

Review of the Draft Hunter Regional Plan and Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City

Prepared by



Table of contents

Executive Summary.....	1
What the draft plan does well	1
What needs to be improved	2
What is the same.....	4
Review of the Draft Hunter Regional Plan	7
Overview	7
Vision, goals and implementation	7
Goal 1: Grow Australia's next major city.....	10
Goal 2: Grow the largest regional economy in Australia.....	14
Goal 3: Protect and connect natural environments	20
Goal 4: Support robust regional communities	24
Review of the Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City	28
Managing growth and change in Hunter City	28
Inner Newcastle District	33
Northern Lake Macquarie District	34
Inner West District	36
Maitland – New England Highway Corridor District	38
Northern Gateways District.....	39
Appendix 1 – Amendment details	40
Amended Hunter Region Vision	40
Amended Hunter Metropolitan Area Principles	40
Amended Hunter Metropolitan Area Map	41
Amended Northern Lake Macquarie District Map.....	42
Amended Inner West District Map.....	43
Amended High Environmental Values Map.....	44
Proposed Additional Direction 3.3 and Action 3.3.1	45
Proposed Additional Action 4.2.9.....	45

Executive Summary

The NSW Government has released a draft strategic land use plan for public comment, which intends to replace the *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy* (LHRS). The draft plan consists of two documents:

- *Draft Hunter Regional Plan*: a strategic land use plan for the entire Hunter region; and
- *Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City*: a strategic land use plan for the Lower Hunter urban area referred to as 'Hunter City'.

The draft plan contains a new vision and goals for the Hunter region, and includes approximately 70 proposed actions to be implemented by the NSW Government (many in collaboration with councils) to manage growth and change within the Hunter region and Hunter City to the year 2036.

The draft plan reflects a new approach to regional planning by the NSW Government, with increased focus on practical actions, and less focus on providing an aspirational vision and desired outcomes for what the region should look like in the future.

This report presents a review of the draft plan outlining (i) what it does well, and (ii) what needs to be improved, and identifies that the draft plan:

- is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning;
- ✓ contains several important initiatives that have the potential to deliver positive outcomes for Lake Macquarie; and
- * includes several areas that are inconsistent with the strategic objectives of Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC), or are unclear, and require significant improvement.

Overall, the draft plan has numerous strengths, weaknesses and limitations. Whilst the draft plan does not include a strong focus on providing an aspirational vision for the region, this review identifies that the draft plan contains important commitments to the Hunter region by the NSW Government. Several significant amendments are also required to improve the draft plan.

A summary of all the recommendations are provided below, and reasoning for each recommendation is provided in the body of the report.



What the draft plan does well

The draft plan includes several new or important initiatives that have the potential to deliver positive social, economic and environmental outcomes for Lake Macquarie. These initiatives are generally consistent with the strategic objectives of LMCC and are recommended for support. Supported recommendations are:

- ✓ *Support the goals identified for the Hunter region, which seek to: grow Australia's next major city; grow the largest regional economy in Australia; protect and connect natural environments; & support robust regional communities (Recommendation A1)*
- ✓ *Support the creation of a coordination and monitoring committee to oversee the implementation of the final adopted plan, which will have representation from each local council (Recommendation A2)*
- ✓ *Support the draft plan's actions to enhance coordinated land use and infrastructure planning for the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] (Recommendation A3)*
- ✓ *Support the action to diversify NSW energy supplies, which includes promoting the development of renewable energy resources (Recommendation A4)*
- ✓ *Support the action to identify strategies to support small business growth and prepare industry-specific planning strategies (Recommendation A5)*
- ✓ *Support the action to better manage land use conflict between mining, rural and urban land uses by planning for 'whole-of lifecycle mining' (Recommendation A6)*

- ✓ Support the mapping of high environmental values, regular updating of the data set, and using the information to guide regional strategic planning (Recommendation A7)
- ✓ Support the action to better manage marine environments and waterways (Recommendation A8)
- ✓ Support the action to prioritise housing development in existing urban areas (Recommendation A9)
- ✓ Support the action to prepare an integrated housing strategy for Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] (Recommendation A10)
- ✓ Support the action to develop a 'green grid' plan to enhance connections between open spaces and environmental areas (Recommendation A11)
- ✓ Support the action to develop land use and infrastructure strategies to assist delivery of housing in new release areas (Recommendation A12)
- ✓ Support the action for the NSW Government to assist Lake Macquarie City Council to develop local strategies and plans to deliver infill housing in the Northern Lake Macquarie District (Recommendation A13)
- ✓ Support the action for the NSW Government to work with Lake Macquarie City Council and the community to identify opportunities to leverage investment in transport infrastructure to grow Glendale as a centre (Recommendation A14)
- ✓ Support the action for the NSW Government to prepare a land use and infrastructure strategy, in conjunction with councils, to deliver the Inner West District's supply of housing land (Recommendation A15)



What needs to be improved

The draft plan contains several parts that are not consistent with the strategic objectives of LMCC, or are unclear, and require significant improvement. The parts of the draft plan recommended to be changed are:

- ✗ Amend the draft plan to (i) consolidate the Draft Hunter Regional Plan and the Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City into one document; and (ii) provide a single set of goals for the Hunter region and Hunter City (Recommendation B1)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan's vision from an economic focus to promoting balanced environmental, economic and social outcomes for the Hunter region, as outlined in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B2)
- ✗ Amend Goal 3 to state that ongoing development will (i) "be balanced with measures to protect scenic and cultural landscapes and heritage items", and (ii) "will consider natural hazards and respond to climate change impacts" (Recommendation B3)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to ensure (i) the structure and terms of reference for the proposed coordination and monitoring committee are established in consultation with local councils; that (ii) NSW Government agencies responsible for education and health facilities are included in the committee; that (iii) the committee develops a monitoring and measurement framework to track and evaluate implementation of the draft plan; and that (iv) the committee arrangements have due regard to the creation of a permanent Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils (Recommendation B4)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to include an action for the NSW Government to provide financial assistance to help councils implement the final adopted plan (Recommendation B5)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to rename 'Hunter City', the 'Hunter Metropolitan Area', to reflect the existence of several cities (Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Maitland etc) in the Lower Hunter each with unique identities (Recommendation B6)

- ✘ Amend the draft plan to include more detailed planning principles for the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area], as shown in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B7)
- ✘ Amend the map of the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] to better illustrate the current and future land uses, as shown in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B8)
- ✘ Amend maps in the draft plan to reflect any boundary adjustments that result from the NSW Government's Fit for the Future reforms (Recommendation B9)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to include an action for the NSW Government to prepare in collaboration with councils a framework describing the role and function of strategic centres within the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] (Recommendation B10)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to include Morisset within the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area], and identify Morisset as an emerging strategic centre, as shown on the amended Hunter City map in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B11)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to identify how many jobs will be required to meet the needs of the Hunter region's growing population (e.g. not a fixed target but a general guide) (Recommendation B12)
- ✘ Amend the action for the NSW Government to work with the agricultural industry to include consideration of climate change impacts on agricultural productivity and food security (Recommendation B13)
- ✘ Amend the action to refine and enhance biophysically strategic agricultural land mapping to include climate change impacts (e.g. consider if areas identified as strategic agricultural land will remain productive into the future) (Recommendation B14)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to include an action to investigate opportunities to enhance the Hunter region's passenger and freight rail network, including a Newcastle freight bypass, and opportunities for high-speed rail (Recommendation B15)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to ensure that it effectively integrates with the Hunter Regional Transport Plan, and the proposal by the NSW Government to create a separate public transport authority for the Hunter region (Recommendation B16)
- ✘ Amend the map of land with high environmental values to include the latest environmental mapping from Lake Macquarie City Council (see Council for details) and add proposed conservation reserves such as the Awaba Conservation Area and the Lake Macquarie Coastal Wetlands Park to the map, as shown in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B17)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to remove or reword the following initiatives proposed to maintain habitat connectivity "sustain connectivity through delivery of greenfield development" and "enhance connectivity through delivery of urban and transport infrastructure", as they are not proven environmental strategies (Recommendation B18)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to include an action for the NSW Government to work with councils to prepare a strategic habitat corridor strategy for the Hunter region (Recommendation B19)
- ✘ Amend the action to create a Planning Practice Note to guide the zoning of waterways to include (i) giving weight to ecosystem services, and (ii) acknowledging the natural processes that take place in waterways (Recommendation B20)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to add an additional direction (3.3) and action (3.3.1) relating to protecting cultural landscapes & heritage items, as outlined in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B21)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to ensure that planning for new retail areas includes consideration of transport and accessibility requirements, and promotes mixed use development and quality urban design (Recommendation B22)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to include an additional action (4.2.9) relating to the protection of cultural landscapes & heritage items, as outlined in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B23)

- ✘ Amend text associated with Direction 4.3 to state that “the NSW Government is an important land, infrastructure and asset owner, planner and manager with significant responsibility for managing natural hazards” (Recommendation B24)
- ✘ Amend the action relating to integrated risk management of hazards to include a review of planning controls to ensure that they are consistent with coastal risk management plans including predicted sea level rise (Recommendation B25)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to reflect the current Local Aboriginal Land Councils operating in the Hunter region (Recommendation B26)
- ✘ Amend the action to establish criteria for the assessment of new land release areas for urban development to include (i) consultation with councils, and (ii) consideration of natural hazards, climate change, and potential impacts on cultural landscapes and heritage values (Recommendation B27)
- ✘ Amend the action to prepare an integrated housing strategy for the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] to include collaboration with councils (Recommendation B28)
- ✘ Amend the action to develop a special infrastructure contributions plan for NSW Government infrastructure to identify that it will be guided by similar principles and legislative requirements of local development contributions (to ensure transparency, equitable levies and accountability) (Recommendation B29)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to extend the Mine Grouting Fund to other strategic centres such as Charlestown and Glendale (Recommendation B30)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to acknowledge the significant redevelopment opportunities that exist within the Northern Lake Macquarie District, and acknowledge that they are not ‘small-scale’ (Recommendation B31)
- ✘ Amend the action for the NSW Government to enhance the capacity of road corridors within North Lake Macquarie to include (i) improving public transport; and (ii) accommodating future growth (Recommendation B32)
- ✘ Amend the Northern Lake Macquarie District map to include ‘urban activation’ areas between Cardiff to Edgeworth, and Charlestown to Belmont, and correctly show the location of arterial roads, as detailed in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B33)
- ✘ Amend the draft plan to include an additional NSW Government funding commitment to construct the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange (Recommendation B34)
- ✘ Amend the Inner West District map to include the Cardiff to Edgeworth corridor and former Pasminco smelter site as ‘urban activation’ areas, and show associated infrastructure, as detailed in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B35)



What is the same

The majority of the draft plan is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning. The parts of the draft plan recommended to be noted as generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning are:

- Note that the population projections in the draft plan estimate less growth for the Hunter region than the LHRS, however, is consistent with the most recent demographic modelling by the NSW Government and is generally consistent with Council staff analysis (Recommendation C1)
- Note that the action to grow the mining sector is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C2)
- Note that the action to protect biophysically strategic agricultural land is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C3)

