



UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL

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Our Reference: 27/007, 01/3115/0125, 01/3260/0045

22 November 2004

Mr Wayne Smith
Honorary Secretary
Aberdeen Rifle Club
17 Calgaroo Avenue
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

Dear Mr Smith

Reference is made to the letter to the Editor by Mr K Muffett, purporting to represent the Aberdeen Rifle Club in the 11 November 2004 Scone Advocate, wherein he accused Council and me personally, of being ignorant or disregarding of the truth, particularly as it relates to the Aberdeen Rifle Club and Council notices to relocate the Rifle Club from land purchased by Scone Shire Council in 1981 for the purpose of residential development.

I have no personal axe to grind with Mr Muffett and would point out that in every letter to the Club and meetings with their representatives, Council has consistently offered its support to the Club for relocation.

The notice served on the Club in January this year, followed on from a public "expressions of interest" process whereby the former Council called publicly for joint venture partnerships to develop all or part of the land.

Notice was "reluctantly" given when it was first known by the former Scone Shire Council that the EOI process may result in a firm proposal to develop that part of the land utilized by the Rifle Club. The Club was therefore notified at the appropriate time, following the calling of the expressions of interest, as stated in the October 7 Article in the Scone Advocate.

Mr Muffett also suggested that I had incorrectly stated "that the Rifle Club could not meet the current requirements if it applied to use this area as a rifle range today".

Whilst the statement is taken out of context from the interview, it is clear that development consent would not be issued for a Rifle Range in that location if an application was made for it today. Consent would not be issued because of the current and future development on the surrounding land, including the Council's residential subdivision on adjacent land. I stand by that comment.

The Aberdeen Rifle Club, in correspondence signed by Mr Muffett on 19 November 1998, to Council clearly states "being fully aware of the temporary nature of our tenure, we are fully prepared to remove all fixtures and fencing at notification of cessation of our tenure", when an

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application to Council was made for fencing and signage to meet safety requirements. Scone Council approved the application on 23 December 1998 on the condition that the improvements be removed within six (6) months of notice to quit from Council.

Well before my time at Council it is perfectly clear that the Club was aware of its limited future because of the residential development proposals for the land.

Since my first correspondence of 9 January 2004, Council has re-iterated its desire to relocate the rifle range with Council's Administrator, Hon John Jobling, also publicly supporting endeavours to relocate as well as approving additional time for the relocation to occur.

In the latest correspondence dated 11 October 2004, Council invited representatives of the Club to meet with Council representatives to a follow-up meeting from the 28th May 2004 meeting to discuss progress to date and consider options. No reply has been received to date, however, the offer stands in a genuine attempt to resolve this issue without a public slanging match.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D N Dutton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

D N Dutton
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER