



**PORT STEPHENS**  
COUNCIL



PNC002581

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

Dear Ms Gibson,

**Re: Submission to Draft Hunter Regional Plan**

I write to provide further detail to our submission on the above matter.

This submission states the following about Fern Bay:

*'The current Northern Gateway District Map wrongfully designates the Newcastle Golf Club and land to the north already developed as Seniors Housing as either National Park or State Forest*

*This land should be designated as part of the Fern Bay 'urban area' given the land does not form part of the public open space network. The land has potential to make a positive contribution to the Fern Bay urban area that should be further investigated through more detailed local planning. The wrongful designation of the land within the plan may inadvertently prevent this further investigation at a local level' (p.8)*

Further to the above, the land known as Stockland Rifle Range, being 14 Popplewell Road, Fern Bay falls within the general area discussed above.

Should you have any questions please contact Jeffrey Bretag, Senior Strategic Planner on (02) 4980 0247 or at [jeffrey.bretag@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jeffrey.bretag@portstephens.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

**David Rowland**  
**Strategy and Environment Section Manager**

10 May 2016  
Telephone enquiries (02) 4980 0247  
Please quote file no: PSC2010-06567



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Department of Planning and Environment  
PO Box 1226  
Newcastle NSW 2300

Dear Regional Director

**Re: Submission to draft Hunter Regional Plan and draft Plan for Growing Hunter City**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft Hunter Regional Plan and Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City. In general, the NSW Government's preparation of the Plans to *'guide the delivery of homes, infrastructure and services to support the growing and changing needs of the Hunter'* is supported.

This submission has been prepared in line with the Port Stephens Planning Strategy 2011 (PSPS) adopted by Council to guide the operations of the Council, and the future growth and sustainability of the Local Government Area (LGA) as well as other endorsed strategic plans and recent studies and mapping. The PSPS has undergone community consultation and has the endorsement of Council.

A summary of key concerns that this submission addresses include:

- The relationship between the NSW government merger proposal and Draft Hunter Regional Plan needs to be clarified;
- Question the inclusion of Raymond Terrace, Newcastle airport and Medowie within the boundary of Hunter City;
- Lack of clarity around the delivery of the plan including the implementation of the Hunter Regional Plan Coordination and Monitoring Committee and how it will influence decision making and state budgets;
- The inherent risks of providing very general direction without ownership and commitment for actions;
- Lack of transparent evidence base planning for actions;
- Lack of a clear infrastructure strategy to support actions;
- Inclusion of RAAF Base Williamtown /Defence and employment lands as key strategic centres;
- Lack of direction on rural residential development; and
- The draft Plan's Newcastle centric focus with limited direction for the landscape subregions.

## **1) General Comments**

Overall, the draft Plans are very general in their objectives and provide numerous actions to be undertaken without a clear understanding of when and how they will be carried out. The draft Hunter Regional Plan and associated draft Hunter City Plan leave high levels of uncertainty in relation to the NSW Government's:

- expectations on the roles and relevance of regional plans in future state, regional and local land use and infrastructure planning, sequencing and funding; and
- level of commitment, as well as the operation, influence and purpose of governance arrangements to progress the implementation of the regional plans and other State activities within the region.

In relation to the actions in both plans, it is recommended that a similar approach to the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan be applied which provides a summary table of the lead agency, key stakeholders and timing for each key action. This would provide a greater level of certainty and ownership.

Council supports the decision for the location and densities of growth areas to be based on detailed environmental site constraints, community support and the provision of appropriate infrastructure. This is a more robust tool than meeting housing targets, which are subject to changing social, economic and political conditions. Notwithstanding this, the draft Plans need to be based on appropriate data and there is little indication of the research that may have been undertaken to inform the preparation of the plans including residential, commercial and industrial land supplies and forecasts. It is therefore recommended that any background studies be referenced and made available.

## **2) Draft Hunter Regional Plan**

### **Structure and Operation of the Plan**

Council supports the regular reporting that will occur on the delivery of the plan that will be overseen by a coordinating and monitoring committee. It is noted that the committee will review and recommend plans, projects and actions to advance the delivery of the final plan. Reporting should be evidence based and made publicly available. Further detail on this is required including terms of reference.

Given the importance of this committee it is necessary all key stakeholders are included. It is therefore recommended that the Department of Health and Education as well as private industry bodies be included.