- *Note that the action to grow service and knowledge based industries is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C4)*
- *Note that the action to enhance tourism infrastructure and develop of tourism opportunities is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C5)*
- *Note that the action to identify and manage the supply of industrial lands is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C6)*
- *Note that the action to enhance inter-regional transport connections is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C7)*
- *Note that the action to grow and diversify the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C8)*
- *Note that the action to avoid urban and rural residential encroachment into agricultural areas is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C9)*
- *Note that the action to reduce biosecurity risk in agricultural areas is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C10)*
- *Note that the action to continuously improve the assessment and management of mining activities is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C11)*
- *Note that the action to improve the quality of and access to information relating to land with high environmental values is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C12)*
- *Note that the action to enhance environmental mapping and options to invest in conservation land is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C13)*
- *Note that the action to provide strategic advice and landscape scale assessments of biodiversity within the region is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C14)*
- *Note that the action to protect water supplies in the Hunter is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C15)*
- *Note that the action to manage water quality and waterways is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C16)*
- *Note that the action to monitor the supply and demand for commercial land is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C17)*
- *Note that the action to plan for schools to meet growing and changing needs is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C18)*
- *Note that the action to improve health facilities to service the region is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C19)*
- *Note that the action to plan for cemeteries and crematoria is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C20)*
- *Note that the action to improve the quality and consistency of hazard data is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C21)*
- *Note that the action to integrate flood, coastal and bushfire assessments into land use planning is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C22)*

- *Note that the action to assist Local Aboriginal Land Councils identify priority sites for further investigation in relation to economic opportunities is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C23)*
- *Note the action to promote the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage values is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C24)*
- *Note that the action to monitor the supply and demand of land for housing and commercial uses is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C25)*
- *Note that the action to facilitate redevelopment of government owned land in existing urban areas is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C26)*
- *Note that the action to improve public transport, walking and cycling is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C27)*
- *Note that the action to assist in delivering an adequate supply of industrial land is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C28)*
- *Note that the action to monitor the supply and demand of land for housing uses is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C29)*
- *Note that the ongoing action to develop a special infrastructure contributions plan for NSW Government infrastructure in the Hunter region is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C30)*
- *Note the funding commitments to Inner Newcastle by the NSW Government are generally consistent with existing NSW Government commitments (Recommendation C31)*
- *Note that the action to investigate opportunities for economic and housing growth within centres is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C32)*

Review of the Draft Hunter Regional Plan

Overview

The draft plan consists of two documents:

- *Draft Hunter Regional Plan*: a strategic land use plan for the entire Hunter region; and
- *Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City*: a strategic land use plan for the Lower Hunter urban area referred to as 'Hunter City'.

Comment

The goals for the Hunter City vary between the *Draft Hunter Regional Plan* and the *Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City*. Specifically, the *Draft Hunter Regional Plan* contains goals for the Hunter region and the Hunter City, however, the *Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City* contains different goals for the Hunter City. Consolidating the draft plan into a single document with a clear set of goals for the Hunter region and Hunter City is recommended.

In addition, actions for the Hunter City are contained in both the *Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City* and the *Draft Hunter Regional Plan*. However, the *Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City* does not include a written statement that it must be read in conjunction with the *Draft Hunter Regional Plan*. Consolidating the draft plan into a single document would ensure that all the actions for the Hunter City are contained within a single document.

Recommendations

- ✖ Amend the draft plan to (i) consolidate the *Draft Hunter Regional Plan* and the *Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City* into one document; and (ii) provide a single set of goals for the Hunter region and Hunter City (Recommendation B1)

Vision, goals and implementation

Vision

The draft plan includes the following vision for the Hunter region:

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.

Comment

The proposed vision for the Hunter region has an economic focus and is inconsistent with the *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy* (LHRS), which promotes balanced environmental, economic and social outcomes. The LHRS states that:

The Government's vision for the Lower Hunter embraces a sustainable future for the Region — balancing environmental, economic and social outcomes so that quality of life can be enhanced without burdening future generations.

Other NSW Government regional plans also promote balanced environmental, economic and social outcomes, such as the adopted *Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Plan*, which states:

The vision for the Illawarra-Shoalhaven region is for a sustainable future and a resilient community, capable of adapting to changing economic, social and environmental circumstances.

Council's *Lifestyle 2030 Strategy* (LS2030) also promotes balanced environmental, economic and social outcomes.

Amending the draft plan to promote balanced economic, environmental and social outcomes is recommended as it provides a broader vision covering the economy, plus the region's community and environment. An amended vision for the Hunter region as presented in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

- ✖ Amend the draft plan's vision from an economic focus to promoting balanced environmental, economic and social outcomes for the Hunter region, as outlined in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B2)

Goals

The draft plan includes the following 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.

Comment

The goals are consistent with the recommended vision of balanced environmental, economic and social outcomes, as well as LHRs and *Lifestyle 2030*. However, the goals do not include consideration of:

- protection of scenic and cultural landscapes and heritage items, or
- natural hazards and climate change impacts.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the goals identified for the Hunter region, which seek to: grow Australia's next major city; grow the largest regional economy in Australia; protect and connect natural environments; & support robust regional communities (Recommendation A1)
- ✖ Amend Goal 3 to state that ongoing development will (i) "*be balanced with measures to protect scenic and cultural landscapes and heritage items*", and (ii) "*will consider natural hazards and respond to climate change impacts*" (Recommendation B3)

Coordinating and monitoring committee

The draft plan identifies that a coordination and monitoring committee will be established, with membership from the NSW Government, service providers and councils to:

- coordinate and drive the delivery of actions;
- establish a framework to report progress on the following issues:
 - population;
 - housing;

- *economy and employment; and*
- *natural environment and resources.*

Comment

The draft plan does not outline details of the committee's structure, members (e.g. elected councillors or council staff), or specific roles and responsibilities (e.g. decision making function or technical advice). The draft plan also does not outline a monitoring and measurement framework to track and evaluate implementation of the draft plan. These matters require resolution to ensure that the committee can undertake effective coordination and monitoring. NSW Government agencies responsible for education and health facilities are also currently not included in the proposed committee and should be added.

The Coordinating and Monitoring Committee statements do not address the potential for the committee to operate in concert with, or as an extension of, Joint Organisations (JO'S) as are being promoted in the current review of the Local Government Act. Councils can potentially work more efficiently in with other levels of government if the frameworks supporting these relationships are consistent and coordinated.

In addition, actions in the draft plan identify that the NSW Government will work with councils to:

- review and revise planning controls for strategic centres and transport gateways in accordance with the draft plan;
- prepare an integrated housing strategy for each local government area;
- align and progress transport plans;
- develop a comprehensive green grid plan for the Hunter City;
- monitor the size, location and capacity of land supply;
- prioritise infrastructure delivery;
- prepare a land use and infrastructure strategy for new release areas in the inner west; and
- review special infrastructure contributions.

The draft plan does not identify that the NSW Government will provide financial assistance to help councils implement these actions.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the creation of a coordination and monitoring committee to oversee the implementation of the final adopted plan, which will have representation from each local council (Recommendation A2)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to ensure (i) the structure and terms of reference for the proposed coordination and monitoring committee are established in consultation with local councils; that (ii) NSW Government agencies responsible for education and health facilities are included in the committee; that (iii) the committee develops a monitoring and measurement framework to track and evaluate implementation of the draft plan; and that (iv) the committee arrangements have due regard to the creation of a permanent Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils (Recommendation B4)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to include an action for the NSW Government to provide financial assistance to help councils implement the final adopted plan (Recommendation B5)

Goal 1: Grow Australia's next major city

Direction 1.1 Grow and sustainably manage Hunter City

ACTION 1.1.1 Deliver a Plan for Growing Hunter City

Hunter City

The draft plan introduces the concept of the 'Hunter City', which visualises the Lower Hunter urban area as a 'metropolitan area' (the seventh largest regional city in Australia, with a population of 430,000 people).

Comment

The draft plan promotes coordinated land use and infrastructure planning for the Hunter City, which is consistent with LHRS and LS2030. However, the Lower Hunter contains several 'cities' with strong and unique identities including Newcastle, Maitland and Lake Macquarie. The name 'Hunter Metropolitan Area' more accurately reflects the urban form of the Lower Hunter. A description of the Hunter Metropolitan Area is also not contained in the draft plan, and should be included as outlined in appendix 1.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the draft plan's actions to enhance coordinated land use and infrastructure planning for the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] (Recommendation A3)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to rename 'Hunter City', the 'Hunter Metropolitan Area', to reflect the existence of several cities (Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Maitland etc) in the Lower Hunter each with unique identities (Recommendation B6)

Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] Principles

The draft plan includes the following principles for the Hunter City:

Principle 1: Development will contribute to connected communities

Principle 2: Investment will support a sustainable and diverse economy

Principle 3: Protect the environment and respond to climate change impacts

Comment

The principles include statements such as: "*The City will provide the essentials – clean air and water*", which do not provide adequate strategic direction for the Hunter City. A revised set of principles outlined in Appendix 1 are recommended for inclusion in the draft plan to provide additional strategic direction for the Hunter Metropolitan Area.

Recommendations

- ✗ Amend the draft plan to include more detailed planning principles for the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area], as shown in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B7)

Hunter City Map

The draft plan includes a map of the Hunter City (see Figure 1) which identifies a range of features including the Hunter City urban area, Hunter City landscape, Hunter City's rural hinterland, and strategic centres.

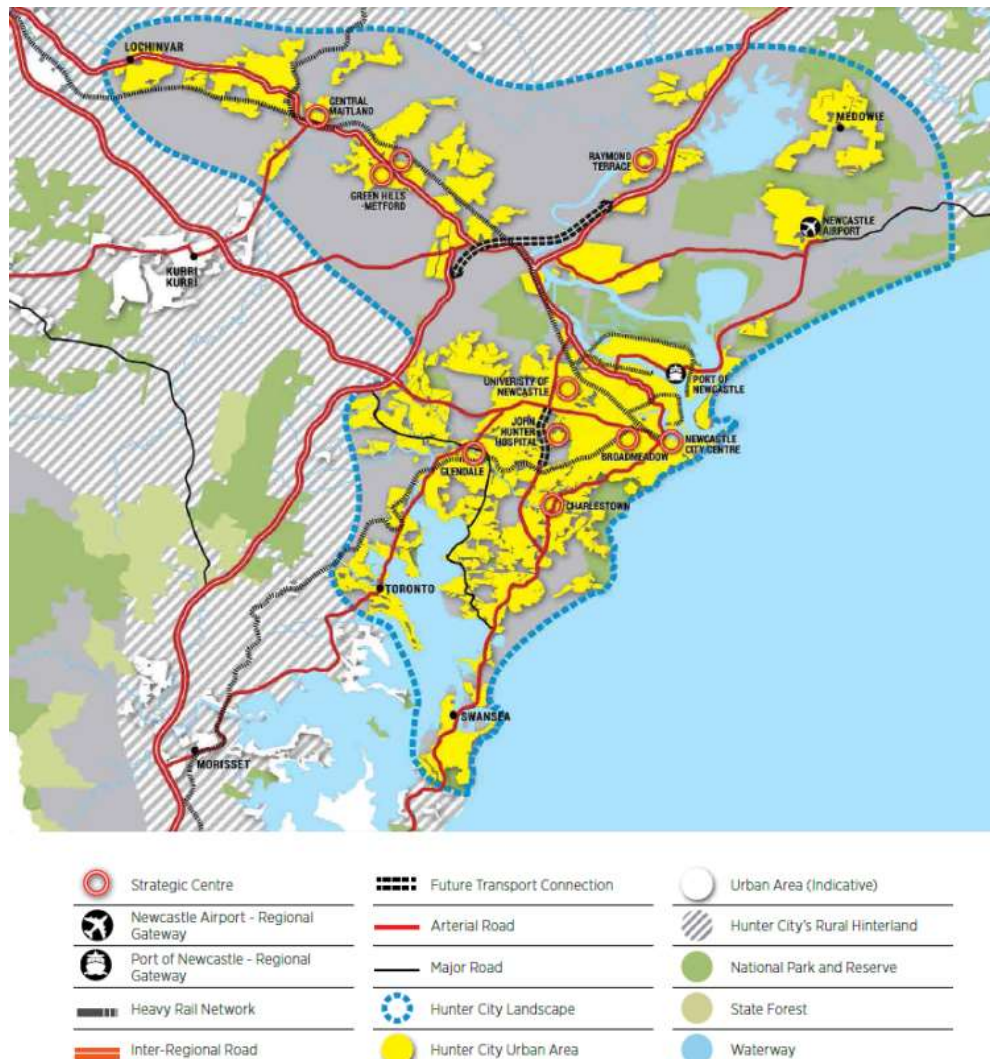


Figure 1 – Map of the Hunter City contained in the draft plan

Comment

The figure may have conceptual value, however, its purpose is unclear making misinterpretation likely. It does not accurately reflect the distinct character and diverse landscape of the Lower Hunter. Specifically:

- More than two-thirds of the Hunter City landscape consists of important environmental lands (including habitat corridors), biophysically strategic agricultural lands, flood prone land and waterways located between Newcastle, Maitland and Raymond Terrace. These areas are coloured 'grey', are not defined in the legend, and can be misinterpreted as land that could form part of the Hunter City's urban area in the future (e.g. new development areas).
- The boundary between the Hunter City landscape and Hunter City's rural hinterland is inconsistent with the landscape character, and does not follow landscape boundaries, for example:
 - rural uses or environmental lands with similar characteristics are both within the Hunter City and hinterland (e.g. around Maitland and Raymond Terrace);
 - significant urban areas such as Morisset are within the hinterland, and identified to remain a predominantly rural landscape; and
 - major visual and geographic features such as the Watagan Mountains or low lying flood prone land are both within the Hunter City and hinterland.

