

Mr Michael File
Director, Strategic Assessments
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

17thth December 2010

Dear Mr File

RE: Coal & Allied Southern Estates Proposal – Gwandalan (MP10_0084)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. We have chosen to focus comment on Appendix A: Concept Plan Principles for Gwandalan.

A range of research suggests that urban form has a significant influence on our health. We advocate for urban environments which support active living. These environments provide opportunities for incorporating physical activity into the routines of daily life such as walking, cycling, or catching public transport. The Public Health Unit is pleased to note the many elements of urban form in this proposal which can have a positive influence on active living and health in general. These include:

- a mix of land use eg. housing, retail, and recreational
- shoptop housing for “eyes on streets”
- street connectivity and continuity that promotes directness of routes
- aesthetic appeal including presence of footpaths, cycleways, separation of pedestrians from vehicle travel, trees and native vegetation
- ageing in place principles to help older people stay in their familiar and supportive neighbourhood
- gathering places which enhance a sense of community ownership and identity

The Public Health Unit requests that the proponent formally commit to the consistent and wide application of existing healthy design guidelines in their document *Gwandalan- Revised Statement of Commitments*, “Urban Design” (Page 4). We recommend NSW Premier’s Council *Designing Places for Active Living* guidelines. This web-based resource provides key healthy design considerations for urban places and was developed with the current NSW planning context in mind. Other valuable guidelines are listed in the bibliography. We also support Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) for minimising crime risk. We note that CPTED is addressed in the *Key Assessment Requirements* of the Director-General’s Requirements for this Concept Plan. We advise the proponent to conduct a CPTED Crime Risk Assessment where safety from crime (real or perceived) may be an issue.

We strongly encourage the retention, protection and enhancement of existing native flora and fauna in the area, regardless of endangered status (A1.1 Development footprint). Ongoing attention should be paid to ensuring that the Estate positively supports humans and native fauna and flora. Natural areas should be regarded as one of our most vital health resources. Research shows that ‘contact with nature’ helps lower blood pressure, and cope with stress and other health problems. Nature offers tranquillity, spiritual inspiration and a greater sense of life satisfaction.

In A1.2 Concept Plan, it states that access to Kanangra Drive will be limited (we note alternative access via Summerland Point). Also, some streets will be narrower and the built form tighter to frame water views (A1.4 Desired future landscape character). We acknowledge the complexities in balancing the diverse aspects of urban form. Our concern lies with ease of access to all homes by emergency services. The proponent may have addressed this issue elsewhere. If not, we request that details be provided on emergency service access, and sufficient entry and exit routes in the event of a natural disaster such as bushfire. The Public Health Unit is reviewing strategies for coping with the potential outcomes of climate change eg. heatwaves. To this end, we ask that housing design (A1.5 Desired Future Character: Built Form) incorporate features that will help residents to live comfortably for periods of time during rolling power blackouts or extreme weather events eg. housing orientation, natural ventilation, thermal mass controls.

Efforts to provide shopping convenience and gathering places for residents in both hamlets are commendable. However, residents living in the 'outer reaches' will need to walk far in excess of 400m from their home to shops or the village green. We wish to highlight the importance of the equitable distribution of open space through short, safe walking distances. The location of shops and public open spaces should be within a maximum of 400-500 metres walking distance from dwellings, and small local parks, within 150 to 300 metres safe walking distance of all dwellings. Also consider innovative and sustainable public transport options to key destinations. Convenient access to public transport means less car dependency and more incidental physical activity.

Given low traffic volumes, shared on-street cycle routes are acceptable (A2.5 Access & Movement). It is also worth considering shared paths for walking and cycling. From a Public Health perspective, key issues to be addressed will include:

- walking and cycling for people of all abilities, including mobility aids
- special consideration for cycling as a viable mode of transport for all levels of ability
- adequate width of paths or road space for sharing (walking and cycling)

Finally, we would like to take this timely opportunity to raise our concerns regarding the potential for cumulative impacts from this proposal and others which may propose intensive development in this area. The impacts of these proposals cannot be viewed in isolation.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide comment and would welcome other opportunities to collaborate with planners and/or be involved in working groups to promote physical activity and healthy environments.

Yours sincerely

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Medical Officer of Health

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Public Health Officer

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