

Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group

“Draft Hunter Regional Plan – Holistic Viewpoint 2016”



A community-based group looking to address Environmental issues affecting Singleton Shire residents

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We seek identification as to what is making our Children and Community Sick so they can be mitigated by OH&S Compliance Orders.

SSHEG Focus on Health

SSHEG is Not Anti Mining or Anti Power Stations

Draft Hunter Regional Plan – Holistic Viewpoint March 2016

This SSHEG Submission supports the concept of a 20 year Concept plan to provide “*an overarching framework to guide development and investment in the Hunter Region to 2036*”, building on the 1999 Hunter Integrated Landscapes Synoptic Plan and consolidating recent Strategic Planning considerations relating to addressing land use Coexistence conflicts.

SSHEG advocate that in view of the longstanding “*Hunter and Hunter Valley Air and Noise Pollution Community Disease Legacy*” it is timely for NSW Government Authorities to respond to the World Health Organisation call in March 2016, for :-

“A Healthier Environment underpins a Healthier Population”.

Missing from this Draft Hunter Regional Plan 2016 is
“*Community Health - Community Health - YES – Community Health*”.

Clearly Urban, Town, Village, Locality, Farming Families, and “Near Neighbours to Open Cut Coal Mines” lack NSW Government Environmental Resident’s Health Planning. WHY ?

It would appear that the SSHEG Community focus on Health is catered for mainly in GOAL 3 of the Draft Plan. –

**GOAL 3: Protect
and connect natural
environments**

The ongoing use and development of land and resources to accommodate growth will be balanced with measures to protect the Hunter's unique terrestrial and aquatic environments, supporting healthy and resilient natural systems, communities and the economy.

Our Holistic approach to Community Health goes beyond “Mission Statements” with a focus on leading edge Medical Research and World Health Organisation deliberations and Announcements on the “*Human Disease Risk of Air and Noise Pollution*” as they pertain to the Hunter Valley Environs.

GOAL 2 introduces the “Coexistence Debate” where SSHEG would expect that the issue of Community Health and especially “*Near Neighbours and Children in close proximity to Open Cut Coal Mining and Power Stations*” would influence the 20 year Hunter Plans for these Land areas; not too dissimilar to the Equine Respiratory Health considerations throughout the Hunter Valley.

**GOAL 2: Grow the
largest regional
economy in Australia**

Longstanding coal mining, viticulture and equine industries will continue to prosper on the world stage. The region's service, knowledge and value-adding sectors will grow and diversify, supporting the Hunter region to retain its position as the biggest and most productive regional economy in Australia. The region will support the diversification of the NSW energy sector through the development and diversification of its energy (coal, gas and renewable) resources.

Overseas, the World Health Assembly in Geneva in May 2015 has for the first time acted on “*Air Pollution and Health*” issues and Mapped- out as detailed Resolutions; the way forward to Healthier Populations. (refer Attachment 1)

These Resolutions now provide a guide to many of the issues encountered by the “Hunter Valley Mining Dialogue Emissions and Health Working Group”. Issues such as engagement with Governments, Industry, Stakeholders, and the Community appear in the forefront as issues to be better addressed and overcome. (WHO Geneva May 2015 extract)

(OP1.2) Enable health systems, including health protection authorities, to take a leading role in raising awareness in the public and among all stakeholders of the impacts of air pollution on health and opportunities to reduce or avoid exposure, including by guiding preventive measures to help reduce these health effects, to interact effectively with the relevant sectors and other relevant public and private stakeholders to inform about sustainable solutions, and to ensure that health concerns are integrated into relevant national, regional and local policy, decision-making and evaluation processes, including public health prevention, preparedness and response measures, as well as health system strengthening;

As recent as March 2016 the WHO in Geneva is now reinforcing the World Health Assembly March 2015 Resolutions with the release of Report entitled “*Preventing disease through healthy environments: a global assessment of the burden of disease from environmental risks*”. The accompanying WHO Media Release March 2016 extract follows:-

Healthier environment: healthier people

“A healthy environment underpins a healthy population,” says Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General. “If countries do not take actions to make environments where people live and work healthy, millions will continue to become ill and die too young.”

