

Public Hearing Report - Reclassification of Land – Glen Innes Severn Council



■ planning ■ surveying ■ project management
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Newcastle: 7 Canberra Street
Charlestown NSW 2290 | 02 4942 5441

Central Coast: Shop 1 & 2, 134 Erina Street East
Gosford NSW 2250 | 02 4314 6249

Mid-Western: 87 Herbert Street
Gulgong NSW 2852 | 02 6374 2911

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admin@dewittconsulting.com.au
www.dewittconsulting.com.au

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Description of the Land.....	2
3.	Public Notification of the planning proposal and public hearing	3
4.	Attendance	3
5.	Public hearing process	3
5.1.	Church St Precinct (Items 1 to 10).....	4
5.2.	Aerodrome land (Items 11 to 13).....	4
5.3.	Works depot (Item 14)	4
5.4.	Saleyards (Item 15)	4
5.5.	Visitor information centre (Items 16- 18)	5
5.6.	Concluding comments.....	5
6.	Submissions	5
6.1.	Issues raised in submission	5
7.	Summary of public hearing feedback	6

1. Introduction

Glen Innes Severn Council has prepared and exhibited a planning proposal (PP- 2025-0373 in accordance with the requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*) to reclassify council owned land (by way of amending the *Glen Innes Severn Local Environmental Plan 2012*) from “community land” to “operational land” as established under Sections 25 and 26 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

As part of the planning proposal process, a public hearing was conducted in accordance with Section 29 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. The purpose of the hearing was to provide community members the opportunity to comment on the proposed reclassification of council owned land and discuss issues with an independent person in a public forum (Department of Planning and Environment, 5th October 2016, *LEP Practice Note PN16-001 Classification and reclassification of public land through a local environmental plan*).

This report, prepared by the independent facilitator, provides the results of the hearing and is to inform Glen Innes Severn Council consideration of the planning proposal.

- **Date of Hearing:** 10th September 2025 – 6pm to 8pm
- **Location:** Glen Innes Highlands Hub – Glen Innes
- **Council Officers Present:** None
- **Independent Facilitator:** Trevor Allen – Deputy Principal Planner – de Witt Consulting.

No later than 4 days after it has received this report, under Section 47G of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council must make this report available for inspection by the public at a location within Glen Innes.

2. Description of the Land

Table 1 lists the parcels of council owned land proposed to be reclassified from community to operational. The land is predominantly located in the town of Glen Innes.

Table 1 Parcels of council owned land proposed to be reclassified

No.	Property	Address	Lot/DP
1	Old Shire Council Building (East)	181 Bourke St, Glen Innes	6/A/DP193319
2	Old Shire Council Building (West)		5/A/DP193319
3	Council Church St Offices	136 Church St, Glen Innes	13/A/DP193319
4	Council Church St Offices		14/A/DP193319
5	Council Church St Offices		11/A/DP193319
6	Council Church St Offices		12/A/DP193319
7	VRA Shed	5 Sachs Lane, Glen Innes	15/A/DP193319
8	VRA Shed		16/A/DP193319
9	Jamesies Garage	138 Church St, Glen Innes	9/DP137340
10	Jamesies Garage		10/DP137340
11	Aerodrome Site	773 Emmaville Rd, Glen Innes	2/DP1187809
12	Aerodrome Hangers		3/DP1187809
13	Aerodrome incl. Terminal		1/DP1187809
14	Works Depot	105 Lang St, Glen Innes	687/DP753282
15	Saleyards	36 Lang St, Glen Innes	716/DP753282
16	Visitor Information Centre	152 Church St, Glen Innes	8/DP773258
17	Visitor Information Centre		3/DP211176
18	Visitor Information Centre		9/DP773258

Note: Item 11 is actually Lot 3 and contains aerodrome hangers whilst Item 12 is actually vacant land.

The item number of each property in the first column is coloured to reflect the spatial grouping of this land i.e. each individual lot and adjacent or near other lots. There are five groups of lots including; the Church St precinct, the aerodrome land, works depot, saleyards and the visitor information centre.

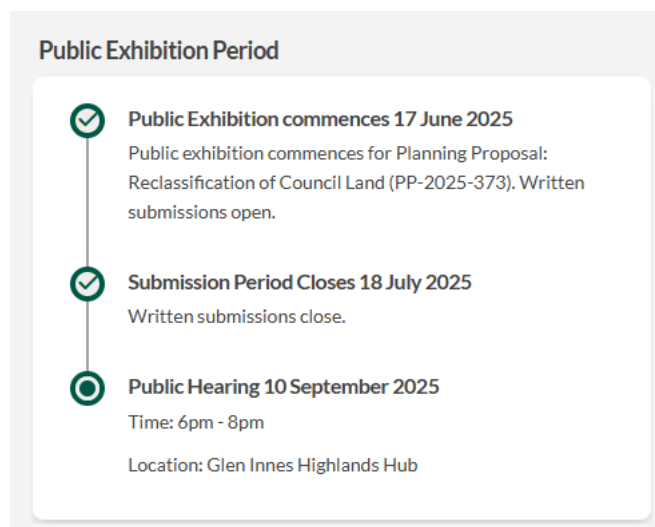
None of these lands are identified or used as parks, reserves or public open space.

