

26 November 2025

The Planning Secretary  
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure  
Locked Bag 5022  
Parramatta NSW 2124

Att: Fadi Shakir

Dear Planning Secretary

**Submission on the Environmental Impact Statement for the Berrima Hotel  
(SSD-66876472)**

Wingecarribee Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission during the public exhibition period for the Berrima Hotel proposed adaptive re-use of the former Berrima Gaol at 2-4 Argyle Street, Berrima.

The former Berrima Gaol is a place of exceptional historical and cultural significance, both to the Berrima community and to the wider State. Its adaptive reuse presents a unique opportunity to conserve and celebrate this important State Heritage Item, while contributing to the Southern Highlands visitor economy and local employment opportunities.

Council recognises the positive potential of this SSD application, noting the opportunity to revitalise the site through heritage-sensitive reuse that delivers public access and regional economic benefit. If well executed, the project could provide a benchmark for design excellence and adaptive reuse outcomes in heritage settings.

While Council acknowledges the project's potential benefits, it has identified several key issues in its detailed submission that warrant further refinement prior to determination, including:

- Ensuring all works to heritage fabric are minimal, reversible, and consistent with the Conservation Management Plan.
- Reducing visual bulk and height of new buildings and maintaining the landmark integrity of the Argyle Street façade.
- Minimising visual, traffic, and amenity impacts on Berrima Village and surrounding environment.
- Applying best-practice stormwater and water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) principles to protect the Wingecarribee River corridor.
- Embedding a genuine community benefit framework through local employment, access and interpretation initiatives.
- Maintaining ongoing collaboration with community and Aboriginal stakeholders.

*We're with you*

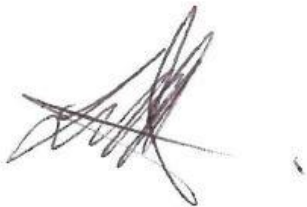
Council's detailed submission provides further analysis and recommendations to guide refinement of the proposal to ensure that the site's cultural, environmental and community values are safeguarded. This submission was endorsed by Council at its meeting held on 19 November 2025.

Council's overall position remains one of in-principle support for the adaptive reuse of the Berrima Gaol, subject to the Department's satisfaction that the matters raised in this submission have been appropriately addressed or conditioned. Council is committed to continuing to work collaboratively with the Department, the proponent and the community to ensure that the redevelopment achieves the highest standards of heritage conservation, design, quality and public benefit.

Council also wishes to note the difficulty in comprehensively reviewing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and accompanying documents within the exhibition timeframes. Given Council meetings and reporting cycles, the short exhibition period limits the ability to provide detailed feedback warranted by a project of this scale and complexity. We acknowledge that an extension was granted due to incomplete documentation, however this does not equate to additional time for review to complete an endorsed submission. Extending timeframes for comment on significant State projects should be considered as a matter of policy by the State Government to allow for more thorough local review and better overall outcomes.

Should you require any additional information please contact Jessica Lintern, Manager Strategic Outcomes on (02) 4868 0888 during business hours (8.30am – 4.30pm) Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Miscamble', with a small blue mark to its right.

Lisa Miscamble  
**General Manager**



# Wingecarribee Shire Council Submission

Berrima Hotel State Significant Development Application (SSD-66876472)

## Executive Summary

Wingecarribee Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the public exhibition phase for the Berrima Hotel State Significant Development (SSD) application (SSD-66876472) for the proposed adaptive re-use of the former Berrima Gaol as a tourist facility comprising a boutique hotel, function centre, restaurants, bar and wellness facilities.

Council acknowledges the potential social, cultural, and economic benefits of the adaptive reuse of this landmark site. If sensitively designed and managed, the redevelopment offers an opportunity to celebrate Berrima's unique heritage, support tourism, and contribute to regional employment.

However, Council also recognises its responsibility to ensure that any redevelopment maintains the integrity of this State heritage item, protects the amenity and character of Berrima Village, and safeguards environmental and infrastructure outcomes.

This submission outlines Council's assessment of key issues, identifies areas requiring refinement, and provides recommendations to ensure the proposal delivers positive outcomes for both the community and the heritage significance of the site.

Council offers in-principle support for the proposal, on the basis that:

- The development respects and retains the heritage significance of the Berrima Gaol and the broader Berrima Heritage Conservation Area.
- New built form is appropriately scaled, visually recessive, and responsive to the village character.
- Environmental and sustainability outcomes are clearly measurable and embedded through detailed design.
- Community access and benefit are prioritised alongside commercial activation.

