

# DISCUSSION PAPER 5

## APPRECIATION OF RURAL SCENIC AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

### A DISCUSSION PAPER TO GUIDE THE EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL RURAL STRATEGY

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For: EUROBODALLA COUNCIL

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION PAPER

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The Draft Eurobodalla Rural Strategy is presented in three volumes:

Volume One: The Strategy – this is a summary document of the recommended preferred options, strategies and action plans.

Volume Two: The Discussion Papers – there are 10 broad papers in this volume, each presenting a discussion on the more significant issues applicable to Council’s role in the rural lands of Eurobodalla.

This is Discussion Paper 5 and it explores the importance of the visual landscape and its importance for cultural and economic reasons.

Volume Three: A compendium of larger scale maps – given the size of the Shire and the detail sometimes required, the more important maps of general land use information and those from the Discussion Papers are presented in A3 page size. In addition, if accessing the PDF version, there is the capacity to “zoom in” to explore more detail.

The draft strategy package as presented in the three volumes, represents the work of the consultant team Garret Barry Planning Services (GBPS). It is stressed these documents are drafts prepared for community comment and input. Council has not concluded any view on the draft recommendations and will resolve a final strategy when it has considered community feedback.

We welcome suggestions from the community as to any issues we may have overlooked and your preferred options and strategies to guide the future direction of the rural areas.

## 1.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Landscapes are a fundamental part of the Eurobodalla history and cultural heritage. The landscapes of the Shire are valuable for their intrinsic qualities, for the quality of life and enjoyment of people, and for the economic benefits they bring.

The unique natural scenic areas of the coast are important not only for their visual amenity but also for the ambience they provide. They are an irreplaceable public asset. They must be preserved and managed for the enjoyment of this and future generations.

Eurobodalla Shire is fortunate to have some of the best quality and diverse rural landscapes in Australia – in fact some of world class.

From the magnificent Tilba landscape acknowledged by the National Trust of Australia and included as part of the Federal Government's Australian National Landscape "Coastal Wilderness", to the stunning and rugged beauty of Gulaga Mountain or the Deua Wilderness Ranges, to the dynamic coastal valley systems such as the Clyde River, historic rural landscapes such as at Bodalla and a diverse range of forested landscapes intermixed with pockets of agricultural land.

Several landscapes have deep spiritual and cultural significance to the Aboriginal community e.g. Najanuka (Little Dromedary Mountain).

Eurobodalla's landscapes are a core foundation of its largest industry – tourism.

The use, promotion and protection of these nationally significant landscapes is important.

The components of most of these landscapes range across public and private lands. There are limitations to Council's roles and responsibilities relating to the rural landscape and this Paper will attempt to explore what is possible and beneficial with respect to the roles Council plays in protection and promotion of this important community asset.

The NSW Coastal Policy 1997 states that the unique natural scenic areas of the coast are important not only for their visual amenity but also for the ambience they provide. The Policy considers them to be irreplaceable public assets that must be preserved and managed for the enjoyment of this and future generations.

NSW has a long tradition of planning to protect coastal landscapes with both Coastal legislation and Coastal Policies and guides in day to day use for assessment of development in the Coastal Zone. But that is only a part of the narrative regarding Eurobodalla's major landscapes.

There are threats to rural landscapes in any area experiencing growth:

- Increasing "industrialisation" of agriculture;
- Poor design and siting of buildings, access roads and signage (where development consent is not required); and
- Public works such as major road cuttings and embankments (though in recent times, the RMS have included consideration of scenic and cultural landscapes in the design of such works).

Then there is the diversity of opinion of what constitutes a landscape of significance and what to do about protecting it. Few people would deny the Tilba Valleys are a world standard landscape, but if you are a farmer in that landscape needing a large storage shed, how much planning control should be applied?

Landscape planning has more challenges than most branches of land use planning. But Eurobodalla is both more blessed than most LGAs in landscape assets and conversely more dependent on them for its whole tourism image/brand. Hence, a need to do what is possible to protect those culturally important assets. Section 7 presents strategies and actions for consideration. These summarise as:

- Some suggestions for expanded tourist drives to better promote the significant visual assets of the Shire.
- Possible measures to encourage land owners to maintain or enhance landscape qualities as part of development offsets. For example, developers of urban sites with some biodiversity value may be required to purchase offsets that could be used to conserve vegetated lands in the rural areas. The rural landowner would receive benefits and landscape protection can flow from such initiatives.
- Potential for more Aboriginal landscape cultural heritage to be cooperatively promoted.
- Development of a guideline to assist staff and developers in planning and assessing development applications in areas of scenic value.

This Paper focuses on the visual and cultural elements of landscape. Discussion Paper 6 (Biodiversity) explores the natural values and issues of the rural landscape. Many elements of the natural landscape are major components of the visual qualities of Eurobodalla.

## 2 THE PLANNING CONTEXT

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### 2.1 THE SOUTH COAST REGIONAL STRATEGY

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The South Coast Regional Strategy 2006, stresses the importance of the visual and cultural landscapes of the South Coast, their natural values, influence on community wellbeing and value for tourism.

This Strategy pursues the protection of important landscapes and cultural assets within the context of the planning controls of the region. It emphasises the value of the landscape to the tourism operations at places like Tilba and Bodalla.

The State Government is moving to a new style of strategy called a Regional Plan but at this stage it is still expected the plan will call for marketing, protection and enhancement of the important landscapes of the region – of which Eurobodalla is particularly blessed.

### 2.2 THE EUROBODALLA LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

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Local planning schemes provide the statutory mechanism to implement local planning strategies through zoning, reservations and planning controls. Development assessment is usually required from Council for developing land or buildings or changing their use. The careful assessment and determination of planning and subdivision applications is important in ensuring objectives for the landscape are met.

Landscape is one of many considerations that must be taken into account in planning for sustainable use and development of land. Landscapes are important but not necessarily to the exclusion of other developments – the aim should be to accommodate change while maintaining and enhancing the quality of landscape.

Eurobodalla Shire Council was required to address matters relating to scenic and cultural landscape values in its Comprehensive LEP. In the ESC LEP 2012 most rural zones, waterways zones and environmental zones included mandatory objectives that refer to protecting and/or maintaining landscape character and/or rural, scenic and aesthetic character/values.

Any land within the coastal zone (which is land defined in the State Government's Coastal Policy and extends approximately 1 kilometre inland of any coastline, bay, estuary, lake or lagoon) will, (under Clause 5.5 of the Eurobodalla LEP 2012), be required to include provisions relating to scenic and cultural landscape values. For example, consent must not be granted to development on land that is wholly or partly within the coastal zone unless the consent authority has considered:

- The suitability of the proposed development, its relationship with the surrounding area and its impact on the natural scenic quality, taking into account:
  - the type of the proposed development and any associated land uses or activities (including compatibility of any land-based and water-based coastal activities);
  - and



- the location; and
- the bulk, scale, size and overall built form design of any building or work involved; and
- How the visual amenity and scenic qualities of the coast, including coastal headlands, can be protected, and how biodiversity and ecosystems can be conserved including:
  - native coastal vegetation and existing wildlife corridors; and
  - rock platforms; and
  - water quality of coastal waterbodies; and
  - native fauna and native flora, and their habitats.

Currently, Council's role in the management of the rural landscape (outside of the coastal zone) is mostly limited to controlling vegetation and views affected by new development on privately owned land (through guidelines in Development Control Plans) and the rezoning of land. Legislation relating to native vegetation is in the process of a major review but currently most of the controls on native vegetation rest at State level.

