



# DUNGOG SHIRE COUNCIL

All Communications to be addressed to:

The General Manager  
Dungog Shire Council  
PO Box 95  
DUNGOG NSW 2420

Telephone: (02) 4995 7777  
Facsimile: (02) 4995 7750  
Email: [shirecouncil@dungog.nsw.gov.au](mailto:shirecouncil@dungog.nsw.gov.au)  
Website: [www.dungog.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dungog.nsw.gov.au)  
ABN 62 610 350 056

Ref: EF08/127, 15/15683

21 March 2016

Planning and Environment  
PO BOX 1226  
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

Attention: Robert Hodgkins

Dear Mr Hodgkins



## **RE: DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN**

Thank you for your letter seeking comments on the draft Hunter Regional Plan. The document has been reviewed by Council's Planning Department and was reported to the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 16 February 2016.

Dungog Local Government Area is located wholly within the Northern Tops landscape as identified in the draft Plan. Council is generally supportive of the key priorities identified for the Northern Tops, particularly in relation to strengthening tourism; protecting water quality, rural amenity and natural assets; managing natural hazards and supporting the roles of existing communities and towns/villages.

In terms of the broader plan, there are few actions which relate directly to Dungog LGA, although the following comments are provided for your consideration:

- The draft Plan identifies that Scone, Gloucester and Dungog provide entry points to the World Heritage Area of Barrington Tops National Park. Council has recently exhibited its draft Dungog Visitor Economy Plan, which has been developed to provide a strategic framework to guide the Dungog tourism industry over the next three years. In preparing the document, it was identified that the State and National Parks within Dungog Shire are the most common primary motivator for visitors to the LGA. However, it was also identified that further discussion between stakeholders, including National Parks and Forestry Corporation, is required to improve access to the Barringtons. Action 2.2.2. of the draft Hunter Regional Plan specifically seeks to develop strategies for enhancing tourism infrastructure to increase national competitiveness through prioritising infrastructure that will support the tourism industry. It is therefore important that access to these State owned lands is given a high priority in order to support tourism in the Dungog LGA.
- In terms of enhancing tourism infrastructure and connectivity, one of the key priorities listed for the Northern Tops is reinforcing the importance of Bucketts Way/Thunderbolts Way. It is Council's view that Main Road 101, from Maitland to Stroud, via Dungog also be included as key infrastructure for the Northern Tops. This route provides the primary link between Gloucester, Stroud, Dungog and Maitland, and as such is an important conduit for economic and tourist

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activity in the local government areas of Dungog and Gloucester. The tourist drive from Maitland, connecting Paterson, Vacy, East Gresford, Dungog, Clarence Town and then to the Raymond Terrace area via Gresford Road, Bingleburra Road and Clarence Town Road is also a significant tourist route within Dungog LGA.

- Dungog Council is currently preparing to undertake a Rural Lands Study, which aims to develop a long term strategy to maintain and/or improve agricultural productivity within Dungog LGA. However, Dungog Shire does not appear to be mentioned in any of the actions within the draft Plan, which seek to protect and promote agriculture.
- It is noted that Direction 2.4 and Action 2.4.2 in particular seek to manage competing and conflicting interests in rural and resources areas to provide greater certainty for investment. As Dungog LGA is not currently impacted by coal mining or gas extraction, there may be opportunities to investigate new agricultural and/or housing pursuits within Dungog Shire, which would not be impacted by the pressures of the resources industry. It is envisaged that Council's upcoming Rural Lands Strategy will investigate opportunities, constraints, challenges and options for diversifying land uses in rural areas to support high value rural industries, intensive agricultural production, tourism demands and other appropriate uses for rural areas.
- The majority of Dungog LGA falls within a Drinking Water Catchment and Council is supportive of Action 3.2.1 of the draft Plan, which seeks to protect the Hunter's water supplies. To achieve this action, it is noted that the NSW Government will work with Council's to:
  - manage growth in identified water supply districts through the application of appropriate planning controls;
  - require that proposals for new or intensified uses or activities in identified water supply catchments demonstrate a neutral or beneficial impact on water quality; and
  - support healthy, productive watercourses and waterfront land by promoting best practice, through the implementation of NSW Government policies and guidelines such as the Water Guidelines for Controlled Activities.

