with the DOP requirements. It was recommended that Council prepare a LES and draft LEP for the lands in the West Korora area. The subject site is included within these lands.

In order to identify an appropriate zone for the subject lands, it is necessary to undertake a complete assessment that addresses environmental, social and economic impacts for the proposed land uses. This is the role of the LES. Any resultant amendment to Coffs Harbour City LEP 2000 would have to address the environmental, social and economic criteria set by Council.

The State Government will not support the rezoning of major residential and rural residential release areas without Council completing appropriate strategies relating to all land uses, but particularly for urban and rural residential development. The proposed rezoning of lands in West Korora accords with the 1996 Urban Development Strategy and the draft Settlement Strategy 'Our Living City' under preparation.

The Department of Planning circular PS 06-013 dated May 2 2006 gives advice about who can prepare local environmental studies. It is noted that provided there are appropriate review mechanisms in place, proponent prepared studies can provide a sound basis for decision making in relation to proposed rezonings. It is therefore proposed that the concept plan and its environmental assessment will also fulfil the requirements for the LES and that the same documentation will serve both purposes. To facilitate this process, Council will need to implement a strategy which manages and reviews the studies being prepared by the proponent.

### **3 SITE DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1 Location**

The site is located on the western side of the current Pacific Highway in West Korora, approximately 4.5km north of Coffs Harbour CBD. The location of the site and aerial photos are included in Appendix 1 and 2.

#### **3.2 Description**

The site has an area approximately 24 hectares. It is bounded by Bruxner Park Road (northern boundary), Pacific Highway (eastern boundary), West Korora Road (southern boundary) and private land to the west.

The site comprises the properties identified by the following title details:

- Lot 1 DP 592173;
- Lot 2 DP 226560;
- Lot 3 DP 820652;
- Lot 4 DP 820652;
- Lot 5 DP 820652; and
- Lot 23 DP 716144

#### **3.3 Zoning**

The site currently has multiple zonings. The majority of the site (namely the cleared areas) are zoned 1A Rural Agricultural while the vegetated areas and the areas around Jordan's Creek are zoned 7A Environmental Protection Habitat & Catchment and are also shown hatched as Koala Habitat. There is also a strip of land along the Pacific Highway frontage which is zoned 7A Environmental Protection Scenic Buffer.

While the current 1A Rural Agricultural zoning of the site does not permit the development concepts presented in this submission, Council have formally resolved to commence the preparation of an amendment to the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000 for the North Coffs area. A copy of this resolution is included in Appendix 8. The site will be included in this area and it is anticipated that the site will be rezoned to permit low and medium density residential development.

#### **3.4 Topography & Geology**

The site contains an undulating topography with some level areas. The steeper sloping land is located in the northern and north western parts of the site near Bruxner Park Road. The site ranges in height from 13AHD in the south eastern corner up to 55AHD in the north western part of the site.

The Coffs Harbour LGA lies in the geological group known as the Coffs Harbour Block. The Coffs Harbour Block is predominantly composed of sandstones and mudstones. The most typical form of soils derived from the Coffs Harbour Blocks are yellow and red earths. The site has not been identified as containing potential acid sulphate soils nor do the soil types or terrain present any limiting constraints to future urban development.

### **3.5 Vegetation**

The site is largely cleared with the exception of a large stand of vegetation located on Lot 4 820652 and part of Lot 5 DP 820652 which front onto West Korora Road. All significant flora and fauna communities located on the site are currently zoned 7A Environmental Protection Habitat and Catchment pursuant to Coffs Harbour LEP 2000. The lands zoned 7A are also marked as primary and secondary koala habitat. There were no areas identified on the site subject to either SEPP14 Wetlands or SEPP 26 Littoral Rainforest.

### **3.6 Heritage**

There are no known heritage items located on the site. Given the sites previous land use history including agricultural and grazing and its disturbed state, it is unlikely that any sites of archaeological significance would exist. There are no recorded sites of Aboriginal significance on the site. However, consultation with the Local Aboriginal Lands Council would be undertaken as part of the rezoning and development process.

