

## THIRD DRAFT MAY 04

### Tomerong Community Forum

## Planning Directions for the Village

There are issues raised in this document which are different from and more extensive than those found in a local government 'Development Control Plan' [DCP]. Endorsement by our community gives us ownership of it. We take control of important aspects of our lives.

There is no attempt to adopt the language of a DCP or other planning document, rather an effort to set out ideas in plain language.

There is no intention to draft something to become a coercive document, rather something that might inspire quality development of appropriate built environment and mutually supportive community.

Whether this leads to local government development of a DCP in time is not the point here. And there are points here which would not be included in a DCP.

Here we are concerned about what might be done, with a sense of community, by those in the community. **If we assert that we are a village, then we ought to be able to demonstrate our villageness not by seeking governmental dictation but by what we sort out among ourselves.** Otherwise we fail a test of what we claim to be.

**What happens if we do nothing?** Various of us have pointed to development patterns we do *not* want to follow. This is not just an issue of aesthetic judgement.

Not everyone in the village runs around with a warm village glow of mutual co-operation — Tomerong is chosen by many as a place of retreat and anonymity and simplicity. The risk is that development without thought (a better expression than 'uncontrolled' development, we are not about more control) risks jeopardising all those private values.

When population grows quickly, the new residents will generally have slight awareness of the environment (physical, ecological, social, the lot) to which they come. And arriving in a short space of time, they may overwhelm current perspectives. There will be many new children and young people; there will be older people. It is essential that we have appropriate and inclusive amenity and community for everyone, so as to minimise social dysfunction and decline in health and public order and security.

Prior to this point, development has been slow and the community not seized by the importance of shaping it.

Now there is need for thoughtful development to keep Tomerong a good place, not a ragged place. This involves community determination, private developer sensitivity and local government work.

We consider that proposals such as these can see enhancement of Tomerong as a village community while adding value to land available for development. Each of these affects the other. The answers are in working together.

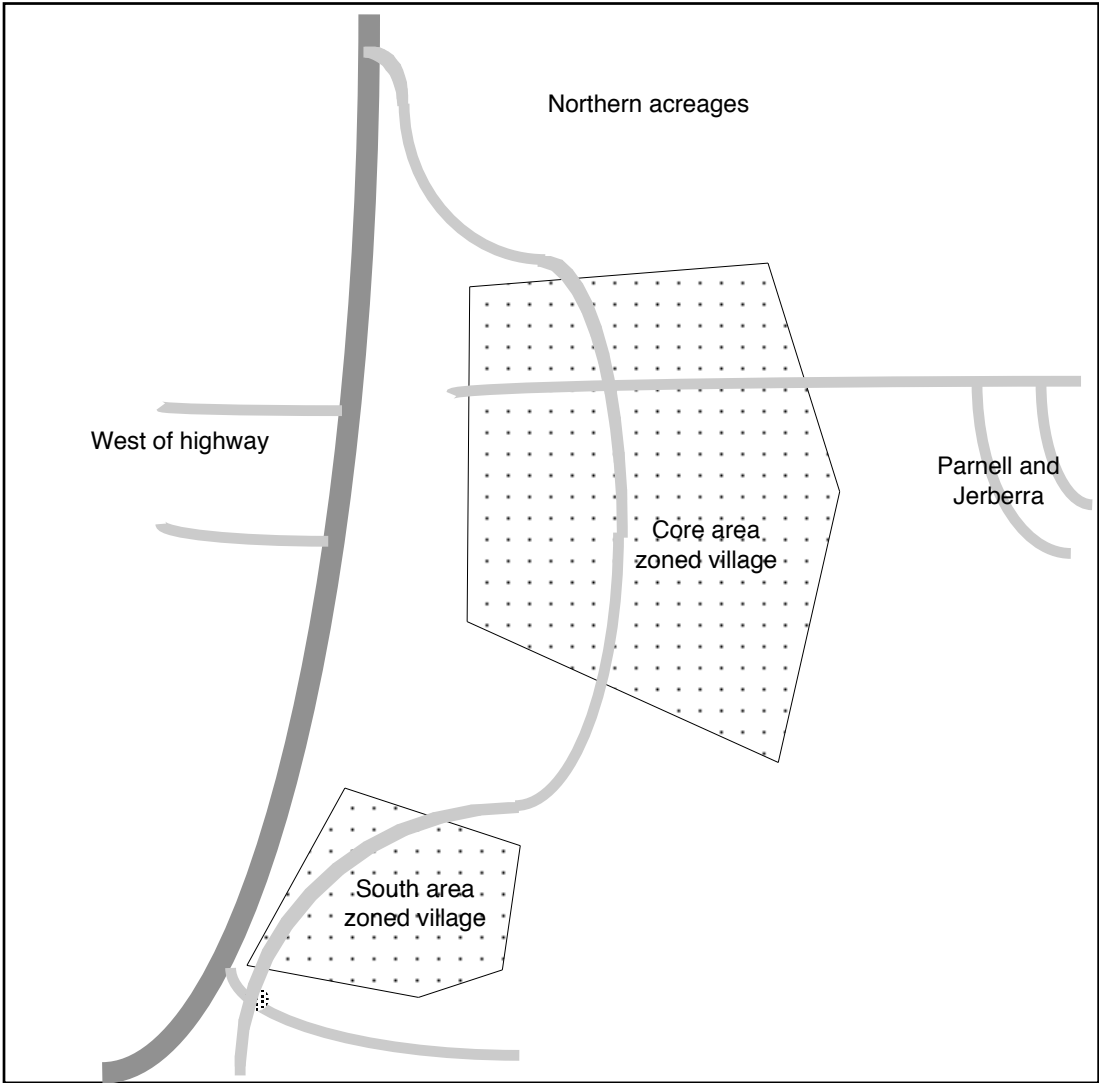
*when is a village not a village?*  
answer: when the people stop caring