Notwithstanding this, it is acknowledged that, too many members on the committee would be inefficient, in particular the inclusion of one council member from 11 councils as proposed. It is recommended sub-committees be created to allow each council and all State agencies to provide an update on their progress in meeting the Plan on an annual basis and to identify actions that are being achieved and reasons why areas

have not. This information can then be assessed to determine whether necessary changes to the Plan are required.

The Hunter Regional Plan in its current form does not specifically support Council plans due to its very general direction, ambiguous intentions as well as insufficient ownership and commitment to its actions. If the regional plans are to remain 'high level' documents, providing an overarching framework, they need to be supported by implementation strategies that provide the certainty required for the public, industry, state and local government to plan and invest with confidence. These implementation strategies could empower local planning and decision making and allow associated delivery tools, such as local strategies and Local Environment Plans to prevail in day to day decision making where endorsed as consistent with the Hunter Regional Plan.

The addition of implementation strategies would give greater weight to and better recognition of local government strategic plans, such as the Port Stephens Planning Strategy and also outline State government priorities and commitments through State-owned implementation strategies such as a regional infrastructure plan.

A model similar to the NSW Local Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R) is recommended to hold State Government accountable to the same level as Local Government. The Integrated Plans comprise of the Community Strategic Plan, Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan. These are for ten years, four years and one year respectively. The draft Hunter Regional Plan would provide the overarching framework to guide the key aims and aspirations for the Hunter similar to the Community Strategic Plan. To provide a greater level of certainty and ownership an additional plan similar to Councils Delivery and Operational Plan is recommended to identify the individual projects and actions that will be undertaken, by who and funding allocated. A proposed reporting framework is outlined in further detail in (**Attachment 1**).

### **Goal 1 – Grow Australia's Next Major City**

Council supports the draft plan's recognition that growth and change will occur differently across the region and identifies four distinct landscape regions to respond to the local landscape and provide a focus to address opportunities and challenges. On this basis, Council questions the boundary of Hunter City including Raymond Terrace, the Newcastle Airport and Medowie. Raymond Terrace is a strategic centre for LGA and surrounding population in the landscape areas. Connections are required within the more rural regions of the LGA, not within the urban city area. Medowie is predominantly rural residential and largely within a water catchment. It does not have the same urban characteristics of Hunter City.

### **Goal 2 – Grow the Largest Regional Economy in Australia**

The draft Plan seeks to strengthen the region's economic resilience, protect its well established economic and employment bases and build on its existing strengths to foster greater market and industry diversification. Despite this, there is a heavy

emphasis on the regions energy and mineral resources which is considered short sighted. Further direction is required on the diversification of the economy including agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, aerospace and the need to transition to a smart economy.

It is noted that the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy was being developed alongside the new *State Infrastructure Strategy*, the *Hunter Infrastructure Plan* and the *Long Term Transport Master Plan* which was strongly supported.

A clear strategy for infrastructure, planning prioritisation and funding is required in conjunction with a finalised regional Plan. This is vital to support economic growth within the region. The draft Plan should provide commitments to deliver necessary infrastructure including roads, public transport, water, sewerage, electricity, telecommunications and state services such as education and health facilities. Major infrastructure projects need to be investigated, prioritised, costed and timeframes given to provide certainty for investors and the community and encourage additional development and investment in the area. This requires a coordinated response from all government agencies to ensure the efficient and timely provision of services.

### **Goal 3 – Protect and Connect Natural Resources**

Council, acknowledges and supports the draft Plan's aim to 'protect and enhance the Hunters natural environment including a connected network of habitats to enhance the liveability of the region. Environmental issues cross LGA boundaries. As such, council supports a regional approach to environmental management to establish conservation priorities in order to reduce uncertainty and to provide an optimal balance between development and biodiversity.

A component of conservation measures is the inclusion of a High Environmental Values (HEV) map. The data used is intended to provide a regional level overview for the purposes of strategic planning. Despite HEV land having protection under existing legislation, regulation, policy or intergovernmental agreement, the draft Plan includes an action to 'create the right regulatory environment and implementing appropriate protection measures to conserve validated high environmental values including through the application of planning controls'. Further information is required on how to apply the maps through subsequent planning.

The Plan acknowledges that, due to the rarity of the Hunter's biological and ecological diversity, securing like-for-like offsets can prove challenging. Accordingly, Council supports more robust and clear planning processes that can streamline the biodiversity assessment and offsetting processes to support growth in the rural and resource areas while sustaining environmental values.

