

DHA Stockton Rifle Range & Fort Wallace sites

Submission on the NSW Government's Draft Hunter Regional Plan and Draft Hunter City Strategy 2015

Prepared on behalf of Defence Housing Australia
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Architectus Group Pty Ltd
ABN 90 131 245 684

Nominated Architect
Managing Director Sydney
Ray Brown
NSWARB 6359

Architectus Sydney
Level 3 341 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia
T +61 2 8252 8400
F +61 2 8252 8600
sydney@architectus.com.au

Architectus Melbourne
Level 7 250 Victoria Parade
East Melbourne VIC 3002
Australia
T +61 3 9429 5733
F +61 3 9429 8480
melbourne@architectus.com.au
Managing Director Melbourne
Mark Wilde

www.architectus.com.au

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Contents

Executive Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 The purpose of this submission	3
1.2 DHA, their role and their vision	3
1.3 The master plan and rezoning process	4
2.0 DHA Fort Wallace, Stockton	6
2.1 The site	6
2.2 Planning context	9
2.3 Matters for investigation and next steps	9
2.4 Development potential – for investigation	10
3.0 DHA Stockton Rifle Range site	11
3.1 The site	11
3.2 Planning context	14
3.3 Matters for investigation	14
3.4 Development potential – for investigation	15
4.0 Review and recommendations	17
4.1 Draft Hunter Regional Plan	17
4.2 Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City	21
5.0 Opportunities	25
5.1 Goals for the Hunter Region	25
5.2 The Green Grid	27
6.0 Next steps	29

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Executive Summary

- DHA owns two significant sites in Stockton and has engaged a team of consultants and experts to investigate the sites' potential for mixed use development in line with DHA's social objectives and charter. The team is currently researching the sites in more detail and will be preparing master options for the site, in consultation with Port Stephens and Newcastle councils, the relevant agencies and the community. Both sites are currently unused and fenced off.
- The development of both sites could contribute to broader strategies for environment and housing. The sites are both well-serviced and accessible from the Newcastle city centre via ferry or bus and would provide housing near infrastructure and jobs (particularly defence jobs at the Williamstown RAAF base, which is 10 minutes travel time from the sites).
- The development of parts of the sites for sensitively-designed DHA and private housing will also address ongoing security and management issues for both sites which are currently fenced off. The sites both accommodate sensitive ecological areas that need to be carefully managed. The sites both present opportunities for the creation of vegetation corridors, best-practice coastal management and pedestrian and cycle connections up the Stockton coastline and feeding into the regional strategies to create the Watagans to Stockton 'Green Grid'.
- The Fort Wallace site (in the Newcastle LGA and currently zoned SP2 - Defence) is shown as an 'Urban Area' in the Draft Hunter Regional Plan, but as 'Non-Urban Area' in the Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City. It is submitted that the site's potential for renewal be recognised and the site shown as 'Urban Area' consistently in both documents. Refer to **Figure A**, overleaf for a plan showing the recommended changes to the plan.
- The Stockton Rifle Range site (in the Port Stephens LGA and currently zoned E2 – Environmental Conservation) also has significant redevelopment potential that could be considered through the master planning and rezoning process. In both studies, the area is shown as 'Non-Urban Area' which may have the effect (intended or otherwise) of precluding a future rezoning of the site because a Planning Proposal would be inconsistent with the regional plan and fail the test set by Local Planning Directions 2.1, 2.2 and 5.1. It is recommended that both plans are amended to show the site as 'Urban Area' or "Urban Area – For Investigation" to allow for the full assessment of the site's redevelopment potential through the Planning Proposal process. Refer to **Figure A** overleaf for a plan showing the recommended changes to the plan.



Figure A - 'Figure 3 – Inner Newcastle District' from the Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City, with Architectus amendments showing the recommended classifications for the two DHA sites in Stockton. We recommend that the same land use classifications be shown on all plans in the Draft Regional Hunter Plan and Plan for Growing Hunter City.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this submission

Defence Housing Australia (DHA) has engaged a consultant team comprising Architectus (urban design and planning), NPC (project management) and Spackman Mossop Michaels (landscape) to prepare a master plan for two significant sites in Stockton, NSW. Refer to **Figure B**.

This submission has been prepared by Architectus on behalf of DHA and provides comments on the key directions for both DHA sites under the *Draft Hunter Regional Plan 2015* and the *Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City 2015* and presents recommendations for the post-exhibition review by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

In the first instance, DHA and the consultant team wish to thank the NSW Department of Planning and Environment for the opportunity to comment on the draft plans, and discuss the vision for the sites in Stockton. We also congratulate the team on the preparation of an integrated planning and transport strategy for the region, which provides the strategic context, and planning vision that supports DHA's ability to deliver housing in appropriate locations.

Attached to our submission is a high-resolution, scaled set of the plans used in this submission.

1.2 DHA, their role and their vision

DHA was established as a Statutory Agency in 1988 and became a Government Business Enterprise in 1992 whose principal role is housing Defence members. DHA manages around 18,500 residences nationally, representing approximately \$10 billion worth of housing stock.

DHA currently manages 1,200 dwellings in Newcastle providing housing for Defence Members posted to the Williamstown RAAF base.