- The mapped extent of the Hunter City landscape and Hunter City's rural hinterland varies:
 - Coal Point (south of Toronto) and south of the Swansea town centre are shown within the Hunter City (figure 2 of the draft plan) and within the Hunter City's Rural Hinterland (figure 4 of the draft plan).
 - Cessnock is located outside the Hunter City's Rural Hinterland (figure 2 of the draft plan), and within the Hunter City's Rural Hinterland (figure 17 of the draft plan).
- Adequate definitions of the Hunter City landscape and Hunter City's rural hinterland are also not included.

Should the map be adopted, it is considered to be highly problematic from an implementation perspective (e.g. preparation of planning strategies and planning proposals), as the map can be unintentionally misinterpreted. Consequently, a revised map is recommended as outlined in Appendix 1.

In addition, maps within the draft plan should also reflect any boundary adjustments that result from the NSW Government's Fit for the Future reforms.

Recommendations

- ✘ Amend the map of the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] to better illustrate the current and future land uses, as shown in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B8)
- ✘ Amend maps in the draft plan to reflect any boundary adjustments that result from the NSW Government's Fit for the Future reforms (Recommendation B9)

Strategic Centres

The draft plan identifies nine strategic centres and two global transport gateways within the Hunter City (see Figure 1).

Comment

The draft plan does not provide strategic guidance on the role of each centre. The draft plan differs from the LHRS, and other NSW Government plans such as the *Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Plan*, which details the role of centres. The exclusion of defined roles significantly reduces the level of strategic guidance provided by the draft plan. To address this, it is recommended a framework describing the role and function of strategic centres within the Hunter City (Hunter Metropolitan Area) be prepared in collaboration with councils.

Recommendations

- ✘ Amend the draft plan to include an action for the NSW Government to prepare in collaboration with councils a framework describing the role and function of strategic centres within the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] (Recommendation B10)

Morisset Emerging Regional Centre

The draft plan does not include Morisset as a strategic centre and locates Morisset within the Hunter City's rural hinterland - an area identified to remain a predominantly rural landscape.

Comment

Morisset is not an area that will remain a predominantly rural landscape. Specifically:

- Morisset is identified in the LHRS as an 'emerging regional centre' and is surrounded by major urban growth areas.
- Morisset has a comparable population, employment and workforce to other strategic centres identified in the draft plan, such as Raymond Terrace, as shown in Table 1.

- Morisset has comparable distances to key facilities and better public transport connectivity to other areas included within the Hunter City, such as Lochinvar, as outlined in Table 2.
- Over the last 10 years, the NSW Government has made significant commitments to establishing Morisset as an emerging regional centre by zoning significant land areas for residential and industrial purposes around Morisset, Cooranbong and Wyee, in accordance with the LHRS.
- Morisset also has a further 280 ha of land zoned RU6 Transition under Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2014 for investigation of future potential urban development.

Accordingly, Morisset is recommended to remain identified as an emerging strategic centre and be identified within the Hunter City (Hunter Metropolitan Area).

Table 1 - Comparison of Morisset and Raymond Terrace

(Data source <http://visual.bts.nsw.gov.au/landuse/>)

	Morisset		Raymond Terrace	
	2016	2036	2016	2036
Population	15,873	23,427	15,707	19,742
Employment	6,846	8,101	11,741	13,741
Workforce	6,817	10,522	7,138	8,974

Table 2 - Comparison of Morisset and Lochinvar

	Morisset	Lochinvar
John Hunter Hospital by road	37 m	42km
Hamilton by road	44km	45kms
Hamilton by train	45 min (regular services)	45min (four services a day)

Recommendations

- ✱ Amend the draft plan to include Morisset within the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area], and identify Morisset as an emerging strategic centre, as shown on the amended Hunter City map in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B11)

Population and housing projections

The draft plan provides an estimate of projected population growth and housing demand to the year 2036, however, does not include job projections.

Comment

The population projections in the draft plan are significantly lower than the LHRS, and a comparison is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 - Comparison of population and housing targets in the LHRS and draft plan

LHRS	Draft plan
By 2031, the Lower Hunter will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grow by 160,000 people • require 115,000 new homes • require 66,000 new jobs 	By 2036, the Hunter City will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grow by 117,850 people • require 60,000 new homes

The population projections are based on population growth modelling by the NSW Government undertaken in 2014, and forwarded to Council at the time. The NSW Government's population projections are generally consistent with Council staff analysis, however, the NSW Government estimates slightly lower population growth.

In regards to jobs, NSW Government staff informed Council staff that job projections were not included as a reliable data source was not available. Despite this, the draft plan should include a general guide to the number of jobs that will be required to meet the needs of the growing

population. A diverse economy and a diverse population base, rather than one skewed to households that do not require employment, is vital for the Hunter in the medium and long term.

Recommendations

- Note that the population projections in the draft plan estimate less growth for the Hunter region than the LHRS, however, is consistent with the most recent demographic modelling by the NSW Government and is generally consistent with Council staff analysis (Recommendation C1)
- ✖ Amend the draft plan to identify how many jobs will be required to meet the needs of the Hunter region's growing population (e.g. not a fixed target but a general guide) (Recommendation B12)

Goal 2: Grow the largest regional economy in Australia

Direction 2.1 Promote investment to grow regional rural and resource industries

ACTION 2.1.1 Identify energy and mineral resource lands to support sustainable growth of mining industries and diversification of NSW energy supplies

The draft plan supports the growth of the mining industry and diversification of energy supplies. The draft plan identifies that existing mining and energy resources are important to the Hunter region and state economy, however, that solar, wind and geothermal resources have the potential to supply renewable energy to NSW.

In addition to the existing policy and legislative tools to support the growth of the mining industry, the draft plan identifies that NSW Government will:

- *develop analytical tools to identify and map large-scale renewable energy potential, building on new information such as the Australian Government's Australian Renewable Energy Mapping Infrastructure, as it becomes available;*
- *maintain a database of mineral and energy resource lands, and monitor development activity. Information will be made available through online resources such as the Common Ground website, as well as through the NSW Mineral Resources Audit; and*
- *work with councils and industry to identify and support opportunities for smaller-scale renewable energy projects such as those using bioenergy or waste coal mine methane, supporting greater energy security within the region.*

Comment

In relation to mining and coal seam gas, the draft plan is generally consistent with existing NSW Government policy. Specifically, the draft plan identifies that:

- open cut coal mining is excluded within the majority of the Lake Macquarie local government area, however, underground mining is permitted; and
- the NSW Government has purchased back coal seam gas exploration gas titles within the majority of Lake Macquarie local government area.

In relation to renewable energy, the proposed action represents a new initiative from the NSW Government, and is generally consistent with LS2030, which seeks to recognise the inevitable growth of renewable energy.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to grow the mining sector is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C2)
- ✓ Support the action to diversify NSW energy supplies, which includes promoting the development of renewable energy resources (Recommendation A4)

ACTION 2.1.2 Support the growth of the region's important primary industries

The draft plan identifies that to support the ongoing success of the Hunter's priority agricultural industries, the NSW Government will:

- *work with industry to develop and maintain sector-specific considerations for the viticulture, equine and oyster aquaculture industries, to guide strategic land use planning and approvals processes;*
- *provide the right regulatory environment to prioritise the protection of strategic agricultural lands; and*
- *refine and enhance biophysical strategic agricultural land mapping to reflect updated data.*

Comment

The draft plan is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions and with LS2030, which seeks to protect agricultural land. However, the draft plan does not adequately consider the potential impacts of climate change on the agricultural sector or on biophysically strategic agricultural land.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to protect biophysically strategic agricultural land is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C3)
- ✖ Amend the action for the NSW Government to work with the agricultural industry to include consideration of climate change impacts on agricultural productivity and food security (Recommendation B13)
- ✖ Amend the action to refine and enhance biophysically strategic agricultural land mapping to include climate change impacts (e.g. consider if areas identified as strategic agricultural land will remain productive into the future) (Recommendation B14)

ACTION 2.1.3 Develop local strategies to support sustainable agriculture and agribusiness

The draft plan identifies that to support sustainable growth of an array of agribusinesses within the Hunter, the NSW Government will continue to work with councils and industry to:

- *develop a uniform methodology for identifying and mapping land important for agriculture at a regional level to inform the development of local strategies and planning controls supporting sustainable agriculture; and*
- *in the longer term, develop and maintain a region-wide database of important agricultural lands.*

Comment

The draft plan is generally consistent existing NSW Government actions and with LS2030, which seeks to protect agricultural land.

Recommendations

(Notes the actions to protect biophysically strategic agricultural land, as noted above)

Direction 2.2 Grow and connect service-based industries to support regional communities and provide a competitive edge for businesses

ACTION 2.2.1 Support the region's key sectors and regional competitiveness with appropriate planning controls

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will enhance opportunities for the region's service based industries to grow by working with councils and industry to:

- *plan for the future needs of industries by identifying land and infrastructure requirements that can support their ongoing success; and*

- *apply appropriate planning controls to create the right conditions, opportunities and capacity for growth in these industries.*

Comment

The draft plan is generally consistent existing NSW Government actions and with LS2030, which promotes growing employment generating business activity.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to grow service and knowledge based industries is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C4)

ACTION 2.2.2 Develop strategies for enhancing tourism infrastructure to increase national competitiveness

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with stakeholders to identify and prioritise infrastructure that will support the tourism industry, including connections to the tourism gateways and attractions; and*
- *investigate options to accommodate a more diverse range of economic uses in natural areas to support tourism and conservation.*

Comment

The draft plan is generally consistent existing NSW Government actions and with LS2030, which encourages the development of tourism opportunities in consultation with the NSW Government.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to enhance tourism infrastructure and develop of tourism opportunities is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C5)

ACTION 2.2.3 Identify and manage the supply of industrial lands to support manufacturing, construction, transport and supply chain industries

The draft plan identifies that to provide a supply of industrial lands that will enable the Hunter to remain competitive, the NSW Government will:

- *work with councils and industry to establish an industrial land monitor that identifies land available, servicing status and projected demand for land;*
- *investigate opportunities for new industrial locations, prioritising locations that have good access to the Hunter's inter-regional transport network, such as the Hunter Expressway corridor; and*
- *work with councils and servicing agencies to prioritise infrastructure planning and delivery for industrial lands.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with LHRs and LS2030, which seeks to plan for an adequate supply of industrial lands.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to identify and manage the supply of industrial lands is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C6)

ACTION 2.2.4 Provide the right regulatory environment to support small business

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with councils to identify and implement strategies to support small business growth and innovation; and*
- *work with councils and industry to prepare industry-specific planning strategies that support growth and a regionally consistent planning approach to tourism.*

Comment

Identifying strategies to support small business growth and preparing industry-specific planning strategies that support growth and a regionally consistent planning approach to tourism, is a new initiative from the NSW Government. The proposed action is generally consistent with LS2030, which promotes growing employment generating business activity, and encourages the development of tourism opportunities in consultation with the NSW Government.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action to identify strategies to support small business growth and prepare industry-specific planning strategies (Recommendation A5)

Direction 2.3 Enhance inter-regional transport connections

ACTION 2.3.1 Identify and deliver transport corridors to enhance inter-regional networks

The draft plan states that Transport for NSW is progressively preparing network and corridor strategies to cover every State road in NSW. The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with stakeholders to maintain efficiencies in transport networks and upgrade network capacity in line with changing demands; and*
- *continue to deliver corridor strategies to support the long term management and operation of State roads in the Hunter.*

Comment

The proposed action to effectively manage road corridors is generally consistent with the NSW Government's existing actions. However, the draft plan does not include an action to plan for enhancing rail transport. This is despite that draft plan stating that the Hunter is part of the national freight network, which supports economic growth and diversification of regional NSW, and that the Australian Government is investigating opportunities for high-speed rail.