3. Public Notification of the planning proposal and public hearing

Council placed the planning proposal on public exhibition for four weeks commencing on 17th June 2025 and closing on 18th July 2025. The method of notification was by Council's website:

haveyoursay.gisc.nsw.gov.au/planning_proposal-reclassification_of_land_pp-2025-373

The notice included the following details on the public exhibition period:



The exhibited planning proposal consisted of the following documents:

- *Gateway determination PP-2025-373 Glen Innes Severn;*
- *Planning Proposal _Reclassification_ V3_PP-2025-373* (prepared by Council);
- *Practice Note PN-16-001 Classification-reclassification of public land through local environmental plan* (prepared by Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure).

4. Attendance

Five members of the community attended the public hearing.

5. Public hearing process

At the commencement of the public hearing, a power point presentation was provided by the independent facilitator (**Attachment 1**) that provided the following information:

- Purpose of public hearing and the process of preparing this report to council for its consideration;
- Explanation of the differences between community land and operational land and that council had identified 18 parcels of community land that are not required or cannot be used for community purposes;
- Land proposed to be reclassified in Table 1 and illustrated in 5 aerial photos (grouped as per Table 1); and

- Each lot or group of lots (Church St precinct, the aerodrome land, works depot, saleyards and visitor information centre) would then be discussed and commented by the attendees.

Feedback from the attendees at the public hearing was recorded in writing by the independent facilitator and then at the end of the public hearing, it was read out to the attendees for their confirmation. Attendee feedback is provided as follows:

5.1. Church St Precinct (Items 1 to 10)

- *Council chambers (Items 1 and 2) – Rural Fire Services moved out. Reluctantly ok?*
- *Council offices (Items 3 to 6) – highway frontage. Hold as community land because of the potential for Council offices*
- *Voluntary Rescue Association (Items 7 and 8) – what will happen with this user – relocate?*
- *Jamesies garage (Items 9 and 10) ok to go to operational*
- *Existing hub is losing money*
- *Don't trust Council with property*
- *Is there another motive? What is the big picture?*
- *Need a strategic approach of council accommodation within which the reclassification can be understood.*

5.2. Aerodrome land (Items 11 to 13)

- *Is the rest of the airport to remain as community land*?*
- *All three lots should be the same*
- *Should be retained as community because it is community infrastructure*
- *Lot 1 – used as a mine camp for mine at Emmaville then ok to be considered to be operational*
- *Northern lot – (Item 11) to be retained as community*
- *Water and sewer is provided to this site that runs back to Glen Innes*
- *Can Council guarantee that it won't sell off this land then ok to be operational.*

* Note: mapping in the powerpoint presentation did not clearly indicate the bulk of the aerodrome (Lot 3) was included for reclassification. This is despite Table 1 above and the planning proposal indicating the three parcels of land making up the aerodrome site are proposed to be reclassified from community to operational.

5.3. Works depot (Item 14)

- *Is this crown land? No*
- *Ok to be operational.*

5.4. Saleyards (Item 15)

- *Forms a community service*
- *Not operating near capacity*
- *Sheep selling centre (it was the biggest in the state)*
- *Cattle component is less*
- *Council is getting a consultant report on what to do with the saleyard – overdue.*
- *This is a small saleyard*
- *Saleyards at Guyra, Inverell, Armidale, Tenterfield and Grafton are larger and some are private*
- *Saleyard is a transshipping facility*
- *Lack of selling agents in Glen Innes*
- *Keep as community.*

5.5. Visitor information centre (Items 16- 18)

- *Bus terminal*
- *Tenterfield shut down its visitor information centre*
- *Tourism is a key economic driver. Glen Innes visitor information centre compares well to other centres in larger towns*
- *Visitor information centre is a business unit within council and contains a gem/sapphire business*
- *Keep as community land but operational if required to be leased to the sapphire business and council can guarantee not to sell. If not retain as community.*

5.6. Concluding comments

- *Why so many properties being considered for reclassification? Reckless?*
- *What does council intend to do with the buildings?*
- *What does Council intend to do with the proceeds?*

6. Submissions

No submissions were received prior or during the public hearing.

