

Enquiries to: Ken Horner

02 6578 7331

Our Ref: 15/0720

Your Ref:

30 March 2016

Ms Monica Gibson
Director – Hunter and Central Coast Region
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
Hunter Central Coast Region
P.O. Box 1226
Newcastle NSW 2300

Dear Monica

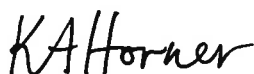
Subject: Council submission to draft Hunter Regional Plan

Reference is made to your Department's letter (received 22 December 2015) providing information on the exhibition of the draft Hunter Regional Plan and inviting Council to lodge a submission by the end of March 2016.

Council considered this matter at its meeting held 21 March 2016 and resolved to lodge the attached submission. A copy of the Council report and resolution are also enclosed for your information.

If you have any further inquiries please contact the undersigned on 6578 7331.

Yours faithfully



Ken Horner
Coordinator Sustainable Development

ABN 52 877 492 396

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the General Manager:**

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SINGLETON COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN

March 2016

INTRODUCTION

Council received a briefing on the Draft Hunter Regional Plan (HRP) from the Department of Planning & Environment on 15 February 2016. The Draft HRP (for the first time) encompasses the whole of the Upper and Lower Hunter and Great Lakes Sub-regional areas. It provides a 20 year horizon for growing the Hunter Region.

The NSW Government's vision for the HRP is:

"The Hunter region will capitalise on its diversity and connectivity to capture growth, using its natural resources and amenity, economic strengths, and its communities, to actively manage change and attract investment. It will offer an array of quality lifestyles within sustainable and healthy environments."

The HRP aims to achieve this vision through four goals:

GOAL 1: Grow Australia's next major city	Hunter City will have an internationally competitive economy that builds on its global gateways and strengths in health, education, manufacturing and research to embrace new opportunities. Hunter City will offer a high standard of living with infrastructure and services.
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.
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.
GOAL 4: Support robust regional communities	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.

The draft Plan also recognises that growth and change will occur differently across the region and identifies four distinct landscape subregions, responding to the local landscape and providing a focus to address opportunities and challenges. These landscape subregions (shown on Figure 2) are:

- Hunter City;
- Western Hunter;
- Northern Tops; and
- Hunter's North East Coast.

Figure 2: Landscape Subregions



COUNCIL COMMENTS

Goal 1: Grow Australia's next major city

Figure 2 of the draft HRP (reproduced above) shows the boundary of "Hunter City", with the "hinterland" extending only to Branxton. The hinterland needs to be extended to encompass Singleton. The criteria for towns and villages being within the hinterland is established on page 77 of the draft HRP. That is, they lie within 30 km, or 30 minutes by road, of the metropolitan area. Singleton meets both these criteria for the western edge of Hunter City.

Singleton shares the Huntlee New Town and the Pokolbin Vineyards with the Cessnock LGA. Singleton's northern access to Pokolbin is increasing in importance with the opening of the Hunter Expressway and with cruise ships now berthing in the Port of Newcastle providing excursions to the vineyards.

Mapping needs to be revised for consistency. Figure 2 shows the hinterland stopping on the western side of Kurri Kurri, whereas Figures 4 and 17 show it extending to include Cessnock township.

Goal 2: Grow the largest regional economy in Australia

The importance of the Hunter Expressway link needs to receive more emphasis in the HRP. It plays a vital role in linking the metropolitan area to the hinterland, with Singleton being a regional hub. The Golden Highway links to the Central West and the New England Highway links to the Upper Hunter, Northwest and New England areas. This is important for both freight and tourism.

The proposed Singleton Bypass will also play an important role in transport linkage to the north and northwest in the future.

Further to protecting the Hunter's water supplies under Goal 3, the HRP should also plan for future water storage to ensure regional growth has an adequate water supply.

If the HRP is to replace the *Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan (UHSRLUP)* as proposed it will need to include provisions for the protection of agricultural land. The current mapping of strategically important agricultural land (in the UHSRLUP) only includes biophysical (high fertility) land and the critical industry clusters of the equine and viticulture industries. To be effective, this mapping system needs to be extended to include other important agricultural industries such as the beef industry, the sheep industry and the poultry industry.

The HRP should include a road map for infrastructure planning throughout the region.