The draft plan also does not detail how it integrates with the actions in the Hunter Regional Transport Plan, and does not provide any references to the proposal to create a separate public transport authority for the Hunter, which was announced by the NSW Government on 5 November 2015.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to enhance inter-regional transport connections is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C7)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to include an action to investigate opportunities to enhance the Hunter region's passenger and freight rail network, including a Newcastle freight bypass, and opportunities for high-speed rail (Recommendation B15)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to ensure that it effectively integrates with the Hunter Regional Transport Plan, and the proposal by the NSW Government to create a separate public transport authority for the Hunter region (Recommendation B16)

ACTION 2.3.2 Support the growth and diversification of the Hunter's global transport gateways (Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport) to maintain competitiveness

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will support the growth and diversification of the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport.

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government policy. The action applies to land outside of the Lake Macquarie local government area, however, is generally consistent promoting economic development within the Hunter region, with potential all benefits for businesses and local residents.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to grow and diversify the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C8)

Direction 2.4 Manage competing and conflicting interests in rural and resource areas to provide greater certainty for investment

ACTION 2.4.1 Plan for the ongoing productive use of extractive resource lands

The draft plan acknowledges the potential for land use conflict between mining and other land uses such as agriculture, water resources and urban development. The draft plan states that land use conflict can be better managed by planning for whole-of lifecycle mining. The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will: *“work with relevant councils, communities and industries to prepare land use plans that respond to the lifecycle of resource activity for active and emerging mining areas in the Western Hunter, around Singleton and Muswellbrook, the Northern Tops, around Gloucester and in Hunter City”*.

Comment

Planning for whole-of lifecycle mining to better manage land use conflicts (rural, resource and urban) is a new initiative proposed by the NSW Government. The proposed action should provide an opportunity to better manage the impacts of mining activities (e.g. noise, dust, and undermining) on rural or urban land uses in Lake Macquarie.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action to better manage land use conflict between mining, rural and urban land uses by planning for ‘whole-of lifecycle mining’ (Recommendation A6)

ACTION 2.4.2 Avoid urban and rural residential encroachment into identified agricultural and extractive resource lands when preparing long-term settlement strategies

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with councils to avoid the impacts of urban and rural housing encroachment into identified agricultural and extractive resource areas when preparing local strategies. This will support the ongoing success of agricultural and mining industries within the Hunter; and*
- *work with councils and industry to identify where demands for additional urban lands coincide with identified extractive resources and develop strategies to sequence the release of these in line with mining activities.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government policy. The proposed action is generally consistent with LS2030, which seeks to protect agricultural land.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to avoid urban and rural residential encroachment into agricultural areas is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C9)

ACTION 2.4.3 Protect the region's wellbeing and prosperity through increased biosecurity measures

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will work with councils to:

- *identify opportunities to minimise biosecurity risks for current and future industries through strategic planning, including a review of zones in local environmental plans; and*
- *promote the application of buffer areas to minimise biosecurity risks when assessing the potential impacts of new development.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government policy. The proposed action is generally consistent with LS2030, which seeks to protect agricultural land.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to reduce biosecurity risk in agricultural areas is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C10)

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

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with councils and industry to implement the Integrated Mining Policy, including finalising economic assessment guidelines;*
- *develop a cumulative impact assessment methodology to manage the cumulative health and amenity impacts of all relevant activities (including mining) and coal seam gas proposals, which:*
 - *considers whether cumulative impact thresholds or tipping points can be adequately described and predicted; and*
 - *considers cumulative impacts on agricultural lands and water resources;*
- *investigate appropriate methods for encouraging best-practice rehabilitation and visual impact management for closed mines; and*
- *prepare a development assessment guideline for impacts on human health from dust (including dust generated by mining and other activities).*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with the NSW Government's existing review of the assessment and management of mining activities.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to continuously improve the assessment and management of mining activities is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C11)

Goal 3: Protect and connect natural environments

Direction 3.1 Protect natural environment and biodiversity

Mapping high environmental values

The draft plan includes a map of land with high environmental values, which is intended to provide a regional-level overview for strategic planning purposes, and is proposed to be updated as new information becomes available.

Comment

The draft plan is generally consistent with LS2030, which identifies areas of environmental value for consideration as part of the strategic planning process. However, the map in the draft plan does not include proposed conservation reserves such as the Awaba Conservation Area and the Lake Macquarie Coastal Wetlands Park. The map is recommended to be amended to include these proposed reserves, as shown in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the mapping of high environmental values, regular updating of the data set, and using the information to guide regional strategic planning (Recommendation A7)
- ✗ Amend the map of land with high environmental values to include the latest environmental mapping from Lake Macquarie City Council (see Council for details) and add proposed conservation reserves such as the Awaba Conservation Area and the Lake Macquarie Coastal Wetlands Park to the map, as shown in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B17)

Habitat connectivity and focus areas

The draft plan includes a map of focus areas and management initiatives for maintaining habitat connectivity (shown in Figure 2), which includes the following management initiatives:

- sustain connectivity through whole-of-lifecycle planning for mining (Barrington Tops to Myall Lakes National Park);
- enhance connectivity through delivery of urban and transport infrastructure (Watagans National Park to Myall Lakes National Park); and
- sustain connectivity through delivery of greenfield development (Watagans National Park to Wallarah National Park).

Comment

The draft plan proposes initiatives to maintain habitat connectivity in ways that are not proven environmental strategies. For example, proposing to “*sustain connectivity through delivery of greenfield development*” and “*enhance connectivity through delivery of urban and transport infrastructure*”, are both likely to result in habitat loss and reduce habitat connectivity. Perhaps this issue arises as a result of word choice and sentence structure, but as written, a more effective approach would be to identify proven strategies to maintain habitat connectivity, such as protecting and rehabilitating habitat corridors. Accordingly, the draft plan is recommended to be revised to prepare a habitat corridor strategy for the Hunter region.

Recommendations

- ✗ Amend the draft plan to remove or reword the following initiatives proposed to maintain habitat connectivity “*sustain connectivity through delivery of greenfield development*” and “*enhance connectivity through delivery of urban and transport infrastructure*”, as they are not proven environmental strategies (Recommendation B18)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to include an action for the NSW Government to work with councils to prepare a strategic habitat corridor strategy for the Hunter region (Recommendation B19)

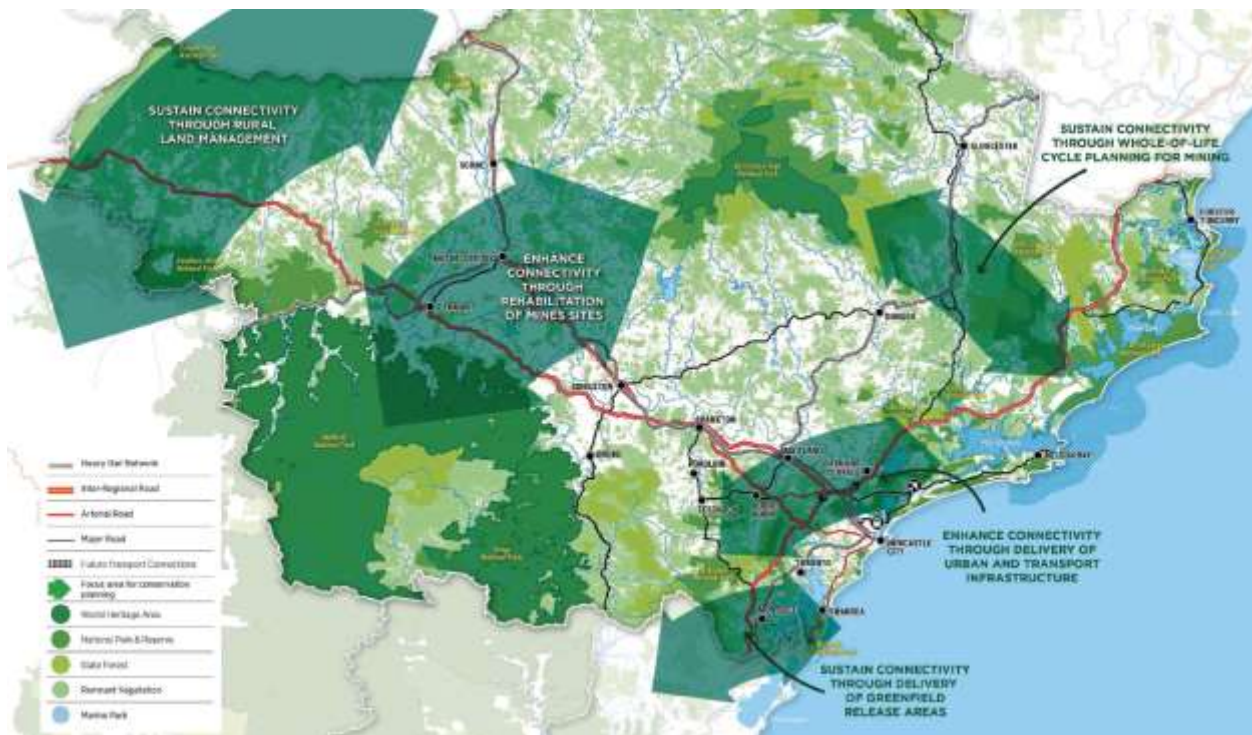


Figure 2 - Map of focus areas and management initiatives for maintaining habitat connectivity

ACTION 3.1.1 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

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will work with councils to protect biodiversity by:

- *creating the right regulatory environment and implementing appropriate protection measures to conserve validated high environmental values, including through the application of planning controls;*
- *developing local strategies to avoid and minimise potential impacts arising from development on areas of high environmental value, and subsequently considering appropriate mechanisms to identify offsets or other mitigation mechanisms for unavoidable impacts; and*
- *identifying and assessing the potential impacts to biodiversity and establishing plans to manage offsets, or at the earliest stage of the planning approvals process, using appropriate assessment methodologies.*

The NSW Government will also update information about and map high environmental value areas to assist decision-making. It will continue to make this information publicly available, including through the use of the Planning e-viewer.

Note: The 'Planning e-viewer' is a NSW Government web-based mapping tool, which is currently under development.

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to improve the quality of and access to information relating to land with high environmental values is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C12)

ACTION 3.1.2 Identify priority investment within regional habitat corridors and prepare local strategies to protect and manage corridors

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *support councils to further develop, share and continuously update strategic planning tools including vegetation data and modelling toolkits; and*
- *provide more options for investing in and conserving land, including managing biodiversity offsets as part of the planning approvals process.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to enhance environmental mapping and options to invest in conservation land is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C13)

ACTION 3.1.3 Encourage greater participation in private conservation schemes to provide more flexibility and options for investing in conservation, including biodiversity offsets

The draft plan states that the NSW Government will continue working with councils and landowners to encourage greater participation in private conservation schemes by:

- *providing strategic advice and landscape scale assessments of biodiversity within the region, to identify areas and opportunities to raise further awareness or incentivise participation.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to provide strategic advice and landscape scale assessments of biodiversity within the region is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C14)

Direction 3.2 Secure the health of water resources and coastal landscapes

ACTION 3.2.1 Protect the Hunter's water supplies to meet the needs of the environment and support the growth and development of towns and industries

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will work with councils 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.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to protect water supplies in the Hunter is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C15)

ACTION 3.2.2 Develop a risk-based decision-making framework to manage water quality and waterway health outcomes for all coastal lakes and estuaries in the region

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *apply the risk-based decision-making framework as a model to manage coastal lakes and estuaries where there is planned development. This will inform the consideration of water quality outcomes in all strategic planning decisions for the region.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to manage water quality and waterways is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C16)

ACTION 3.2.3 Investigate opportunities to integrate the marine estate and adjacent coastal land uses

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *prepare a Marine Estate Management Strategy for NSW, in partnership with key stakeholders, to respond to the outcomes of threat and risk assessments for the Hawkesbury and Manning bioregions. This will consider the marine estate, including its social, economic and ecological values, and will determine the management priorities for the estate;*
- *prepare a Local Environmental Planning Practice Note to guide councils about how to apply natural, recreational and working waterway zones during the preparation of local environmental plans, while considering things like foreshore access and foreshore building lines; and*
- *develop regional boating plans to improve boating safety, boat storage, and waterway access on major waterways.*

Comment

Preparing a Marine Estate Management Strategy for NSW is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions. Preparing a Local Environmental Planning Practice Note to guide the zoning of waterways is a new NSW Government initiative that will provide greater guidance for land use zoning. However, the practice note should give weight to the ecosystem services provided by estuaries and waterways and acknowledge the natural processes that take place in estuaries and waterways (including the tidal zone and substrate for the depth of the water column as well as over the estuary/waterway water surface).

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action to better manage marine environments and waterways (Recommendation A8)
- ✗ Amend the action to create a Planning Practice Note to guide the zoning of waterways to include (i) giving weight to ecosystem services, and (ii) acknowledging the natural processes that take place in waterways (Recommendation B20)

Additional Direction 3.3 Protect Cultural Landscapes and Heritage Items

Comments

Apart from *Action 4.4.2 Identify and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage values*, the draft plan does not include any details on the protection of cultural landscapes and heritage items. Cultural landscapes and heritage items are a central part of our regional identity, and their protection is an essential part of planning for our future. Therefore, an additional direction and action is recommended relating to the protection of cultural landscapes and heritage items, as outlined in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

- ✗ Amend the draft plan to add an additional direction (3.3) and action (3.3.1) relating to protecting cultural landscapes & heritage items, as outlined in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B21)

Goal 4: Support robust regional communities

Direction 4.1 Focus housing and service growth towards Hunter City and the region's existing towns and villages

The draft plan identifies the following actions:

- ACTION 4.1.1 Investigate demand for and options to accommodate long-term housing growth in regional towns and villages
- ACTION 4.1.2 Manage the supply of housing in rural areas to protect social, environmental and economic value

Comments

These actions generally apply to land outside of the Lake Macquarie local government area.

Direction 4.2 Provide housing and services that meet local communities' needs

The draft plan identifies the following actions:

- ACTION 4.2.1 Investigate options to integrate the delivery of housing with infrastructure
- ACTION 4.2.2 Investigate options to establish monitoring and strategic frameworks to better respond to the changing needs of communities with seasonal populations in regional towns and villages
- ACTION 4.2.3 Deliver housing to meet the varied needs of communities
- ACTION 4.2.4 Develop local strategies to create flexible employment, housing and service delivery that responds to changing markets

Comments

These actions generally apply to land outside of the Lake Macquarie local government area.

ACTION 4.2.5 Support retail growth in centres to promote vibrant, liveable communities

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with councils to develop a new supply and demand database to guide planning for retail space, which takes into account the changing demand for different types of retail, including supermarkets and large-format retail stores.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with the LHRS, which identified the need to monitor the supply and demand for commercial land. However, the action does not adequately consider broader strategic planning considerations associated with planning for retail areas, such as transport and accessibility requirements, or urban form and design considerations. Accordingly, the draft plan should be amended to include additional strategic planning criteria to guide new retail development.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to monitor the supply and demand for commercial land is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C17)
- × Amend the draft plan to ensure that planning for new retail areas includes consideration of transport and accessibility requirements, and promotes mixed use development and quality urban design (Recommendation B22)

ACTION 4.2.6 Plan for schools to meet growing and changing needs

The draft plan identifies that to meet the growing and changing needs of the region's communities, the NSW Government will:

- *develop a revised service model and a new approach to planning school assets in the region.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to plan for schools to meet growing and changing needs is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C18)

ACTION 4.2.7 Plan for the expansion of health facilities to service the region

The draft plan identifies that to meet the region's future health needs, the NSW Government will:

- *support planning and delivery of a new hospital at Metford to provide new and expanded services close to rapidly growing communities; and*
- *investigate opportunities to improve access, including by public transport, to all major hospitals.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to improve health facilities to service the region is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C19)

ACTION 4.2.8 Coordinate the planning and delivery of cemeteries and crematoria

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *support councils and infrastructure providers to identify appropriate sites and capacity for cemeteries and crematoria.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to plan for cemeteries and crematoria is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C20)

Additional Action Protect Cultural Landscapes and Heritage Items

Comments

Apart from *Action 4.4.2 Identify and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage values*, the draft plan does not include any details on the protection of cultural landscapes and heritage items. Cultural landscapes and heritage items are a central part of our regional identity, and their protection is an essential part of planning for our future. Therefore, an additional direction and action is recommended to be included in the draft plan relating to the protection of cultural landscapes and heritage items, as outlined in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

- × Amend the draft plan to include an additional action (4.2.9) relating to the protection of cultural landscapes & heritage items, as outlined in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B23)

Direction 4.3 Build the region's resilience to natural hazards

The draft plan states that:

Land use planning can build community resilience to hazards by supporting changes to the physical environment and infrastructure to avoid or manage threats. Councils will remain predominantly responsible for identifying and managing these threats. The NSW Government will support councils to develop evidence and provide strategic advice to inform decision-making.

The direction does not acknowledge that the NSW Government is an important land, infrastructure and asset owner, planner and manager, with significant responsibility for managing natural hazards (e.g. Swansea channel infrastructure).

Recommendations

- ✖ Amend text associated with Direction 4.3 to state that “the NSW Government is an important land, infrastructure and asset owner, planner and manager with significant responsibility for managing natural hazards” (Recommendation B24)

ACTION 4.3.1 Investigate opportunities to improve the quality and consistency of hazard data within the region

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- continue to support councils to consider the long term implications of climate change in decision-making; and,
- where possible, take 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.

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to improve the quality and consistency of hazard data is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C21)

ACTION 4.3.2 Integrate risk management frameworks for coastal, floodplain and other hazards into local strategies and planning controls, prioritising areas identified to support regional growth

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- work with councils to:
 - review and update local floodplain and coastal risk management plans; and
 - incorporate the best available information on physical and infrastructure resilience to hazards when planning for new growth opportunities.
- prioritise investigations into how hazard mitigation infrastructure may be improved.
- develop strategic, incident-based and emergency management actions such as bushfire, flood and coastal response plans; and
- integrate planning for emergency response infrastructure to support the above.

Comment

The action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning, except in relation to coastal hazards.

The draft plan states that “[t]he NSW Government is already responding to community concerns about coastal hazards through a coastal reform process” (p. 73). However, the draft plan does not include any detailed actions, such as reviewing planning controls to ensure that they are consistent with coastal hazards, including predicted sea level rise.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to integrate flood, coastal and bushfire assessments into land use planning is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C22)
- ✖ Amend the action relating to integrated risk management of hazards to include a review of planning controls to ensure that they are consistent with coastal risk management plans including predicted sea level rise (Recommendation B25)

Direction 4.4 Strengthen the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities

ACTION 4.4.1 Conduct a strategic assessment of land held by the region’s Local Aboriginal Land Councils to identify priority sites for further investigation of their economic opportunities

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with the Forster, Karuah, Worimi, Mindaribba, Awabakal, Bahtabah, Koompahtoo and Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Councils to identify priority sites so that each Local Aboriginal Land Council can create a pipeline of potential projects.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government actions. However, the draft plan should be updated to reflect the current Aboriginal Land Councils in the Hunter region (e.g. Koompahtoo has been dissolved, and Biraban has been established).

Recommendations

- Note that the action to assist Local Aboriginal Land Councils identify priority sites for further investigation in relation to economic opportunities is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C23)
- ✖ Amend the draft plan to reflect the current Local Aboriginal Land Councils operating in the Hunter region (Recommendation B26)

ACTION 4.4.2 Identify and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage values

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *support the preparation of appropriate heritage studies to inform the development of strategic plans, including regional Aboriginal cultural heritage studies.*

Comment

The proposed action is consistent with Council’s approach Aboriginal cultural heritage matters.

Recommendations

- Note the action to promote the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage values is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C24)

Review of the Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City

Managing growth and change in Hunter City

Direction 1.1 Grow and diversify centres across the City

ACTION 1.1.1 Invest in strategic centres to grow jobs and housing and create vibrant hubs of activity

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *target investment in strategic centres and transport gateways; and*
- *work with councils to review and revise planning controls in strategic centres and transport gateways.*

Comment

The action has strategic implications for Lake Macquarie City Council, as the draft plan proposes to remove Morisset's status as an emerging regional / strategic centre (see *Amend the draft plan to include Morisset within the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area], and identify Morisset as an emerging strategic centre, as shown on the amended Hunter City map in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B11 in this report)*). The action implies that Morisset will not receive investment from the NSW Government.

Recommendations

(Morisset is recommended to be included as a strategic centre as outlined elsewhere in this report)

ACTION 1.1.2 Improve data on the demand and supply of homes, office and retail space to better inform strategic planning

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will work with councils to:

- *investigate options for establishing retail, commercial and industrial databases for the Hunter City; and*
- *monitor the construction and take-up of commercial floor space and the delivery of new housing in strategic centres.*

Comment

The action is consistent with previous commitments by the NSW Government in the LHRS. It should also be noted that Lake Macquarie City Council is introducing a system to collect data.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to monitor the supply and demand of land for housing and commercial uses is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C25)

Direction 1.2 Provide a greater mix of housing types to meet changing demand

ACTION 1.2.1 Identify new opportunities for housing in the existing urban area to increase supply and improve housing choice

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *identify surplus Government-owned land in the existing urban area that is suitable for urban renewal; and*
- *work with councils to regularly monitor the supply of development sites in the existing urban area and identify actions to improve efficiency in housing delivery.*

Comment

The action seeks to facilitate redevelopment within existing urban areas and is generally consistent with existing NSW Government policy and LS2030. It is noted that there is NSW Government owned land suitable for housing and that including these areas could benefit growth of mixed development or other land uses that support residential development.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to facilitate redevelopment of government owned land in existing urban areas is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C26)

ACTION 1.2.2 Investigate new land release areas to deliver housing in the longer term

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *establish criteria for the assessment of new land release areas, based on:*
 - *potential impact to the environment and biodiversity;*
 - *potential impact to agricultural and resource sectors;*
 - *the cost of delivering transport and utilities infrastructure;*
 - *potential costs arising from and increased distance from jobs, services and recreation facilities;*
 - *delivery of sustainable communities; and*
- *prioritise housing development within the existing urban footprint.*

Comment

Unlike the LHRS, the draft plan does not include criteria to assess new land release areas. Developing assessment criteria is needed, however, should be undertaken in consultation with councils. The criteria should also consider natural hazards, climate change and potential impacts on cultural landscapes and heritage items.