## 2.3 THE TILBA VILLAGES AND CONSERVATION AREA DCP 2012

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The Tilba Villages and Conservation Area Development Control Plan applies not only to the Tilba Village zones but also to a substantial area of rural land beyond the villages and including much of the eastern escarpment of Mt Gulaga. The DCP states that it is:

*Council's intention that the villages and the Tilba Conservation Area develop in a manner that maintains and where possible enhances its individual historic character.*

*Generally this will mean that existing buildings will be maintained and restored and that the form and detail of new buildings will be closely modelled on local significant building stock. The Tilba Conservation Area will be managed so that it is an appropriate setting for the two villages and so that it retains its significant cultural landscape values.*

The DCP identifies the following as important attributes of the villages and Tilba Conservation Area that require planning controls:

- *Buildings and structures of individual heritage significance.*
- *The villages as a whole, to ensure that their distinctive character is not compromised by inappropriate development.*
- *Places and attributes that contribute to the historic character.*
- *Infill development that has the potential to impact on precinct character.*
- *Roads, in so far as they contribute to character of the villages and the TCA.*
- *Roadside and verge treatments (including kerbing, guttering and footpaths) that impact on character*
- *Remnant forest and individual stands of trees, both natural and introduced.*

- *Important views within, to and from the villages and TCA.*
- *The impact of subdivision and development of large allotments.*
- *Colours on structures, to ensure that inappropriate colours are not used in a manner that could degrade the villages" or conservation area's appearance.*
- *Signage, so that it does not dominate nor detract from streetscape character, and*
- *Services and utilities.*

Included in each category of development control (e.g. *Building Bulk and Scale*) is:

- A statement of intent (e.g. *to ensure that the built form of new development does not compromise the historic and aesthetic values of the Tilba Conservation Area*).
- A set of Development Controls with Performance Criteria and Acceptable Solutions.(e.g. *the bulk and scale of development does not result in structures that are visually prominent in the landscape* and its acceptable solutions are:
  - the bulk and scale of new development shall be consistent with other historic buildings in the TCA. This is generally interpreted as buildings of single storey height.)

## 2.4 THE COASTAL POLICY AND COASTAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

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In preparing a draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP), NSW Councils are required by Ministerial Direction to include provisions that give effect to and are consistent with the Coastal Policy 1997 and Coastal Design Guidelines 2003, unless the inconsistency is justified by an environmental study or strategy.

The terrestrial coastal zone is defined by a map and includes:

- All bays, estuaries, coastal lakes, lagoons and islands;
- Tidal waters of coastal rivers to the limit of mangroves, as defined by NSW Fisheries (1985) maps 1 or the tidal limit whichever is closer to the sea.
- Buffer lands to those coastal features.

A copy of the map as it applies to Eurobodalla Shire is presented at the end of this sub-section.

The Coastal Policy places importance on the protection and conservation of scenic and cultural landscapes. The Policy states that coastal attractions and cultural heritage, including cultural landscape, is of economic and social importance to the community and therefore it should be conserved.

Goal 3 and Objective 3.1 of the Coastal Policy is to protect and enhance the aesthetic qualities of the coastal zone and to identify and protect areas of high natural or built aesthetic quality, respectively. Strategic Action 3.1.2 of the Policy states, "*Provisions to protect areas or items of high aesthetic value will continue to be considered when preparing planning instruments and plans of management*".

Goal 4 and Objective 4.1 of the Coastal Policy is “*To protect and conserve cultural heritage*” and “*To effectively manage and conserve cultural heritage places, items and landscapes*” respectively.

The Coastal Design Guidelines were developed to demonstrate how best practice urban design can facilitate new development to be responsive to community expectations and to local conditions. The guidelines contribute to defining appropriate settlement types and developing place-specific development control plans.

The following design guidelines most relevant to this Discussion Paper include:

- a. Dwellings in sensitive coastal or rural landscapes are designed to minimise visual impacts, particularly when viewed from the foreshore, entry roads to settlements and from key public viewing points. Groups of smaller buildings are designed in preference to one large building to reduce visual impacts.
- b. Dwellings on headlands and prominent ridge lines are avoided because of the high visual exposure.
- c. Dwellings are located on the edges of valleys or side slopes in the landscape to minimise visual impacts.

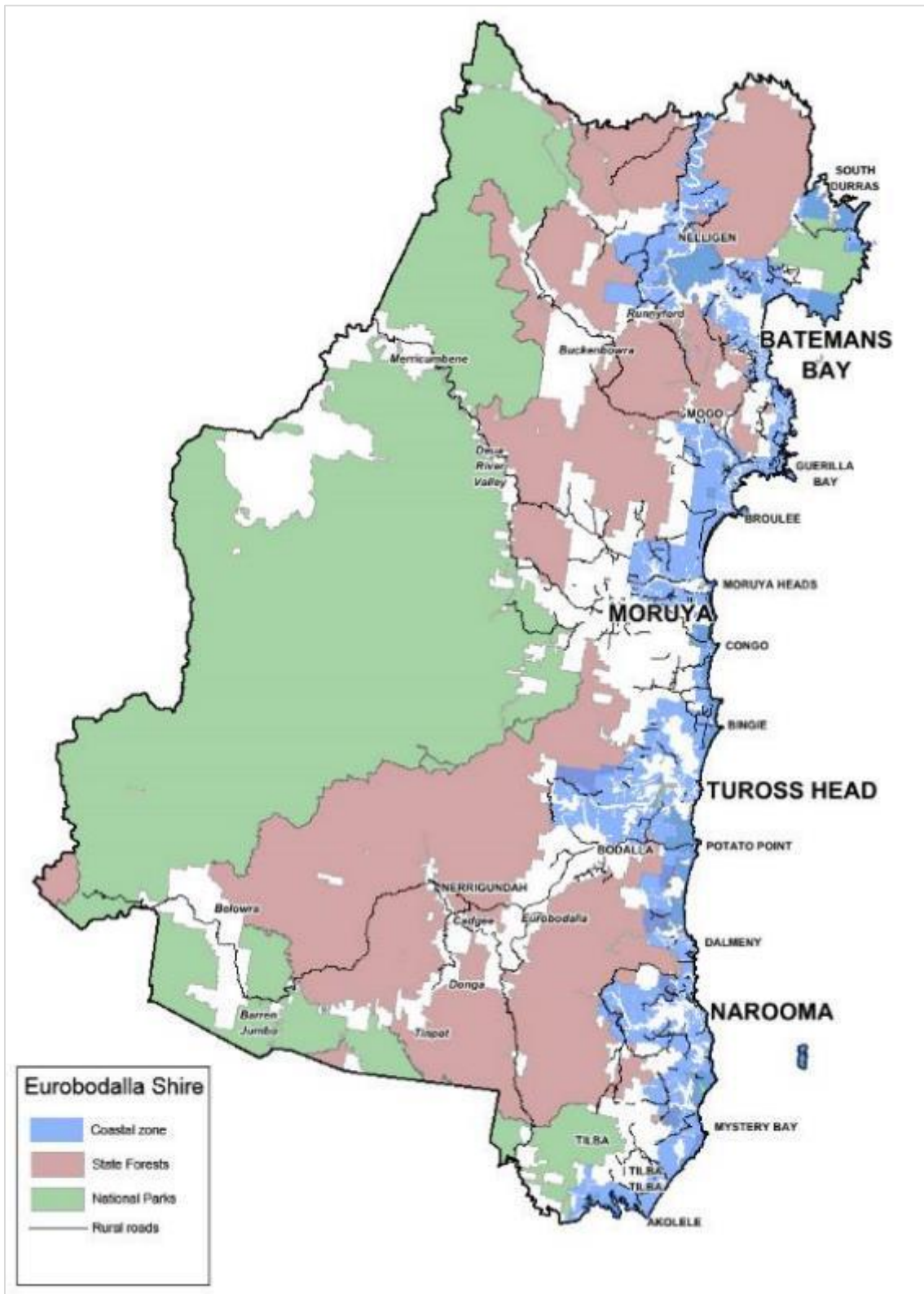
The Design Guidelines propose, as a basis for determining a location's desired future character, the following characteristics be considered:

- Views and vistas
  - Throughout and around the settlement, distant views, local context views (from 100 m - 500 m away) and streetscape views. Other important views around settlements include:
    - geographic features and the way in which the settlement sits within the landscape;
    - the visual character of key natural features;
    - the visual character of places and buildings of public, social and cultural importance;
    - vegetation, especially mature trees;
    - views to heritage items.
- Heritage - Aboriginal and European places, relics and items.

(Source: Coastal Council 2003; Coastal Design Guidelines for NSW)

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/en-au/planningyourregion/coastalprotection/coastaldesignguidelines.aspx>

**Map 1: Outline of the Coastal Zone in Eurobodalla Shire as defined in the NSW Government Coastal Policy**



## 2.5 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SCENIC AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES?

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Scenic landscape amenity is a composite of two factors – scenic preference (the community's liking for scenery) and visual exposure (the extent to which a place in the landscape is seen from important public viewing situations).

Cultural landscapes, within the context of this Discussion Paper are considered as physical areas with natural features and elements modified by human activity that have resulted in land use patterns layered in the landscape which give a place its particular character, reflecting human relationships with and association with that landscape.

Highly rated scenic quality and community preference for landscape has been demonstrated to be associated with:

- Greater relief and ruggedness;
- A diversity of vegetation;
- Greater naturalness and absence of human induced change;
- Unusual features (i.e. rock outcrops, water features, etc.); and
- Cultural landscapes (such as the agricultural landscape where there is a strong association in the landscape with existing or past agriculture).

Visual quality of a landscape may also be assessed using criteria developed by *The NSW Comprehensive Coastal Assessment - Visual Assessment*. These include:

- Visual integrity;
- Diversity/contrast;
- Balance/harmony;
- Distinctiveness;
- Adjacent scenery; and
- Rarity.

### 2.5.1 Definitions

The following terminology is commonly used when describing and assessing scenic and cultural landscapes.

Term	Definition
Absorption capacity	An estimation of the capacity of the landscape to absorb developments without its character being significantly changed or its scenic quality reduced.
Characteristic landscape	The established landscape within an area being viewed. This does not necessarily mean a naturalistic character. It could refer to an agricultural setting, an urban landscape, a primarily natural environment or a combination of these types.
Cultural landscape	Cultural landscapes are considered as physical areas with natural features and elements modified by human activity that have resulted in land use patterns layered in the landscape, which give a place its particular character, reflecting human relationships with and association with that landscape. Cultural significance of the landscape is particularly important to the Aboriginal community.
Form	The mass or shape of an object or objects that appear unified such as a vegetative opening in a forest, a cliff formation or a building.
Landscape	The combination of biophysical and cultural elements of a place or region.
Locally significant view locations	Those visited and used principally by local residents and includes views from urban areas, local commuter routes, recreation areas.
Regionally significant view locations	Those visited and used by tourist and regional recreational users as well as regional travel routes that traverse the Eurobodalla Shire.
Seen landscape	Those portions of the landscape that are visible from the primary viewing situations. These areas may include ridges and slopes that are visible from roads, lookouts and other public places.
Scenic landscape amenity	Scenic landscape amenity is a composite of two factors – scenic preference (the community’s liking for scenery) and visual exposure (the extent to which a place in the landscape is seen from important public viewing situations).

Term	Definition
Viewing situation	Defined locations in the landscape that are generally accessible to the public such as roads, beaches, public lookouts, rivers, parks and off-shore areas. The limit of available financial and human resources generally dictates that viewing situations are confined to public viewing locations.
Visual exposure	A measure of the extent to which a place in the landscape is seen from important public viewing situations (e.g. lookouts, roads, beaches, recreation areas, schools, golf courses).
Visual foreground zone	The area visible from a view situation such as road, use area, or other observation point to a distance of 1 km. Within this distance zone the greatest visual detail is perceived in terms of form, shape, line, colour and texture.
Visual mid-ground	In this zone visual detail of individual elements is lost. Vegetation is apparent only in patterns or outline. The outer boundary of this zone is defined as the point where the texture and form of individual plants are no longer discernible in the landscape. For Management purposes this is defined as 5 km. The middle ground is therefore between 1-5 kms.
Visual background	The visible area of a landscape, which lies beyond the foreground and middle ground. In this zone landscape patterns are still visible. However, both colour and texture become very much modified and texture is not apparent. Areas that are more than 5 km from the viewer can generally be deemed to be in the background.
Visual Sensitivity	This is a qualitative estimation of the sensitivity of a particular place to changes in its visual character when taking into consideration the number of viewers experience it, its visibility and its character. For example, the Bodalla flats has a high visual sensitivity because of its visibility from many locations and the high volume of traffic carried by the Princes Highway.



### 3 WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MORE SIGNIFICANT SCENIC RURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF EUROBODALLA?

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The importance of scenic and cultural landscapes, for the purpose of this Discussion Paper, is determined by a composite of three factors:

- Visual exposure (the extent to which a place in the landscape is seen from important public viewing situations);
- Scenic values; and
- Landscapes with a unique character that demonstrate human relationships with and attachment to that landscape.

The extent to which a landscape is seen is largely influenced by its proximity to the principal transport routes and urban areas.

#### 3.1 SCENIC RURAL LANDSCAPES

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Applying the criteria at the beginning of this Section and using professional judgement, the rural landscapes of the Tilba rural area and Bodalla rural area are identified as the most significant scenic rural landscapes in the Shire with high levels of scenic exposure. The coastal wilderness, the expansive Moruya River floodplain, the rolling green hills around Corunna Lake, Coila and Tuross Lakes with views over the Kyla Park grazing lands and the Clyde River Valley Landscape were also assessed as having significant scenic values.

##### 3.1.1 Coastal Wilderness

The Eurobodalla coast from Narooma south to the border with Bega Valley is part of Australia's Coastal Wilderness one of 16 iconic Australian National Landscapes marketed worldwide by Tourism Australia.

While the *Guide to the Coastal Wilderness Landscape* is almost entirely focused on lands south of Eurobodalla, Eurobodalla National Park which stretches from Moruya Head to Mystery Bay exhibits many features of the coastal wilderness – rugged coastal scenery, tall forests and a sense of remoteness. The sections of the Park south of Narooma best fit this wilderness landscapes theme.



**Figure 1: Eurobodalla National Park at Mystery Bay**



The park's landscape provides a rich source of food, shelter, medicines and weapons and continues to be an important place for Aboriginal people today.

While an important part of the scenic landscape of Eurobodalla, Council planning policy and provisions can have little impact on the management of this landscape except for privately owned lands adjoining the Park.

