

Goulburn Post

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Towrang temple talk



• STATUE: If all goes to plan a giant Buddha statue like this one in Myanmar could look out over the surrounding countryside from a site near Towrang.

By DAVID COLE

A BUDDHIST group have revealed plans to build one of the largest Buddha statues in the Pacific Region at Towrang.

The Adeikhtan Buddhist Missionary Company (ABMC) Australia held preliminary discussions with Goulburn Mulwaree Council to erect the 55m high structure at a briefing session on February 4.

The company's spokesperson Kevin Kyza outlined their plans to build a 55m tall Buddha statue, meditation centre, car park, and Dharma Hall (conference centre) on 30 acres near Towrang.

Mr Kyza said the proposal was still in

the planning stages.

"We are planning to build a Buddhist statue, meditation and retreat centre and offer courses in Buddhist teaching and meditation, but it is all in the preliminary stages," Mr Kyza said.

He said the group was attracted to the area because it was too expensive to buy land and build the project in Sydney and because of the quiet location.

"It is very expensive in Sydney plus we like the quiet and landscape of Towrang," he said.

"We are very hopeful of a good result and we hope for it to be a tourist attraction as well.

"It is a good point between Canberra and Sydney."

He said the ABMC has three monasteries in Sydney.

Goulburn Mulwaree planning director Chris Stewart said it was all in the preliminary stages.

"It is a bit out of the ordinary, but no DA has been lodged yet and no land has been purchased yet," Mr Stewart said.

"They were just here to gauge council's preliminary reaction to their concept."

He said he would be preparing a report to the March Ordinary Council Meeting about the proposal.



Statue to benefit tourism

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Goulburn Mulwaree general manager Chris Berry confirmed the group had held discussions with the council.

"They recognised there was a planning and consultation process to go through," Mr Berry said.

"They are talking about a major temple and conference centre on a 25-30 acre parcel of land a few kilometres along Towrang Rd from the Hume Highway turnoff.

"It is a reasonably large development, including a retreat where people can come to meditate."

Mr Berry said they indicated it wouldn't be an exclusive development, but welcoming to all visitors and denominations.

"But I don't see any reason why Goulburn couldn't host something like this. I think we are open and understanding enough as a community," he said.

For more information about the project see <http://www.abmc.com.au>.