Prioritising housing within the existing urban footprint is a new NSW Government action, which differs from the LHRS, which promoted 60% of new dwellings within new release areas, and 40% in existing urban areas. However, the action is generally consistent with LS2030, which promotes development near existing centres and in areas that have good access to services.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action to prioritise housing development in existing urban areas (Recommendation A9)
- ✗ Amend the action to establish criteria for the assessment of new land release areas for urban development to include (i) consultation with councils, and (ii) consideration of natural hazards, climate change, and potential impacts on cultural landscapes and heritage values (Recommendation B27)

ACTION 1.2.3 Identify housing needs and develop strategies to target housing at groups with particular needs

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will work with councils to:

- *prepare an integrated housing strategy for Hunter City that addresses:*
 - *increasing the supply of smaller dwellings;*
 - *increasing the supply of affordable housing;*
 - *delivering housing to meet special needs groups such as students, short term visitors, visitors accessing health services and older people; and*
- *review local plans and strategies against the objectives of a Hunter City integrated housing strategy.*

Comment

Preparing an integrated housing strategy is a new NSW Government initiative. Increasing housing diversity and affordability is generally consistent with LS2030, however, preparation of the strategy should occur in partnership with local councils.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action to prepare an integrated housing strategy for Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] (Recommendation A10)
- ✗ Amend the action to prepare an integrated housing strategy for the Hunter City [Hunter Metropolitan Area] to include collaboration with councils (Recommendation B28)

Direction 1.3 Enhance City-wide transport

ACTION 1.3.1 Integrate land use and transport planning to encourage more efficient travel patterns and sustainable modes of transport

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with councils and communities to align and progress transport plans for Hunter City, giving priority to improving:*
 - *public transport, walking and cycling connections to key destinations and open space; and*
 - *connections between strategic centres and transport gateways.*

Comment

The action is generally consistent with existing NSW Government policy

Recommendations

- Note that the action to improve public transport, walking and cycling is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C27)

Direction 1.4 The City's blue and green network

ACTION 1.4.3 Plan and deliver the Hunter City Green Grid

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with councils and communities to:*
 - *develop a comprehensive green grid plan for Hunter City, including a delivery strategy; and*
 - *deliver a green grid plan for Hunter City that:*
 1. *identifies new open space in land release areas;*
 2. *identifies opportunities to connect existing open space and recreation destinations with walking and cycling routes; and*
 3. *provides guidelines for design and delivery.*

Comment

The action seeks to improve access and connectivity between the region's waterways and green spaces for recreational and environmental purposes, and is a new initiative by the NSW Government. The action is consistent with LS2030, which seeks to provide enhanced recreational opportunities and protect and conserve the environment.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action to develop a 'green grid' plan to enhance connections between open spaces and environmental areas (Recommendation A11)

Direction 1.5 Grow and manage industrial activity in the City

ACTION 1.5.1 Identify and protect industrial land supply in Hunter City and its hinterland, to support the regional economy and create more jobs closer to home

The draft plan states that manufacturing is the third largest employer in the Hunter region and promotes identifying strategic locations for industry development around national infrastructure routes and gateways. Specifically, the draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will work with councils to:

- *monitor the size, location and capacity of industrial land supply; and*
- *review local plans and strategies to assist in the timely delivery of industrial lands and infrastructure.*

Comment

The action is generally consistent with previous commitments by the NSW Government in the LHRs, and the LS2030, which promotes a sufficient supply of industrial land in areas with direct access to arterial roads.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to assist in delivering an adequate supply of industrial land is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C28)

Direction 1.6 Coordinate infrastructure to support and deliver growth

ACTION 1.6.1 Monitor development activity to support infrastructure planning

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *establish a method for monitoring land supply for housing and housing development activity across Hunter City and its surrounding hinterland; and*
- *establish a Hunter City Urban Development Program to monitor development activity and regularly report on growth across Hunter City.*

The action is generally consistent with action 1.1.2 in the draft plan and previous commitments by the NSW Government in the LHRs.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to monitor the supply and demand of land for housing uses is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C29)

ACTION 1.6.2 Develop infrastructure priorities based on land use and infrastructure strategies

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will work with infrastructure providers and councils to:

- *prioritise infrastructure delivery based on land use and infrastructure strategies for growth areas, starting with the Inner West and Maitland-New England Highway Corridor Districts.*

Comment

The proposed action is a new policy initiative seeking to improve infrastructure delivery in new release areas within the north-west of Lake Macquarie (e.g. Cameron Park). The proposed action is generally consistent with Council's LS2030 Strategy, which identifies that infrastructure provision will be guided by NSW Government plans and strategies.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action to develop land use and infrastructure strategies to assist delivery of housing in new release areas (Recommendation A12)

ACTION 1.6.3 Review special infrastructure contributions in the Hunter to support infrastructure delivery

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will work with infrastructure providers and councils to:

- *review a special infrastructure contribution for the Inner West and Maitland–New England Highway Corridor Districts.*

Comment

A draft Special Infrastructure Contributions Plan was prepared for the Lower Hunter by the NSW Government in 2011, however, was never adopted. Council's local development contribution plans provide a mechanism to deliver local infrastructure, however, do not address state infrastructure requirements such as arterial roads and schools. A special infrastructure contributions plan for state infrastructure, synchronised with local development contribution plans for Council infrastructure, would provide a mechanism for delivering local and state infrastructure in a coordinated manner. However, any special infrastructure contributions plan for the Hunter region should mirror the principles and legislative requirements of local development contributions. This is to ensure that state infrastructure contribution levies are transparent and equitable across development, and have robust accountability measures.

Recommendations

- Note that the ongoing action to develop a special infrastructure contributions plan for NSW Government infrastructure in the Hunter region is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C30)
- ✱ Amend the action to develop a special infrastructure contributions plan for NSW Government infrastructure to identify that it will be guided by similar principles and legislative requirements of local development contributions (to ensure transparency, equitable levies and accountability) (Recommendation B29)

Inner Newcastle District

Direction 2.1 and 2.2

The draft plan identifies a range of actions to facilitate growth and improve liveability within the inner Newcastle district (Newcastle local government area from the CBD to Kotara to Jesmond):

Direction 2.1 Grow and diversify strategic centres in Inner Newcastle

- *ACTION 2.1.1 Deliver the long term aspirations and vision for Newcastle City Centre*
- *ACTION 2.1.2 Diversify employment activities at the university and hospital campuses and enhance their connectivity to the region*
- *ACTION 2.1.3 Support the development of the Broadmeadow precinct as a preferred place to live, work and play*

Direction 2.2 Build on the quality of the inner-city lifestyle

- *ACTION 2.2.1 Build active and vibrant corridors that support local economic growth and infill*
- *ACTION 2.2.2 Support small-scale housing growth within Inner Newcastle neighbourhoods*
- *ACTION 2.2.3 Support increased walking and cycling, and improved connectivity in Inner Newcastle*

The draft plan also outlines existing NSW Government funding commitments to the inner Newcastle district including:

- \$90m Justice Precinct;
- \$25m Newcastle University CBD campus;
- \$460m CBD revitalisation;
- \$17m Newcastle CBD Mine Grouting Fund; and
- \$7.6m Mayfield BHP steelworks remediation.

These actions and funding commitments to Inner Newcastle by the NSW Government are not replicated within Lake Macquarie.

Mine subsidence is an issue of relevance to the Lake Macquarie LGA, with potential to cap redevelopment opportunities in Charlestown and Glendale, in particular, if grouting or other remediation does not occur.

Recommendations

- Note the funding commitments to Inner Newcastle by the NSW Government are generally consistent with existing NSW Government commitments (Recommendation C31)
- × Amend the draft plan to extend the Mine Grouting Fund to other strategic centres such as Charlestown and Glendale (Recommendation B30)

Northern Lake Macquarie District

Direction 3.1 Grow and connect coastal and lakeside centres

ACTION 3.1.1 Focus growth within coastal and lakeside centres

The draft plan identifies that: “*Growth and change in the Northern Lake Macquarie District will mostly be accommodated through incremental and small-scale renewal of established urban areas*”. In addition, the draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *support Lake Macquarie City Council to develop local strategies and plans to deliver infill housing;*
- *improve public transport efficiency by protecting the capacity of corridors linking northern Lake Macquarie’s existing urban centres to strategic centres across Hunter City including:*
 - *the Pacific Highway between Swansea and Newcastle;*
 - *Lake Road between Toronto and Glendale; and*
 - *cross-lake connections, particularly between Belmont and Speers Point*

Comment

Preparing local strategies to deliver infill housing around existing centres is generally consistent with LS2030. However, the wording associated with the direction refers to ‘small-scale’ urban renewal, which does not accurately reflect the extent of development opportunities within the Northern Lake Macquarie District, as shown in Table 4. The proposed action also seeks to limit major new development along the Pacific Highway and Lake Road, where major development opportunities exist. Accordingly, the direction and action should be revised to reflect planned development and redevelopment with the Northern Lake Macquarie District.

In addition, the map associated with the Northern Lake Macquarie District is not consistent with LHRS, as it does not show the ‘renewal corridors’ identified under the LHRS from Cardiff to Edgeworth, and Charlestown to Gateshead. These renewal corridors are in similar locations to the ‘growth and expansion corridor’ (Cardiff to Edgeworth) and the ‘east lake intensification corridor’ (Charlestown to Belmont) identified in LS2030. These areas should continue to be identified on the Northern Lake Macquarie District map, potentially as ‘urban activation’ areas. However, the extent and purpose of urban activation areas will vary from place to place, and should be defined through detailed planning at the local level in conjunction with Council.

On a further point, the arterial road network is also not accurately shown in the Northern Lake Macquarie District map.