The report emphasizes cost-effective measures that countries can take to reverse the upward trend of environment-related disease and deaths. These include reducing the use of solid fuels for cooking and increasing access to low-carbon energy technologies.

“There's an urgent need for investment in strategies to reduce environmental risks in our cities, homes and workplaces”, said Dr Maria Neira, WHO Director, Department of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health. “Such investments can significantly reduce the rising worldwide burden of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, injuries, and cancers, and lead to immediate savings in healthcare costs.”

Environmental risks take their greatest toll on young children and older people, the report finds, with children under 5 and adults aged 50 to 75 years most impacted. Yearly, the deaths of 1.7 million children under 5 and 4.9 million adults aged 50 to 75 could be prevented through better environmental management. Lower respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases mostly impact children under 5, while older people are most impacted by NCDs.

(NCD – non communicative Diseases)

Overall then, Ministers of Health and especially Environmental Health need to express a greater prominence in the development of the Road Map to achieve Minimisation of Air and Noise Pollution.

In this Draft Hunter Regional Plan at least a subsection, Direction, and Actions on Community Health is warranted to incorporate these World Health Organisation initiatives.

Dr Neville Hodkinson PhD

Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group

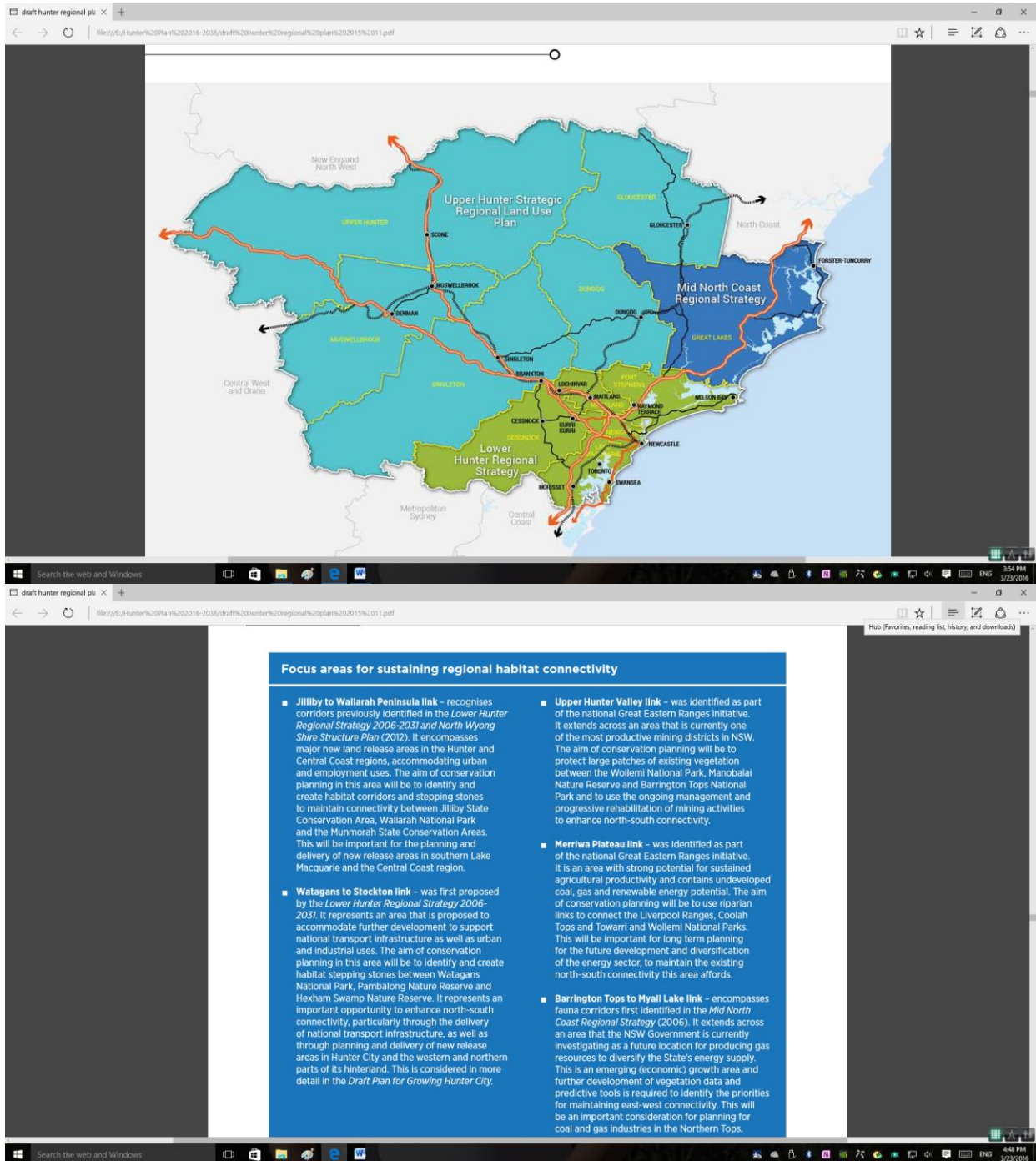
Attachment 1 SSGEG Presentation Calling for Minimisation of Air
and Noise Pollution by Amber Alarm System –
“*MTW Mine Management Plans Jan 2016*”
Incl World Health Assembly Geneva May 2015