The key conditions for Council's support of the proposal are:

- Heritage: No new openings in the Argyle Street façade; ongoing compliance with the Conservation Management Plan; and implementation of a Heritage Interpretation Plan.
- Urban Design: Reduce the visual bulk of the River Suites; enhance landscape screening; prepare Lighting Management Plan to manage night-time character.
- Environment and Sustainability: Stormwater and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) Implementation Plan; Green Star or equivalent sustainability benchmark; measurable carbon-reduction and tree canopy targets.
- Traffic and Access: Preparation of a Comprehensive Traffic and Parking Management Plan; provision of a right-turn treatment at Old Hume Highway; improved pedestrian connections.
- Infrastructure and Servicing: Confirm servicing capacity and upgrades; provision of water, sewer and drainage to Council standards, undertake road dilapidation and upgrade works completed prior to construction.
- Community Benefit: Preparation of a Local Employment and Procurement Strategy; meaningful ongoing community and Aboriginal stakeholder engagement, with feedback loops and responses; provision of benefits above and beyond Council's development contributions plans.

## 1. Introduction and Context

The proposal seeks consent for the adaptive reuse of the former Berrima Gaol at 2-4 Argyle Street, Berrima into a boutique hotel and tourism precinct, known as the Berrima Hotel.

Prepared by Sutherland & Associates Planning on behalf of Blue Sox Group, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and supporting documentation has been submitted to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) as an SSD application.

While DPHI is the assessing body, Wingecarribee Shire Council's role is to provide technical and community-based feedback to ensure that development outcomes are consistent with local strategic objectives and the expectations of the Berrima community.

Council's assessment has been guided by the Wingecarribee 2035: Community Strategic Plan, the Wingecarribee Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS – Wingecarribee 2040), the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan (WLEP 2010), and the Berrima Development Control Plan (DCP), which remain highly relevant despite the project's SSD status.

## 2. Key assessment issues and Council commentary

### 2.1. Heritage and Built Form

The Berrima Gaol is one of the most significant colonial penal sites in NSW, listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR No. 00807) and within the Berrima Heritage Conservation Area under the WLEP. The site contributes substantially to the historic and aesthetic character of Berrima village and is central to its tourism identity.

#### Adaptive Reuse Approach

The proposed works aim to retain and adapt the key heritage buildings and site elements, including the perimeter sandstone walls, 1866 and 1839 gatehouses, Governor's Residence, Deputy Governor's Residence, and associated courtyards, for new uses that enable greater public access and appreciation.

Council supports this adaptive reuse strategy in principle. It represents a positive step toward ensuring the site's long-term conservation and activation while allowing the public to engage with an important chapter of Berrima's and the State's penal history.

#### Design Integration and New Works

The proposed new works, as illustrated in Turner Studio's design drawings (DA-110-008 to DA-220-601), include new hotel accommodation building ("River Suites") located to the west of the main gaol complex, glazed infill roofs to one of the existing courtyards, and limited alterations to the eastern wall to improve permeability and accessibility.

While the architectural treatments proposed appear contemporary and visually recessive, Council recommends further design refinement to ensure:

- The scale and massing of new buildings do not visually compete with the dominant sandstone gaol form, particularly when viewed from Argyle Street and Wingecarribee Street.
- The materials palette (primarily glass, metal, and lightweight cladding) is carefully controlled to remain complementary to the site's sandstone construction and Berrima's broader heritage character.

- The roof forms of the proposed courtyard enclosures maintain visual subordination to the original building envelope, ensuring transparency and reversibility consistent with the NSW Heritage Office Adaptive Reuse Guidelines.

Council notes the Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) finding that “new additions are located and designed to be clearly distinguishable from the historic fabric, while remaining sympathetic in scale, materiality, and form.” Council supports this principle but recommends DPHI impose conditions requiring a Heritage Design Review Panel or similar process during detailed design to ensure these conservation principles are upheld through delivery.

#### Openings and Wall Alterations

The proposal includes the creation of a new opening in the eastern gaol wall to improve access between the forecourt and internal precinct. The HIS assesses this as a minor intervention with negligible impact on overall significance, provided that stonework salvage, interpretive detailing, and documentation are undertaken before removal.

While this rationale is accepted, Council does not support the creation of any new openings within the principal façade of the Gaol fronting Argyle Street. This elevation is fundamental to the site’s historic and visual integrity and contributes strongly to the landmark character of Berrima village. This façade represents a defining element to the site’s State heritage significance and should remain visually intact and uninterrupted.

Council also recommends that any new openings or penetrations in original walls be the minimum necessary, with all stone elements salvaged, catalogued, and reused where feasible to retain physical and interpretive integrity.

#### Conservation and Management Framework

The proposal aligns with the 2024 Conservation Management Plan (CMP), which provides conservation policies for the Gaol’s long-term care. Council strongly supports conditioning the SSD consent to require:

- Ongoing adherence to the CMP.
- Preparation of a Detailed Conservation Works Schedule and Archaeological Research Design prior to any site works.
- Development of a Heritage Interpretation Strategy to communicate the site’s penal history and its social and cultural layers.