DHA is currently seeking to provide more accommodation on sites that are:

- Within close proximity to the Williamstown RAAF base.
- Are not affected by the airport ANEF contours or other unworkable site or environmental constraints
- Within close proximity to services and community infrastructure

The vision for the DHA Stockton Rifle Range and DHA Fort Wallace sites is for a sensitively designed residential community providing housing diversity, best practice design and the creation of new open space and connections, together with the preservation of European and Indigenous heritage and environmental assets for the wider community. The DHA team hopes to use this master planning process to explore opportunities to plan for new types of housing for DHA and exemplar open space and conservation projects.

1.3 The master plan and rezoning process

Over the past 10 years, a number of studies have been commissioned for each of the sites, including ecological studies, heritage assessments, traffic and transport and contamination. All relevant consultants will be engaged to help guide the master planning process and ensure acceptable environmental outcomes. Key areas for further investigation include detailed ecological studies, particularly in relation to dune ecology, groundwater conditions, indigenous heritage and social impact.

The next stages in the master plan process for both DHA sites will commence in early 2016 and will involve the following steps:

- Detailed site surveys, site analysis and additional environmental studies.
- Further consultation with the community, agencies, and nearby significant landowners.
- Master plan options, for discussion with key stakeholders in mid-2016.
- Preferred master plan, accompanied by landscape concepts and the necessary management strategies.
- Planning Proposals seeking amendment to the land use and built form controls, lodged late 2016.
- Development Applications for early works and subdivision, potentially assessed concurrently with the Planning Proposals.



Figure B - The DHA Stockton sites and their context in Newcastle

2.0 DHA Fort Wallace, Stockton

2.1 The site

The site is approximately 32 hectares in area and located on Stockton Bight to the north of the existing coastal suburb of Stockton, opposite the Newcastle city centre at the mouth of the Hunter River.

The site is accessible via Fullerton Road to its west and is approximately a 20 minute drive from the Newcastle city centre. It is also reasonably close to the ferry crossing between Stockton and the Newcastle city centre.

The site is bound by the Stockton Centre (health care facility) to its north, a redundant waste water treatment works to the south, Fullerton Road and the Hunter River to the west and Stockton Beach to the east.

Key site's features include:

- It is currently vacant and secured.
- Significant European history with remnant defence buildings and gun emplacements with heritage significance.
- Potential for some cultural significance for local Aboriginal community.
- Undulating topography with a mix of areas of native regrowth vegetation, weed infested areas and highly modified landform where previous defence uses have occurred.
- Good elevated views west over the Hunter River.
- Coastal dune system to its eastern boundary (shelters the remaining site areas but restricts views east to the ocean).



Figure C - The Fort Wallace site



View from the site over the Hunter River to the Kooragang Island industrial area



Large cleared areas and derelict buildings provide opportunities for sensitive development in parts of the site.



Elements of the gun emplacements and fortifications present real opportunities for preservation, interpretation and even incorporation into new open space areas for the wider community.



Whilst DHA regularly undertakes maintenance and continues to keep the site secure, management of a vacant site remains a challenge.

