



Community Environment Network Inc.

An alliance of community and environment groups from Lake Macquarie, Wyong and Gosford.

Deputy Chair
Community Environment
Network
17 Jacaranda Close
Cooranbong
NSW 2265

Submission re: Draft Hunter Regional Plan

Dear Sir/Madam,
Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

The Community Environment Network (CEN) is an alliance of community and environment groups from Gosford, Wyong and Lake Macquarie. The Lake Macquarie Planning Committee is a sub group of CEN. Our aim is to work for ecologically sustainable development and against threats to it.

CEN supports proposed actions that work towards Climate Change adaptation such as:
ACTION 4.3.1 Investigate opportunity to improve the quality and consistency of hazard data within the region and
ACTION 4.3.2 Integrate risk management frameworks for coastal, floodplain and other hazards into local strategies and planning controls, prioritizing areas identified to support regional growth. Lake Macquarie City Council is to be commended for its work in building resilience to natural hazards eg Lake Mac Draft 'Coastal Zone Management Plan Framework - for Implementation 2015' and for commissioning the report by Umwelt 'All Uphill From Here – Preparing Lake Macquarie Wetlands For Retreat 2015' and 'Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2014-2023'.

CEN does not support the proposed expansion of the coal extraction industry in the Hunter Region as outlined in –

DIRECTION 2.1 Promote investments to grow regional and resource industries.
Current trends in climate change necessitate the move away from coal burning fossil fuels to renewable energy. China is a declining market for Australian coal and is rapidly switching to renewable sources of energy. State government approval given to the extension of coal mines such as the Mandalong South mine in Lake Macquarie in 2015 will contribute to the oversupply of coal globally and increase the rate of CO2 emissions and global warming.

This direction is contrary to global agreements made at the Earth Summit 2015 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CEN does not support the exploration either on shore or offshore for natural gas.

CEN supports NSW government identifying additional lands capable of accommodating large-scale renewable energy projects.

Action 2.4.4 Implement a robust assessment process to consider social, economic and environmental implications of mining activities and manage these throughout the life of the project.

Impacts on water and air need more stringent controls. Dust in air generated by mining activity and coal trains needs to be subject to stricter measurement and controls and public reporting.

Goal 3 – Protect and Connect Natural Environments - Awaba Conservation Area

The Awaba Conservation Area needs to be established. The Draft Hunter Regional Plan makes no reference to the proposed Awaba Conservation Area which was recommended in 1972 by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in the Hunter 2000 Report (SWC Consultancy 1995 p.1). In 1995 Lake Macquarie City Council commissioned an ecological assessment of the proposed site by SWC Consultancy. In 2009 the NSW Government acknowledged the importance of the land 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) There are many threatened species in the area including Squirrel Glider, Spotted-tailed Quolls, Swift Parrot, Grey-headed Flying Foxes, Sooty Owl, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl and Tetratheca Juncea.

Action 4.2.7 - Plan for the expansion of health facilities to service the region.

Morisset is a regional growth centre in Lake Macquarie with large population increases occurring on Morisset Peninsula (1500 population) and North Cooranbong (2,500 population). Consideration is needed regarding the provision of a hospital to serve the Westlake area of Lake Macquarie. Morisset has good connectivity to the region with rail and M1 Motorway and in addition a large area of NSW government land at the old Morisset Psychiatric Hospital site.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Hunter Regional Plan

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Chair – Community Environment Network