Council also recommends inclusion of a Heritage Maintenance Plan to guide long-term stewardship, consistent with the recommendations of the CMP and HIS.

#### Design Excellence and Visual Setting

The adaptive reuse of a State Heritage-listed site of this prominence demands an exemplary standard of design and integration. Council reiterates its earlier SEARs submission recommendation that the project be subject to an architectural design excellence process. It is noted that the proposal has been reviewed by the State Design Review Panel (SDRP). Further consultation with the SDRP should be undertaken with future iterations of the proposal and as further refinements are made.

This would ensure that future detailed design phases, particularly for the new hotel buildings, courtyard structures, and landscaping, maintain architectural integrity, respond appropriately to the village’s heritage setting, and deliver a cohesive and high-quality public realm outcome.

### Cultural Connection and Landscape integration

References to Aboriginal engagement and bush tucker planting are supported but require further definition. Council recommends a Cultural Heritage Management Plan co-designed with Traditional Custodians to ensure authenticity and ongoing involvement.

### Summary:

Council recognises the sensitive and well-researched approach adopted in the HIS and architectural documentation

Council supports adaptive reuse as a mechanism for heritage conservation but emphasises that interventions into the fabric of this State Heritage-listed site must be carefully justified, minimal and reversible wherever possible.

Council recommends:

- Adherence to the site's Conservation Management Plan (CMP) as the primary reference for all works.
- Limiting structural penetrations or openings into the gaol walls and ensuring consistency with the site's "Fortress" character.
- Ensuring that any new buildings or extensions remain visually subservient to the existing heritage structures.

## **2.2. Urban Design and Visual impact**

Council acknowledges that the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) (Virtual Ideas, 2025 Appendix 14) concludes that the proposal's most visually sensitive interfaces, being Argyle Street, Wilshire Street and Wingecarribee Street, ranges from low to high significance depending on viewing angle and distance.

While the assessment identifies that the Argyle Street frontage will largely retain its established visual character and heritage prominence, it also finds high significance visual change from viewpoints along Wilshire and Wingecarribee Streets. These locations represent key approach views to the Berrima Village and are integral to its heritage setting.

### Scale, Siting and Built Form

The proposed three-storey hotel building (River Suites) represents a substantial visual intervention on the western side of the site. Although the assessment asserts that its location within a topographic low and use of muted materials will mitigate visibility, Council considers the outcome highly dependent on assumptions about vegetation growth, material selection, and roof reflectivity.

Council is concerned that the building's height, massing, and visibility from the Wingecarribee River corridor will undermine the visual dominance of the original gaol walls and alter the low-rise, vegetated character that defines the Berrima Heritage Conservation Area. The building's bulk remains at odds with the fine-grain, human-scaled form of the surrounding village.

As noted in the VIA, the views of the western gaol walls are obstructed by the Industries Buildings, particularly from Wilshire Street, however the massing and visual dominance of this building is significantly less than what is proposed. The consideration of this building and how it is viewed from both Wilshire and Wingecarribee Streets, should be considered in more detail with a reduction in the overall massing and scale.

### Public Domain and Streetscape Character

The proposal introduces a formalised carpark (“the Paddock”) on the southern boundary adjacent to Wingecarribee Street, which the VIA identifies as generating a considerable magnitude of visual change. Council notes that this intervention risks urbanising a traditionally informally landscape edge, creating a discordant relationship with the rural lane character of the street.

Council recommends that the Department impose conditions requiring the design of Wingecarribee Street frontages to:

- Maintain the streetscape character of Berrima village and ensure minimal hardstanding.
- Incorporate dense landscaping and canopy planting to soften the carpark interface.
- Use locally characteristic materials (sandstone edging, timber fencing) to integrate new elements visually with the surrounding village fabric.

### View Corridors and Visual Integration

While the VIA identifies the Argyle Street facade as being subject to low visual impact, Council emphasises that this frontage is the site’s most defining and recognisable feature within the heritage streetscape. Any new openings or interventions in this elevation would irreversibly diminish its landmark value and must be prohibited.

The assessment’s reliance on vegetation screening as a long-term mitigation measure is also problematic, as plant establishment and seasonal variation can significantly affect the effectiveness of visual buffering. Council recommends that a Visual Impact Verification Report be prepared to confirm the actual degree of visibility of new structures, supported by realistic landscape maturity modelling and independent peer review.

### Lighting and Night-time Character

Council notes that the EIS and VIA provide limited assessment of night-time lighting impacts. Given the site’s elevated position, proposed operating hours, and proximity to residential properties, the introduction of landscape and architectural lighting could substantially alter the night-time ambience of Berrima.