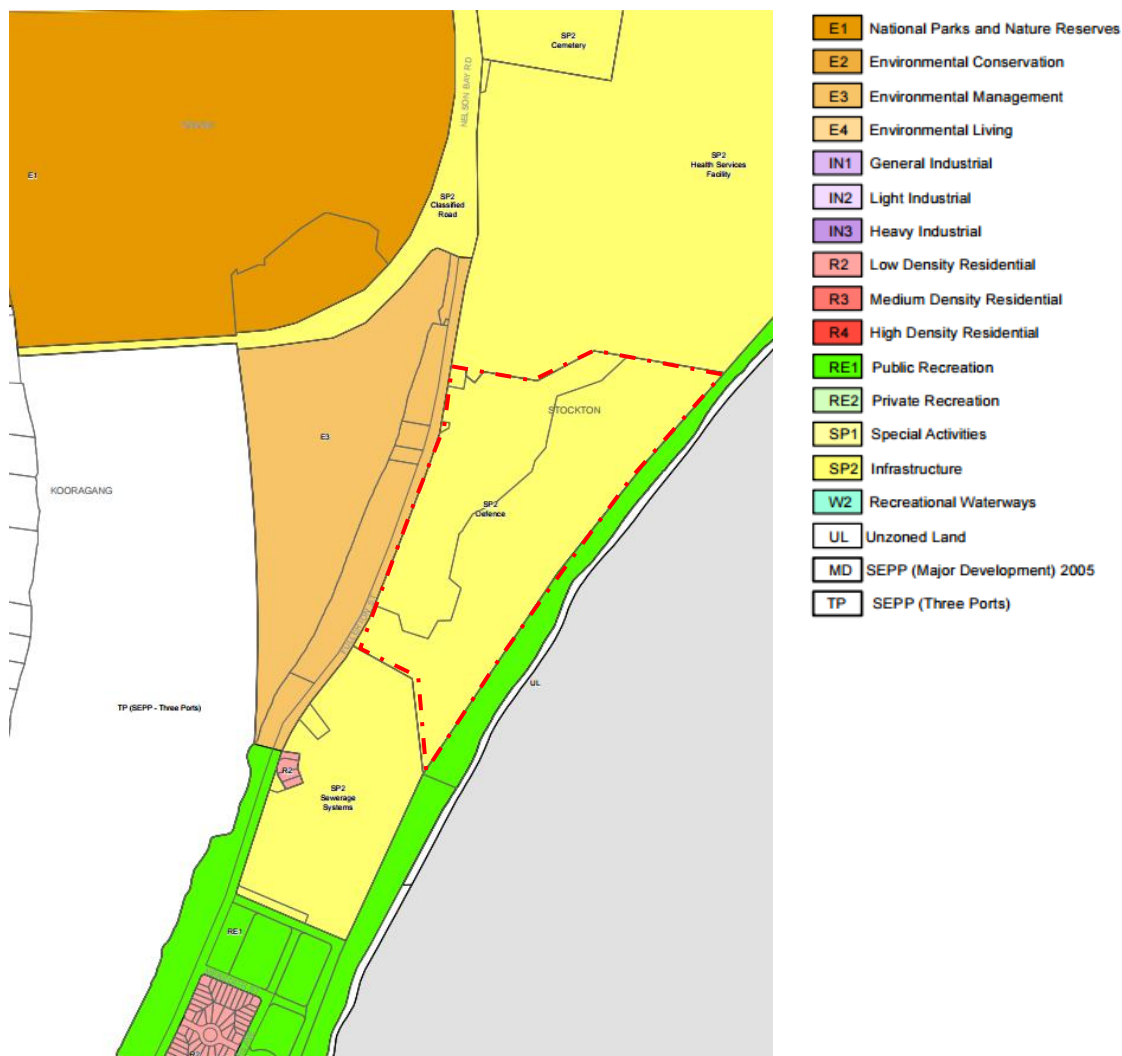


The coastline that forms the eastern boundary of the Fort Wallace site.

2.2 Planning context

The site is located within the Newcastle Local Government Area. *Newcastle LEP 2012* provides the following key controls for the site:

- Land use: SP2 – Defence. DHA housing could be considered to be permissible as an ancillary use (refer to zoning plan below).
- Built form: No maximum height or FSR controls are specified for the site.
- Heritage: No local listing or State listing, or listing as an Aboriginal places under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The Stockton Centre to the north is locally listed, but not on the State Register, or the Aboriginal places register.



2.3 Matters for investigation and next steps

Matters requiring investigation include European heritage, aboriginal heritage, ecology, geotechnical, flooding, interface with the adjacent redundant treatment centre, interface with the potential renewal area at the Stockton Centre, transport and traffic – including relationship with the port and airport, impacts of airport expansion and

compatibility with residential uses.

2.4 Development potential – for investigation

Opportunities for the site include:

- New public open space, preserving and celebrating the site's heritage.
- Connections to the beach, and to the Stockton residential area to the south.
- A mix of DHA and private residences, promoting community integration and social outcomes.
- Sensitive, high-quality residential development.

Following the master planning process, the DHA team will prepare and lodge a Planning Proposal seeking the rezoning for the developable area to R1 – General Residential, to allow for a variety of housing choices and supporting retail and services.



Figure D – Potential developable area, following preliminary opportunities and constraints analysis

3.0 DHA Stockton Rifle Range site

3.1 The site

The site is approximately 112 hectares in area and located on the Stockton Peninsula approximately 7km north of the Newcastle city centre but within Port Stephens LGA. Much of the eastern half of the site is taken up by the extensive dune system associated with Stockton Beach.

The site is accessible from its west via Popplewell Road which links back to Newcastle via Nelson Bay Road across the Hunter River.

The site is bound by the Worimi Conservation Lands to the north, the Stockton Centre and Stockton Cemetery to the south, existing residential development to the west and Stockton Beach and dune system to its east.

Key site features include:

- The site is currently vacant and secured.
- Historically used as a rifle range with the operational layout of the firing mounds still evident.
- The site topography is characterised by large flat areas previously used as the range with steep dunes that block views to the east and low lying areas of regrowth to the north.
- Larger areas of remnant vegetation regrowth to the north of the site bordering the Worimi Conservation Lands and to the south bordering the Stockton Centre.



Figure E - The Stockton Rifle Range Site



View from the site looking west. The DHA Stockton Rifle Range site adjoins an existing residential area.



Vegetation varies on the site from cleared areas to regrowth, to intact dune landscape to the east of the site. This photo is of areas near the Fullerton Road entry.



Dunes in the eastern part of the site are used for dune buggy driving and other non-complementary activities and would benefit from management and passive surveillance.



Informal, private walking tracks connecting to the Stockton Centre could be formalised and opened to the public as part of the redevelopment of the site.

