



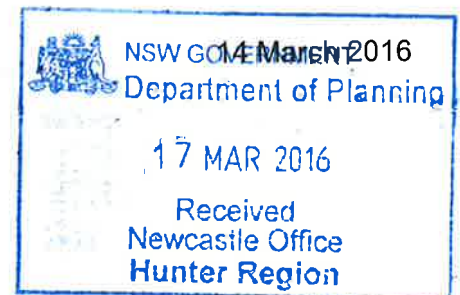
Monica Gibson
Director Regions, Hunter and Central Coast
Planning Services
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
PO Box 1226
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

Our Reference: Hunter Regional
Plan

Contact: Mr Roger Busby
Telephone: 6591 7254

Dear Monica,

SUBMISSION TO DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN



Council, at its Strategic Committee meeting of 8 March 2016, considered a report on the Draft Hunter Regional Plan. In considering the draft plan Council resolved:

A. To advise the Department of Planning and Environment that:

1. Council supports the general direction of the draft Hunter Regional Plan whereby it is recognised that local Government can make effective planning decisions in the interests of the community within the broad parameters set by the Plan.
2. Council's support is subject to adequate funding and resources being provided to enable implementation of the final Plan.
3. Subject to the following matters being properly addressed in the final Plan, Council believes the plan will set a sound blueprint for the sustainable growth of the Great Lakes:
 - a). Clearer guidance on the mechanisms available to implement the Goals, Directions and Actions from the Plan and clarification of what is meant by the Government will support/work with/require as stated under the various Actions in the Plan.
 - b). Identification, on Figure 9 Selected Primary Industries, of the significant poultry industry along The Bucketts Way generally between Limeburners Creek and Stroud Rd as well as the oyster industry in Wallis Lake.
 - c). The poultry industry being identified under Direction 1 (Goal 2 - Grow the Largest Regional Economy in Australia) and the associated Actions as a significant regional primary industry, including Action 2.4.3 relating to biosecurity. A further Action should be added that states words to the effect of:

The NSW Government will support the preparation a strategy for the poultry industry for The Tops and North East Coast Landscape Subregions that:

- Conserves and enhances poultry industry and environmental values
- Highlights and responds to current and predicted pressures on poultry production
- Manages and plans for a balance between economically viable food production, demographic trends and environmental protection
- Facilitates institutional and planning changes within Government
- Builds capacity through collaborative engagement

d). Greater recognition, under Directions 4.1 and 4.2, of the significant issues associated with an increase in the ageing population and, in particular, Great Lakes Council's aspiration to be a Centre of Excellence for Ageing and its recognition by the World health Organisation as a member of the Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities.

e). Inclusion of an a new Action/s under Direction 4.1 and/or 4.2, which refers to the preparation of strategies to identify and support cities and towns that are experiencing, and will continue to experience, significant service and infrastructure demands from an ageing population. The NSW Government should then give a commitment to support those regional communities that are going to experience high demand for ageing related services and infrastructure.

f). Wherever the plan mentions "older people", this should be expanded to "older people and people with a disability".

g). Clarification should be provided that the statement under Direction 4.1 the Draft Plan relating to adequacy of urban and rural living land supplies have been made with reference to Council's strategies that have already been prepared and which will be reviewed.

h). Greater recognition should be given under Direction 2.3 and under The Hunter's Landscape Subregions to the importance of The Bucketts Way to the regional economy.

i). That Action 2.2.2 Strategies for Enhancing Tourism Infrastructure should be broadened to recognise that the provision of infrastructure associated with walking, such as "Great Lakes Great Walks" in areas of high natural appeal present significant opportunities to grow the Hunter's visitor economy and health and wellbeing. The Plan should recognise the need to fund feasibility and planning studies of nature-based recreation assets across the region, in a coordinated and strategic manner.

j). That under Action 2.2.2, Hawks Nest, Tea Gardens and Bulahdelah should be identified as towns with potential to contribute to the visitor economy due to their proximity to Myall Lakes National Park, Myall River and Port Stephens and coastal beaches.

- k). In the commentary on The Tops Landscape Subregion, acknowledgement should be given to the heritage significance of Stroud and Tahlee.
- l). Greater consideration should be given, under Direction 2.1 to building resilience toward a time if extractive industries are no longer the big economic provider for the region.
- m). Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens should be identified, under Action 4.1.2, as a coastal growth area with potential to part of a robust regional community.
- n). Higher priority should be given, under Direction 4.1 am elsewhere as appropriate, to removing black spots for both mobile phone coverage and internet provision in regional locations. Some of this is mentioned in the plan, but it needs a much stronger focus.
- o). The Vision adopted in the Final Plan should be more reflective of the need to actually "protect and restore biodiversity to enhance the function and condition of natural landscapes and the provision of important ecosystem services functions".
- p). The finalised plan should reflect, under Direction 3.2, that OISAS, as well as catchment management programs, are required, to secure the oyster production industry into the future.
- q). The finalised Plan, under Goal 3, needs to adopt a more realistic assessment of the current state, trends and threats to the natural environment, such that it can identify meaningful and coordinated responses.
- r). Figure 11 High Environmental Values has limited value and accuracy and should not be provided in the finalised Plan as it is incomplete and misleading.
- s). The Department should, under Direction 3.1, reflect on the Greater Hunter Vegetation Mapping and provide enhanced or revised processes to guide biodiversity assessment, protection and offsetting in the future.
- t). Figure 12 Focus Areas for Sustainable Habitat Connectivity should include an arrow identifying this Eastern Seaboard habitat corridor.
- u). The final plan should, under Direction 3.1, cite that the development and delivery of a Tops to Lakes Implementation Strategy could form a model for connectivity and conservation planning for other parts of the Region.
- v). The final Plan should, under Goal 3, be realistic about key ecological problems that warrant strategic action. This should be in the form of more sub-regional and local conservation strategy documents.
- w). The Plan should adopt a framework for such research and knowledge to feed into changed practice. For instance it is noted that under the Vision "the annual monitoring of development activity will inform the timing of new investments". This should be expanded to

include words to the effect: "Similarly, the condition and function of biodiversity and ecological health of the region will also be monitored such that management can be reflective of ecological trends and needs".

x). The estuaries of the Great Lakes (Myall, Smiths and Wallis) have specific short term and long term targets that are deliverable based on best available modelling and scenario testing. Clear policy objectives and management interventions are established and have been successfully implemented for over 15 years. In this regard:

- I. Figure 13 showing the drinking water catchments should be amended to show the entire Crawford River catchment (Bulahdelah Water Supply catchment) and the entire Karuah River Catchment upstream, of Stroud (Stroud water supply).
- II. Action 3.2.2 relating to water quality and waterway health should include - "require that development proposals for new or intensified uses or activities in coastal lake catchment and sensitive waterways achieve a neutral or beneficial impact on water quality for greenfield development and load reduction targets (45% Total Nitrogen, 60% Total Phosphorus and 80% Total Suspended Solids) for redevelopment or infill development".
- III. Direction 3.2 (Water Resources) should give greater recognition to the relationship between surface and groundwater and the susceptibility of groundwater to impacts from development.

The full report to Council on the draft plan can be viewed on Council's website at www.greatlakes.nsw.gov.au

Should you wish to discuss any of the matters in Council's submission please contact me on 6591 7254.

Yours faithfully



Roger Busby
Manager Strategic Planning
Planning & Environmental Services