*when is a town not a town?*  
answer: when the people start wanting

*when is a suburb not a suburb?*  
answer: when the people get envious

*when is a city not city?*  
answer: when the people start caring

This is a paper about village values.



## BACKGROUND

The village of Tomerong has an unusual history and is at a turning point.

In 1907 Tomerong became the headquarters of the Clyde Shire, a local government area which covered rural and village areas along the south coast, but did not include the urban centres of Nowra and Ulladulla. A bush shire.

The Clyde Shire disappeared with amalgamation of local government areas, Tomerong eventually becoming part of the so-called Shoalhaven 'City'.

Tomerong was, until a decade ago, a highway town, divided and limited by traffic. Then the highway bypassed Tomerong.

So Tomerong's history is one of 'bypass' – headquarters of a shire which bypassed the major towns in local government, that arrangement then being bypassed by local government amalgamation, then being bypassed by the highway - granted a breath of fresh air, physically and metaphorically. All that seems to contribute to a 'villageness'. It is not a town or a suburb; it has no commercial centre, just a combined shop and post office next to the school. It is a village, without commercial grandeur or significant architecture or momentous building style. There are village events and there are village institutions. The school's biennial fete is a regional draw card. The hall – the *Tomerong School of Arts* – has been described cheerfully by people who come from elsewhere to events there as 'the centre of the universe. When a Councillor lamented the absence of postal delivery at a village meeting in January 2004, the general response was "No! We walk to the post office, that's the point!" And so on. Everywhere there are voices, even from those who 'don't want to be involved' that want to preserve valued qualities of Tomerong. And voices saying: "Leave the village alone, we like it the way it is."

## CURRENT PROSPECTS

The increased pace of settlement and the rush in real estate brings pressures to bear on Tomerong. We are not going to be "left alone."