This region is one of only three places on Australia's eastern seaboard where inland ecosystems stretch to the coast with its natural amenity and unique biodiversity. The Great Dividing Range and Great Escarpment are dominant landscape features and form part of a national habitat corridor. The World Heritage values of the Greater Blue Mountains and Gondwana Rainforests of Australia are present in Wollemi, Yengo and Barrington Tops National Parks. These natural areas are highly valued by residents and are major drivers for tourism in the region.

The region's natural systems support the rural and resource industries that have traditionally underpinned regional economic growth and settlement patterns. Australia's first coal mine was established near Nobbys Head in the 1790s, making the Hunter Australia's oldest and most productive coal mining region. The region has a multi-billion dollar thoroughbred horse breeding industry, with the second largest concentration of stud farms in the world and one of only three International Centres of Thoroughbred Breeding Excellence in the world. The Hunter Valley is also Australia's oldest wine producing region, initially established around 1825 and now exporting world-class wines internationally. The region's river estuaries (Hunter, Port Stephens and Myall Lakes) are collectively the largest oyster producers in NSW.

The Hunter region will provide an array of lifestyles in city, coastal and rural settings. Communities will have access to a range of housing opportunities and jobs. Access to jobs, services, shops, recreation, entertainment and the arts will deliver quality living.