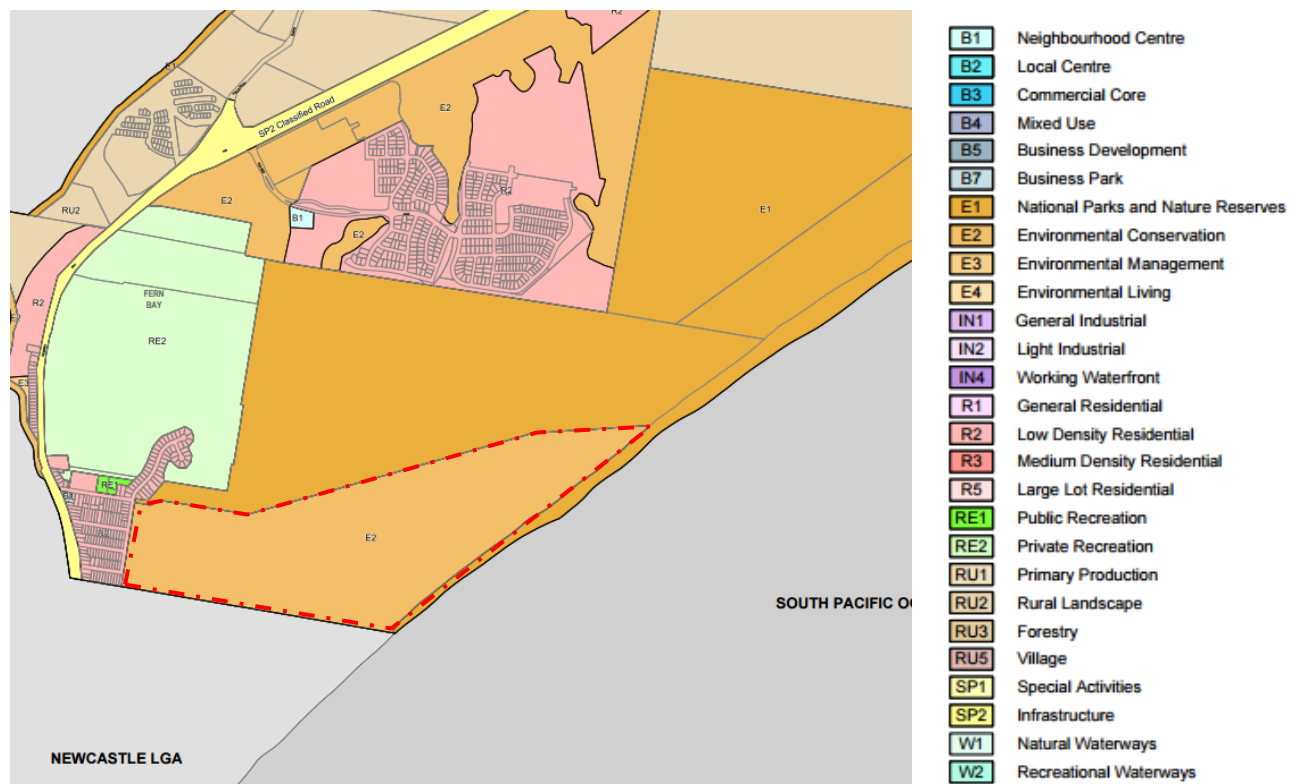


The coastline that forms the eastern boundary of the Rifle Range site. Sensitive coastal areas could be preserved and managed through sensitive re-development of the site. Note the views back to Newcastle from the site.

3.2 Planning context

The site is located within the Port Stephens Local Government Area. *Port Stephens LEP 2013* provides the following key controls for the site:

- Land use: E2 – Environmental Conservation. Dual occupancies and dwelling houses are permissible with consent in the zone.
- Built form: No maximum height or FSR controls are specified for the site.
- Heritage: No local listing or State listing, or listing as an Aboriginal places under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*. The coastal area to the north is locally listed, but not on the State Register, or the Aboriginal places register.
- ‘Extractive industries’ are identified as an additional permissible use on the site.
- Other: The site is not subject to flooding, is not identified on the Wetlands mapping, no land acquisition requirements, and is not identified on the land release mapping.



3.3 Matters for investigation

Matters requiring investigation include European heritage, aboriginal heritage, ecology, geotechnical, flooding, interface with the adjacent redundant treatment centre, interface with the potential renewal area at the Stockton Centre, transport and traffic – including relationship with the port and airport.

3.4 Development potential – for investigation

Opportunities include:

- New public open space, preserving and celebrating the site's heritage.
- Connections to the beach, and to the Stockton residential area to the south.
- A mix of DHA and private residences, promoting community integration and social outcomes.
- Sensitive, high-quality residential development.
- Opportunity to reinforce the significant landscape characteristics and valuable ecological connections.

It is likely that a rezoning to R1 – General Residential Zone would be sought for the developable parts of the site, following further investigation.



Figure F – Potneital developable area, following preliminary opportunities and constraints analysis

4.0 Review and recommendations

4.1 Draft Hunter Regional Plan

Key directions for the DHA sites	Comments
Context in the region	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Centrally located in the Hunter City subregion in <i>Figure 2 – Landscape Subregions</i>. See excerpt overleaf.<i>Figure 4 – Defining Hunter City</i> identifies 'Urban Areas' within Hunter City. Urban Areas are the primary sites for infill development. The Fort Wallace site is identified as an "Urban Area". The Stockton Rifle Range is identified as a 'Non-Urban Area', despite adjoining urban areas to the south and west. The plan states that renewal is to be concentrated in the Urban Areas.Sites are in close proximity to Newcastle Port and other jobs and infrastructure, and have access to State arterial road B63 – which connects the airport, port and city centre.	<p>The sites' inclusion in the Hunter City subregion is supported – a sensitive mixed use development of these sites would complement housing choice and provide recreational and heritage assets close to the city.</p> <p>The identification of the Fort Wallace site as an Urban Area is considered appropriate and supported. The sensitive development of this site would result in homes near jobs and infrastructure, and supports the function of Newcastle as the region's strategic centre.</p> <p>Based on the investigations to date, the Rifle Range site has some development potential, and also presents the opportunity for heritage and environmental outcomes for the wider community.</p> <p>It is understood that the land use categories "Urban Area" and "Non-Urban Area" generally reflect the current controls or current proposals and do not provide strategic direction in regards to land that should be considered for renewal. It is submitted that this should be an important function of the Hunter Regional Plan, and that the areas may need some review. It is also suggested that the two categories "Urban Area" and "Non-Urban Area" are too broad, and maybe there should be categories for renewal areas for investigation, or long-term renewal areas.</p> <p>The Stockton Rifle Range site's identification as a Non-Urban Area could potentially act as a barrier for any new Planning Proposal relating to the site – particularly in terms of demonstrating consistency with the local planning directions under 117 of the Act. (Note: We assume that Local Direction 5.1 would be updated to reflect the new Hunter Strategy title). To this end, alternative wording, or identification of the site for investigation would allow for a Planning Proposal for the Rifle Range site to be assessed on its merits.</p> <p>As such, it is recommended that Figure 4 be amended to show the Rifle Range site as 'Urban Area' or 'Urban Area – for investigation'.</p>