There is prospect of doubling or tripling of population, or more — this will involve also the periphery of the village, including west of the highway, the southern village zone (around the industrial area), the northern acreages and the eastern area – Parnell Rd and the Jerberra Estate - '**Greater Tomerong**'. There is a village core, plus a wider hinterland of people who regard Tomerong as their post office, their school, their 'place'. Contemplation of what can be done to enhance the village needs to encompass the whole.

In the normal course, development occurs when vacant, appropriately zoned land, is subdivided, package by package. The issues in approval of such development are generally those generated inside the area to be developed. This is the pattern particularly in suburbs, where there is, in good circumstances, an overarching design, outside the particular subdivision, of infrastructure, amenities and facilities and links to employment. Tomerong is

not going to have such things on any scale for the foreseeable future. The *Jervis Bay Settlement Strategy 2003* specifically asserts that Tomerong will remain a ‘village’ without many of the assets found in urban areas.

## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

Long standing members of the community have grown up with an array of skills and sets of expectations about life that relate to life in the bush. These are not immediately shared by newcomers. There is de-skilling of people in the cities these days, with expectations of the gadgetisation of everything in life and accessibility of cures and fixes for everything – expectations of dependancy rather than independent resourcefulness. The emptiness of people’s lives and the health impacts of that are not just in poorer areas. For example, Northern Sydney Area Health, with some of the most affluent places in the nation, between the harbour and the Hawkesbury, has a mental health budget of about \$70m a year, a thousand mental health staff – and nonetheless constant crisis, shortage of acute beds, inability to help people with less than the worst problems. There is the clearest evidence and theory, historically, that suicide rates rise when people lack a sense of community, fall out of association with each other and from the natural world. Religious adherence has declined, yet we have not put in its place effective secular ethic or sense of community co-operative support. *If we do not build and maintain a healthy community, we will lose happiness and health.*

The lack of amenity for young people is notorious in the Shoalhaven. There is also a lack of amenity for older people and people with limits to their health. Twenty five years ago, people could distance themselves from the unemployment issue (“not in my family!”) but now no family is aloof from employment and income problems, from issues of life for kids, all of us will get older, none is immune from the impacts of disease or injury. Do we ship out, trap in, ignore, or neglect people who face such real issues in our village, or ensure that we provide resources for everyone, resources to accommodate a diverse, supportive and tolerant community? Do we want to be able to live healthy older lives here, or be shipped out to town when we start to fray? A caring community can provide healthy amenity for all ages.

## OUR LIVING ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The word *environment* seems to produce agitation in discussion, but we all live in the environment: physical, built, ecological, social, cultural. We are all affected immediately by the violence of weather, issues of fire and water, air quality, noise, and gorgeous or ungorgeous things we see. We all have a shared responsibility for how we use resources that are limited and easily spoiled. These are local, regional, national, global responsibilities. We can tend to blush or get annoyed when such matters are raised, but the issues only grow worse with neglect or rejection.

In Tomerong, these issues come to attention in various ways: in the management of the forest environment and in the active Rural Fire Service unit’s tasks; in the independent efforts of individual residents to limit resource consumption – to reuse and recycle and to develop their blocks sustainably with reuse of waste water; in people’s affection for the bush; concern

about various noise or other disturbances, etc. We have broader impact not least in the way run-off from Tomerong, not always pretty, affects Tomerong Creek — with its impact on water quality in St George's Basin. Councils, police and other authorities and emergency services can only deal with the dirty margins of such issues, rounding up the garbage, emptying the sumps, taking on recycling, shifting problems out of our responsibility, at tax cost. There is much that can be done locally, not coercively, with some collective learning and cooperation. One group of residents met in March with representatives from the EPA and discussed a sustainability project for the village, beginning with the hall. *Village projects have important social value, not just possible physical results.*

### **Environment and sustainability: our rights and obligations:**

National, state and local government policies and planning documents contain increasing references to these matters, but they need to be stated at community level to be effective and real.

