



**BYRON
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

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The Hon Anthony Roberts MP
Minister for Planning
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001
Via email: office@roberts.minister.nsw.gov.au

Dear Minister

Thank you for arranging a time for Council staff to meet with Jayden from your office and Luke Walton from Department of Planning last week to discuss Byron Shire's concerns in relation to the Agritourism package.

I am reaching out to see if Jayden has since discussed that meeting with you.

Byron Shire has several initiatives in place that connect with and support our agricultural sector. These include an in-house agricultural liaison officer, an agriculture industry cluster group and an agriculture action plan 2020-2025, all initiatives I instigated in the last term of Council. I therefore see myself well placed to raise our concerns with you about the Agritourism package.

As we now understand it, the planning provisions for Agritourism are still being drafted and can be refined. Conceivably, our concerns could be addressed now with further consultation. Of concern to my staff from the meeting, was the reliance by Department of Planning staff on pilot councils for the basis of these planning provisions. None of these councils are coastal or in the northern rivers area. Further, some of the metrics and terms presented verbally were new and did not make sense to our staff. We believe the provisions require further thought to ensure unintended impacts on agriculture and farming operations do not occur as the result of the exempt tourism uses being proposed on adjoining land.

We have requested to see the latest set of planning provisions to inform our position better but staff have been advised that we would only see them once they were notified and that comments could be made after.

We do not accept that this is a transparent or fair way to implement new statewide planning policy. It locks councils and their communities out from having valuable input about how they see their local areas being developed.

The implications of some of this package as communicated previously are significant on our local area and are not consistent with what our farming community or our local community has said they want for our rural land. We have had over the past few years



extensive consultation and planning changes put into place in our local environmental plan to respect their views and positions.

As such, we repeat our request that you allow Byron Shire to opt out of certain elements of the package which had previously been agreed to by the Department of Planning.

We also put to Luke Walton that if we are unable to opt out as a single council, then the Department of Planning consider a staged rollout of the package – perhaps inland councils first - as clearly these were the councils piloted and seeking the changes – with coastal councils at a subsequent nominated time to enable further feedback on these provisions to be provided to make them fit for purpose given how highly desired and challenging our coastal environments have become. The flood events of earlier this year has only increased the need to take a more cautious approach to major planning change. I am aware that our coastal neighbours, Ballina and Tweed councils also have similar concerns.

I look forward to your earliest response and given the drafting timeline believe a meeting with you would be highly beneficial, if at all possible.

Warm regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M Lyon', written in a cursive style.

Michael Lyon
MAYOR