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Without Prejudice

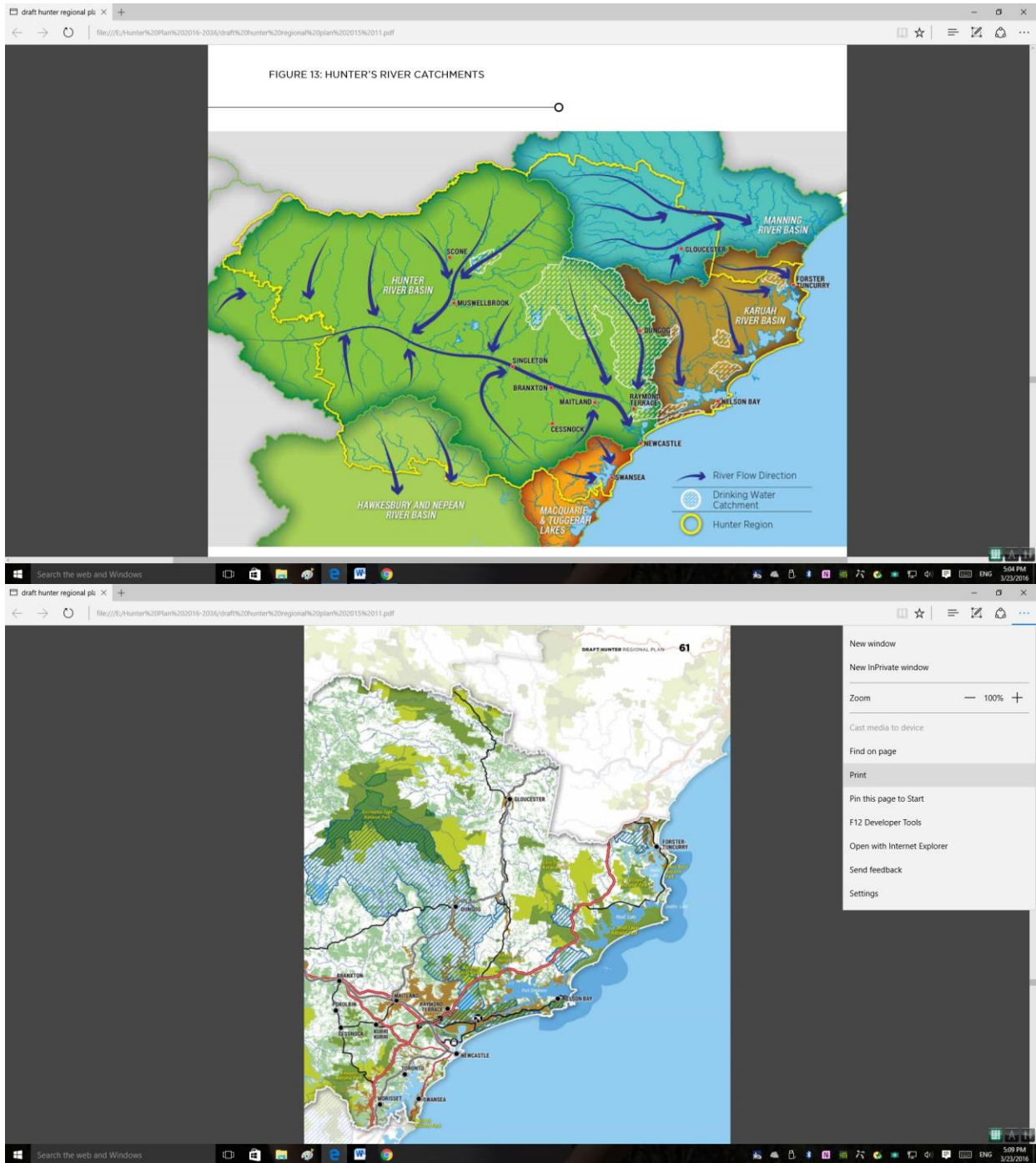
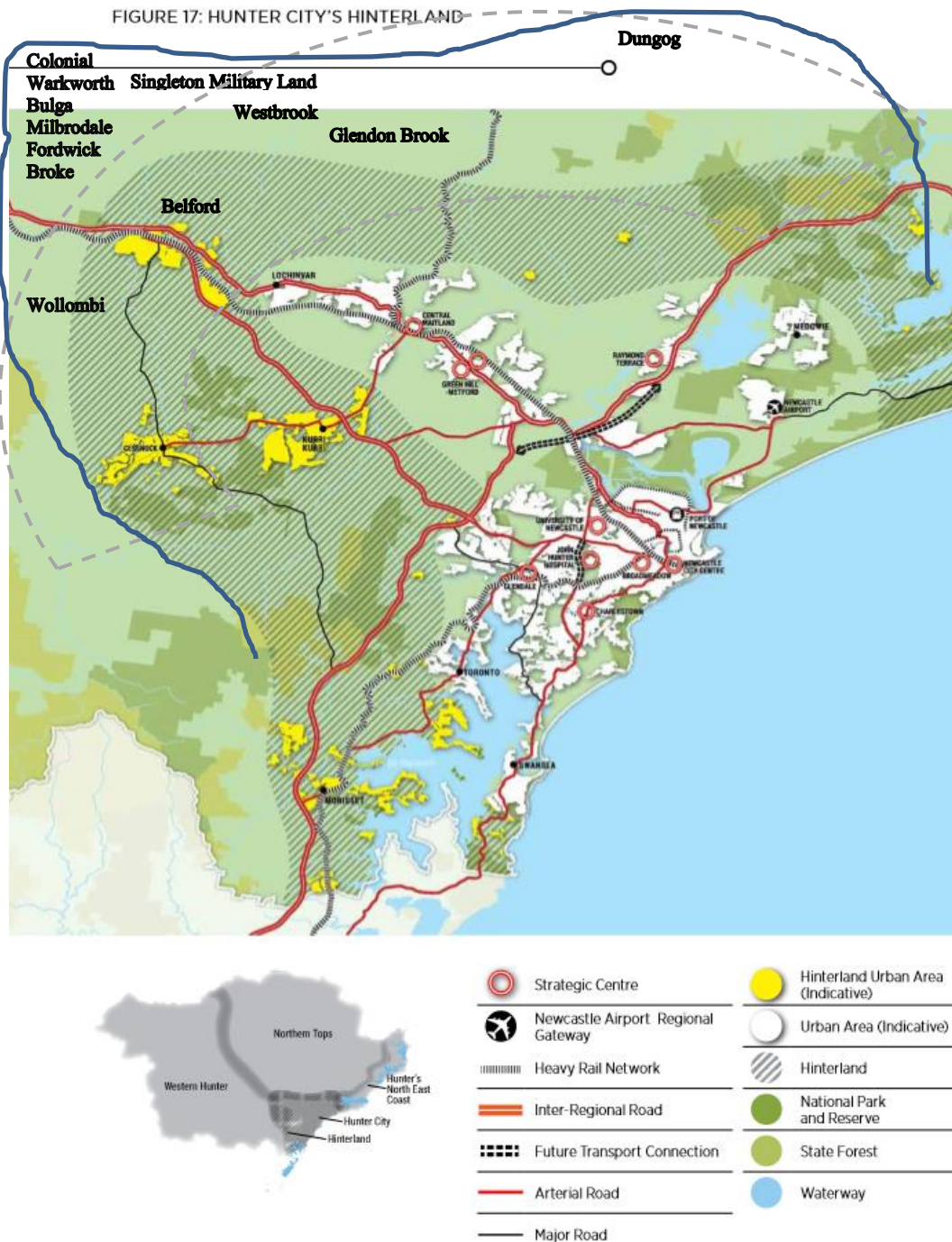