Artificial lighting also has the potential to disrupt local biodiversity, particularly nocturnal fauna that rely on natural darkness for foraging and movement. Light spill into surrounding vegetated areas and along the Wingecarribee River should be minimised to protect habitat connectivity and ecological function.

Council recommends a Lighting Management Plan be prepared to ensure all external illumination is low-level, shielded, and consistent with the heritage village context, and to verify that lighting design avoids impacts on both residential amenity and local wildlife.

### Summary

While Council supports the principle of sensitively designed adaptive reuse, the VIA demonstrates that the proposal will generate moderate to high visual impacts from key approach views and introduce built form elements inconsistent with Berrima’s traditional village scale.

Council recommends the Department require:

- Reduction in the height and visual prominence of the River Suites building.
- Enhanced landscape screening and integration along Wingecarribee and Wilshire Street frontages.
- Preparation of a Visual Impact Verification Report at detailed design stage.
- Submission of a Lighting Management Plan prior to construction.

Subject to these refinements, Council considers that the visual and urban design outcomes could achieve a more sympathetic and contextually appropriate integration of new and heritage elements within the Berrima village setting.

### **2.3. Traffic, Parking and Access**

Council has reviewed the Traffic Impact Assessment (Arup, 2025) and associated plans. The adaptive reuse of the Berrima Gaol will introduce new visitor and staff movements, event traffic, and increased pedestrian activity within and around the Berrima village centre.

Council recognises that while the local road network has some reserve capacity, the village's historic layout and narrow carriageways require careful management to protect safety, amenity, and accessibility. This will be increasingly important given the proposed use and increased activity that will be generated through the adaptive reuse of the site.

#### Pedestrian access

Greater consideration should be given to the improvement of pedestrian access to promote greater connectivity and accessibility both to the site and to Berrima village. Council requests that the plans and documentation are updated to include:

- Pedestrian footpaths along Wingecarribee Street and Wilshire Street.
- A footpath on the southern side of Wilshire Street, extending from Argyle Street to the furthest pedestrian access point of the development site.
- Pedestrian connectivity between the Berrima Gaol site and the adjoining Surveyor General Inn should be clearly addressed to ensure safe and coordinated movement between these two activity nodes, minimising potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.

As this proposal will significantly increase pedestrian activity within Berrima Village, a pedestrian crossing facility on the Old Hume Highway should also be provided by the proponent as part of this development.

These works will ensure safe pedestrian movement and support integration between the Gaol precinct and existing retail, dining, and visitor destinations within Berrima.

#### Parking

The proposal includes both basement and at-grade parking, providing 195 spaces across three levels. Council requests that further detailed assessment be undertaken to ensure that all parking generated by the proposal, including events, staff, and visitor peaks, can be accommodated within the site. This should be confirmed based on the proposal of the at-grade car parking being multifunctional space and having the ability to be used for events and gatherings as needed. These uses are considered to increase the demand for parking.

Council also notes references to buffer planting to screen the car park from Argyle Street. From review of the architectural plans, it appears that existing sheds fronting the car park are to be removed. Without these, effective screening will rely heavily on landscape treatments.

The Landscape Plans and Design Report (Appendices 7 and 8) identify planting species and an indicative layout; however, the extent and maturity of the proposed vegetation may be insufficient to minimise visual impact and provide adequate shade.

Council requests that paid parking be prohibited on site. This is to ensure visitors and patrons utilise the dedicated parking facilities provided within the development rather than

seeking free parking within the Berrima village, which would otherwise place pressure on limited public parking resources.

Council requests that:

- Amended plans be provided showing detailed planting arrangements, with the quantity and species, and visualisations.
- Soil depth and species selection to be confirmed to support long-term canopy growth.
- Additional trees and screening vegetation be incorporated to better conceal the carpark and soften the development's visual impact from Argyle Street and Wilshire Street.

### Traffic

Council requests that the proponent deliver a Basic Right Turn (BAR) treatment for vehicles turning into Wingecarribee Street from the Old Hume Highway. Without this improvement, traffic congestion and safety risks are likely to occur on the highway due to queuing and delayed movements.

Further evidence is also required to demonstrate that the local road network can safely accommodate peak visitor volumes, particularly during events, and that pedestrian safety will be maintained.

A Comprehensive Parking and Access Management Plan should be prepared, including:

- Event-day and peak-season traffic management and strategies.
- Wayfinding and directional signage for visitors.
- Pedestrian safety improvements at key intersections.

Council also encourages investigation of shuttle or park-and-ride services during major events to reduce localised congestion and parking pressure within the village.

### Summary

Council acknowledges that the transport studies support the viability of the proposal but considers that additional detail and commitments are required to ensure the development integrates safely with the existing road network and preserves Berrima's village character.