*Every individual in the Greater Tomerong community has the basic right to clean air, fresh water, uncontaminated land, natural areas & tolerant neighbours.* These basic rights are part of our living environment. Our living environment includes 'everything' from our physical surrounds, our homes, our productive and natural areas, heritage values to our social & cultural interactions. Greater Tomerong village is fortunate in having a rich mosaic of all our living environment components

*We have a shared responsibility of how we use our living environment* — an environment that is limited and easily damaged. The issues arising from our responsibility are complex and challenging for us all. These issues are on a local scale but reflects many current global concerns. The key issues relate to:

- resource consumption,
- natural areas management,
- productive lands management,
- sustainable water use – clean water, and
- development considerations.

There are practical recommendations arising from these set out below.

### **ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Some of the following issues and recommendations can be and will be rendered in graphic form. Some may be more easily seen in graphic form. These boxes are a first step in ordering thoughts about how to shape and maintain the village as an identifiable and supportive community. Endorsement of these will need to be followed by an elaboration of action plans. *While this is something of an overall package of values and designs, it is sensible to recognise the importance of assigning priorities; neither we nor Council has resources to do 'the lot' just like that. The way forward is via the art of the possible.*

**ABBREVIATIONS of responsibility for action:** C - community (includes Forum); LG - local government; LOD - landowners and developers; T&S - trustees or other stake holder; SG - State Government.

ISSUE 1	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Every person in the community deserves a voice and amenity, including the right not to be involved, and the right to private pursuits and lifestyles which do no harm to others.</p>	<p><b>[a]</b> <i>Accept as principle that planning and community actions need to be based on tolerance and concern to provide a space and amenity for all. C</i></p> <p><b>[b]</b> <i>Ensure that younger and older people and those with disabilities are heard in development of plans. C</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Ask the school to ask students ‘what do you want in the village’. C</i></p> <p><b>[d]</b> <i>Engage local Aboriginal community in consultation processes. C</i></p> <p><b>[e]</b> <i>Engage local businesses with consultation processes. C</i></p> <p><b>[f]</b> <i>Bring the Council along with us on all this. C, LG</i></p>

ISSUE 2	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Enhance village identity.</p>	<p><b>[a]</b> <i>Encourage hinterland as well as village core population to see their lives as affected by village community development. C</i></p> <p><b>[b]</b> <i>Encourage and support community groups to flourish. C, LG, T&amp;S</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Pursue environment and sustainability issues as set out below. C, LG</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Physical factors as below. C, T&amp;S, LOD, LG</i></p>

ISSUE 3	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Village perimeter.— <i>the order here in 3, 4 and 5 is the perimeter, the core and the buffer around the core, an effort to make amenity and identity by planning and developing public space and roads. There are some things that can be done by community, some by local government. The idea is to make improvements within a plan rather than piecemeal.</i></p>	<p><b>[a]</b> <i>Establish a 50 kph zone through the southern village zone as well as the core village zone LG</i></p> <p><b>[b]</b> <i>Lower 80 kph limit between the two zones to 60 kph LG</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Place signs and art works at the perimeters. C, LG</i></p> <p><b>[d]</b> <i>hold junior and senior competitions for perimeter signs, totems, etc. C</i></p>

ISSUE 4	RECOMMENDATIONS
Village core.	<p><b>[a]</b> <i>Establish a 20 kph shared pedestrian vehicle precinct, with pedestrian right of way, on Hawken Road, between Church Street and the Post Office, using appropriate traffic calming and other devices. LG</i></p> <p><b>[b]</b> <i>Seal Church St east of Hawken Rd; Education Department to acquire land to the east for school expansion and safe parking/vehicle pickup area, noting adjacent 33000 volt power lines and easement suitable for parking but not building. Include this area in shared precinct. LG, SG</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Develop and implement a landscaping plan for the core area, including land around Post Office, Hall, Church, playground. C, T&amp;S, LG</i></p> <p><b>[d]</b> <i>Landscaping plan to provide improvements in parking and ensure road safety.</i></p> <p><b>[e]</b> <i>Invite child, youth, disable, aged comments on facilities in this area. C</i></p> <p><b>[f]</b> <i>Public education program in local areas to enhance respect for this development.</i></p>
ISSUE 5	RECOMMENDATIONS
Village core buffer	<p><b>[a]</b> <i>Establish a 40 kph buffer zone around the village core 20 kph zone:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>at the southern end, at the present School 40 kph boundary</i></li> <li>- <i>at the northern end, including new road entry to the approved Bryce subdivision</i></li> <li>- <i>on Pine Forest Rd, at the crest of the hill.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>LG</b></p> <p><b>[b]</b> <i>Appropriate traffic calming and associated landscaping. LG</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Study appropriate development of the Hawken/Pine Forest/William Bryce intersection and adjacent properties. LG, C, LOD.</i></p>