FIGURE 17: HUNTER CITY'S HINTERLAND



The hinterland sustains a diverse range of productive resource industries including mining, extensive agriculture (grain, sheep and beef), intensive agriculture (viticulture, poultry and horticulture), commercial fishing and aquaculture. The growth and development of

these industries has led to demand for value-adding activities in manufacturing, tourism, research and training.

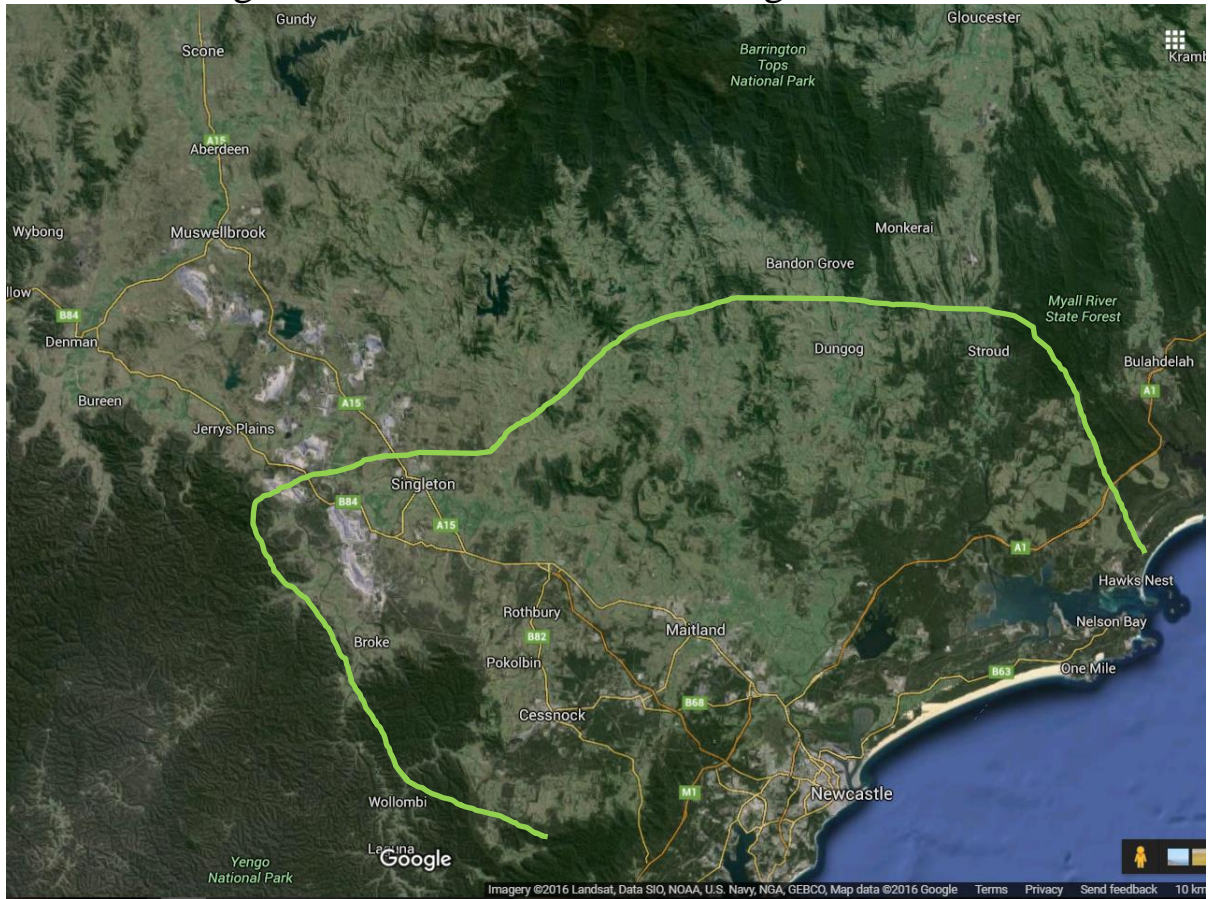
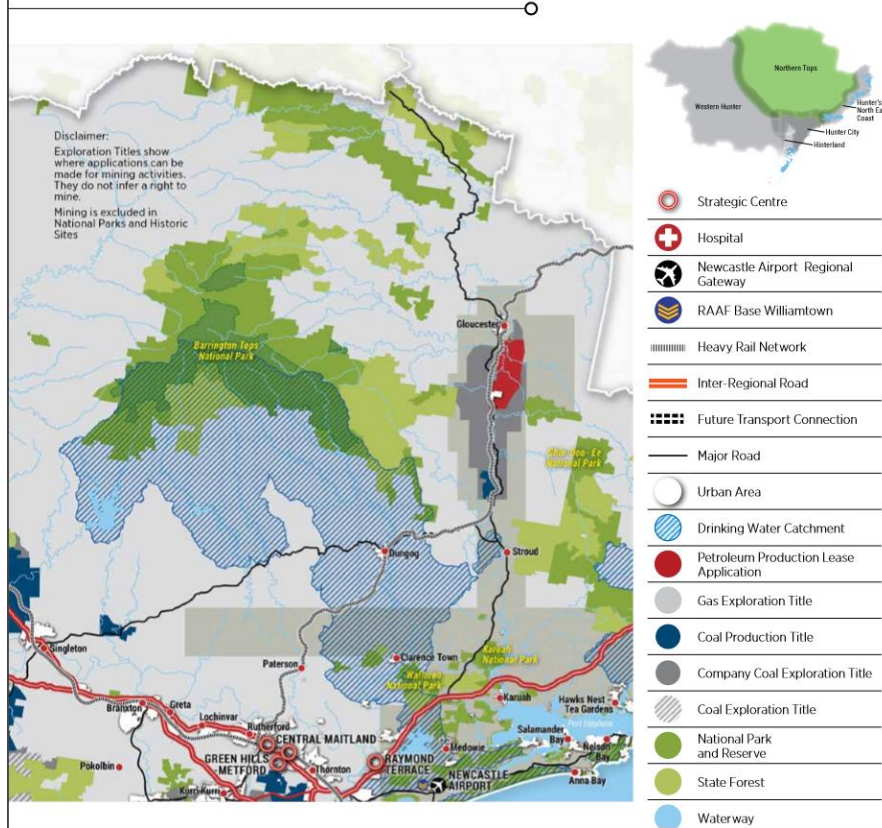
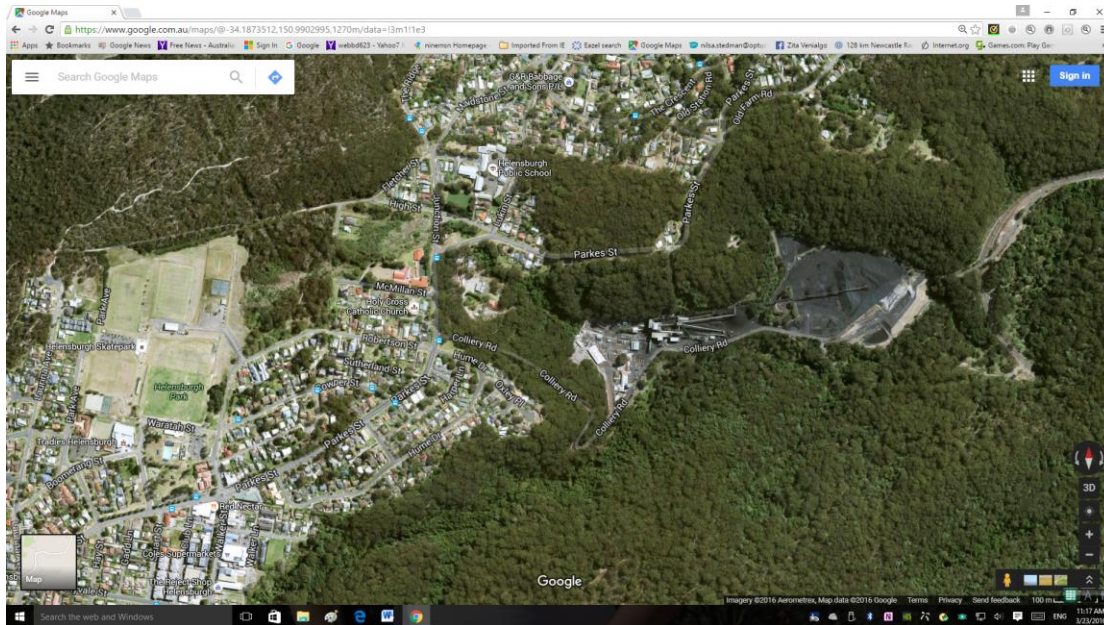