Goal 3: Protect and connect natural environments

Figure 12 includes a broad brush arrow in the Singleton area labelled “enhance connectivity through rehabilitation of mine sites”. There is opportunity in this section of the HRP to reference the *Synoptic Plan: Integrated Landscapes for Coal Mine Rehabilitation in the Hunter Valley of NSW (1999)* prepared by the NSW Department of Mineral Resources. The Synoptic Plan identified integration of mining rehabilitation to 2020. The HRP should provide for further implementation and follow up on the Synoptic Plan.

There is a serious need to improve environmental mapping for the region, especially in light of the recent finding that current vegetation mapping is so inaccurate that it cannot be relied upon.

Goal 4: Support robust regional communities

There is no discussion of urban hierarchy in the draft HRP. It is inferred in general terms from the Hunter City / hinterland / regional communities concept, however, consideration should be given to developing a more formal urban hierarchy.

Huntlee is proposed to be a major regional new town, straddling the Singleton / Cessnock LGA boundary, yet it is not mentioned in the draft HRP.

Resource funding tends to be focused on metropolitan areas. What mechanism will be put in place to ensure that there is a balance of funding for the hinterland and regional communities in addition to the metropolitan area?

Governance and Delivering the Plan

Good governance will be essential in implementing the HRP. Individual Councils should be represented on the proposed Coordination and Monitoring Committee.

Landscape Subregions

Singleton is shown to straddle the boundary between the Western Hunter Subregion and the Northern Tops Subregion. This boundary should be moved about 15 km to the northeast if it is to reflect the criteria for the respective Landscape Subregions. This would then include the mining areas which lie to the east of the New England Highway within the Western Hunter rather than the Northern Tops Subregion.

The current use of the Landscape Subregions in the draft HRP is confusing. Figure 2 is produced near the front of the document (page 10) with a brief explanation of the structure and operation of the Plan. There is no further reference to the Landscape Subregions until the end of the document. They should play a more prominent role within the document.

10. Draft Hunter Regional Plan - Council Submission to Public Exhibition
Author: Ken Horner

FILE: 15/0720

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present a draft submission for Council's consideration, to lodge in response to the public exhibition of the draft Hunter Regional Plan.

RECOMMENDED that Council lodge the submission provided as **Attachment 1** to this report, with amendment if so resolved, in response to the public exhibition of the draft Hunter Regional Plan.

Background

The NSW Government has produced the *Draft Hunter Regional Plan (HRP)* which is on extended public exhibition until the 24 March 2016. Submissions from local government will be received up to the end of March. The Draft HRP (for the first time) encompasses the whole of the Upper and Lower Hunter and Great Lakes sub-regional areas. It provides a 20 year horizon for growing the Hunter Region.

Council received a briefing on the Draft HRP from the Department of Planning & Environment on 15 February 2016. Staff received a preliminary briefing on 26 November 2015 and a further briefing on 25 February 2016 (provided at the Hunter Planners Directors' Forum). The Council submission, provided as **Attachment 1**, has been prepared from feedback received during the briefing sessions.

Council Submission

The main points raised in the submission are summarised below:

Goal1: Grow Australia's next major city

1. Singleton should be included in the "hinterland" of "Hunter City". It meets the distance and travel time criteria, yet the mapping stops at Branxton.
2. The northern access to Pokolbin (within Singleton LGA) is increasing in importance and should be recognised in the HRP.
3. Mapping in the draft HRP is inconsistent and needs to be revised.

Goal 2: Grow the largest regional economy in Australia

4. The importance of the Hunter Expressway link needs to be recognised in the HRP.
5. The need for the Singleton Bypass (with options currently being finalised) should be recognised within the HRP.
6. The HRP should include an investigation of future water supply to ensure capacity is adequate to support regional growth.
7. The HRP will need to include mapping for the protection of important agricultural land and industries. The current NSW Government agricultural mapping is inadequate.
8. The HRP should include a road map for infrastructure planning throughout the region.

*Planning and Sustainable Environment Report (Items Requiring Decision) - DP&SE10/16***Goal 3: Protect and connect natural environments**

9. There is opportunity to reference the *Synoptic Plan: Integrated Landscapes for Coal Mine Rehabilitation in the Hunter Valley of NSW (1999)* prepared by the NSW Department of Mineral Resources, and provide for further implementation and follow up on the Synoptic Plan.
10. There is a serious need to improve environmental mapping for the region.