Key directions for the DHA sites		Comments
Environment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Figure 11 – High Environmental Value and Figure 12 – Focus Areas for Sustaining Regional Habitat Connectivity</i> identify National Parks and State Forests are to the north and north-west of the Stockton Rifle Range site. Neither of the sites are identified as having high environmental value in the draft plan (but would need to be assessed as part of the master planning for both sites).		<p>The identification of significant environmental assets is supported.</p> <p>The sites' location near significant environmental assets should be considered as part of master planning for the sites, and opportunities for connecting and preserving high value areas should be considered.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Draft Plan identifies the opportunity to create the Watagans to Stockton Green Link.		<p>Opportunities to contribute towards this project should be considered as part of the master planning for both sites.</p>

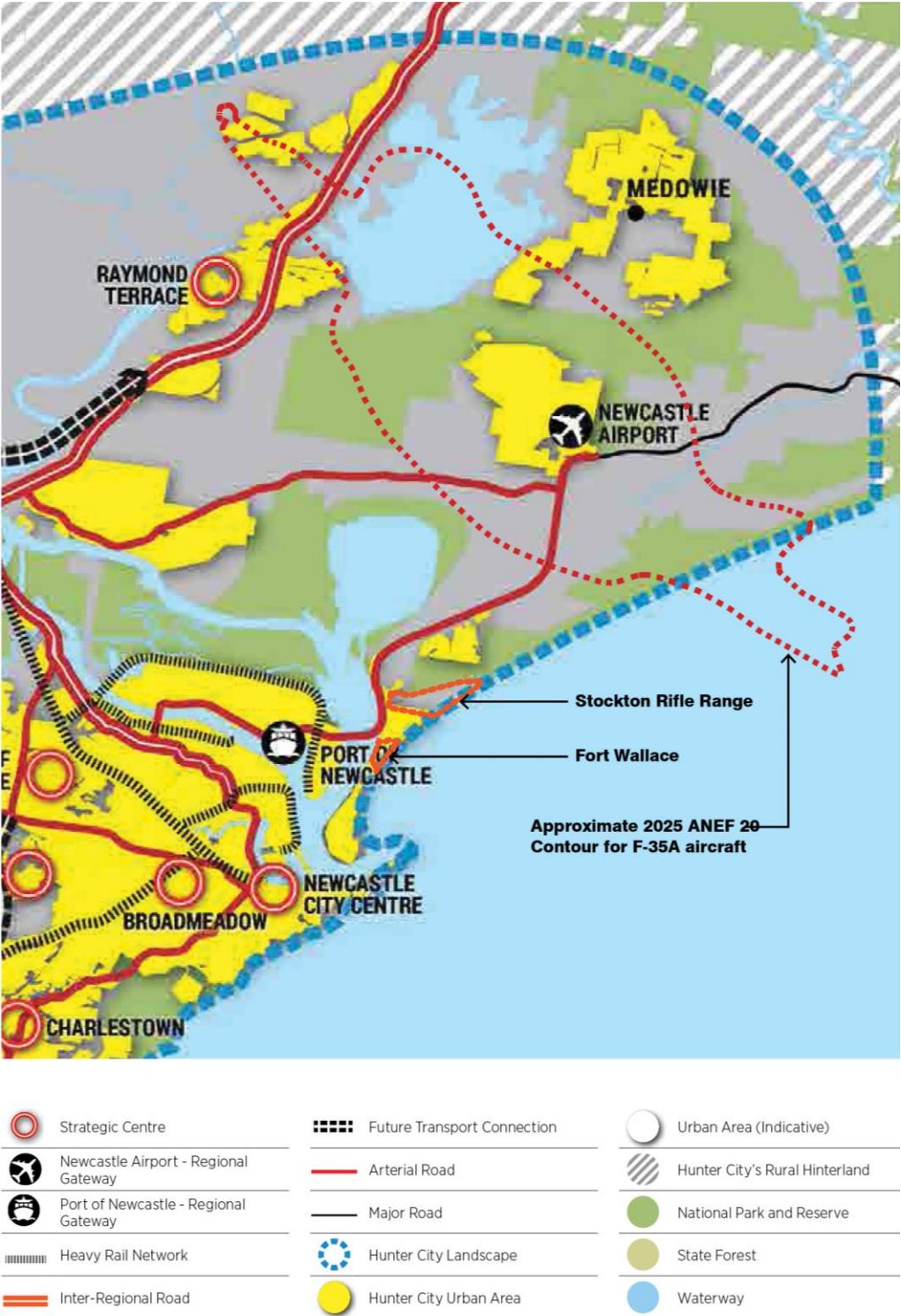


Figure G - The DHA sites (shown in red) overlaid on an extract Figure 4 of the Draft Hunter Regional Plan, which identifies the Fort Wallace site as 'Urban Area' (shown in yellow), and Stockton Rifle Range as 'Non-Urban Area' (grey).



