



**PLACE**  
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# Kings Forest Project Application (Stage 1)

## Rural Supplies Centre (Precinct 1)

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### Visual Impact Statement

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Prepared for

Project 28 Pty Ltd

PLANNING DESIGN ENVIRONMENT

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Date:	29 August 2012
Document Reference:	LED05_Kings Forest_Visual Impact Statement_Rural Supplies Centre
Report:	Visual Impact Statement - DRAFT

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Executive Summary

The Kings Forest Stage 1 Project Application No. MP 08\_0194 was lodged in November 2011. The Application and Environmental Assessment Report was advertised from December 2011 to January 2012 following which 302 public submissions and 10 agency submissions were received.

As a result of the submissions, amendments to the project have been made. The amended project contains the following key elements (NB: these elements will be revised and updated as the amended project is finalised).

- Subdivision to create new lots for future development;
  - Bulk earthworks across the site;
  - Road works comprising:
    - construction of the entrance road into the site and associated intersection works on Tweed Coast Road;
    - alignment and construction of the proposed Kings Forest Parkway from Tweed Coast Road via Precincts 4 and 5 through to the western precincts; and
    - alignment and part construction of two proposed roads through SEPP 14 areas to access the southern precincts;
- Development of 2,036 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space for rural supplies development and access arrangements within Precinct 1;
- Construction of subdivision and infrastructure works along the Kings Forest Parkway and within Precincts 1 and 5;
- The Plan of Development for Precinct 5.

## 1.2 Visual Assessment Overview

This Visual Impact Statement assesses the visual impact of the Rural Supplies Centre on landscape character, passing traffic, adjoining properties and local residences. It examines the visual appearance of the Rural Supplies Centre building and carpark in terms of built form and landscape, the likely impact of the development on the surrounding landscape. It makes recommendations to mitigate impacts on the through design measures, particularly from Tweed Coast Road.

It references a number of key project application documents contained at the end of the report.

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

### 2.1 Landscape Character

The character of the landscape leading to and immediately surrounding the subject site is distinctly rural and typical of the inland coastal area of Tweed Shire.

The land surrounding the subject site is fairly flat and low lying, with a combination of rural residential lots, agricultural land, plantations, riparian creek vegetation and coastal forest. There is some relief in topography with a low hill to the north of the subject site.

The area to the north is predominantly farm land with some residential dwellings and scattered clumps of retained vegetation. To the south and east, the land is environmentally protected wetland forest.

There are two existing developments to the west of the subject site. A small hamlet of houses is directly opposite the subject site and protected by an acoustic fence from Tweed Coast Road. A major residential estate is being developed to the west of the hamlet with a primary entrance off Old Tweed Road just south of the subject site. This development will alter the local rural character of the locality to some extent.



Fig 1. Site Location



**1. Farmland with residence and vegetation clumps on top of the hill (looking south)**



**2. Agricultural land (looking south)**



**3. Low lying coastal forest (looking north)**

**Fig 2. Landscape character along Tweed Coast Road**

## 2.2 Tweed Coast Road

The 80 kph two lane road currently carries about 9,000 vehicles a day (Source: Kings Forest Environmental Noise Impact Report, Carter Rytenskild Group, August 2012). It provides a link between the Pacific Highway and the coastal communities such as Casuarina Beach. There is a wire fence (much of it fauna proof) along its edges through environmental areas and farmland in the locality, including along the subject site.



**Fig 3. Fauna fence at the subject site**

## 2.3 Hamlet on Old Bogangar Road

Directly opposite the subject site, there is an existing timber acoustic fence facing the Tweed Coast Road with a gap allowing access to Old Bogangar Road and a hamlet of twelve houses. Immediately behind this fence is an existing vegetation buffer that also acts as a visual screen to the hamlet. The timber fence is to be upgraded as part of development works for Kings Forest.



**Fig 4. Existing timber acoustic fence opposite the subject site**

## 2.4 The Plantation

The trees in the plantation have been felled and it is currently an open paddock with a row of eucalypts along the boundary. It is assumed that the plantation will be forested again in the future.