### 3.1.2 The nationally significant Tilba landscapes

The Tilba Villages and Conservation Area Landscape is significant for both its cultural and scenic values. These values are well documented. For example, in planning documents and reports by the National Trust, the Tilba Villages and Conservation Area DCP 2012, and Councils Aboriginal Cultural Heritage report series.

The classic Tilba villages are an historic snapshot in time set against a diverse and magnificent set of views of forest and mountains, dairy farms and undeveloped coastline.

The combination of traditional building typology, land-use pattern, forests, rural roads and topography, all set against the backdrop of Mt Dromedary, endows the area with exceptional aesthetic and historic value. The Tilba Conservation area is a highly attractive cultural landscape that evolved from dairying on the fertile slopes and valleys surrounding Mt Dromedary.

**Figure 2: Tilba Conservation Area viewed from the Bermagui Road**

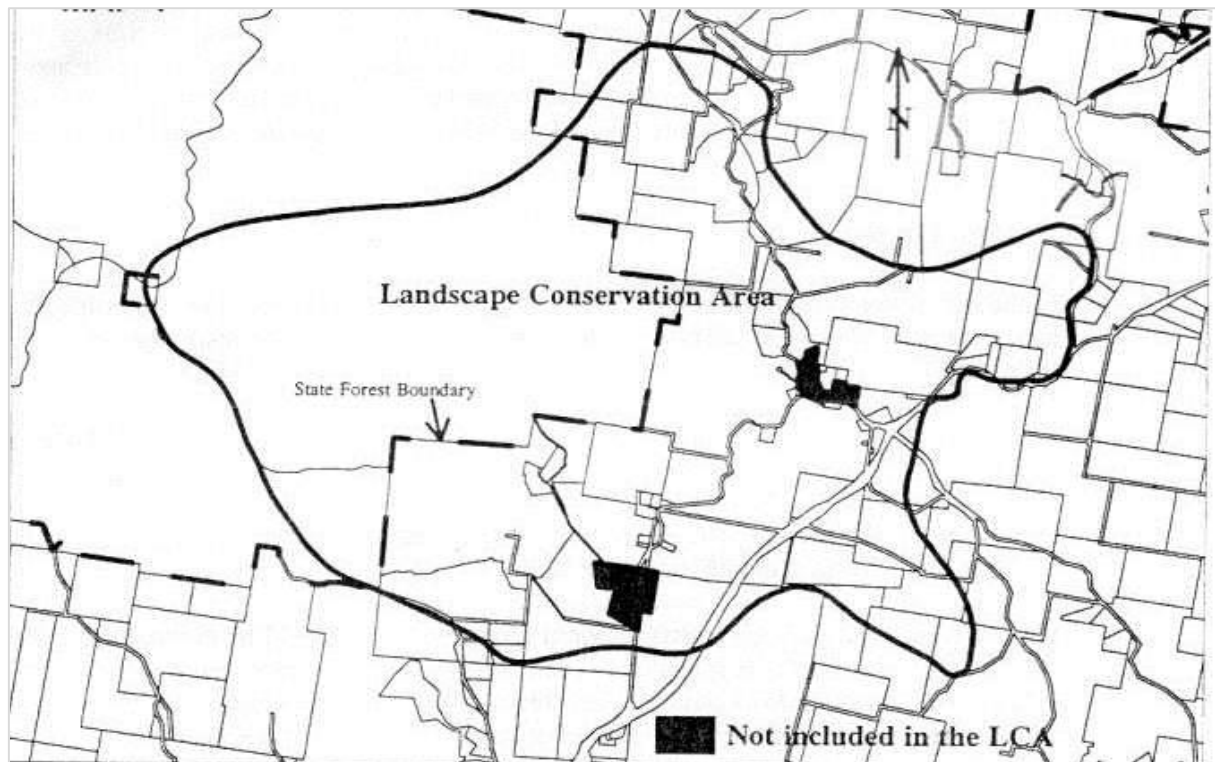


Its visual exposure is high and there are many viewing situations given the proximity to the Princess Highway, the area's topography and the popularity of Central Tilba and Tilba as visitor destinations.

Tilba Tilba and Central Tilba are located at the foothills of Gulaga (Mt Dromedary) which is a site of great spiritual significance to the local Yuin people, whose descendants today still hold the mountain in special reverence. The mountain is 806 m high but still dominates the Tilba landscape. It can be seen from many locations in the region and there are often excellent views from across many of the local lakes, like Corunna and Wallaga.

Najanuka (Little Dromedary) is a smaller, but still a striking rock outcrop just to the east of Gulaga and Tilba. It too is a significant element in the regional landscape with excellent views from both Central and Tilba Tilba. Najanuka is also of major spiritual significance to the local Yuin people.

**Figure 3: Tilba Conservation Area**



Source: TCA DCP 2012



### 3.1.3 Bodalla/Tuross Valley

This is a striking landscape of remnant dairy country, coastal waterways and wetlands, mixed landscape of natural forest and productive farmland in current use. There are quality settings of rural buildings and a need to ensure new development complements this style.

The scenic landscape as viewed from the Eurobodalla Road is of active farming activity along fertile river flats with water courses bordered by extensive stands of trees with coastal ranges often forming the distant view backdrop.

**Figure 4: Typical scene along Eurobodalla Road**



The visual exposure of the Bodalla/Tuross Valley scenic landscape is more local than regional as the principal viewing locations are from the Eurobodalla Road, All Saints Church Bodalla and to a lesser extent the Bodalla Hotel (the view is not as clear from the hotel as from the other two sites). Site inspections suggest that the Eurobodalla Road carries much less tourist traffic than roads in and around the Tilba Conservation Area. Consequently, the scenic landscape values of this area is related to the value placed on it by the local community more so than visitors. This could change if the Eurobodalla Road were to be incorporated into a scenic drive although this is unlikely given the standard of roads beyond the Eurobodalla locality. There may be scope for private operators to develop more organised tours into the Shire's less accessible landscapes.

A more detailed description of the cultural landscape of the area is provided in Section 3.2.2 of this Discussion Paper.

**Figure 5: The Bodalla Conservation Area as seen from Bodalla All Saints Church**



### 3.1.4 Moruya River Floodplain

South Head Road and George Bass Drive along North Head Road provide a high level of visual exposure of the Moruya River Floodplain and the forested coastal hills and ranges in the visual background to the west and north.

**Figure 6: Typical landscape looking North West from South Head Road**



**Figure 7: View from North Head Road to the North West**



The distant views of the forested coastal ranges from South Head Road and George Bass Drive along North Head Road are considered of a high quality and worthy of preserving. However, more often than not the visual foreground and visual mid-ground are of flat grazing land without distinctive features and not seen from any significant elevation.

### 3.1.5 The Clyde River Valley landscapes

The Kings Highway presents several vantage points of the majestic Clyde river system – from oyster and boat shed clusters to wide river expanses and wild range backdrops. In the main the majestic landscapes along the Kings Highway within the Shire are public lands and the management of their landscape values cannot significantly be influenced by Local Government land use planning.



### 3.1.6 Corunna Lake

Corunna Lake offers people driving north along the Princess Highway a high quality scenic landscape with significant visual exposure – albeit for a very short time duration. The landscape offers elements that are attractive to most people – water, rolling hills and a variety of vegetation cover – from quality grazing lands to forested ranges. This landscape is a good example of how much of the Eurobodalla scenic landscapes are seen – many are not extensive scenic landscapes and they are geographically contained – they offer the viewer a glimpse of a landscape which is seen over a period of 30-60 seconds.