Figure H - The DHA sites (shown in red) overlaid on an extract Figure 12 of the Draft Hunter Regional Plan

4.2 Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City

Key directions for the DHA sites	Comments
<p>Districts – Northern Gateway District or Inner Newcastle District?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Figure 1 – Hunter City's Districts</i> identifies the 5 districts and locates both sites within the Northern Gateways District, but very close to the border of the Inner Newcastle District. Generally, the Inner Newcastle District should be the focus for growth and investment, with jobs and housing focussed in the Strategic Centres, include the Newcastle city centre. 	<p>Both DHA sites have an important relationship with the city centre. The current ferry service links Stockton Wharf (800m from the Fort Wallace site) to Queens Wharf, Newcastle in just <u>5 minutes</u>. A bus connects the Stockton Centre to the Newcastle city Centre is less than 30 mins.</p> <p>They present the opportunity to provide accommodation in a location that is near jobs (the Defence base, the city centre and the port) and also in close proximity to the services and infrastructure available in the Newcastle city centre.</p> <p>While the sites have an important role in supporting the operation of the Williamtown base, it is preferable that the sites are considered as part of Inner Newcastle because of the site's opportunity to contribute to broader heritage, landscape, environmental and connectivity strategies for Newcastle.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Department of Planning and Environment consider the inclusion of both DHA sites within the Inner Newcastle District to recognise their strategic and visual relationship with the city and their potential to contribute to the goals for Hunter City.</p>
<p>Strategies for the Inner Newcastle District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direction 2.1 - Grow and diversify strategic centres in Inner Newcastle. Importantly, Figure 3 shows the Fort Wallace site as 'Non-Urban Area', which is inconsistent with the draft Regional Hunter Plan, which shows the site as 'Urban Area' The Rifle Range site is incorrectly shown as 'National Parks and Reserves'. This is not appropriate because the Rifle Range site is not zoned for National Park uses under Port Stephen LEP 2013 (like the adjoining sites), or owned or managed under the National Parks Act. 	<p>Stockton's close proximity to Inner Newcastle means that the redevelopment of the DHA sites for primarily residential uses would support Direction 2.1 by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New houses near jobs, education, entertainment and services in the city centre and the port area. Housing diversity – the sites could be developed for a variety of housing types that complement the existing offer in the city centre. More people living in close proximity to the Newcastle city centre creates activity and vibrancy in the city centre and contributes to the objectives for creating a lively, diverse and engaging city centre. The development of the DHA sites supports existing transport infrastructure and increases patronage of the ferry and bus services. Opportunity to create new open space and cultural facilities for the people of Newcastle, including walking and cycling opportunities – all contributing to a quality lifestyle. <p>It is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Figure 3 be amended to show the entire Fort Wallace Site as an 'Urban Area', consistent with Figure 2 in the Draft Plan. Figure 3 be amended to show the Rifle Range site as 'Urban Area' or 'Urban Area – for investigation'. Any part of the site not identified as 'Urban Area' or 'Urban Area – for investigation' should be shown as non-urban areas and not forest. <p>Refer to the plan overleaf, which has been amended as per the above recommendations.</p>



Figure I - The DHA sites (shown in red) overlaid on an extract of the Inner Newcastle District plan from the Draft Hunter City Strategy (Fig 3, Page 20). The northern site is incorrectly shown as ‘National Parks and Reserves’, and the Fort Wallace site is shown as “Non-Urban Area”, despite being identified as “Urban Area” in all of the figures in the Draft Regional Plan and Plan for Growing Hunter City

