

TO whom it may Concern,

LT Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Group (LTCSNG), welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Hunter Regional Plan. LTCSNG is part of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Program initiated by Lake Macquarie City Council.

LTCSNG submission will cover:

Goal one: Grow Australia's next major city

Principle 3: The NSW government states it identifies with a city wide transport network that improves public transport, walking and cycling options.

LTCSNG supports all transport options that improves sustainable connectivity not only in the Hunter City but the Hunter Hinterland including more purposed built shared bicycle/walk trails; promotes active transport modes that promote health benefits, reduces air pollution, noise pollution and protects the natural environment; and offers tourist opportunities and sustainable economic growth.

LTCSNG Supports public transport options that promotes connectivity between communities, supports the growing aging population, assists in employment opportunities and sustainable economic growth.

Goal 2: Grow the Largest Regional Economy in Australia:

LTCSNG Supports the investment of renewable energies projects at a large scale including wind solar and geothermal.

LTCSNG supports the divestment of new coal mines and projects and that of Coal Seam Gas.

LTCSNG supports the investment of primary industries, and the services and tourism industry, including increasing biosecurity measures.

Goal 3 -Protect and Connect Natural Environments

Direction 3.1 Protect the natural environment and biodiversity.

While **LTCSNG** applauds all actions that promote the protection and enhancement of the Hunter's natural environment, including biodiversity and connectivity, we are surprised that the west Lake Macquarie Area has not been acknowledged in this Plan. There area was acknowledged in the Hunter Regional Conservation Plan (2009, p. 32) and was considered the next high priority by the NSW Government. While the Draft Hunter Regional Plan acknowledges that not all areas of high environmental value has been mentioned, Figure 11(p46-47) recognises the High Environmental Value of the area.

Action 3.1.1 states – “Improve the quality of and access to information relating to high environmental values and use this information to avoid, minimise and mitigate the impacts of development on significant environmental assets”. *Why has the west Lake Macquarie area been omitted in the Draft Regional Plan?*

LTCSNG supports that the west Lake Macquarie area, including the Proposed Awaba State Conservation Area is acknowledged and planned for in the Draft Hunter Regional Plan. It is an important wildlife corridor and habitat for threatened species such as the Spotted-Tailed Quoll, Squirrel Glider, Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl, Sooty Owl, Grey-Headed Flying Foxes and *Tetratheca juncea*. It provides an important wildlife corridor from the Watagan Mountains to Lake Macquarie State Conservation Area.

Attached is scanned hard-copy petitions to support the need of the Awaba State Conservation to be acknowledged and planned for. There are 80 signatures.

There is an online petition also established to demonstrate support for the area. Currently there is over 620 signatures.

The link is https://www.change.org/p/nsw-department-of-planning-and-environment-nsw-government-office-of-environment-and-heritage-the-nsw-government-to-acknowledge-gazette-the-proposed-awaba-conservation-area?recruiter=25403416&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink

Goal 4 – Support Robust Regional Communities.

Action 4:1:1 – Investigate demand for and options to accommodate long-term housing growth in regional towns and villages -working with Council to review planning controls and encourages appropriate medium density housing in appropriate areas.

LTCSNG supports sustainable management of urban growth areas and utilising local retail precincts.

This includes development that:

- protects the environment, promoting wildlife corridors and wildlife overpasses over transport corridors;

- provide necessary and appropriate infrastructure (including health facilities) within communities;

- provide street trees, and open green spaces to offset heat island effects and provide recreational spaces;

- promote active transport such as cycling, walking and public transport;

- promotes local retail precincts via active transport and infrastructure;

- uses infill and brown field spaces appropriately for housing development;

- promotes community engagement;

- offers affordable housing options for lower income and aged residents.

Yours sincerely

LT Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Group.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

The **Proposed Awaba Conservation Area** provides a vital wildlife corridor from the Watagan Mountains through Awaba State Forest and Sugarloaf Conservation Area to the shores of Lake Macquarie and the Lake Macquarie Conservation Area. There are many Threatened species living in the area including Squirrel Gliders, Spotted -tailed Quolls, and Swift Parrot, Grey-headed Flying foxes, Sooty Owl, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl and Tetratheca junceae.

In 2009 the NSW State Government Acknowledged the importance of the land with its high conservation and biodiversity values stating "Additional conservation areas in West Lake Macquarie are clearly the next highest priority for the future. DECC will be actively working to improve conservation of priority lands in the West Lake Macquarie area by improved conservation Practices on other crown tenures, through private land partnerships or as the sites for conservation offsets" (DECC 2009 LHCP p32).

It is requested that:

The current NSW State Government and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment acknowledge and include Awaba Conservation Area in the Hunter Regional Plan for its biodiversity and conservation values and its potential economic benefits and tourist values.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment work with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW Land and Property Management Authority and Lake Macquarie City Council to establish the Awaba Conservation Area.

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A Wild life Corridor from the Watagans to Wangi

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