Table 4 - Major development opportunities within the Northern Lake Macquarie District

Major development site	Location
15 storey development opportunities within the Charlestown regional centre	Pacific Hwy
8 storey development opportunities within the Belmont town centre	Pacific Hwy
Glendale strategic centre and Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange	Lake Road
1000 lot residential redevelopment of the former Pasminco smelter site	Lake Road
250ha of land zoned RU6 Transition under LMLEP 2014 north of Fennel Bay	Lake Road

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action for the NSW Government to assist Lake Macquarie City Council to develop local strategies and plans to deliver infill housing in the Northern Lake Macquarie District (Recommendation A13)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to acknowledge the significant redevelopment opportunities that exist within the Northern Lake Macquarie District, and acknowledge that they are not ‘small-scale’ (Recommendation B31)

- ✖ Amend the action for the NSW Government to enhance the capacity of road corridors within North Lake Macquarie to include (i) improving public transport; and (ii) accommodating future growth (Recommendation B32)
- ✖ Amend the Northern Lake Macquarie District map to include 'urban activation' areas between Cardiff to Edgeworth, and Charlestown to Belmont, and correctly show the location of arterial roads, as detailed in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B33)

Inner West District

Direction 4.1 Grow Inner West centres

ACTION 4.1.1 Improve connections to and within Glendale

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will:

- *work with Lake Macquarie City Council and the community to identify opportunities to leverage investment in transport infrastructure to grow Glendale as a centre, providing more jobs and services closer to home; and*
- *work with Council to facilitate local urban renewal between Glendale and Edgeworth.*

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with LS2030, however, does not include a NSW Government commitment to provide additional funding to construct the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange, which includes a train station and bus interchange. The map associated with the Inner West District also does not show the former Pasminco smelter site (a significant urban redevelopment area with the potential for 1000 residential lots plus significant employment development) or the urban renewal corridor identified in the text of the draft plan and the LHRS for Cardiff to Edgeworth. The map also does not show a key link associated with Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange – the extension of Munibung Road to Lake Road / T.C.Frith Avenue. The urban release areas and arterial road network is also not accurately shown in the map. Accordingly, the map should be revised to accurately reflect and guide planned redevelopment in the Inner West District.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action for the NSW Government to work with Lake Macquarie City Council and the community to identify opportunities to leverage investment in transport infrastructure to grow Glendale as a centre (Recommendation A14)
- ✗ Amend the draft plan to include an additional NSW Government funding commitment to construct the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange (Recommendation B34)
- ✗ Amend the Inner West District map to include the Cardiff to Edgeworth corridor and former Pasminco smelter site as ‘urban activation’ areas, and show associated infrastructure, as detailed in Appendix 1 (Recommendation B35)

ACTION 4.1.2 Investigate opportunities for economic and housing growth within centres

The draft plan identifies that the NSW Government will: *“investigate the capacity for increased growth in housing and commercial activity in the district’s centres that have good public transport access”*.

Comment

The proposed action is generally consistent with the NSW Government initiatives, and LS2030, which seeks to encourage intensification within centres.

Recommendations

- Note that the action to investigate opportunities for economic and housing growth within centres is generally consistent with existing NSW Government planning (Recommendation C32)

Direction 4.2 Deliver the Inner West District’s supply of housing land

ACTION 4.2.1 Identify and address infrastructure and environmental pinch points to accelerate delivery of new housing

The draft plan identifies that the timely delivery of urban release areas within the Inner West is dependent on resolving outstanding infrastructure servicing and biodiversity offsets. The draft

plan identifies that the NSW Government will work with Newcastle and Lake Macquarie City Councils to prepare a land use and infrastructure strategy that:

- *identifies opportunities for State involvement in improving local road connections;*
- *finalises biodiversity outcomes, including biodiversity offsets;*
- *manages traffic to protect link road efficiencies;*
- *provides adequate bushfire and flood evacuation routes;*
- *encourages walking and cycling; and*
- *improves access to public transport.*

Comment

The proposed action is a new initiative from the NSW Government and is generally consistent with achieving the intention of the land use zonings for the area under Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2014.

Recommendations

- ✓ Support the action for the NSW Government to prepare a land use and infrastructure strategy, in conjunction with councils, to deliver the Inner West District's supply of housing land (Recommendation A15)

Maitland – New England Highway Corridor District

Direction 5.1, 5.2 and 6.1

The draft plan identifies a range of actions to facilitate growth and change within Maitland, which are:

Direction 5.1 Sequence urban growth

- *ACTION 5.1.1 Develop a land use and infrastructure strategy for Maitland to coordinate the planning and delivery of State and local infrastructure*

DIRECTION 5.2 Grow centres and communities within the district

- *ACTION 5.2.1 Investigate opportunities for growth in Central Maitland*
- *ACTION 5.2.2 Develop a health precinct in Metford*

Direction 6.1 Address Hunter's national pinch point to strengthen habitat connectivity and transport efficiency

- *ACTION 6.1.1 Develop a framework to balance competing interests and deliver conservation, transport and land use planning objectives*

The actions are outside of the Lake Macquarie local government area, however, are consistent with managing growth and change in the Hunter Metropolitan Area.

Northern Gateways District

Direction 7.1 and 7.2

The draft plan identifies a range of actions to facilitate growth and change within Port Stephens, which are:

Direction 7.1 Develop and diversify Hunter City's global transport gateways

- *ACTION 7.1.1 Provide the right regulatory environment to support the growth, diversification and sustainability of transport gateways*

Direction 7.2 Manage growth to protect strategic assets

- *ACTION 7.2.1 Investigate long term opportunities for housing growth in the Northern Gateways District*
- *ACTION 7.2.2 Support sustainable port growth within the Hunter estuary*

The actions are outside of the Lake Macquarie local government area, however, are consistent with managing growth and change in the Hunter Metropolitan Area.

Appendix 1 – Amendment details

Amended Hunter Region Vision

The vision for the Hunter region is for a sustainable future and a resilient community, capable of adapting to changing economic, social and environmental circumstances.

Amended Hunter Metropolitan Area Principles

The Hunter Metropolitan Area should be recognised at the state and federal level as Australia's seventh largest urban area, and as a stand-alone urban area, separate from Sydney.

The Hunter Metropolitan Area consists of a diverse landscape of cities and towns, rural and environmental lands, and industrial and mining activity.

The localities within the Hunter Metropolitan Area each have a unique identity, character, and separate local governance arrangements.

The Hunter Metropolitan Area provides employment, housing, retail and recreation opportunities to its residents and the region, as well as being a visitor destination in its own right.

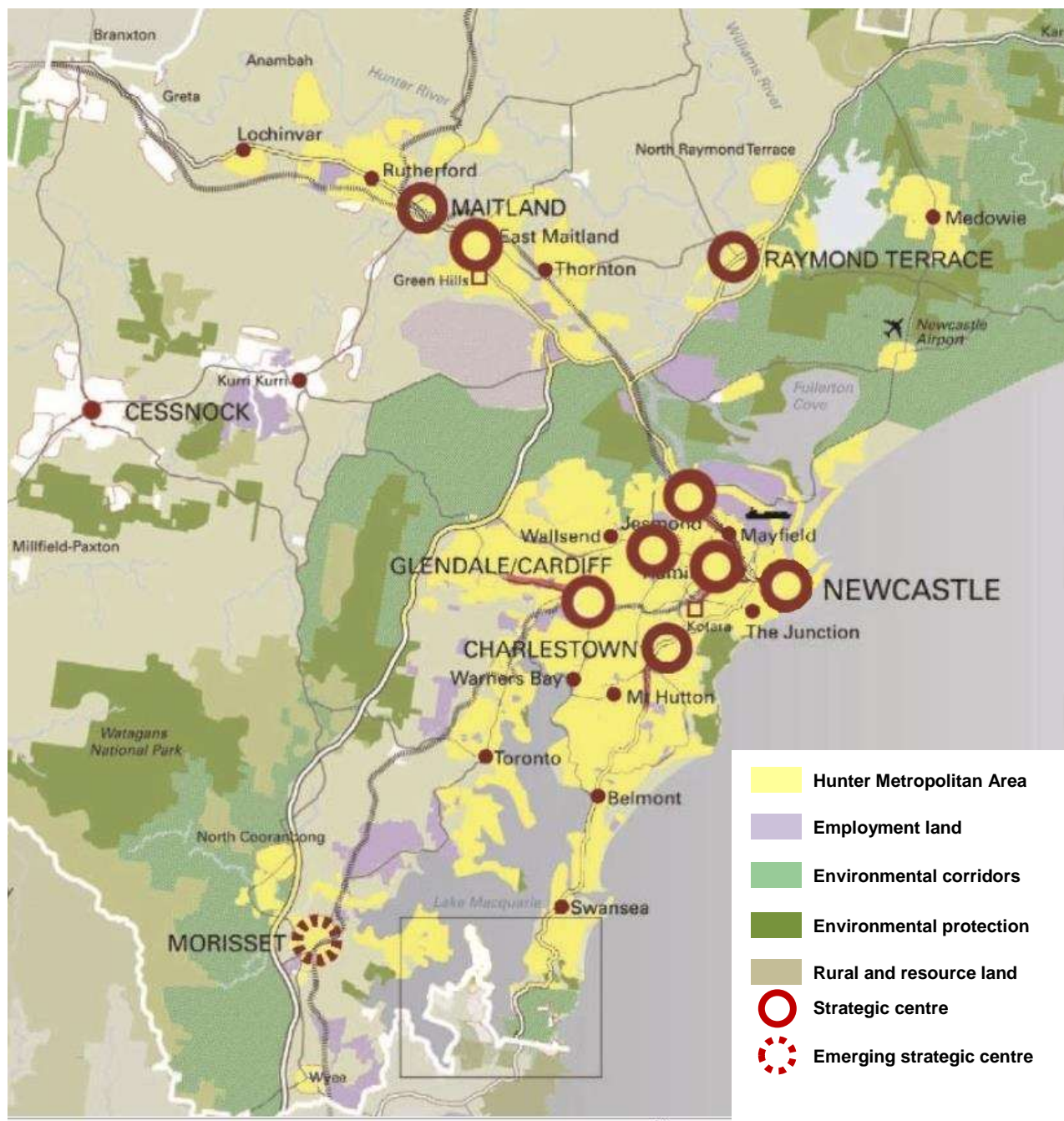
The overarching principles to guide growth and change of the Hunter Metropolitan Area are:

1. Planning for the Hunter Metropolitan Area will occur in collaboration with the NSW Government, local councils and relevant stakeholders
2. Strategic centres will be a focus for new development and provide high levels of amenity and will be accessible by walking, cycling, public transport and private vehicles
3. Transport linkages and accessibility between strategic centres, transport gateways and other strategic areas (e.g. Sydney, Brisbane and New England) will be progressively improved
4. Employment growth will be predominantly located within and around strategic centres and transport gateways, and in previously identified strategic employment areas
5. Future housing needs will be predominantly provided within existing urban areas as well as in identified urban release areas
6. Biodiversity values, habitat corridors, strategic agricultural lands, waterways, environmental reserves and scenic landscapes will be protected and enhanced
7. Future development will not occur in areas with high natural hazards and will consider potential climate change impacts