This landscape is also identified as being visually sensitive in the visual foreground and mid-ground. Inappropriately located and designed development could have a significant impact on its scenic value.

**Figure 8: Corunna Lake looking north from the Princess Highway**





### 3.1.7 Coila/Tuross Lakes

Hector McWilliam Drive between the Princess Highway and Tuross Heads offers a high amenity scenic landscape with a high level of visual exposure. The views are of both Coila and Tuross Lakes in the visual mid-ground and to Gulaga in the visual background. Views can also be had of remnants of the historic Kyla Park grazing lands. Kyla Park Farm Remnants is listed as an archaeological site in Eurobodalla Local Environmental Plan 2012 - Schedule 5.

The visual sensitivity of the foreground and mid-ground in this precinct is considered as high due to the volume of local and tourist traffic and because insensitive development could significantly reduce its scenic quality.

**Figure 9: Coila Lake as seen from Hector McWilliam Drive**



**Figure 10: Tuross Lake and grazing land as seen from Hector McWilliam Drive**



### **3.2 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES**

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The Tilba Conservation Area and several Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Areas are listed in the Eurobodalla LEP 2102 Schedule 5 Part 3 - Heritage conservation areas. A Bodalla Cultural Scenic Landscape Conservation Area was proposed for listing and exhibited as such, but was deferred pending further consultation with the land owners.

The Shire's most evident cultural landscapes tend to be related to its pastoral heritage. Physical evidence of this heritage includes pastures and paddocks (including dairying/piggery/corn cropping assemblages), homestead compounds, stand-alone dairies/cheese manufacturing buildings, silos, plantings around homesteads or driveway entrances and cultural planting of exotic specimens at homesteads. Less evident, but no less important are the landscape values of the Aboriginal community both in the historic and current cultural settings and the historical transport and travel routes used by Aboriginal and European travellers.

The following Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Areas are listed in ELEP 2012:

- Najanuka (Little Dromedary Mountain);
- Smyth's Oval;
- Stoney Creek – Brou Lake;
- Malabar Lagoon;
- Pedro Swamp and Point;
- Bengello Creek ;

- Barlings Beach and Island Complex;
- Grandfather's Gully Beach;
- Hanging Rock, Catalina; and
- Cullendulla Creek.

Other heritage themes may relate to:

- Timber;
- Fishing;
- Marine transport;
- Mining; and
- Recreation and tourism.

### 3.2.1 Tilba

The Tilba Conservation Area consists of the villages of Central Tilba and Tilba Tilba and the landscape comprising its visual catchment, being a considerable portion of the eastern foothill slopes of Mount Dromedary. (See Section 3.1.2 for a map of the Tilba Conservation Area).

It should be noted that Tilba is identified as both a Cultural Landscape and a Scenic Landscape. It is therefore included in both Sections 3.1 and 3.2.

*The Tilba Conservation Area is the prime example of a landscape with important and historic scenic values, where agriculture, natural values and rural villages together make up a significant economic and tourism asset (Opportunities and Constraints Paper p. 43.)*

The entire village is classified by the [National Trust](#) as the Central Tilba Conservation Area. In 1974 the National Trust classified the Tilba District as a place of historic and special aesthetic significance and established The Tilba Conservation Area.

#### **Tilba Conservation Area Character Statements**

The Statement of Cultural Significance which was included in the Tilba Conservation Area Heritage and Streetscape Study 1992 is as follows:

*The Tilba Conservation Area has a high heritage significance due to a composite of values. The area as a whole is significant because of its homogeneous built character, because of the pattern of urban and rural development that has relied on the dairy industry, and because of the scale of development that has taken place in and around the villages. Individual items are significant for the extent that they contribute to the Conservation Area as a whole. The Tilba Conservation Area is of local, state and national significance.*

The following character statement is contained in the Tilba Villages and Conservation Area Development Control Plan:



*The conservation area is a highly attractive cultural landscape that evolved from dairying on the fertile slopes and valleys surrounding Mt Dromedary. The conservation area is particularly significant for its high integrity, which is evident in the large number of surviving timber buildings and the general land layout and usage pattern. The relocation of the highway in the second half of the 20th century relieved road pressure on the area, enabling retention of the narrow road widths and steeper grades of earlier times. The combination of traditional building typology, land-use pattern, rural roads and topography, all set against the backdrop of Mt Dromedary, endows the area with exceptional aesthetic and historic value. Strategy for managing future character Future rural development should maintain the tight functional cluster of buildings.*

**Figure 11: High scenic exposure site looking south from Central Tilba**



### 3.2.2 Bodalla Landscape

The Bodalla Heritage Conservation Area is currently limited to a section of the village commercial area. It should be noted that the Bodalla Landscape is identified as both a Cultural Landscape and a Scenic Landscape. It is therefore included in both Sections 3.1 and 3.2.

The natural bushland immediately to the west of Eurobodalla Road and extending up to the Princes Highway contributes to the Bodalla's character and provides some excellent filtered views of the cleared farmland beyond. Other important views can be had from the highway near the hotel looking west over some of the early Bodalla dairy farm country.

A Bodalla Cultural Landscape Heritage Assessment was prepared by Pip Giovanelli and Laurelle Pacey for Eurobodalla Shire Council in April 2012.

<http://eurobodalla-web01.squiz.net/living-in/about/culture-and-heritage/heritage-studies/bodalla-cultural-lands-study/draft-Bodalla-Cultural-Landscape-Heritage-Assessment.pdf>

The assessment report states that:

*Many dairy farms still operate on the South Coast. What makes the Bodalla area so interesting is that the dairy farms in the Bodalla cultural landscape area continue to be actively managed for milk production on the same land that has been used for this purpose since almost the first Europeans moved into the area. The evidence of the former layers of dairy farming practice are still evident in the surviving historic rural and village structures, roads, and modified vegetation and drainage patterns. Collectively they are able to demonstrate large-scale dairying practice that relied upon a variety of labour and ownership models including share farming, tenant farming and, later, private landownership. (Giovanelli and Pacey, 2012 p. 23)*

*The landscape is particularly attractive with special views to be had from the vicinity of the Bodalla Hotel and All Saints Church, through the spotted gum forest on the west side of the village, and from along Eurobodalla Road down on the Tuross River flats.*

*While many dairy farms operate across NSW, there are not many with the depth of history and associations as the Bodalla Cultural Landscape area that have not succumbed to urban or rural subdivision, or changed farming practice. To this extent Bodalla is rare, and a detailed study of its landscape in the context of the historic record is yet to be undertaken. (Giovanelli and Pacey, 2012 p. 25).*

As noted in Section 3.1.3 this cultural landscape is seen mostly by local residents as Eurobodalla Road is not part of a major tourist route. However, as stated in the Bodalla Cultural Landscape Heritage Assessment, the quality of the landscape warrants preservation due to its cultural significance.

The land is currently zoned mostly RU1 Primary Production. Given its cultural significance as identified by Giovanelli and Pacey (2012) consideration could be given to zoning this land and other high quality landscapes such as the Tilba surrounds as RU2 Rural Landscape. But no advantages are seen in such an approach over a less restrictive code as discussed in Section 5 of this Discussion Paper.

It is also suggested that a detailed study of its landscape in the context of the historic record be undertaken when resources permit.