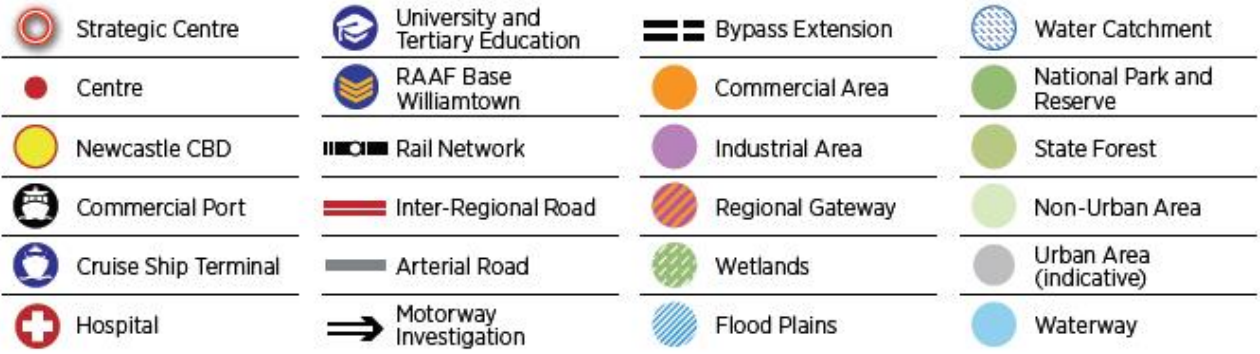
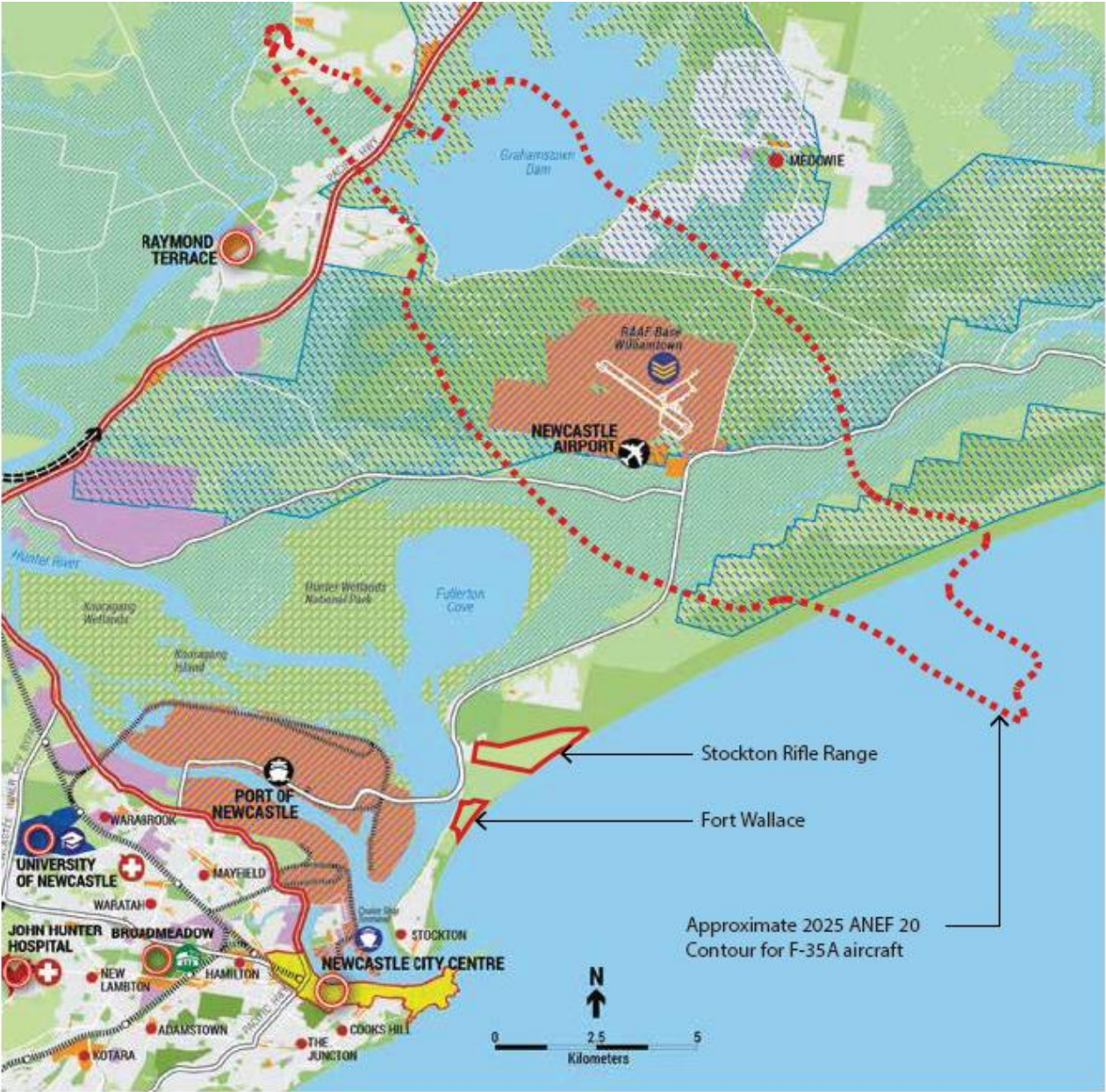


Figure J - The DHA sites (shown in red) overlaid on an extract of the Northern Gateways District plan from the Draft Hunter City Strategy (Fig 7, Page 42).

Key directions for the DHA sites	Comments
The Inner Hunter Green Grid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 1.4.3 – Plan and deliver the Hunter City Green Grid seeks to connect open space and environmental assets together, and to homes and jobs via safe pedestrian and cycle paths. 	<p>The Green Grid direction is supported by DHA and the two DHA sites are an opportunity to create an exemplar Green Grid project for the Inner Hunter.</p> <p>The redevelopment of the sites provides the opportunity to fund open space and active transport projects on both sites. The master plan should look at the opportunities to create new parks and connections.</p>
Strategies for the Northern Gateways District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DHA sites are located in the Northern Gateways District. Direction 7.2 - Manage growth to protect strategic assets seeks to ensure sensitive urban settlement in the Northern Gateway District. "Residential development in the district will be limited by environmental constraints, the extent of economic activity, the topography, the risk of natural hazards (including bushfires and flooding), aircraft noise and the land requirements of the airport and port. <u>Future housing development will be located within established urban areas and committed growth areas such as Raymond Terrace, Medowie and Stockton.</u> This will help to build sustainable communities by protecting the environment, maintaining water quality and maximising the use of existing and committed urban infrastructure and services." Importantly, Figure 7 shows the Fort Wallace site as 'Non-Urban Area', which is inconsistent with the draft Regional Hunter Plan. The Rifle Range site is show here as 'Non-Urban Area', which is potentially inconsistent with the current zoning, and does not reflect the site's potential for sensitive in fill development. 	<p>It is important to consider the DHA sites in terms of their relationship to the transport gateways and natural assets in this Northern Gateways District, in addition to how they form part of the Newcastle Centre.</p> <p>DHA supports the direction to allow for the expansion of residential uses in the Stockton area in a way that is shaped by the natural environment.</p> <p>The master planning process for both sites will commence with detailed environmental studies to understand the sites' opportunities and constraints for development. DHA is committed to the delivery of a sensitive coastal community that allows for the protection and on-going management of the most valuable and sensitive parts of each site.</p> <p>The DHA Fort Wallace site is identified as an 'Urban Area' in the Draft Regional Plan, and should therefore be the focus for residential development in the Northern Gateways, following careful master planning and rezoning and consultation.</p> <p>The DHA Stockton site is identified as a Non-Urban Area, but it is not clear if it is captured under the term "<u>growth areas such as Raymond Terrace, Medowie and Stockton</u>".</p> <p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure 7 be amended to show the entire Fort Wallace Site as an 'Urban Area', consistent with Figure 2 in the Draft Plan. Figure 7 be amended to show the Rifle Range site as 'Urban Area' or 'Urban Area – for investigation'. Any part of the site not identified as 'Urban Area' or 'Urban Area – for investigation' should be shown as non-urban area.