A coordinated approach to vehicle access, parking and pedestrian movement, supported by updated plans, verified traffic modelling, and landscape screening, will be essential to achieving a balanced outcome that supports both local amenity and visitor experience. Addressing the matters raised in this part of the submission will improve traffic, parking, and connectivity while minimising visual impacts and respecting the heritage values of the site and Berrima village.

## **2.4. Environmental and Flooding Impacts**

Council acknowledges the comprehensive environmental assessments submitted as part of the EIS, including reports on sustainability, arboriculture, and flooding. The documentation demonstrates a genuine intent to deliver a development that supports environmental performance, sustainability, and long-term resilience.

While Council supports the general direction of the proposal, several matters require further clarification and quantification to ensure positive outcomes are being achieved.

### Sustainability and Design Integration

The Architectural Design Report (Appendix 6) identifies that the project will achieve a net increase in tree canopy cover compared with existing site conditions. Council welcomes this commitment but requests that the extent of tree canopy increase be quantified.

The same report recommends using local materials in construction to maximise circular economy principles and reduce embodied carbon. Council strongly supports this initiative and recommends that the use of locally sourced and recycled materials be formalised as a condition of consent if approval is granted.

The inclusion of rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) infrastructure is also supported. However, Council seeks confirmation that this system is incorporated into the final design and the visual impacts, particularly from elevated viewpoints along Argyle Street and Wilshire Street are appropriately mitigated through colour treatment and screening. It is unclear if the VIA (Appendix 14) has considered the PV system on the roof of the internal structures, and no views from elevated positions have been provided for assessment. This should be addressed prior to granting of any approval.

### Bushfire Assessment

Council supports the findings of the Bushfire Assessment, noting that all construction must meet relevant Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) ratings and provide adequate asset protection zones and emergency access. Consultation with the NSW Rural Fire Service should continue through detailed design.

### Trees Retention and Canopy Management

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) prepared (Appendix 16) identifies that approximately 119 trees will be retained on site, with approximately 30 trees removed to facilitate the redevelopment. The AIA has determined that the trees for removal are low retention value.

To maintain the village's landscape character and offset the removal of trees, Council requests that:

- Replacement planting achieves at least a 2:1 ratio using local endemic species.
- Detailed planting plans demonstrate soil depth and root-zone protection sufficient for mature canopy establishment.
- Independent arborist supervision occurs during construction to ensure compliance with AS4970-2009 (Protection of Trees on Development Sites).

These measures will ensure continuity of canopy cover and biodiversity while contributing to Berrima's green village setting.

### Sustainability Framework and ESD Commitments

Council commends the inclusion of an ESD framework that emphasises low-emission design, circular economy principles, and connection with Country. However, the Sustainability Assessment (Appendix 19) remains largely conceptual, with few measurable performance indicators.

To ensure robust outcomes, Council recommends conditioning:

- Achievement of a minimum 5-Star Green Star – Design & As Built (v1.3) certification or equivalent.
- All-electric operation, with confirmation that no gas infrastructure will be installed and renewable supply will be available from commencement.
- Inclusion of battery energy storage be undertaken as part of the Stage 1 works.
- Submission of a WSUD Implementation Report prior to construction, verifying the hydraulic performance of rainwater reuse, raingardens and permeable paving.

- Reparation of a Lifecycle Carbon Assessment demonstrating at least 10-20% reduction in embodied carbon compared with standard benchmarks.

Council supports the commitments to 80% construction waste diversion and heritage material reuse and recommends a Circular Economy and Waste Implementation Plan specifying on-site reuse, recycling, and organics management processes. This should still retain consistency with relevant heritage conservation standards.

### Flooding

The site and proposed works are essentially unaffected by flooding up to the 0.2% AEP flood event in the Wingecarribee River, and the flood impacts are considered to be acceptable.

In flood events larger than the 0.2% AEP, large amounts of water will flow down the basement car park entry ramp and produce high hazard flooding within the basement. While the proposal technically meets the requirements of the Berrima DCP, the residual risk for flooding of the basement in extreme events is a concern and should preferably be mitigated.

Council requests that the proponent provide further mitigation measures to manage the risk of flooding to the basement car parks.

### Summary

Overall, the environmental and sustainability components of the proposal demonstrate positive intent and alignment with strategic goals for adaptive reuse, energy efficiency, and resource conservation. However, quantifiable performance targets and formal commitments to local materials and canopy expansion are required to ensure best practice outcomes and long-term resilience.

Council requests that:

- Condition measurable ESD performance standards, including Green Star certification and all-electric operation.
- Quantification of canopy cover increase and replacement planting at a 2:1 ratio using local species.
- Conditioning of local and recycled material use to support circular economy outcomes.
- Further flood mitigation measures to address basement risk in extreme flood vents.
- Submission of a WSUD Implementation Report prior to construction to confirm technical compliance.