**Fig 5. The plantation land north of the subject site**

## 2.5 Wetlands and ecological buffer

Existing vegetation on the subject site will form the future ecological buffer to the wetlands.



**Fig 6. Wetland vegetation to form part of the ecological buffer**

## 2.6 Kings Forest Residential Development

At the southern tip of the subject site opposite the ecological buffer, a new road off the Tweed Coast Road will provide the main entry to Kings Forest via a roundabout and the Kings Forest Parkway – a dual carriage landscaped boulevard.

The Kings Forest Residential Development will include a range of residential types, community and educational facilities, and neighbourhood commercial facilities. Kings Forest will generate a significant increase in traffic which will be evident at the turning on to Tweed Coast Road. The entry feature at this point includes decorative pillars, acoustic fencing, signage and landscape planting.



**Fig 7. New entry to Kings Forest Development (plan)**



**LEGEND**

- ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA
- ECOLOGICAL BUFFER
- EXISTING VEGETATION BUFFER (MIX NATIVES AND WEED SPECIES)
- ENTRY TO KINGS FOREST DEVELOPMENT OR HAMLET
- EXISTING WIRE FENCE
- EXISTING ACOUSTIC FENCE TO BE UPGRADED

**Fig 8. Landscape Context Plan**

## 3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 3.1 Site Description

The Rural Supplies Centre is on a triangular site abutting wetlands to the east, Tweed Coast Road to the west and a tree plantation on agricultural land to the north. The land has been cleared in the past and is somewhat degraded with a number of weed species among the regrowth. The site is about a metre below the road level and generally flat. However, in the future the road will be lowered when it is widened and the site will be at the same level as the road.



**Fig 9. Rural Supplies Centre Plan**

Source: Kings Forest Rural Supplies Centre Site Plan, Buchanan Group, August 2012

## 3.2 Development Description

A single one storey building is orientated east west with carparking to the front of the building and service access, loading and turnaround located behind the building and adjacent to the northern boundary. There is a single access point to the development from Tweed Coast Road on the west boundary.

The majority of the site is hardscape as either building footprint or paved surface. The development comprises:

- A single building of 2036m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area
- A large and small carpark (total 135 spaces)
- Service and access roads
- A retail sign to be visible from Tweed Coast Road
- A regional pump station
- Perimeter fencing
- Landscape treatments and planting areas

These elements are discussed in more detail below.

### 3.2.1 Built Form

The Rural Supplies Centre is a single storey structure with a roof height of 5.1m. Twelve vertical posts and an AC unit take the overall building height to 6.5m. The building is 28m wide and 88.4m long and is set back 14m from the Tweed Coast Road.

The front facade faces the carpark and has 11 glass shop fronts positioned between the vertical posts. An awning over a 3m wide footpath runs along the length of the front facade

The remaining building facades are concrete tilt panel walls in a mottled pattern of neutral colours. The long facade facing the plantation has three large roller doors. The two end facades facing the ecological buffer and Tweed Coast Road are blank walls.

The majority of the site cover is bitumen to allow vehicular access and carparking. Coloured concrete paving is provided for pedestrian access at the building.

A chain wire fauna proof fence will run along the boundary between the carpark and the Ecological Buffer Zone. There will also be a chain wire fence along the northern boundary to the plantation.



**Fig 10. Rural Supplies Centre Elevations**

Source: Kings Forest Rural Supplies Centre Site Plan, Buchanan Group, August 2012