Amended Hunter Metropolitan Area Map

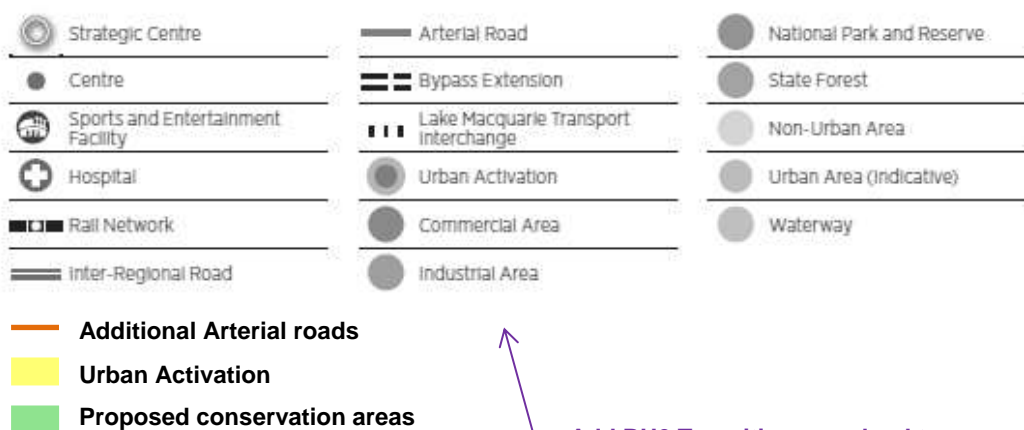
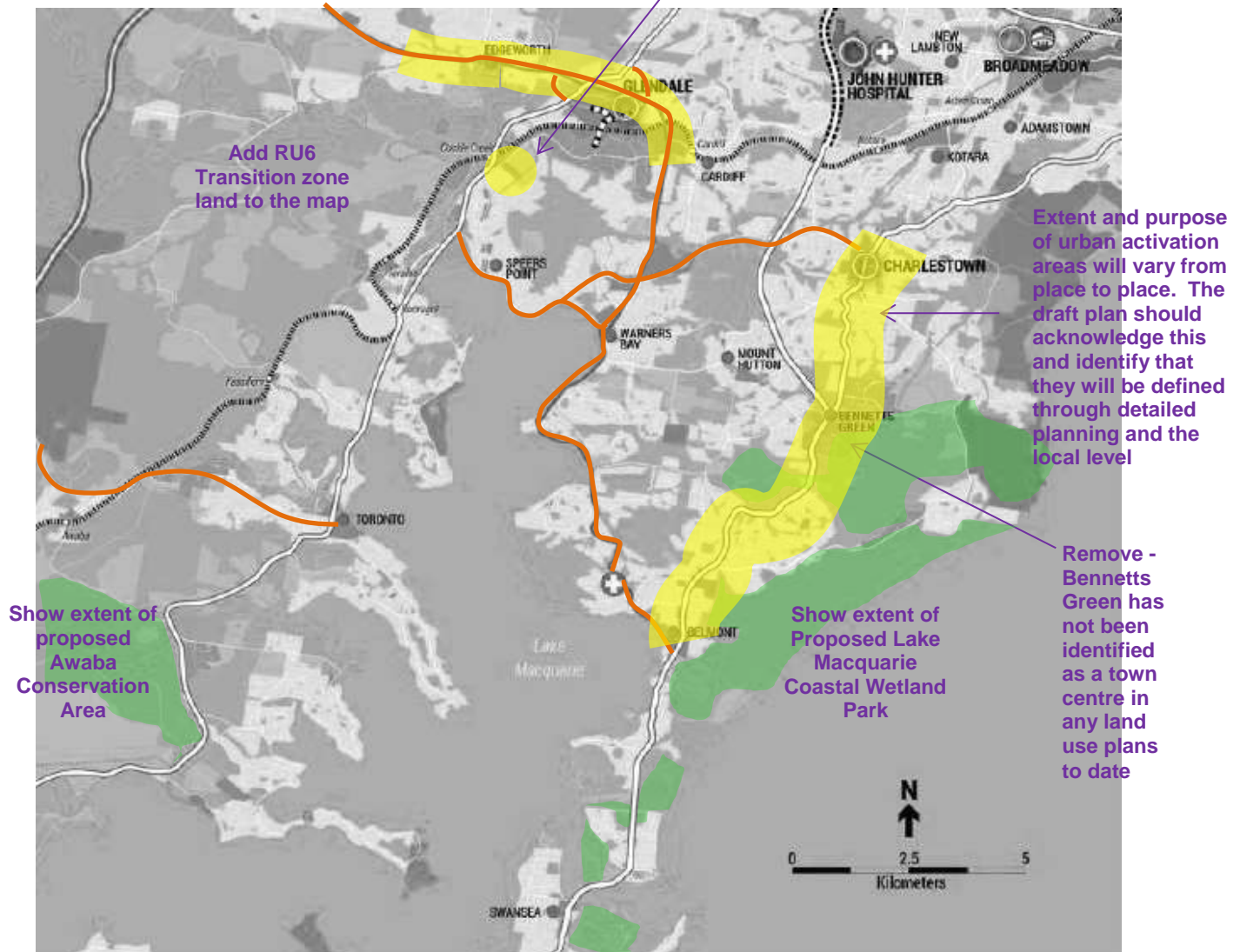
A revised map of the Hunter Metropolitan Area is presented in the figure below, which:

- removes the 'Hunter City Landscape' and 'Hunter City's Rural Hinterland' boundaries, as they do not accurately identify the extent of the urban landscape or the rural hinterland;
- replaces the boundaries with the mapped extent of urban, rural, resource and environmental lands (which includes key environmental corridor such as the Watagan Stockton and Wallarah corridors); and
- is similar to the mapping in the adopted *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy* and the recently adopted *A Plan for Growing Sydney* (which do not include an arbitrary urban and hinterland boundary).



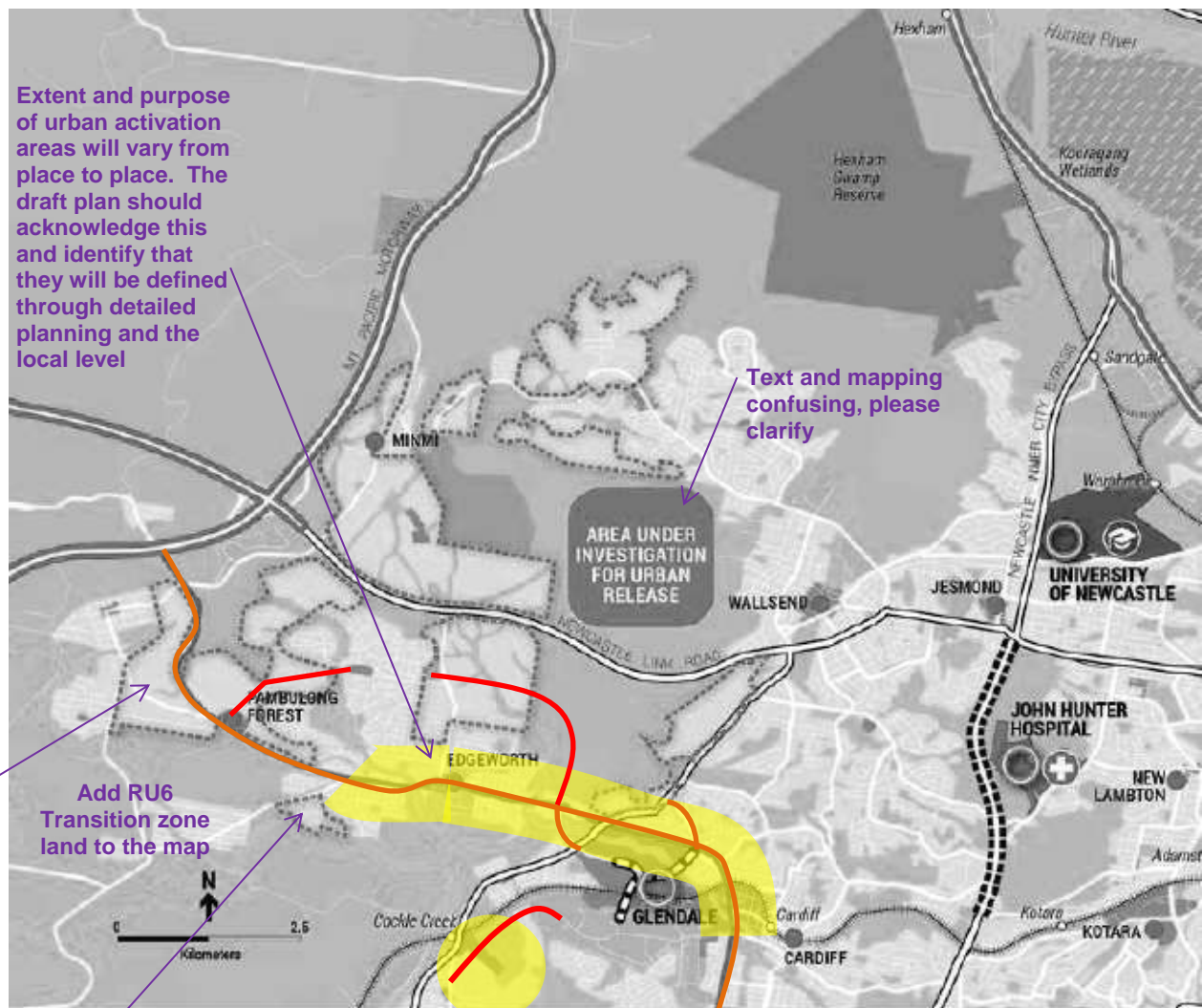
Amended Northern Lake Macquarie District Map

Pasminco rail spur line has been demolished



Add RU6 Transition zone land to the legend

Amended Inner West District Map



	Strategic Centre		Inter-Regional Road		National Park and Reserve
	Centre		Arterial Road		State Forest
	Hospital		Bypass Extension		Non-Urban Area
	University and Tertiary Education		Lake Macquarie Transport interchange		Urban Area (Indicative)
	Urban Release Area		Commercial Area		Waterway
	Rail Network		Industrial Area		

— Additional Arterial roads

— Urban Activation

— Proposed strategic road link

Text confusing – perhaps the legend should say “existing urban release areas (land already zoned residential – under development or development)”

Add RU6 Transition zone land to the legend

Existing development (amend map)

The boundary does not match the approved DA, and includes existing urban areas and open space. Amend the map to ensure that it cannot be misinterpreted (see council for details)

Amended High Environmental Values Map



- Include mapped boundary of proposed conservation areas shown on the Amended Northern Lake Macquarie District Map

Proposed Additional Direction 3.3 and Action 3.3.1

Direction 3.3 Protect Cultural Landscapes and Heritage Items

The ongoing use and development of land and resources to accommodate growth will be balanced with measures to protect the Hunter's unique cultural landscapes and heritage items, supporting communities and the economy.

Strategic land use planning should identify and take account of the location and extent of these areas of high cultural landscape value. Any potential impacts on these areas should be considered well before the development assessment stage.

Land use planning can support improved heritage outcomes by directing investment to conserving or enhancing cultural landscapes and individual heritage items, and to offset unavoidable impacts of development in locations that have been identified for growth. The uniqueness of the region's cultural heritage means that it should be conserved in place, in line with current NSW and Australian Government heritage legislation and policy.

The NSW Government should support a strategic assessment of impacts on cultural landscapes arising from new and expanding mining activities in the Upper Hunter Valley and expanding residential development in the whole region. This would provide a coordinated mechanism to deliver investment in heritage conservation.

Multiple benefits can be achieved where investments in heritage conservation, are directed to protect, and where possible, enhance cultural landscapes across the Hunter. Examples where multiple benefits related to tourism and economic diversity have been generated, include the cultural landscape of the wine producing areas in the Hunter, and some of the smaller historic towns such as Morpeth.

ACTION 3.3.1 Improve the quality of and access to information relating to high cultural landscape values and use this information to avoid, minimise and mitigate the impacts of development on significant heritage assets

In areas identified with high cultural landscape values the NSW Government will work with councils to protect cultural heritage resources by:

- creating the right regulatory environment and implementing appropriate protection measures to conserve validated high cultural landscape values, including through the application of planning controls;
- developing local strategies to avoid and minimise potential impacts arising from development on areas of high cultural landscape value, and subsequently considering appropriate mechanisms to identify mitigation mechanisms for unavoidable impacts; and
- identifying and assessing the potential impacts to cultural heritage resources, or at the earliest stage of the planning approvals process, using appropriate assessment methodologies.

In order to assist with this process, the NSW Government will update information about and map high cultural landscape value areas to assist decision-making. This information will also be made publicly available, including through the use of the Planning e-viewer.

Proposed Additional Action 4.2.9

ACTION 4.2.9 Identify and protect cultural heritage resources

In the coming decades, there will be increased demands for land to be used and developed, to support the growth of the Hunter Metropolitan Area and other regional towns and villages, as well as the ongoing success of the region's rural and resource industries. This change has the

potential to affect recognised, and yet to be identified cultural landscapes and sites, that are important to local communities, particularly in rural areas and small villages across the Hunter.

Strategic land use planning will help to identify high cultural landscape value areas and heritage items, based on historic evidence and previous studies, earlier in the planning process. Local communities will be involved in investigations for specific projects, to protect and manage cultural heritage values as part of the planning and assessment process.

The NSW Government will:

- support the preparation of appropriate heritage studies to inform the development of strategic plans, including regional cultural heritage studies.