FIGURE 19: NORTHERN TOPS LANDSCAPE



Pramble



The perceptions of the Singleton Shire Community in 2008 of the association between; (1) the increasing pace and closeness of Open Cut Coal Mines in established Rural areas; and, (2) the appearance of “Community Disease Clusters particularly in children” - with 49 diseases informed to NSW Environmental Health along with 37 identified Air Pollutants based on National Pollution Inventory.

One Such “Near Neighbour” today reports with “Lung Dusting” in Camberwell.

Specifically, SSHEG identified the Particulate Matter fraction PM2.5, and argued the case at Mine Community Consultative Committees against a double contrary opinion; (1) PM2.5 was then considered as homogenous across the Valley, and (2) Coal Mining considers Mine Abrasive Dust as large coming from Mechanical processes.

Today, both of these opinions are now clearly without support as

Air Drifting and Dispersion (Space and Time) Patterns are clearly evident.

- Barnowl Alarm Triggers)

For Air Quality – it is evident in Figure 4 that the Daily 24Hr PM10 Averages 2011-2013 already for Bulga is below 25ug/m³ for around 66% of the time. This suggests that Table 3 “*Real Time Air Quality Alarm System Overview*” **Stage 1 &2 Trigger Levels are Red Alert Levels**, such that **Amber lower levels** could provide the basis for Mine Controllers to Minimise Air Pollution.

A PM2.5 TEOM for Bulga Village should be now mandatory in the light of WHO Air Quality Health findings.

The question of Coexistence lies at the heart of the Mt Thorley Warkworth debacle where ironically in good faith the 2002 MTW Approval process established an acceptable balance between existing Rural Residents and Villagers, and the Mining of extensive Coal Resources of the area.

The Bulga community was mindful of the Coexistence Planning Policy that decimated the Camberwell Community and Village by stealth, and without “**Minimisation of Mine Air and Noise Pollution**” these Micro-Valley Residents are also at Risk.



Wambo – MTW- Bulga Mining Precinct