Two submissions were received during the public exhibition period: one by email on 3 July 2025 raising matters addressed in Table 2 below and one via the NSW Planning Portal which did not express an opinion on the proposal.

6.1. Issues raised in submission

Consideration of the issues raised in the email submission are provided in Table 2.

Table 2 Consideration of issues raised in submission

Issue	Consideration
• <i>If the land becomes operational, what is the plan for these lots within a ten-year framework?</i>	Generic or specific plans of management for each operational lot will guide the current and future uses of these lots.
• <i>Which of these properties would be retained and for what purpose?</i>	As stated in the planning proposal, only the former Severn Shire Council building is to be sold under an existing council resolution. All other lots will be retained as is and/or adjust in response to commercial and market needs.
• <i>Which properties are intended for sale, where would the proceeds from any sales go.</i>	Only the former Severn Shire Council is to be sold under an existing council resolution. Proceeds will be reinvested in priority projects that benefit the community, such as upgrades to public facilities or improvements to council buildings.
• <i>Is there a list of council properties and the income derived from the ownership and the cost of ownership including the maintenance and depreciation on each asset?</i>	The capacity for council properties to generate income to offset the costs of ownership is significantly influenced by the classification of the property, commercial arrangements for use/users and market factors. If there is a concern about the financial performance of council properties, then the reclassification of certain council owned land provides commercial flexibility and allows Council to generate more income for the community.
• <i>Also is there a list of the costings and income of every program that the council runs?</i>	This is not a matter that has a bearing on whether select council owned land should be reclassified.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An accurate summary of all the council's costings and income derived from council's operations would allow the community to understand where their rates are going. 	This is not a matter for the reclassification of select council land. This is a rates matter that is best directed to the Council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is the costs of maintaining and the depreciation on these assets in anyway responsible for the declining financial well-being of council? 	The status of council's assets are detailed in Council's asset management strategies and plans. If there is a perception that Council's financial well-being is declining, then the reclassification of select council owned land to provide flexibility in how Council can generate income from these land would be seen as a desirable outcome.

7. Summary of public hearing feedback

The attendees at the public hearing generally had a consistent view on the planning proposal overall and hence each parcel overall. It may be reasonable to summarise the attendees viewed the proposed reclassification of select council owned land from community to operational as lacking context and having a distrust of council when it comes to the management and the buying and selling of land.

The facilitator indicated to the attendees these are matters separate to the planning proposal process and subject to Council decision making requirements and processes under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The feedback of the public hearing on each lot of land is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of public hearing feedback

No.	Property	Reclassify?	Conditions
1	Old Shire Council Building (East)	Yes	No conditions
2	Old Shire Council Building (West)		
3	Council Church St Offices	No	
4	Council Church St Offices		
5	Council Church St Offices		
6	Council Church St Offices		
7	VRA Shed	No	
8	VRA Shed		
9	Jamesies Garage	Yes	No conditions
10	Jamesies Garage		
11	Aerodrome Site	No	
12	Aerodrome Hangers	Yes	But specifically for the lot required for the mine camp and subject to council not selling the land.
13	Aerodrome incl. Terminal		
14	Works Depot	Yes	No conditions
15	Saleyards	No	
16	Visitor Information Centre	Yes	If required to lease to sapphire business and subject to council not selling the land.
17	Visitor Information Centre		
18	Visitor Information Centre		

Prepared by



Trevor Allen

Deputy Principal Planner – de Witt Consulting

2nd October 2025

Attachment 1

Powerpoint presentation to public hearing *Reclassification of land – PP-2025-373*

Public Hearing for
reclassification 18
parcels of council land
in Glen Innes

10/09/2025

PP-2025

Chaired by: Trevor Allen – Deputy Principal Planner
- de Witt Consulting

trevor.allen@dewittconsulting.com.au

Purpose of Public Hearing

- ◆ Councils must hold a public hearing when reclassifying public land from community to operational (EP&A Act s.57 & LG Act s.29). This gives the community an opportunity to expand on written submissions and discuss issues with an independent person in a public forum (this forum).
- ◆ Trevor Allen will review all submissions from the public exhibition of the planning proposal including feedback/comments at today's public hearing and prepare a public hearing report.
- ◆ Council will make the public hearing report publicly available and must consider it before making a decision to proceed with the reclassification of the subject land.

Land classification

- ◆ Public land is managed under the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act) based on its classification. All public land must be classified as either community land or operational land (LG Act ss.25, 26).
- ◆ *Community* land – is land council makes available for use by the general public, for example, parks, reserves or sports grounds.
- ◆ *Operational* land – is land which facilitates the functions of council, and may not be open to the general public, for example, a works depot or council garage.