### 3.2.3 Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Areas

The Eurobodalla Aboriginal Heritage Study Stage 4 (Donaldson & Barry, 2008) recommended the following 11 areas of special significance be defined as Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Areas in the Local Environment Plan. (All except Trunketabella Lagoon and the Cricket Ground are now listed in the ELEP 2012.)

- The Cricket ground;
- Smyth's Oval, Narooma;

- Trunketabella Lagoon;
- Whittakers Creek – Brou Lake;
- Malabar Lagoon;
- Pedro Swamp and Point;
- Bengello Creek and Beach, Moruya;
- Barlings corner and island, Tomakin;
- Grandfather’s Gully Beach, Lilli Pilli;
- Hanging Rock, Catalina and
- Cullendulla Creek, Surfside.

The Study also recommended 5 broader landscape units be classified as “Aboriginal Culturally Sensitive Lands” in the Eurobodalla Shire Development Control Plan. These were:

- Gulaga (Mt Dromedary) including Dignams Creek, the shores of Wallaga Lake, Tilba Lake, Pooles Point, and Mystery Bay;
- Wagonga Inlet and coastal swampland;
- Tuross River and Lake including Potato Point, Coila Lake and ‘Black Hill’;
- Moruya River including Ryans Creek, the mangroves on the north side, north and south heads; and
- Batemans Bay and Clyde River.

It is recommended these landscapes of cultural significance be included in a guideline.

## 4 HOW LANDSCAPE IS A CORNERSTONE OF EUROBODALLA TOURISM AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

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### 4.1 TOURISM AND THE LANDSCAPE

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The Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy describes tourism in the Eurobodalla as being focussed on the relatively untouched coastal landscape including the beaches, picturesque backdrop of forested ranges and interspersed dairy pastures.

Among the key landscape attributes for tourism in Eurobodalla (as noted in the Settlement Strategy) include:

- An extensive range of ecosystems and protected areas: and
- Agricultural landscapes with rolling hills of green pasture.

The Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy notes that:

*“Natural areas that are highly visible from public places contribute to the scenic qualities of Eurobodalla Shire and are valuable as backdrops to settlements and road networks. Valuable natural landscapes include vegetated ridgelines and slopes, estuaries, ocean beaches and headlands. Farmland and modified rural landscapes also add character and create an identity that brings benefits through tourism and for residents.” (Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy, p. 106).*

The Strategy describes scenic values along roads as being particularly important to maintain. Such roads are described as:

- Coastal drives where scenic values include the foreshore, beaches, headlands, rocky outcrops and vegetation. Coastal drives generally provide access to ocean, lake and river foreshores for visitors and residents;
- Bushland drives where scenic values include forests, wetlands, valleys and bridges. Many of these areas are state forest, national park or private forested land;
- Farmland drives where scenic values include historic bridges, farmhouses and outbuildings, wetlands, coastal lakes, mangroves and rural roads. These drives make up some of Eurobodalla Shire’s most spectacular scenery and provide the transition between the larger settlements and bushland/mountains; and
- Settlement entry roads which may have a combination of any of the scenic values listed above and generally feature a combination of bushland and farmland scenic values.

The Eurobodalla Shire Destination Management Plan recognised the value of landscape to tourism. The Plan states that the important factors that have shaped the attractiveness of the Eurobodalla as a tourism destination include a coastal and marine landscape that is not dominated by industries such as fishing and boating (e.g. Port Macquarie, Yamba, Coffs Harbour) nor industrial activity (e.g. Wollongong) (ESCDMP, p. 10).

There are currently 5 tourist drives listed on the Eurobodalla Tourism website:

- Shallow Crossing – offering exposure to the Clyde River Valley landscape;
- The Coast Road – taking in much of the Moruya River Flats;
- The Seaspray – from Dalmeny to Narooma;
- The Bellbird – offering exposure to Tilba and Bodalla and much of the scenic landscape south of Narooma; and
- The Wagonga – which takes drivers through forest areas west of Narooma around Wagonga Inlet.

## **4.2 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LANDSCAPE**

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Council has previously prepared the Eurobodalla Aboriginal Heritage Study – a set of four studies. (Dale-Donaldson, S et al, 2008).

These reports identified a range of landscapes of significance to the Aboriginal community. Not surprisingly, many of the major landscape features of Eurobodalla from a European scenic landscape significance are often of high spiritual significance to the local Aboriginal community.

Some information is culturally sensitive and not readily available, but the report does identify a range of landscape issues and features that, perhaps with further sensitive consultation, may be both publicly identified for protection in a code or similar document and even promoted as part of the rich heritage of Eurobodalla.

Some landscape sites have already been placed on the 2012 LEP e.g. Najanuka Mountain and its curtilage is mapped and recorded in the LEP as an Aboriginal Place of Heritage Significance.

Some wider landscape features of cultural significance were also recommended by Donaldson for inclusion in a DCP or Guideline and this is recommended. (See Section 3.2.3).

## **4.3 GENERAL COMMUNITY VALUES RELATING TO THE LANDSCAPE**

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There are general community values enshrined in the landscape. The early dairying heritage and other elements of early settlement across the rural landscape are important to the descendants of the early farming families who constructed these works, planted feature trees and generally helped form the diverse landscape of today. They also provide a fascinating historic landscape for visitors.

Almost all residents of Eurobodalla base some of their fondness for the area on its landscape beauty. Most visitors both national and international are struck with the special significance of landscapes like the Tilba and Bodalla Valleys and many glimpses of rugged distant mountains across diverse farming and vegetated landscape.



## 5 IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR THE RURAL STRATEGY

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### 5.1 LANDSCAPE ISSUES RELEVANT TO ECONOMIC STRATEGY

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Scenic and cultural landscapes, as described earlier in this Discussion Paper, are an integral part of Eurobodalla Tourism. Their protection is essential to the economic wellbeing of Eurobodalla tourism.

There are currently 5 tourist drives listed on the Eurobodalla web site, though they do not focus specifically on Eurobodalla's considerable and significant cultural landscapes assets. While Tilba is included in the Bellbird scenic drive, it is not specific to the cultural landscape nor does it provide much cultural interpretation.

There may be scope to incorporate the Bodalla Conservation Area into the Bellbird tourist drive along with a revised cultural heritage interpretation in the itinerary description.

There may be scope for developing a mobile application for new or revised scenic driving routes that incorporate interpretation and GPS technology.

### 5.2 LANDSCAPE ISSUES RELEVANT TO PLANNING CONTROLS

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Landscape issues for rural land use planning centre on guiding new development such that the character of existing quality landscapes are conserved and, where practical, landscape enhancement is achieved.

#### 5.2.1 Issues identified so far

- Potential for rural residential development impacting adversely on the visual integrity of broader scenic and cultural landscapes.
- Loss of historically evolved settlement pattern, form and style resulting from rural lifestyle development. The challenge is how to reduce the risk of urban sprawl and conserve old dairy and other heritage without burdening the landowner.
- Construction of unsympathetic rural or rural industrial buildings, roads and related structures adversely impacting on the visual integrity of scenic landscapes.
- Conserving existing native vegetation of visual quality. (This is addressed in Discussion Paper 6 on biodiversity).