### 3.2.2 Landscape

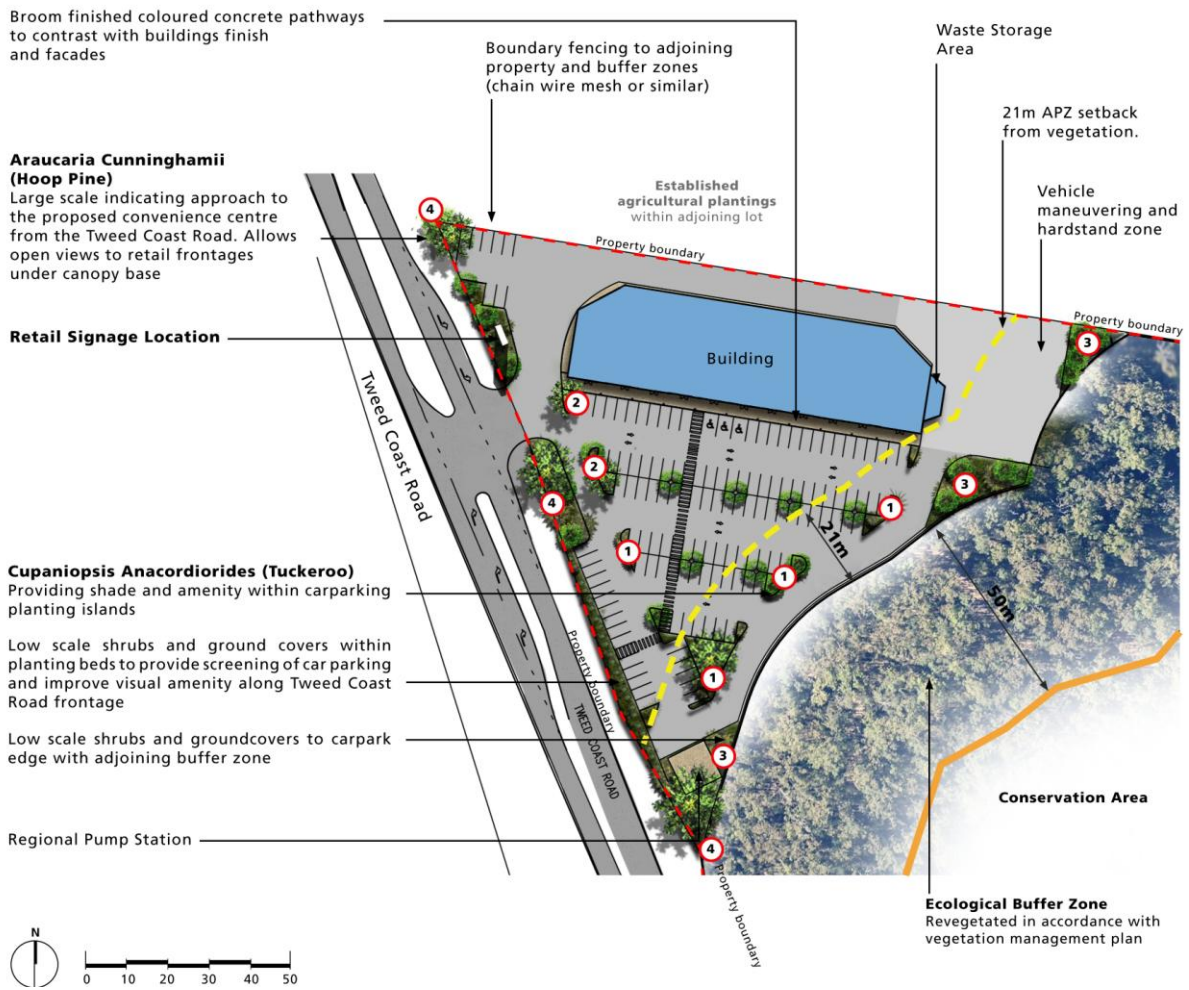
Landscape for the Rural Supplies Centre comprises the following:

- A 50m buffer zone to the wetlands
- Buffer planting to Tweed Coast Road frontage
- Shade trees and understorey planting in the car park areas
- Larger planted areas adjacent to the buffer zone boundary
- Planted area around the pump station

The buffer zone will be revegetated as an ecological area with endemic plants in accordance with the Vegetation Management Plan. It will provide a natural backdrop to the development on one side.

The width of the buffer planting to Tweed Coast Road along the southern frontage varies in width between 0.9m at its narrowest and 4.3m at its widest. To the north of the entry the buffer planting is compromised by the small car park to the northwest corner which will have no buffer planting at one point. The buffer will generally comprise of tall trees, low shrubs (to 1.5m) and groundcover planting of predominantly native species.