Council is committed to protecting its water resources and in addition to the controls in the Dungog Local Environmental Plan, has recently prepared a Development Assessment Framework for the assessment of on-site sewage management systems within the Shire, setting out additional requirements for proposals located within the drinking water catchments. Hunter Water has also recently prepared draft Guidelines for Planning and Assessment Developments in the Drinking Water Catchment. However, given that the majority of Dungog LGA is located within Drinking Water catchments, it is important that the application of any new planning controls does not unreasonably restrict future development or investment within Dungog Shire. It is further requested that Council be involved

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in the development of any new planning controls relating to development within drinking water catchments.

- Action 4.2.1 of the draft Plan recognises that localities including Dungog Shire are popular destinations for retirees and are expected to age more rapidly. Consequently, there will be additional demand for health services, community transport services and seniors housing. Actions 4.2.1, together with Action 4.2.7 are focused on improving transport to health services. While access to these facilities is important, the ongoing provision of health services within the Dungog community is necessary. It is noted that Hunter New England Health is not listed as part of the Coordinating and Monitoring Committee outlined on page 12 of the draft Plan.
- While Dungog LGA is a popular destination for retirees, there is also an emphasis on attracting young families or 'lifestylers' to the LGA. It is therefore important that access to a range of services, employment opportunities and housing options are available for both the young and aging populations.
- Dungog Shire has been significantly affected by flooding in recent years. Council is supportive of the Actions within Direction 4.3 to build resilience to natural hazards and would benefit from working with the NSW Government to achieve the actions as follows:
  - Supporting existing and planned communities by investing in infrastructure to reduce the threat of harm to people and property and provide safe evacuation and appropriate response during a hazard event.
  - Taking a more consistent and coordinated approach to plan and manage hazards by:
    - consolidating information and making this publicly available through the Department of Planning and Environment's Planning Portal and the Office of Environment and Heritage's website, Adapt NSW;
    - supporting joint council investigations into managing the threat of natural hazards in the region; and
    - working with councils to develop local strategies and planning controls for urban and rural lands and related infrastructure.
  - Reviewing and updating local floodplain management plan
  - Prioritising investigations into how hazard mitigation infrastructure may be improved.
  - Developing strategic, incident-based and emergency management actions such as bushfire and flood response plans; and
  - Integrating planning for emergency response infrastructure to support the above.

Council currently has funding through the Office of Environment and Heritage for the preparation of a Flood Risk Management Study and Plan for Dungog.





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- As previously stated, Council is generally supportive of the key priorities identified for the Northern Tops landscape. However, the mapping and written description for this sub-region requires some clarification. For example:
  - Figure 2, which illustrates the landscape sub-regions appears to include an overlap of Scone, Muswellbrook and Singleton within the Western Hunter and Northern Tops landscapes. However, the mapping in Figure 19 only extends as far as Singleton. It is therefore unclear how far the Northern Tops extends. It is also unclear as to where the boundary is between the Northern Tops landscape and North East Coast landscape.
  - The draft Plan makes reference to the thoroughbred breeding industry around Scone as part of the Northern Tops, although based on Figures 18 and 19 it would appear that Scone is located within the Western Hunter Landscape rather than the Northern Tops.
  - The draft Plan makes reference to water supply from Glenbawn, Glennies Creek, Lostock and Chichester dams. Based on Figures 18 and 19, Glenbawn appears to be located within the Western Hunter landscape and it is unclear as to whether Glennies Creek dam falls within Northern Tops or the Western Hunter landscape.
  - Figure 19 for the Northern Tops does not identify the existing hospital at Dungog, despite a hospital being included in the key/legend.
  - It was disappointing that the township of Dungog was not mentioned within the written discussion of the Northern Tops landscape as Dungog forms the main administrative, services and tourist centre for Dungog Shire.

I trust that the above comments will be of assistance to you and thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the draft Plans. Should you have any enquiries regarding the above comments, please contact Jenny Webb on 4995 7777.

Yours faithfully

Craig Deasey  
**GENERAL MANAGER**



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Life as it should be...

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