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ADELAIDE HILLS COUNCIL RURAL/PRIMARY PRODUCTION AREAS PLANNING POLICY CHANGES



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

| | QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| 1 | How will the proposed planning policy changes affect primary producers? | <p>The cost of farmland in the Hills is considered artificially high because of high demand for rural lifestyle allotments by urban based commuters. This economic driver is making it more costly to farm some of the State's best farm land.</p> <p>The intent of the review of planning policies is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• keep the rural areas of the Adelaide Hills as a farming region and counter the trend to rural residential uses• designate high quality farm land as priority farming areas• provide improved planning policy guidelines for a range of buildings, structures and farming activities in the farming areas• limit rural lifestyle housing in farming areas to housing associated with a productive farm• provide for rural lifestyle housing and activities <i>outside priority farming areas</i>, and• to provide improved planning policy guidelines for value-adding agricultural activities in ways which do not pollute the watershed/water catchment. <p>The impact of the proposed changes to planning policies for the rural/primary production areas is intended to ensure good agricultural land is protected for this purpose, make it easier to farm from a planning policy point of view, and provide for value adding opportunities where such uses are undertaken on active farms.</p> |
| 2 | How would the the planning policy changes allow/assist primary producers to continue to farm? | <p>In essence the proposed changes are intended to simplify the development approval process as it will list a wider range of land use activities as "on-merit" rather than "non-complying¹" uses making it simpler to get some development approvals. Further, value adding agricultural activities will also be defined and listed as on-merit development to simplify the development approval process and enable farmers to use their land for a wider range of activities other than just farming.</p> <p>The policy changes may result in the reduction of the cost of land within the priority farming areas which will make expanding a farm and sharecropping more economical.</p> |

¹ Please refer to the non-complying development information sheet on Council's website for further information on what non-complying development is and the process involved for such applications.

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| | | Limiting the available locations for rural lifestyle housing reduces the potential for “buffer issues” to do with spray drift, noise, night harvesting, etc. This would reduce the amount of land farmers have to set aside for buffers near neighbouring houses, but will not affect buffer requirements between different crop/grazing types. |
| 3 | How will these changes affect rural lifestyle land owners? | The intent is to limit the areas in which land can be used solely for rural lifestyle/living to areas which are not designated priority farming areas. Should a person still wish to build a rural lifestyle house in such priority areas, such development may be proposed to be “non-complying”. |
| 4 | How will these policy changes restrict or encourage “value adding” primary production activities? | Value adding primary production activities will be clearly defined and controlled, however, the intent of these changes is to facilitate a wide range of such activities so that farmers can derive more income from their land than just farming. The key issue being investigated is to encourage activities which will not pollute the Watershed/water catchment in order to protect metropolitan Adelaide’s water supply and the Adelaide Hills farmlands. |
| 5 | How will these changes affect planning requirements for changing from one type of farming to another? | The current planning principle is that a development application is required where farming activity becomes more intense or results in a change of land use (for example changing from grazing to horticulture or from horticulture to viticulture). The assessment process looks at impacts on surround land uses and the environment such as water quality impacts, spray drift management, impacts on adjoining agricultural uses, noise impacts, need for buffers, etc. Farming activities which are of the same or lesser activity do not require a Development Application. For more information in this regard, please contact the Council’s Development Services Department on 8408-0558. Opportunities to make the development application process easier for farmers will also be investigated as part of this DPA. |
| 6 | How will these changes affect the ability of farmers to build farm sheds or similar farm buildings? | The policy changes are intended to define and allow for the types of sheds and buildings which support farming activities for the production of food and fibre within and outside priority farming areas . |
| 7 | Will these proposed changes affect the ability to build a house on an existing vacant title? | Outside of the priority farming areas , a house can be built on a vacant title where it meets access, septic tank and other planning and legislative requirements. Within the priority farming areas , a proposed house which will be part of a farming operation will be an on-merit form of development subject to the normal planning and legislative requirements. However, where <u>no farming</u> is being undertaken on the vacant title, a proposed house may be a “non-complying” form of development. |

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| 8 | How will these policy changes affect requirements for service type businesses? | Currently, service type businesses are effectively limited to locations within township areas only. By providing impact standards for development in the rural areas, some service businesses may be permitted within rural locations where there is no impact (noise, traffic, pollution, water runoff, chemical disposal, etc) on the environment or adjoining properties. |
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