Shade trees in the carpark are planted either between parking isles in small tree pits or at the ends of isles in larger islands. It is noted that the size of the tree pits between car aisles will not support significant tree growth and so trees will be stunted unless remedial action is undertaken (refer to recommendations).



**Fig 11. Rural Supplies Centre Landscape Plan**  
 Source: Kings Forest Landscape Plan, PLACE Design Group, July 2012

## 4.0 VISUAL IMPACTS

### 4.1 Viewers

The Rural Supplies Centre will mostly be viewed by regional visitors or locals travelling through the area along the Tweed Coast Road. It will also be visible to a much smaller number of people from three private properties on Old Bogangbar Road and from users of the plantation.

From Tweed Coast Road, approximately 9,000 daily travellers will view the development for a limited time in passing which will have some impact on their experience of their movement through the rural landscape. From the hamlet residences and the plantation a small number of local users will be impacted by the development for longer periods of time.

For these reasons it is considered advantageous to reduce the impact of the built elements wherever possible. This can be achieved by softening or filtering views of the building through vegetation and appropriate colour choices.

### 4.2 Visibility

The Rural Supplies Centre site is visible at grade from the Tweed Coast Road as one approaches it and drives past. There are static views of much of the development site from three residences and the access point to Old Bogangbar Road.

The development site is highly visible from the adjacent plantation which is private property. The property is slightly elevated above the subject site which also makes it more visible.

The ecological buffer of the site is visible from the environmental area and it also serves to restrict the interior views to the Rural Supplies Centre.

The visual impact of these various views is discussed in the next section.



LEGEND


- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | HOUSES WITH VIEW TO RURAL SUPPLIES CENTRE   |  | VIEW FROM ADJACENT PLANTATION                             |
|  | VIEW FROM RESIDENCES                        |  | EXISTING ACOUSTIC FENCE TO BE UPGRADED                    |
|  | VIEWS ON THE APPROACH FROM TWEED COAST ROAD |  | EXISTING VEGETATION BUFFER (MIX NATIVES AND WEED SPECIES) |

Fig 12. Visual Impacts Plan

## 4.3 Visual Impact

The different elements of the Rural Supplies Centre have different visual impacts. In addition, the impacts differ depending on where they are viewed from. This is discussed below.

### 4.3.1 Impacts from Tweed Coast Road

The buffer zone will be seen as dense vegetation and will visually blend with the environmental area. The visual impact will be very low as it is a desirable view that reinforces the rural and riparian quality of the local landscape.

The carpark will be at a similar level to the road and the view of it will be mostly screened by the buffer planting on the road boundary and some planting areas within the carpark. The exception to this is at the entry where cars will be in full view. However, this view will be fairly fleeting while driving on the Tweed Coast Road. The impact of the carpark is considered low due to the extent of screening from the boundary planting.

Approaching from the south, the building will mostly be screened or softened by trees in the carpark so the full length of it will not be evident from the road. Where there are trees, the building will be partially visible above the buffer planting and below the canopies of the Hoop Pines at the entry and the shade trees in the carpark. The building height is relatively low and will not be visible above the canopies of trees (once mature). The building will have a medium to low impact due to the extent of screening.

Approaching from the north, the rear of the building will be seen between the trees on the road boundary of the plantation. As the plantation regrows, the building will be screened from view from this angle. This impact will change from medium to low over time.

### 4.3.2 Impact from hamlet residences

Part of the development site is fully visible across the Tweed Coast Road, however much of the view of the carpark and building will be screened by vegetation (trees and boundary planting). The impact to residences is considered low.

### 4.3.3 Impact from the plantation

The back of the building, AC unit, service road and wire fence will be fully visible from the plantation site. Even though the numbers of users is low, this is a high visual impact due to there being no planting along the boundary to screen or visually reduce the scale and bulk of the building. That said, there may be opportunity for screening on the plantation property should that be desired.

### 4.3.4 Impact on character

The environmental buffer zone which occupies about a third of the site strongly reinforces the natural rural character of the area. In addition, the new native boundary planting that replaces the wire fence along Tweed Coast Road will appear much more sympathetic to the rural landscape.