### 5.2.2 Formal LEP controls versus DCP controls or Guideline Codes?

- The Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy referenced in the Eurobodalla Rural Opportunities and Constraints report presented the following direction relevant to scenic and cultural landscapes:

*Insert rural landscape character assessment provisions in the new LEP to retain scenic qualities and aesthetic values through the retention of bushland backdrops to towns and villages, and the coastline. (ROC p. 51).*

An alternative, and preferred, approach is to develop a code/guideline that is more informal and is aimed at helping land owners proposing developments to design and locate buildings or other structures in a way that best fits in with the landscape. An outline of such a code is presented in Appendix 1.

- A code could attempt to expand the “ownership” of the landscape qualities in the community and in particular with the landowners of the rural landscape elements.
- The RU2 Landscape zone has been used by some councils to delineate areas that might otherwise be RU1 but where more landscape protection is warranted. But defining the limits of an RU2 zone in Eurobodalla is very subjective given the wide area of landscape attractions and the difficulties in defining boundaries between lands of “lesser” and “higher” visual quality. Even if an RU2 zone could be created based on likely complex screening criteria, a code or guideline would still be required and would be more effective and detailed as to suggestions and encouragement for developers to respect the magnificent and diverse Eurobodalla landscapes.
- The direct role of Council in landscape conservation or enhancement is limited to assessment of DAs or rezonings. In these instances where the development is exempt development (such as some farm buildings) Council’s influence may be restricted to an advisory, encouragement or educational role. The likely DAs over the coming 20 year vision horizon of this Strategy are mostly dwellings (of which the number are currently limited), some access roads and farm buildings. Occasional developments like intensive agriculture or extractive industries may be applied for, which could have significant visual impacts. A code should adequately guide the likely DAs of the Strategy period. Vegetation clearing is also a potential threat to some landscapes but is currently regulated by State Government under the *Native Vegetation Act*.
- Standard LEP techniques such as larger lot sizes are being developed in Discussion Papers 9 and 10 and will have some cognisance of landscape values and need for protection.
- The North Coast review of E zones also resulted in an interim position from Department of Planning and Environment to the effect landscape control measures should be in a DCP or Code rather than as overlays and LEP clauses. (See Discussion Paper 4 for detail on the North Coast Review).
- Scenic and cultural landscape conservation and enhancement may be advanced if a more robust fund and offset program to retain native vegetation with significant scenic value on lands with development potential can be developed by State Government.
- On consideration of the above options, it is recommended that Council develop a Cultural and Scenic Landscape Code to support existing development control plans.

## 6 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR EUROBODALLA LANDSCAPE

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### 6.1 ECONOMIC STRATEGIES AND LANDSCAPE

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- Consider incorporating cultural landscapes into existing touring routes or develop new routes which emphasise and interpret the rich scenic and cultural landscapes, including of past dairy industry at Tilba and Bodalla.

Consider opportunities for infrastructure, such as signage at key points along tourist routes. For example, an interpretation board could be located at Bodalla using information in the Bodalla Cultural Landscape Heritage Assessment prepared by Giovanelli and Pacey (2012). There may be scope for developing a mobile application for new or revised scenic driving routes that incorporates interpretation and GPS technology.

- There is a wealth of Aboriginal cultural heritage some of which may be further interpreted in consultation with the Aboriginal community. Aboriginal Cultural Tours exist but might be further fostered.
- Road standards limit the ability to significantly promote the highly scenic Tuross and Deua River Valleys but scope exists for organised tours by private operators (e.g. 4x4 vehicle tours).
- State or Federal funding to help private landowners “manage” landscapes. Possible development offsets to reward owners who improve or maintain the landscape (see Discussion Paper 6 – Biodiversity, for detail).

### 6.2 PLANNING STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF SCENIC AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

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#### 6.2.1 Need for further targeted research

- As resources permit, undertake further studies of important scenic and cultural landscapes.
- Prepare a set of management guidelines for the Bodalla Cultural Landscape Area’s historic values in a manner that does not impede or constrain current or future farming use.
- Council to continue to provide small heritage grants for landowners to conserve historic agricultural infrastructure.

### 6.2.2 Formal LEP controls versus DCP controls or Codes?

- The recommended strategy is for Council to develop a Scenic and Cultural Landscape Code as resources permit to guide development in the rural landscape and develop an awareness by developers and guideline for staff in protection of cultural elements such as historic agricultural artefacts (e.g. dairy history) and Aboriginal Landscape cultural sensitivities as detailed in Donaldson's report (2008).
- Appendix 1 outlines the possible structure for development of a code for consideration and comment.

## 7 APPENDIX 1: OUTLINE FOR A EUROBODALLA SCENIC AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE PROTECTION CODE

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The following are ideas and extracts of material that could form the basis of a more general landscape code.

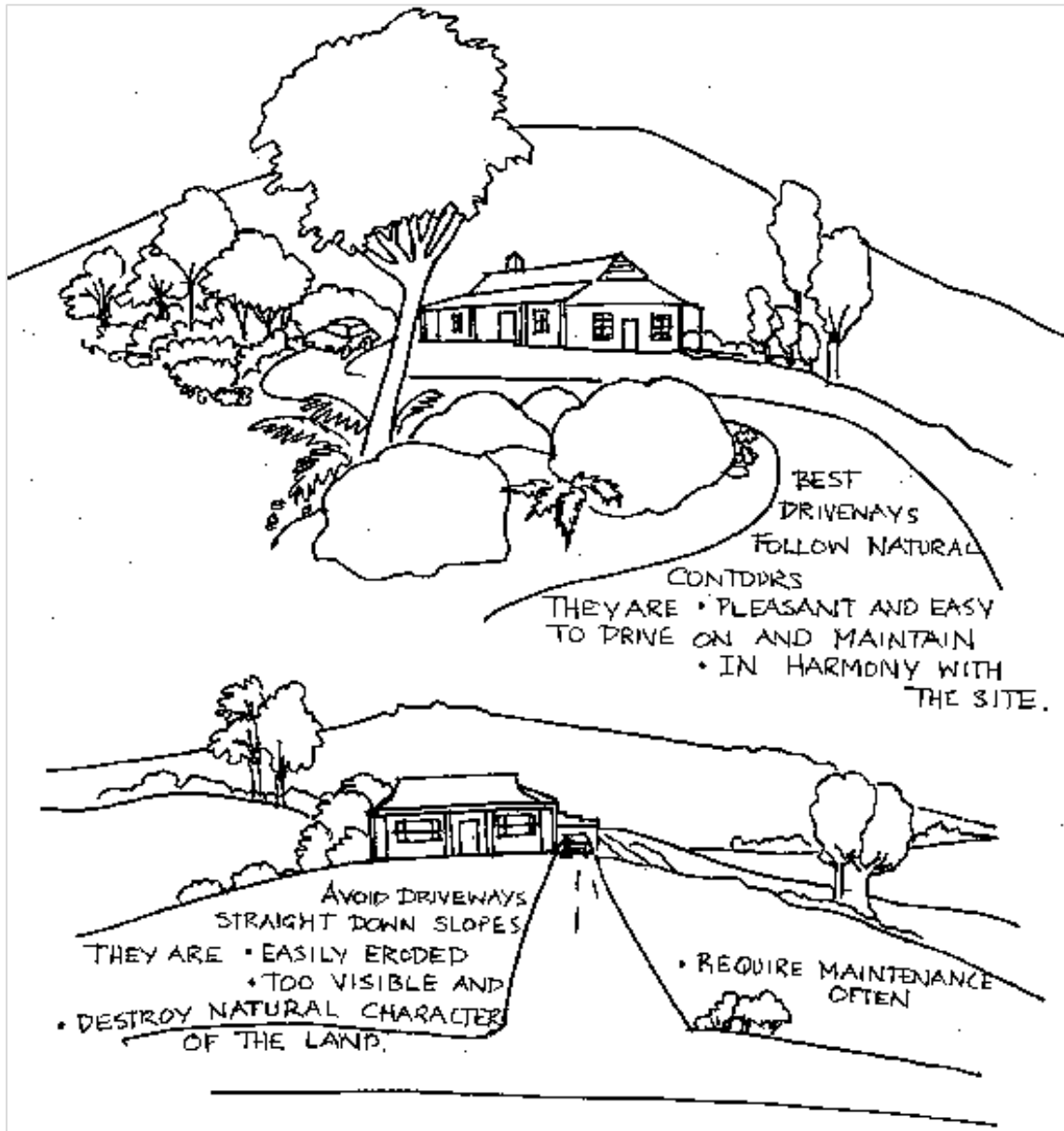
### 7.1 SUGGESTED SCENIC LANDSCAPE GUIDELINE OBJECTIVES