### **3.7 Site Context**

The site is surrounded by a mix of land uses. Generally, the land to the east of the Pacific Highway is zoned for urban purposes. Adjacent to the site, across the Pacific Highway is the Pacific Bay Resort which includes a golf course, recreational facilities, resort as well as permanent residential accommodation. Land to the north and south of the Pacific Bay resort is used for low density residential development. Land to the west of the Pacific Highway and which surrounds the site is mainly zoned for rural/agricultural uses. These areas have traditionally been used as banana plantations.

### **3.8 Existing Development**

The site is largely vacant with the exception of a rugby playing field and associated amenities and gym buildings located in the middle of Lot 5 DP 820 652. There is also a small shed located in the far north western corner of Lot 2 DP 226560.



## **4 DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS**

### **4.1 Opportunities and Constraints for Development**

A preliminary analysis was carried out of the opportunities and constraints relating to the future development of the site and out of this the preliminary urban design principles were developed. The site analysis is included in Appendix 4. The main opportunities and constraints presented by the site are as follows:

#### **Opportunities**

- Increased housing choices;
- Integrate with surrounding and future residential areas;
- Good access;
- Increase utilisation of green space;
- Views towards Pacific Ocean;
- Increase public access to open space and hilltop areas.

#### **Constraints**

- Areas of steep slope;
- Areas of significant vegetation and koala habitat;
- Flood affected areas;
- Areas of bushfire prone land;
- Visual impacts on sloping land
- Land contamination

### **4.2 Concepts for the site**

The central theme of the design concept is to integrate the new development with existing recreational and landscape features on the site. A clear urban structure is defined, linking the development to surrounding green space and coastline beyond.

The proposed concept is a residential community comprising approximately 200 dwellings which utilise the existing recreational and landscape features of the site. These are linked with a network of landscaped streets, pedestrian pathways and view corridors. There is no development proposed for the areas of the site zoned 7A Habitat and Catchment. These areas will be cleaned up and the vegetation allowed to regenerate. A clear urban structure will be defined, linking the development to surrounding green space and the coastline beyond. Salient features of the proposal include:

- A network of landscaped streets and pedestrian pathways, utilising site topography and aspect;
- Creation of view corridors to coastline and surrounding vistas;
- Utilisation of existing recreational space on site, linked to focal green spaces within development.

The preliminary development concept is shown in Appendix 6.

The proposed development concept provides for a mix of low and medium density dwellings. The low density development comprises single detached dwellings on lots starting in size from 450m<sup>2</sup>. The medium density development will comprise townhouses and up to 3 storey residential apartments. It is also envisaged that some lots will include and back onto the vegetated areas on site.

The proposed road network aims to respect the existing topography of the site by following the general contours, which will also help to emphasise the integration of the development into the surrounding landscape and provide positive visual impacts for the development when viewed from surrounding areas.

#### **4.3 General Development Parameters**

The general development parameters for the site will arise out of the assessment process and will be provided by the planning controls which will apply to the site following the rezoning for residential purposes. These are likely to permit a mix of low and medium density residential, together with recreational open space and environmental protection areas and associated uses including some neighbourhood retail uses.

It is intended that specific design guidelines will be developed for the site to ensure a consistent and high quality development.

The proposed uses will comply with the objectives and permissible uses of the chosen residential zones in relation to density and uses. The height of low and medium density buildings will comply with the 6m & 10m height limits respectively and any required setbacks from the Pacific Highway. There will be no buildings over 14 metres in height.

The requirements of the relevant State Environmental Planning Policies relating to Coastal Protection and the Design of Residential Flat Buildings will also be implemented in the development.

#### **4.4 Open Space and Landscape**

The overriding concept for the redevelopment of the site is to create a mix of open space and landscape areas which are linked through a series of 'green fingers'. The hilltop park creates a focal point and allows future residents to enjoy the views towards the Pacific Ocean and surrounding coastline.

The 'green fingers' will create links from the hilltop park to the Pacific Bay Resort, nearby coastline and beaches.

The existing vegetation on the site will be the subject of a flora and fauna study. The retention of significant vegetation will be an integral part of the development concept. In conjunction with the retention of this vegetation, other significant planted vegetation will be implemented as part of the development concept.

## **5 DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

### **5.1 Compliance with planning controls**

The proposed development will be assessed and new planning controls developed for the site. The proposals will be developed to comply with the controls which are to be applied to the site. It is also intended that site specific design guidelines will be implemented to ensure a consistent and high quality development.