The scale of the carpark and building are not particularly sympathetic to the rural character, however they are largely screened or softened by new planting of shrubs and trees. The colours and pattern of the building facade are neutral browns which will help the building to blend in with the surrounding colours of nature.

There is a lack of trees along the boundary which weakens the road landscape and experience and the landscape character along this stretch.



**Fig 13. Visual Impact Impression – looking south**



**Fig 14. Visual Impact Impression – looking north**

## 4.4 Conclusion

The Rural Supplies Centre will have some impact on the existing overall rural character by converting an open paddock into a development area with a building and carpark. While the scale, shape and colour of the building is fairly consistent in character with a rural “shed”, the carpark is not.

However, the boundary planting will provide adequate screening to the carpark and the trees in the carpark will screen or reduce the visibility of the building to a large extent. In terms of height, the trees will eventually be the dominant feature on the site.

The new boundary landscape to Tweed Coast Road, provides an improvement on the existing visual amenity along the roadside by replacing the chainwire fence with attractive native buffer planting. There is also an opportunity to provide tall feature trees along the length of the road boundary to improve the quality of landscape character. Additional tall hoop pines along the boundary would eventually become a dominant feature in the landscape and counteract the scale of the building and provide a strong sense of place in keeping with the Tweed Coast Road experience.

Further recommendations to improve visual amenity are outlined below.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Discussion

The following recommendations will assist in reducing some of the visual impacts of the Rural Supplies Centre and enhance, rather than detract from, local landscape character. These recommendations are to be integrated into the detail design of the development. Refer to the recommendations plan.

#### 5.1.1 Shade trees

It is essential that the shade trees in the carpark reach full maturity to provide amenity and softening to the harshness of the hardstand as well as softening the appearance of the building from the road. This can only be achieved with adequate sized tree pits to support healthy tree growth. It is recommended that seven tree pits use structural soil cells underneath the paving for this purpose. This will need to be budgeted for in the landscape costing.

#### 5.1.2 Buffer planting

The buffer planting should occur along the length of the Tweed Road frontage to provide consistent visual appearance and amenity. This can be achieved by reconfiguring the shape of the small northern carpark to allow for enough space for planting on the boundary. This can be achieved without compromising the amount of car spaces.

#### 5.1.3 Building Colour

The colours of the building are neutral which will reduce its visual impact. The tone of the colours should be mid range rather than light so that it visually recedes and blends in with its surroundings.

#### 5.1.4 AC Unit




The AC unit, deck and screening would be best placed towards the middle of the building where it will be less visible from Tweed Coast Road. Alternatively, taking the unit off the roof and integrating it with the building on the ground plane will reduce its visual impact and intrusion on landscape character.

#### 5.1.5 Road character

It is recommended that a row of hoop pines are planting along the road boundary to provide adequate scale in the landscape to offset the building development. It will also provide a strong feature that provides a sense of place to the development overtime. In future these mature pines will be just as effective as signage in marking the site for locals and visitors alike.



LEGEND

-  HOOP PINES (*Araucaria cunninghamii*) AT 25m CENTRES ALONG BOUNDARY
-  STRUCTURAL TREE PITS REQUIRED FOR ADEQUATE TREE GROWTH
-  RE-CONFIGURED CARPARK TO ALLOW FOR BUFFER PLANTING TO TWEED COAST ROAD

**Fig 15. Recommendations Plan**

## REFERENCES

Kings Forest, Precinct 5 Plan of Development, RPS, August 2012

Kings Forest, Stage 1 Project Application, Concept Plan, RPS, August 2012

Kings Forest, Stage 1 Project Application, Road Hierarchy Plan, RPS, August 2012

Kings Forest Environmental Noise Impact Report, Carter Rytenskild Group, August 2012

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Kings Forest, Rural Supplies Centre Site Plan and Location Plan, The Buchan Group, July 2012

Kings Forest Rural Retail Development Visual Impact Statement, MPS Architects, March 2011

Kings Forest Visual Impact Statement For Precinct 5, PLACE Design Group, June 2011