Climate change, coastal management and natural hazards are also key issues which requires further consideration in the draft plans given the range of affected stakeholders and financial implications. In light of recent storm events, this also needs to be considered in line with emergency services.

It is noted that the draft Plans emphasise the importance of managing development within drinking water catchments including action 7.2.1 'identify opportunities for sustainable development outcomes at Medowie that do not affect water quality'. Council is committed to managing development within drinking water catchments in partnership with Hunter Water. This includes the adoption of water quality measures within the Development Control Plan, including the requirements to undertake *Small Scale Stormwater Water Quality Model (SSSQM)* or water quality modelling, such as *MUSIC Modelling*.

Furthermore, Council is currently undertaking a revised Medowie Strategy which is currently on public exhibition. The strategy acknowledges the very high importance in Medowie because large areas are located within the Grahamstown Dam Drinking Water Catchment and provides water management principles relevantly including:

- Water quality is improved or maintained in the Grahamstown Dam Drinking Water Catchment; and
- Council and Hunter Water Corporation will work collaboratively to identify a catchment-wide solution to stormwater drainage and water quality.

#### **Goal 4 – Support robust regional communities**

The draft Plan aims to focus housing and service growth towards Hunter City and the regions existing towns and villages. It is noted that the plan outlines that the Hunter already has sufficient supply of land available in established and new release areas to meet anticipated demand. As previously outlined, no studies are provided to support this. This includes no indication of market preferences with respect to the type and location of housing Hunter residents will require over their lifetime, along with market entry price points. It is recommended that appropriate housing studies be undertaken and made available for review.

The intention to reinforce existing urban areas and centres is strongly supported. The development of medium density housing is encouraged within and surrounding centres where services and transport are more available. However new growth areas responsive to local needs should also be accommodated to provide greater housing choice and affordability commensurate with local area jobs growth.

To ensure robust regional communities the PSPS has also identified a need to:

- develop a broader base of employment, including higher order services;
- develop employment skills in the workforce;
- reduce unemployment rates; and
- create sufficient employment opportunities in the LGA for a growing population generated by new town developments.

To facilitate this it is recommended the draft Plan reflects these objectives and provides specific direction for how these could be achieved.

## **The Hunters Landscape Subregions**

While the creation of landscape subregions to acknowledge the different characteristics and needs of areas is supported, there is limited detail and defined actions. Each landscape subregion has specific priorities; however in many instances these priorities are inconsistent within each subregion. For example the Hunter City includes an action to 'apply a risk-based decision making framework to manage coastal land, lakes and estuaries where there is development'. Within the northeast coast the action is to 'protect the water quality, estuarine lakes, coastal environments and natural assets that characterise the region'. Similarly the Hunter City has an action to 'develop strategies to deliver the housing needs of the hinterland community', no similar action is included within the North East Coast landscape region.

All communities within the region have specific housing needs and it is unclear why all areas don't have similar actions. It is recommended that all priorities within and between regional landscapes be reviewed to ensure consistency with studies and plans being carried out and ensure areas are not disadvantaged.

Greater detail on recommended approaches to landscape subregions is provided in **(Attachment 2)**.

### **3) Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City**

Council acknowledges Hunter City's importance to the Hunter region and the State. While Council welcomes strategic linkages to key centres, there is concern that the plan is too city centric and too greater emphasis is given to Newcastle City Centre for development and growth. As previously stated, it is considered Raymond Terrace and Medowie are inconsistent with this character.

## **Managing Growth and Change in Hunter City**

Direction 1.1 identifies nine strategic centres and two global transport gateways and suggests these places are the key to accommodating future growth. It is considered that RAAF Base, Newcastle Airport, DAREZ and Tomago/ Heatherbrae should be included within this.

The RAAF makes a considerable contribution to the region as well as the NSW's economy currently employing 3500 people directly and undertaking significant capital works projects including a plan to house most of the planned F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Lightning aircraft. This alone is expected to contribute an additional \$500 million investment into the region with associated job increases as well as wider multiplier effects in regional employment and income.