ISSUE 6	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Pedestrians, disabled persons, cyclists, horses and new development.</p> <p><i>We note RTA/EPA policy: Achieve zero growth in Vehicle Kilometres Travelled per capita by 2011 — We all have to drive out of Tomerong to work.etc. It is essential that village design make it pleasant and feasible to reduce vehicle use within the village. No such state policy can work without making local communities work better.</i></p>	<p><b>[a]</b> <i>Encourage all new subdivision and development to provide access to the village core by other than motor vehicle, along paths which radiate out from the centre and which are at sensible grades and of safe durable standards (not here specifying paving) to suit children, elderly and people with limited mobility. C, LOD, LG</i></p> <p><b>[b]</b> <i>Incorporate open spaces and amenity in such paths. C, LOD, LG.</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Avoid patterns of development and subdivision providing only vehicular access to main roads away from the core. C, LOD, LG.</i></p>

ISSUE 7	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Style of building and land development — see also environment and sustainability section below</p>	<p><b>[a]</b> <i>People will always have a strong urge to follow their hearts in building. Efforts should be made to showcase styles of local housing and development which relate to the environment, which are energy efficient, which minimise environmental impact, which are efficient users of water and disposers of effluent. C, LG, LOD.</i></p> <p><b>[b]</b> <i>Encourage examples of ‘sustainable’ activities, ensure that people planning to build are aware of the extent of their options, for example in grey water use. C, LG, LOD</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Educate building industry in these areas too. C, LG, LOD.</i></p>

ISSUE 8	RECOMMENDATIONS
Community awareness	<p><b>[a]</b> <i>Encourage new arrivals and younger people to join in community activities, including the RFS, Hall, Community Forum. C, T&amp;S.</i></p> <p><b>[b]</b> <i>Be responsive to need for organisational flexibility and need for new organisations for new groups. C, T&amp;S.</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Establish a ‘history trail’ around the village, with posts with signs. C, LG.</i></p> <p><b>[d]</b> <i>Establish a guide to forest paths and other recreation facilities. C, LG.</i></p> <p><b>[e]</b> <i>In setting up [c] and [d] be mindful of the needs of people with limited mobility.</i></p>
ISSUE 9	RECOMMENDATIONS
Road safety not elsewhere covered.	<p><b>[a]</b> <i>With increased traffic, the northern access to the Princes Highway from Hawken Rd will become more dangerous than it is already. There is need for a safe exit lane from the highway southbound and a protected entry lane onto the highway and going north. SG, LG.</i></p> <p><b>[b]</b> <i>Officials inspecting that intersection should be encouraged to give it a go at 8.15am in the rain and at 5.30pm in winter – not midmorning on sunny days. SG, LG.</i></p> <p><b>[c]</b> <i>Many people already find the Hawken Rd/William Bryce Rd/Pine Forest Rd intersection awkward and dangerous. The number of children, as well as number of vehicles, is increased by the approved Bryce subdivision. The new pedestrian traffic is from the north and west side of Hawken Rd, the only footpath is on the east side, south of Pine Forest Rd. Safety and design options need careful study. C, LG.</i></p>

## ISSUE 10 - ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The *Jervis Bay Settlement Strategy* adopted by both the State Government and Shoalhaven City Council in 2003 says (at page 31):

### Section B - Managing Growth

#### 6. Vision

The vision presented for the Jervis Bay Region, and which will be pursued in implementing this Settlement Strategy, is as follows:

*To maintain and enhance the marine, estuarine and natural resources by providing balanced future living and visiting opportunities which are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable...*

Underlying all of the considerations that will be relevant to planning new settlement in the Region are the principles of Ecological and Sustainable Development (ESD) and Total Catchment Management (TCM).