## **2.5. Environmental Management Measures and Biodiversity**

Council notes that while a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) Waiver has been issued for the site (Appendix 21), the environmental assessments do not comprehensively address potential indirect biodiversity and habitat impacts that may arise during construction and operation.

The BDAR Waiver determination was granted on the basis that the development footprint is largely within a previously disturbed and built-up area, with minimal vegetation removal required as confirmed by the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Appendix 16). However, the waiver does not consider potential secondary impacts from lighting, noise, stormwater discharge, or increased visitation that could affect fauna movement and habitat values along the Wingecarribee River corridor.

Given the site's proximity to this sensitive riparian environment, and the presence of mature vegetation that provides foraging or roosting habitat, Council recommends that

further assessment be undertaken to confirm that the development and its associated infrastructure will not adversely affect local biodiversity or downstream ecosystems.

In addition, while the EIS includes a range of environmental management and mitigation measures, these are dispersed across multiple appendices. A consolidated Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be prepared prior to construction to integrate these measures, clearly identify environmental responsibilities, and provide monitoring, reporting and correction action processes.

The CEMP should specifically address:

- Vegetation protection and exclusion zones during construction.
- Erosion and sediment controls measures consistent with the Blue Book guidelines.
- Pollution prevention and water-quality safeguards for the Wingecarribee River.
- Habitat-sensitive lighting design to minimise wildlife disturbance.
- Post construction revegetation using local endemic species to enhance ecological connectivity.

### Summary

Council requests that:

- Preparation of a targeted ecological assessment to verify potential indirect impacts on fauna habitat and confirm mitigation measures.
- Preparation of a consolidated CEMP integrating all environmental safeguards and monitoring requirements.
- Incorporation of biodiversity protection and habitat-sensitive design measures within the WSUD and landscape frameworks.
- Ongoing consultation with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) to ensure alignment with the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021.

## **2.6. Noise, Amenity and Lighting**

The proposed uses include event spaces and outdoor functions, which may generate operational noise and light spill, particularly during evening events. The Acoustic Assessment (Renzo Tonin & Associates, August 2025) identifies that while noise levels are generally compliant with relevant criteria, some exceedances may occur at nearby residential receivers during events or construction without appropriate mitigation measures.

Council supports the proposed acoustic design measures, including noise barriers, use of acoustic glazing, and management of amplified sound. However, the Environmental Impact Statement does not provide a detailed Noise and Event Management Plan, nor does it address long-term compliance monitoring or community notification protocols.

Similarly, the Visual Impact Assessment and EIS provide limited analysis of lighting impacts. Given the site's elevated position and proximity to residential areas, night-time illumination has the potential to alter the village's ambient character.

Council recommends:

- Preparation and implementation of a Noise and Event Management Plan detailing hours of operation, amplified music curfews, and compliance monitoring.
- Preparation of a Lighting Management Plan ensuring compliance with AS 4282 – Control of the Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting, with all lighting shielded and low-level to protect Berrima's heritage character.
- Incorporation of landscape and built form screening to buffer adjoining residential areas and reduce both noise and light spill impacts.

## 2.7. Social and Economic Impacts

Council recognises that the proposed redevelopment of the Berrima Gaol could generate substantial local employment, training, and tourism benefits. These outcomes are positive but must be accompanied by clear, enforceable mechanisms to ensure that social and economic benefits are realised equitably and that impacts on Berrima's community and character are appropriately managed.

The Social and Economic Impact Assessment (Appendix 35, prepared by HillPDA) identifies a range of economic benefits, including employment generation, tourism activation and heritage revitalisation. However, Council considers that the EIS overstates community benefits and understates social and amenity risks associated with the project's scale and intensity of use.

### Social considerations

The proposed level visitation, events and accommodation represent a material shift from Berrima's small-scale, heritage focused character. Careful design, operation, and ongoing management will be critical to maintaining the village's identity and protecting local amenity.

The majority of the site, including the hotel, restaurant and spa facilities, will operate on a private or guest-only basis. While there will be improved physical access to parts of the Gaol, public entry will be limited. Council therefore recommends a preparation of a Community Access and Interpretation Plan that provides:

- Free, ongoing public access to key heritage spaces.
- Integration with the Berrima Heritage Trail to support education, interpretation, and storytelling about the site's history and cultural significance.

Event use and extended operational hours may result in increased noise, traffic and light spill. Council reiterates the importance of a Noise and Event Management Plan and recommends clear conditions of consent, should approval be granted, limiting operating hours and amplified sound.

### Local Employment and procurement

The HillPDA report estimates up to 414 total (99 direct and 316 indirect) construction and 123 total (63 direct and 60 indirect) operational jobs but provides no details that these roles will benefit local workers or businesses. Council recommends the preparation of a Local Employment and Procurement Strategy to ensure residents and local suppliers share in the project's economic benefits.