### **5.2 Simultaneous preparation of an LES, LEP and Concept Plan**

The site currently has multiple zonings. The majority of the site (namely the cleared areas) are zoned 1A Rural Agricultural while the vegetated areas and the areas around Jordan's Creek are zoned 7A Environmental Protection Habitat & Catchment.

The development concepts proposed are not currently permissible under the current zoning of the site. However, on 20 April 2006, Council formally resolved to commence the preparation of an amendment to the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000 for the North Coffs area. The site will be included in this area and it is anticipated that it will be rezoned to permit low and medium density residential development.

Accordingly, it is proposed that a Project Application will be lodged concurrently with the rezoning application pursuant to the provisions of clause 72J of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* which allows for the making and determination of a development application (also interpreted to be a Project Application) that may only be carried out if an environmental planning instruments applying to the land is appropriately amended.

It is also proposed that the concept plan and environmental assessment will fulfil the requirements for the Local Environmental Study and hence the same documentation will serve both purposes. The preparation of studies by the proponent is endorsed by DOP provided there are appropriate review mechanisms in place. To facilitate this process, Council will need to implement a strategy which manages and reviews the studies being prepared by the proponent.

### **5.3 Social and Economic Issues**

The development of the site is expected to have positive social and economic effects. Coffs Harbour has an estimated growth rate of above 2% and is amongst the largest regional centres on the North Coast, with an expected projected population growth on 35.4 thousand between 1996 and 2021. The development concepts proposed provide a mix of dwelling types including single dwellings, semi detached housing and multi-unit dwellings.

This will provide a positive social effect by catering to a variety of household types for those both arriving to the area and those wishing to stay in the area but wanting a different form of housing. The development concepts for the site have an estimated capital investment value of approximately \$90 million which will flow into the local economy in terms of construction jobs, additional demand for local goods and services etc.

#### **5.4 Hydraulics**

The south and south eastern portions of the site are affected by Jordan's Creek and the potential for flood inundation of the flood plain. A full flood / hydraulics study will be required as part of any rezoning or project application to identify the areas affected by possible inundation and define the limit of potential development. The hydraulics study will also need to address the potential hydraulic impacts on Jordan's Creek resulting from increased stormwater runoff, its capacity to handle any increased runoff and measures which can be used to minimise impacts.

The proposed development concepts will implement total water cycle management and ESD principles. Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) offers a means to integrate urban stormwater best practice into urban planning and design to achieve multiple objectives relating to stormwater drainage, water quality improvements, aquatic habitat protection, stormwater recycling and landscape amenity. These principles will be incorporated into the design process.

#### **5.5 Access, Traffic and Parking**

Vehicular access to the site can be gained from both West Korora and Bruxner Park Road. There is a pedestrian underpass beneath the Pacific Highway linking the Pacific Bay resort to the subject site. There is currently no vehicular access to the site from the Pacific Highway. In December 2004, the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) announced the preferred Highway option which re-routes the Pacific Highway to the west of the subject site. This route will be adopted for the purposes of studies and future planning of the site.

There are no known traffic problems with the surrounding road network that should prevent the site being developed for urban purposes. A more detailed traffic impact analysis will need to be prepared as part of the rezoning and project application process to determine acceptable levels of vehicle movements and road network capacity. The additional parking needs generated by the development are able to be met on site.

## 5.6 Geology and Contamination

The subject site has been used for banana growing. Contamination investigations carried out on parts of the site confirm that some chemical residues are present. It is likely that remediation will be required in the former banana plantation areas. Once this has occurred, the site will be suitable for residential uses. The site has not been identified as containing potential acid sulphate soils nor do the soil types or terrain present any limiting constraints to future urban development. A geotechnical report will need to be prepared to assess any land stability issues in the steeper parts of the site.

## 5.7 Bushfire Hazard

The site is a moderate bushfire risk. The issues to be addressed in relation to the bushfire requirements are as follows:

- The Coffs Harbour Bushfire Prone Land Map identifies the vegetation on Lot 2 DP 226560 and Lot 4 DP 820652 as Category 1 Vegetation which extends a bushfire buffer zone over the central part of the site;
- Planning for Bushfire Protection (2001) sets out the requirements for Asset Protection Zones (APZ) to separate the development from the identified bushfire vegetation. This issue will be addressed through liaison with the project architects consultant at the planning stage to maximise the potential development area by utilising the APZ for car parking areas and open space / recreation areas etc.