Community land/operational land?

- ◆ Community land must not be sold, exchanged or otherwise disposed of by a council.
- ◆ There are no special restrictions on council powers to manage, develop, dispose, or change the nature and use of operational land.
- ◆ If council identifies community land that is not required for community use then it can reclassify it to operational to allow it to be developed or disposed.
- ◆ Council has identified a number of lots of community land that are not required or cannot be used for community purposes. This public hearing is to listen to the community comment on each lot of land proposed to be reclassified with a person independent of council.

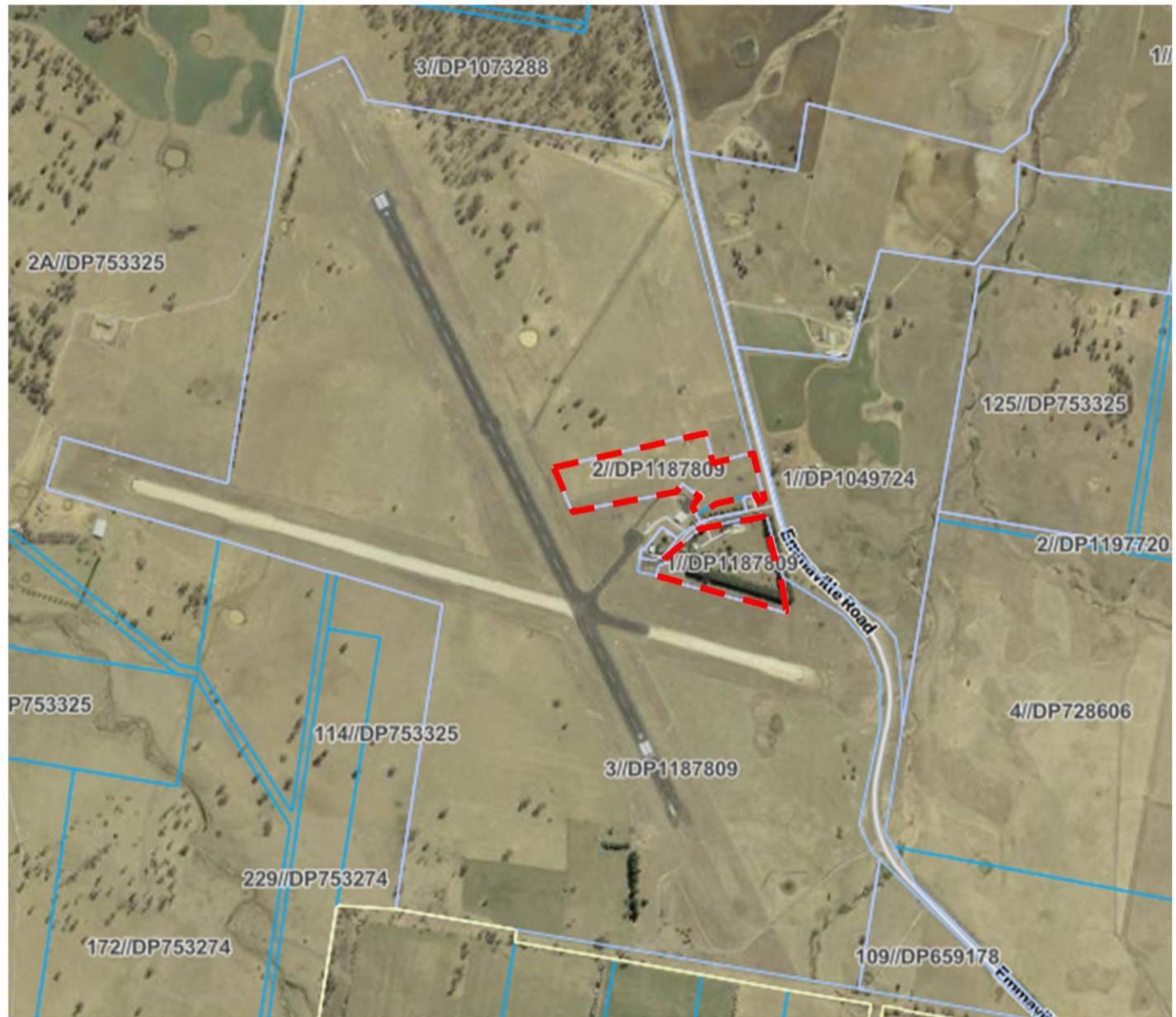
Land proposed to be reclassified

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Church Street precinct – parcels 1 to 10



Aerodrome site – parcels 11 to 13



Council works depot – parcel 14



Saleyards - parcel 15



Visitor information centre - parcel 16 to 18