This strategy should include measurable targets for:

- Local workforce participation.
- Procurement from Southern Highlands-based suppliers.
- Reporting on economic outcomes following commencement of operations.

The HillPDA assessment assumes net economic growth but does not analyse potential displacement from existing small accommodation and hospitality providers. Council recommends DPHI require independent verification that the project provides net regional benefit rather than market redistribution.

Economic gains from large-scale events must be balanced against Berrima's infrastructure constraints, including narrow roads, limited parking and heritage infrastructure. Council further notes the risk of over-commercialisation or future conversion to non-tourism uses if the operation underperforms. Conditions of consent should therefore restrict future land use changes that are inconsistent with heritage tourism objectives.

The EIS indicates that the on-site restaurant will show case local produce. Council strongly supports this commitment and recommends it be formalised through a Local Supplier Agreement or similar mechanism to ensure tangible economic benefits to local producers.

#### Infrastructure Contributions and Community Benefit

While the development is State Significant and not subject to Council's development contributions framework, the scale and intensity of the redevelopment will increase demand on local infrastructure, services and public spaces.

Council requests that the proponent be required to work with Council and the Department to go beyond statutory contributions and deliver tangible community benefits consistent with the projects profile. This may include public domain and pedestrian improvements, heritage interpretation initiatives, and local amenity or infrastructure upgrades that strengthen connections with Berrima Village and provide lasting community value.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The Social and Economic Impact Assessment considers cumulative impacts (Section 4.3, Appendix 35) only within 1.5 kilometres of the site. This scope is too limited and does not capture the broader regional context including other major developments that may draw down upon the same accommodation supply, workforce, and community services across the Southern Highlands.

Given the scale of construction activity occurring across the region, cumulative demand on temporary accommodation, local services, transport networks, and community facilities should be more comprehensively assessed. Council recommends expanding the cumulative impact analysis to consider concurrent regional projects that may contribute to combined social and economic pressures during both construction and operation.

#### Summary

Council supports adaptive reuse of the Berrima Gaol as a means of conserving and activating a key heritage asset. However, to ensure that the project delivers authentic community and economic benefit, outcomes must be transparent, measurable, and locally focused.

Council recommends:

- Preparation of a Community Benefit and Access Plan addressing local employment targets, procurement from local suppliers, and community access to the site for educational or cultural purposes.
- Inclusion of interpretation and storytelling elements to reconnect residents and visitors with the history of Berrima Gaol and its broader social context.
- Preparation of a Local Employment and Procurement Strategy with measurable local job and supplier targets.
- Conditioning of event limits and operational controls to protect residential amenity and village character.
- The Department explore a Planning Agreement or a similar mechanism to secure additional community benefit outcomes consistent with the scale and public significance of the development.

## **2.8. Infrastructure and Servicing**

Council has reviewed the civil and servicing documentation accompanying the EIS and acknowledges that the proposed works aim to integrate with existing village infrastructure while supporting the adaptive reuse of the Berrima Gaol.

However, further detail is required to confirm that the proposed servicing strategy, including water, sewer, stormwater, waste, and road infrastructure, can adequately accommodate the development without adversely affecting existing systems or local amenity.

#### Works to Wingecarribee Street

Council requests that the design for Wingecarribee Street include:

- Provision of kerb and guttering with a piped stormwater drainage system to service the development.
- Sufficient space allocation for a footpath along the upgraded section, consistent with the Pedestrian Movement and Circulation Plan, connecting to the Berrima River Walk.
- An appropriate vehicle turning facility near the existing tennis court where the road reserve widens, to accommodate service and emergency vehicles safely.

#### Site servicing

It is unclear how waste from the development will be collected. A vertical clearance of 4.5 metres is insufficient for front-lift waste collection vehicles to carry out on-site collection. Detailed information about the waste collection process must be provided prior to determination.

Council's policy requires one water connection and meter per property. The design should consider one connection point off the largest connecting main (for fire flow) with appropriate fire and domestic metering/services. All internal services are to run off this single source.

The design must comply with Council's minimum standards of:

- DN180 water main diameter for commercial development.
- DN225 sewer main diameter, noting that while the downstream system may be smaller, new or renewed mains must meet these standards.

#### Water

The Water and Sewer Modelling Report identifies a total demand of 94 Equivalent Tenements (ETs) but does not provide the calculation methodology. Council requests that this be supplied to confirm assumptions and system capacity.

The water main relocation can be extended to form a ring main by connecting the dead end of Wingecarribee Street to Willshire Street via the rear of the property, within an appropriate easement in favour of Council. This ring main will prevent dirty water accumulation in the dead-end main and will potentially increase the water flow rate within the system.

