



**TWEED**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

## **Tweed Rural Land Strategy - Reference Panel Charter**

### **Need for a Rural Land Strategy**

Rural land use in the Tweed has changed dramatically during the past 10 years, with continual pressure to change land uses and develop rural land. The Rural Land Strategy (RLS) will establish a contemporary policy to guide the use and development of rural land, balancing the land's inherent capacity and suitability for specific uses, while considering economic, social, ecological and political considerations.

### **Purpose of Reference Group**

The Tweed Rural Land Strategy Reference Panel (the Panel) is a group of appropriately qualified persons, experienced local rural landowners, and persons with a direct and recognised interest in the future of rural land in the Tweed. It will provide technical reviews of documentation as requested by the Project Manager, and act as a technical resource for informing and guiding best landuse practices and outcomes of the RLS.

This charter provides advice on the composition and purpose of the Panel.

### **Responsibility**

The Panel is a group of technical advisory specialists that will:

- a. Provide independent evaluation, advice and peer review to Council's consultants on draft documents circulated among Panel members, as they relate to the scientific and technical aspects of rural landuse issues and options for the future of rural land.
- b. Provide advice on the relative merit, suitability, local relevance and feasibility of concepts, information, and recommendations in draft documents prepared by Council's consultants.
- c. Provide informed views on identified issues and options that could apply to and inform the strategy's preparation.
- d. Use their expertise and stakeholder perspective to contribute to identifying issues and developing options, to constructively comment on the thinking, consideration and assessment of issues and development of options.
- e. Identify any gaps in consideration and analysis; while in accordance with the scope of the Tender Document and contract issued to the consultants for preparation of the RLS.
- f. Provide timely responses and recommendations to requests from the consultants through the Chairperson (Project Manager).

### **Duration of Panel**

The Panel will be convened as soon as possible after the advertising and selection of members.

It is expected the Panel will be dissolved once the final draft RLS has been prepared, which is expected to be completed before the end of 2013.

### Composition of the Panel

The RLS is a technical panel that covers all rural land in the shire, so the Panel will be representative of the diverse range of landuses and community interests across Tweed Shire's rural lands.

Panel members will be appointed in their capacity as individual experts and not as representatives of an organisation.

Panel members will not be permitted to nominate alternative representatives or nominees to attend meetings on their behalf.

Should a member no longer be able to fulfil the functions required, a replacement will be appointed by the selection committee.

The Panel is to comprise a range of persons who are:

- Recognised for their knowledge and experience in a particular rural or related industry.
- Able to provide a positive and expert input.
- Representative of the diverse range of rural landuses and associated industries.
- Independent experienced professionals in relevant fields.
- Representative(s) of relevant Government agencies.
- Representative of a relevant educational institution.

The Panel will comprise not more than 10 persons selected from the following groups:

- a. dairy farming
- b. beef cattle
- c. vegetable farming
- d. sugar cane farming
- e. intensive agriculture
- f. horticulture
- g. rural lifestyle living
- h. rural business (non agricultural/horticultural landuse)
- i. government agency
- j. tourism and marketing organisation
- k. educational institution
- l. landcare network
- m. organic farming
- n. other identified legitimate rural land or associated industry or land use

### Selection Committee for Appointment of Panel Members

The selection committee for the appointment of Panel members will comprise two Council officers, one representative of EnPlan and one representative from GHD.

Selection of Panel members will be undertaken against the selection criteria provided in the advertisement.

### Call for Expressions of Interest

The EOI will be advertised in Council's local newspaper The Tweed Link for 14 days. The selection of Panel members will then occur and it is intended to have the Panel in operation by the end of May 2013.

### Initial and Subsequent Meeting Procedures

Once the Panel is appointed, an initial meeting will be convened to:

1. Bring members up to date with progress in developing the RLS.
2. Determine how members will provide input into the process.
3. Ensure its members have a clear understanding the group is solely a technical reference panel.
4. Identify any potential conflicts of interest.
5. Ensure members understand issues and requirements regarding confidentiality, identifying and managing conflicts of interest, and the planning process as it relates to the RLS.
6. Set out protocols for correspondence, meeting procedures, information dissemination etc.

### Frequency of Meetings

While the majority of technical review and input can be done remotely, meetings will be convened at the request of the Project Manager - though not more regularly than once every six (6) weeks - and before the public release of documents such as the Background and Issues Paper and the Suitability Study and Options Paper.

### Record keeping

A record of meetings and general correspondence on other occasions will be kept by the Project Manager for referral to the consultants preparing the strategy and its various reports.

### Waiver

The Project Manager and consultants are not obliged to act on the views expressed by Panel members. However, due weight and consideration will be given to the advice provided, and Panel members will receive feedback about how their views have been considered and addressed.

### Correspondence

All correspondence will be forwarded to the Project Manager, who is also the Chairperson of the Reference Panel for referral to the consultants preparing the RLS.

END