Ecologically Sustainable Development embodies the three concepts of:

- Environment
- Social, and
- Economics

All three are interrelated and have to be considered as such... There is ultimately a need to find the right balance so that we can have a sustainable future, and can leave an intact environment for future generations.

The Jervis Bay Integrated Management Project (NPWS 1999) recognises that improved collaboration between the three levels of Government (Federal, State and Local) and the community will facilitate the identification of common goals and integrate management of the region.

Note the reference to *community* in that last sentence. It makes sense for us to take our own steps and provide community lead.

ISSUE 10 [A]	RECOMMENDATION
Environment and Sustainable Development [A] Resource consumption	<p>[a] <i>adopt community goals and means to “refuse/reuse/recycle” C, LG</i></p> <p>[b] <i>gather information on ecological footprints C, LG</i></p> <p>[c] <i>assess opportunities for economic diversification C, LG</i></p> <p>[d] <i>facilitate production and distribution of local produce C, LG</i></p> <p>[e, f, g...] <i>learn the song “ don ’t worry be happy C</i></p>

ISSUE 10 [B]	RECOMMENDATION
Environment and Sustainable Development [B] Natural areas management	<p>[a] <i>encourage local interest and involvement of government agencies such as DEC &amp; DIPNR</i> <b>C, LG, SG</b></p> <p>[b] <i>fire management</i> <b>C, LG, SG</b></p> <p>[c] <i>retention of 30% (the regulatory minimum) of all the different vegetative communities</i> <b>C, LG</b></p> <p>[d] <i>develop a charter for the conservation of the biodiversity of the area</i> <b>C, LG</b></p>

ISSUE 10 [C]	RECOMMENDATION
Environment and Sustainable Development [C] Productive lands management	<p>[a] <i>encourage sustainable land management</i> <b>C, LG, SG</b></p> <p>[b] <i>gather information on the economic diversification of rural zoned lands</i> <b>C, LG, SG</b></p> <p>[c] <i>develop landcare links and programs</i> <b>C, LG</b></p> <p>[d] <i>prepare an inventory of Greater Tomerong native/exotic plants and animals.</i> <b>C, LG, SG</b></p>

ISSUE 10 [D]	RECOMMENDATION
Environment and Sustainable Development [D] Sustainable water use — <i>(clean water)</i>	<p>[a] <i>encourage water conservation (e.g. facilitate use of water tanks, grey water systems, other water recycling)</i> <b>C, LG, SG</b></p> <p>[b] <i>act with awareness that all streams, creeks and drains lead to where we swim, fish and play.</i> <b>C, LG</b></p> <p>[c] <i>ensure proper maintenance of sewerage systems</i> <b>C, LG</b></p>

ISSUE 10 [E]	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Environment and Sustainable Development [E] Development and subdivision considerations</p>	<p>[a] <i>gather information on ecological footprints</i> <b>C, LG, LOD</b>  [b] <i>encourage sustainable sewerage management systems.</i> <b>LG, LOD</b>  [c] <i>ensure information is available and helpful to assist with adoption of ESD principles</i> <b>C, LG, LOD</b>  [d] <i>quality assurance pre &amp; post development</i> <b>LG, LOD</b>  [e] <i>encourage developers to contribute to village community considerations</i> <b>C, LG, LOD</b>  [f] <i>appropriate lot sizes</i> <b>LG</b>  [g] <i>provide for public land and public space in developments.</i></p>