The WS Model Report has not followed Council's template and is missing several key sections, which are listed below. Council requests the report is updated and provided to Council for review prior to determination. The WS Model Report needs to be updated with:

- Emergency storage analysis for SPS-BE1 has not been included, and therefore, potential impacts cannot be assessed. T
- Overflow details before and after development have not been provided, preventing assessment of any impact in system performance.
- The Hydraulic Grade Line (HGL) plot for the post-development scenario has not been included so it is unclear whether any surcharge occurs in the system from the connection point(s) to SPS-BE1. The HGL is required to be provided in the report

The water model version provided for the analysis had an error in the operation philosophy for Reservoir RES-ME1. In the version provided the fill rate is restricted to the point that the reservoir does not refill on subsequent maximum day demand (MDD) days. This has been reviewed and fixed in Council's latest model version in alignment with SCADA and observed operation. The modelling report needs to be updated to reflect this, and the latest version can be provided to the consultant with this update included. The WS Model report needs to be updated with regards to the reservoir comments.

### Sewer

The proposed sewer (Sewer Diversion Design – Annexure F) appears to be shallow (120mm at Chainage 58.30). It is located within the batter and flood zone. The manhole at Chainage 37.8 will have a depth of approximately 330mm, making it difficult to construct. Additionally, Council requires a 3-metre-wide easement over the sewer main through the site for maintenance.

Council has concerns regarding the proposed location of the sewer main, as it is adjacent to the Wingecarribee River. In the event of a sewer manhole surcharge, raw sewage could contaminate the Wingecarribee River.

An easement, minimum of 3 metres wide, will be required over the sewer main running through the site for access and maintenance.

Council prefers the entire length of the sewer main (Wilshire Street to Wingecarribee Street) within the development site to be upsized and renewed. There is less impact to renew the main as part of the works, rather than potentially having to do it later. As a minimum, the upstream sewer needs to be CCTV inspected before and after development works to ensure development works do not impact the sewer main. This should be included as a condition of consent if the proposal is to be approved.

### Stormwater

Council recommends that the use of Vortex style Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) in preference to filter cartridges to maximise treatment efficiency and reduce maintenance costs.

The final stormwater design should also confirm:

- System capacity under peak rainfall events.
- Integration with Council's stormwater network standards and the WSUD Implementation Plan.

### Construction Impacts

The proposal involves the removal of approximately 23,270 cubic metres of excess fill, equating to roughly 4,900 truck movements during the earthworks phase. Council requires detailed modelling of the cumulative transport impacts from these movements, in conjunction with other construction traffic, and requests the identification of any required road upgrades prior to the commencement of the works.

Council requests that further detail be provided about the potential construction impacts arising from these works and details of any upgrades required prior to approval.

A Dilapidation report should be prepared for adjoining roads, including the Old Hume Highway, to document existing conditions and safeguard Council's civil infrastructure assets. This report should be required as a condition of consent, if approval is to be granted.

### Summary

Overall, while the proposed servicing strategy demonstrates a workable approach to water, sewer, stormwater, and transport infrastructure, several elements require clarification or upgrading to meet Council's engineering and environmental standards.

Early coordination between the proponent and Council will be essential to achieving compliant, efficient, and resilient servicing outcomes.

Council recommends:

- Provision of kerb, gutter, piped drainage, and footpath along Wingecarribee Street.
- Revision of the Water and Sewer Modelling report to address missing analyses and use the updated model version.
- Upsizing and renewal of the on-site sewer main, with a minimum three metre easement and CCTV inspection pre- and post-development.
- Confirmation of waste collection arrangements and construction traffic management prior to approval.
- Conditioning of a Dilapidation Report for adjoining roads, with any required upgrades to occur before construction commences.

### **3. Conclusion**

Wingecarribee Shire Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Berrima Hotel SSD. The proposal presents a significant opportunity to conserve a State-listed heritage item, strengthen Berrima's visitor economy, and deliver community benefit. Council offers in-principle support, subject to further refinements that ensure the redevelopment protects the site's heritage values, integrates sensitively with the village character, and achieves credible environmental and servicing outcomes.

In Council's view, consent should secure:

- Heritage-led design that keeps the Argyle Street frontage visually intact and ensures new works remain clearly subordinate.
- Urban design and amenity measures that manage visual, lighting and noise effects.
- Verified sustainability and water-sensitive urban design performance.
- Safe and accessible traffic, parking and pedestrian connections.
- Transparent social and economic commitments that deliver public access and local benefit.

These expectations can be resolved through targeted design refinement and enforceable conditions as detailed design and pre-construction stages.

Council remains committed to working collaboratively with DPHI, the State Design Review Panel, the NSW Heritage Council, and the proponent to achieve an exemplary adaptive re-use outcome that celebrates Berrima's heritage, enhances local amenity, and provides lasting regional benefit.