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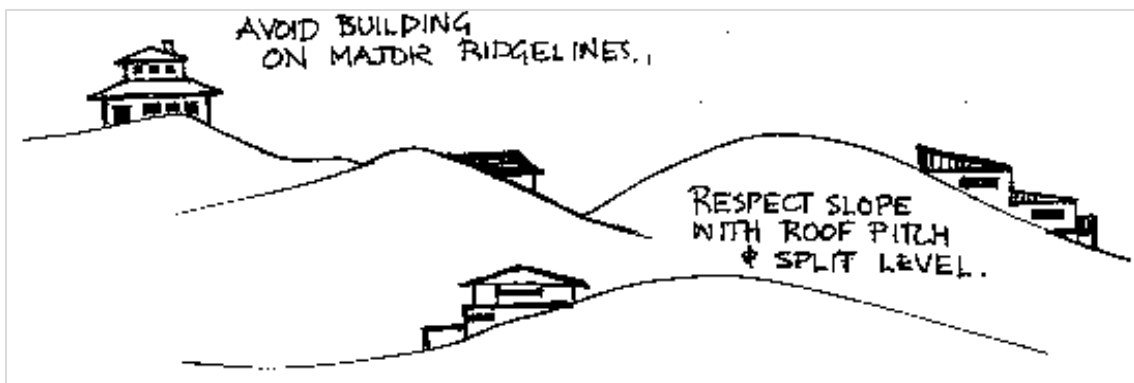
- Conserve the scenic values of the rural landscape as seen from regionally or locally significant view situations. Develop outline maps of significant drives and vantage points.
- Ensure the appropriate siting and design of development, buildings and works to preserve the rural landscape and heritage values of the locality.
- Allow for changing agricultural practices while encouraging the retention of past agricultural production character in the landscape.
- Protect and recognise the importance of natural forest verges and remnant native forest stands and exotic plantations to the landscape character of significant cultural or scenic landscape units.
- To conserve evidence in the landscape of its historic association with (e.g. dairying) in the Eurobodalla Shire.
- To recognise and protect the Aboriginal Cultural Landscape values (e.g. Najanuka and its curtilage).

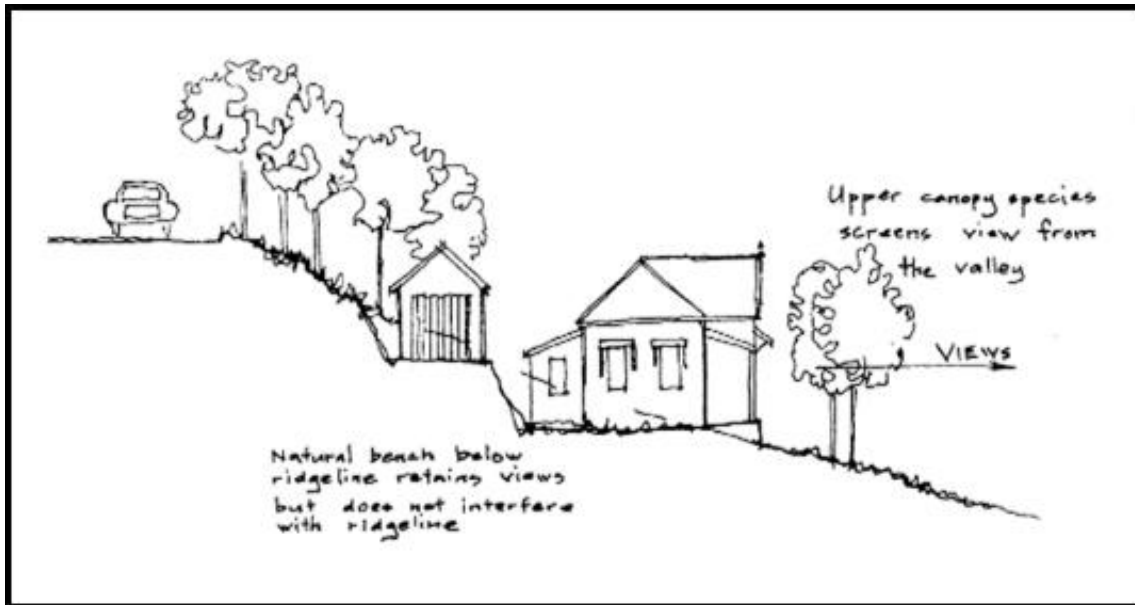
#### 7.1.1 Suggested/Sample General requirements for Guideline

- New buildings and ancillary development such as access roads in the rural landscape must be in a style (design, height, scale, bulk, materials and external colours) sympathetic to the landscape.
- Consider the impact on scenic quality of the main building and works of the development. Visibility of new buildings from regionally or locally significant public roads and vantage points must be minimised by planting trees and shrubs between the view sites and the structure and immediately adjacent to the structure. Landscape planting must reflect existing landform and natural vegetation. Buildings can be partly set into the natural surface on slopes and/or be split level.
- Consider the impact on the landscape of dispersing vs clustering developments.
- Roads, driveways, fencing, electricity and other services visible from regionally or locally significant public roads and vantage points should follow contours and natural vegetation lines and not be at right angles to contours. Excessive cut and fill is to be avoided.
- The transition from urban to rural landscape can be harmonious and balanced if developed in a planned and controlled manner:
  - Ribbon development along the main traffic routes is to be avoided; and
  - Requirement for visual buffers.



- The erection of a building on a ridgeline is discouraged if the building would be visible from a regionally or locally significant public road or vantage point and appears as a skyline structure from that location.





(Source: Tilba Villages Conservation Area DCP 2012)

The following strategies are considered appropriate to reduce negative impacts of development on scenic values:

- Reduce visual exposure by increasing the distance between the development and significant public roads or vantage points;
- Avoid new development not essential to the carrying out of agricultural activity in the foreground visual zone and visible from public roads;
- Maintain settlement density generally in keeping with the current ratios of development densities and pattern;
- Locating the structure on a site that is partly or fully hidden from significant public roads or vantage points;
- Siting development in less prominent areas such as on the side slopes and in the natural depressions;
- Reducing the height and width of the structure that presents to the public road or vantage points;
- Planting and maintaining screening vegetation as ongoing performance conditions of consent.

Where landscape planting is an important part of the mitigation strategy for any development, Council may impose ongoing performance conditions for the land owner to achieve and maintain the intent of the provision.

## 8 REFERENCES

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