5.0 Opportunities

The future development of the two DHA sites in Stockton has the potential to contribute to many of the goals, directions and project ideas set out in the Draft Regional Plan and Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City, as discussed below.

5.1 Goals for the Hunter Region

Goals for the Hunter Region	Opportunities presented on the Stockton Rifle Range and Fort Wallace sites
<i>GOAL 1: Grow Australia's next major city</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for heritage interpretation and new open space on both sites which contribute to a lively and interesting Newcastle City. • Provision of homes near existing centres in well-served locations means effective public investment in infrastructure. • Provides for housing diversity near the city – both sites present the potential for new types of medium density accommodation with fantastic amenity and ocean and bush views. • Protection and celebration of significant environmental assets that will play an important role in Newcastle's competitiveness and success in the long term.
<i>GOAL 2: Grow the largest regional economy in Australia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the function of the Williamtown RAAF base, and provide homes near the port and airport – all part of the Northern Gateway to the region. • Contribution to creating a critical residential mass in the region to support other services and businesses.
<i>GOAL 3: Protect and connect natural environments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed use developments on both sites could allow for the protection of significant coastal eco-systems. The master plans for each site will test the possibility of creating vegetation corridors, and a pedestrian and cycle boardwalk to promote interest in the environment and connections to Newcastle City. • Parts of the Stockton Rifle Range site may be considered as future National Park and the management and future of these areas will be discussed with the local Worimi people as part of this project. • Both sites adjoin established urban areas and comprise areas that have previously been disturbed or developed and have potential for future development. The sites provide the opportunity to carefully manage the interface between urban area and natural environment. • The development of the sites may allow for the stabilisation of the Stockton sand dunes.
<i>GOAL 4: Support robust regional communities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The master plans for both sites will test options for new public open spaces on both sites that could open up both sites and reveal their histories to the local

Goals for the Hunter Region	Opportunities presented on the Stockton Rifle Range and Fort Wallace sites
	<p>community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional densities in the Stockton area will support emerging businesses and services in the area.• New open spaces, heritage interpretation and environmental projects could act as drawcards for the area.• DHA is committed to delivering diverse housing types, integration of the defence community with the local community, and housing opportunities for people in various stages of the life cycle.

5.2 The Green Grid

Action 1.4.3 of the Plan for Growing Hunter City Plan is to “deliver the Hunter City Green Grid”. The idea is to make the most of the Hunter Region’s substantial natural assets and provide active transport connections between parks and reserves. The outcome is the creation of destinations and increased visitations, healthy lifestyle and environmental benefits. Master planning for both sites will test the potential to deliver the following projects as part of the mixed use development of parts of each site:

1. Create a new boardwalk/ pedestrian and cycle path along the coast.

A best-practice example is the recent completion of the walkway along the six kilometre stretch of coast from Nobbys Beach to Merewether Beach being progressively transformed as part of Newcastle City Council's coastal revitalisation program. This project also provides opportunities for public art and heritage interpretation projects.



The incredible dune system at the edge of the Rifle Range site



The boardwalk at Bathers Way

Source: <http://www.visitnewcastle.com.au>



Heritage interpretation works along the Newcastle Memorial Walk.



The Bondi to Coogee walk provides opportunities for exercise. Attracts tourism, brings people to local businesses and is also the location of festivals and art exhibitions like Sculpture by the Sea.

2. New public open spaces

Large areas in both sites comprise items of local heritage significance, and the area is rich in indigenous history. New open spaces should be designed to showcase items and promote appreciation and education.



Gun emplacements and fort structures on the Fort Wallace site could be located in new public spaces. Heritage experts on the DHA team will help the designers to understand if the items could potentially be reused and enjoyed as part of a playground for example.



An example of a park with a strong focus on the retelling of history is Ballast Point in Sydney. The site explores the layers of history - from the days of the Dharug and Wangul people to its role the maritime and oil industries, and now a significant coastal public open space.



A café, amenities, barbeques and dining areas in the park would encourage use of the park and the walking trails that connect the parks to the bush and the city.



The park could be designed to accommodate markets, food festivals and other events that bring the community to the site.

6.0 Next steps

Architectus and the project team are currently undertaking a detailed analysis of the site and its context and will be developing master plan options and project ideas for discussion with Newcastle and Port Stephens councils, the Department of Planning + Environment, state and local agencies, the Worimi people and Land Council and the local community.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with the Department as part of your review of submissions on the draft strategies and to discuss the many opportunities presented by both DHA sites.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Jane Freeman, Associate on 8252 8400 if you have any questions about our submission or require any additional information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Harrison', followed by a period.

Michael Harrison
Director, Urban Planning and Urban Design
Architectus