Goal 4: Support robust regional communities

11. Consideration should be given to developing a formal urban hierarchy in the HRP.
12. Huntlee is a new regional town and should be acknowledged.
13. There needs to be a mechanism to ensure there is a balance of funding for the hinterland and regional communities in addition to the metropolitan area.

Governance

14. Individual Councils should be represented on the proposed Coordination and Monitoring Committee to ensure balanced governance and implementation of the HRP.

Landscape Subregions

15. The boundary between the Western Hunter and the Northern Tops Subregions should be moved about 15 km to the northeast to include mining areas to the northeast of the New England Highway within the Western Hunter Subregion.
16. The Landscape Regions should play a more prominent role within the document.

Community Strategic Plan

The draft HRP relates to the following outcomes and strategies identified in the Singleton Community Strategic Plan:

Our Community

- Provision of services and facilities (regional focus).

Our Places

- Partner to improve road and infrastructure systems;
- Improve transport options within the community and region.

Our Environment

- Collaborate to protect, enhance and improve our environment.

Our Community Leadership

- Develop economic diversification.

Delivery Program/Operational Plan

The HRP does not relate to Council's current Delivery/Operational Plan. However, outcomes from the HRP with direct relevance to Singleton may be implemented through future Delivery Plans.

*Planning and Sustainable Environment Report (Items Requiring Decision) - DP&SE10/16***Council Policy/Legislation**

The HRP does not relate to Council Policy/Legislation. The HRP will provide further strategic context for future amendment to planning and environmental legislation.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for Council.

Consultation/Social Implications

The draft HRP is on extended public exhibition until the 24 March 2016. Submissions from local government will be received up to the end of March. The draft has been prepared taking into consideration community and stakeholder input to the *Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan* and the *Your Future Lower Hunter Discussion Paper*, and the joint Australian and NSW Governments' Regional Sustainability Planning initiative for the Lower Hunter.

Environmental Consideration

The third goal of the draft HRP is to "protect and connect natural environments".

Risk Implications

There are no risk implications relative to this report.

Options

The following options are available to Council:

1. Lodge the attached submission.
2. Lodge the attached submission with amendment.
3. Not lodge a submission.

Option one is recommended.

Conclusions

Following briefing sessions for both the Council and staff, a submission has been drafted to lodge in response to the public exhibition of the draft HRP. Council may wish to provide further input for the submission.

It is recommended Council lodge the attached submission (with amendment if so resolved) in response to the exhibition.

Mark Ihlein.

Mark Ihlein

Director Planning & Sustainable Environment Group

Attachments

AT-1 Singleton Council Submission to draft Hunter Regional Plan

SINGLETON COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN

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COUNCIL COMMENTS**Goal 1: Grow Australia's next major city**

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*Corporate Services Report (DCS14/16)***DCS14/16 Tender for the Extension to Council Water Main
Between Queen Street and Gresford Road to Service
Singletons Regional Livestock Market****FILE:T2016.008**

The purpose of this report was to advise Council that a report has been prepared for Council's consideration in Closed Council which contains commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it (the Tenderers).

Tenderers were invited to submit a Tender for the supply and installation of the extension to Council's water main between Queen Street and Gresford Road as part of the upgrade to Singleton's Regional Livestock Market. Tenders closed on 8 March 2016 at 2.30pm.

- 546/16 **RESOLVED** that the report for the supply and installation of the extension to Council's water main between Queen Street and Gresford Road as part of the upgrade to Singleton's Regional Livestock Market be considered in Closed Council with the press and public excluded in accordance with Section 10A(2)(d)(i) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, on the grounds that the report contains commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.

(Adamthwaite/Thompson)

*Planning and Sustainable Environment Report (DP&SE10/16)***DP&SE10/16 Draft Hunter Regional Plan - Council Submission to
Public Exhibition****FILE:15/0720**

The purpose of this report was to present a draft submission for Council's consideration, to lodge in response to the public exhibition of the draft Hunter Regional Plan.

- 557/16 **RESOLVED** that Council lodge the submission as circulated with the report, with amendment if so resolved, in response to the public exhibition of the draft Hunter Regional Plan.

(Scott/Diemar-Jenkins)