## 5.8 Flora and Fauna

The site contains a large stand of vegetation located on Lot 4 820652 and part of Lot 5 DP 820652 which front onto West Korora Road. These lands are currently zoned 7A Environmental Protection Habitat and are also marked as primary and secondary koala habitat. There were no areas identified on the site subject to either SEPP14 Wetlands or SEPP 26 Littoral Rainforest.

A comprehensive flora and fauna survey will be required in accordance with the EP&A Act. The assessment will involve the following:

- Determining the known threatened flora species in the locality
- Assess the nature and condition of vegetation at the site
- Determining the known threatened fauna species in the locality
- Searching for historical records of threatened fauna species
- Assessing the habitat value of the site for threatened species
- Addressing statutory requirements including State Environmental Planning (SEPP 71 – Coastal Protection), Section 5A of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act (1979) and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Amendment Act (2004)

- Addressing statutory requirements including State Environmental Planning (SEPP 44 – Koala Habitat Protection), Section 5A of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act (1979) and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Amendment Act (2004)
- Addressing the legislative requirements of the Coastal Protection Act, 1979 including the N.S.W Coastal Policy 1997 and Coastal Development Guidelines for N.S.W.

## 5.9 Visual Issues

The subject site is on the western side of the Pacific Highway and is located approximately 1 kilometre from the coastal areas of Charlesworth Bay and Diggers Head. The development concepts presented in this submission are unlikely to result in any visual impacts to these coastal areas.

The development concept seeks to minimise visual impacts to the surrounding area by carefully considering the building heights and typologies in the more elevated and sloping parts of the site near Bruxner Park Road and the Pacific Highway. There is also a strip of land along the Pacific Highway frontage which is zoned 7A Environment Protection Scenic Buffer. It is intended that this land remain vegetated and act as a landscaped screen to any future residential development near the site.

## 5.10 Coastal Protection

The site is on the western side of the Pacific Highway a kilometre from the coastal areas of Charlesworth Bay and Diggers Head. Development on the subject site is unlikely to affect any coastal processes in these areas, nor is there likely to be any visual impacts from the coastal area as a result of residential development. All stormwater runoff will be retained on site as part of the water cycle management. The development concept proposed for the site has been designed to minimise any visual impacts on the elevated sloping areas on the site.

## 5.11 Provision of Utilities

The utility services of electrical power and telephone are available to the site. Water supply is available to the site and can be connected to existing Council trunk mains. There is sufficient capacity in the Karangi dam to accommodate any population increases. The site can be connected to a reticulated sewerage system without the use of a pump station. An extension of the reticulation system and trunk line may be necessary to service the subject site.

## 6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report is submitted to the Department of Planning (DOP) under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act) as part of the proposed outline and preliminary environmental assessment for a residential development on the Pacific Bay Western Lands site at Korora, Coffs Harbour.

The development concepts are for a residential development including a mix of building types. The site will be subdivided to accommodate the development and it is estimated that approximately 200 residences could be developed. As part of the concept plan, it is proposed to develop detailed design guidelines for the future development of the site.

While current zoning of the site does not permit the development concept presented in this submission, the site has been identified in Council's Residential Strategies as having potential for urban growth and on 20 April 2006, Council formally resolved to commence the preparation of a Local Environmental Study and draft Local Environmental Plan to rezone the lands in the West Korora area. It is anticipated that the site will be rezoned to an urban residential zone permitting a range of low and medium density housing.

It is proposed that the concept plan and environmental assessment will fulfil the requirements for the Local Environmental Study and hence the same documentation will serve both purposes. The preparation of studies by the proponent is endorsed by DOP provided there are appropriate review mechanisms in place. To facilitate this process, Council will need to implement a strategy which manages and reviews the studies being prepared by the proponent.

The site does not contain any major physical constraints which prevent it from being developed for urban purposes. Issues that will need to be addressed in the planning and design of the proposed development include:

- bushfire hazard;
- flora and fauna;
- hydraulics;
- contamination;
- access and traffic and parking;
- geotechnical;
- compliance with statutory planning controls;
- utility services
- coastal protection and visual impact; and
- social and economic issues

It is considered that the information provided in this report is sufficient to enable the Director General to establish the level and scope of the environmental assessment required for the Part 3A process.