A significant increase in workers is expected in the Defence Airport Related Economic Zone (DAREZ) encompassing Newcastle Airport and the RAAF Base at Williamtown over the next 30 years. Locating close to airports is becoming increasingly attractive to a wider range of economic activities due to the:

- rapid growth in air transit;
- current and future level of investment in airport infrastructure;
- accessibility to major cities and regional centres;
- accessibility of location for visiting customers and employees coming by air; and
- high passing trade from passengers.

As a result, Council is receiving increasing pressure from investors and developers wanting to take advantage of these benefits and develop near and around Newcastle airport. The regional significance of this area as a major economic and transport hub needs to be recognised and supported in the Plan and indicate support to resolve planning issues to support its delivery.

Tomago is already home to a conglomerate of local and global operations that service the regions local mining industries and export goods and services to the world based on its proximity to the Port of Newcastle and RAAF Base/ Williamtown/ Newcastle Airport/ DAREZ. Tomago was declared a state significant site in June 2007 for further development of 351 hectares of industrial land. Progress is being made with the 240 ha Northbank Enterprise Hub neighbouring the recently completed WesTrac headquarters. Therefore, its recognition as a strategic centre is justified.

It is noted that development should be located to protect future transport corridors however as previously outlined without a clear transport plan it is unclear where these areas are.

Action 1.1.2 identifies that new land release areas for housing development may be required to maintain a sufficient supply of housing in the long term. These sites will be subject to an assessment against a set of strategic criteria. It is unclear when this criteria will be developed.

The Plan acknowledges the growing demand for smaller dwellings and identifies the need for councils to prepare a housing strategy which may form part of Councils' community strategic plan. The NSW Government will prepare an integrated housing strategy for Hunter City that addresses smaller dwellings, supply of affordable housing and housing to meet special needs. Appropriate housing, in particular affordable housing and housing for the ageing community is an important issue for the entire Hunter region and state. The strategy should be State wide and consider legislation, incentives, zonings etc.

The Draft Plan identifies priorities for infrastructure planning in the inner west and Maitland New England corridor. It is considered that Raymond Terrace, Kings Hill and Medowie are also key areas of growth. It is noted that the Government will work with infrastructure providers and councils to review a special infrastructure contributions for the inner west and Maitland New England highway corridor districts. It is unclear why this is limited to these areas.



## **Northern Gateways District**

The draft Plan states that rural living is a popular lifestyle choice in the Hunter. It states that the region has a sufficient supply of land for rural living and any additional areas will have to sustain the region's agricultural and environmental values and minimise the costs of providing services.

### Medowie

Council is currently in the process of reviewing the Medowie Strategy. The Medowie Strategy guides the management of future population growth and the building of neighbourhoods in Medowie. It establishes a context and policy direction for future rezoning requests and development controls in the Medowie area. It also integrates the location, timing and funding for community facilities and infrastructure.

In November 2015 Council resolved to endorse a Draft Revised Medowie Planning Strategy and Draft Medowie Town Centre Master Plan for public exhibition. The current Northern Gateway District map do not accurately reflect the development areas included in the draft revised Medowie Strategy. It is recommended that the area be amended to be in line with the revised strategy.

### Fern Bay

The current Northern Gateway District map wrongfully designates the Newcastle Golf Club and land to the north already developed as Seniors Housing as either National Park or State Forest.

This land should be designated as part of the Fern Bay 'urban area' given the land does not form part of the public open space network. The land has potential to make a positive contribution to the Fern Bay urban area that should be further investigated through more detailed local planning. The wrongful designation of the land within the plan may inadvertently prevent this further investigation at a local level.

### Rural Residential Development

Port Stephens Council is facing increasing pressure in relation to development and rezoning of rural lands for residential purposes. While existing studies and strategies have been carried out on existing rural lands, Council does not have a specific strategy that deals with the social, economic and environmental challenges faced by rural residential land planning and management.

Council is currently preparing a rural residential strategy. The Port Stephens Rural Residential Strategy aims are:

- To develop a strategy to identify opportunities relating to new rural residential development on rural zoned land.
- To provide Council and the community with further clarity around the future use and development of rural lands.

- To provide a framework for which Council can assess the appropriateness of future rural residential development proposals.
- To ensure future development protects the environmental and cultural values of the area.
- To ensure that existing prime agricultural land is preserved and agricultural industries are able to prosper and expand without being unduly limited by neighbouring residential uses.
- To ensure that rural residential development does not hinder the strategic development of urban settlements in the future.
- To ensure new developments can have access to an appropriate level of community services in a cost effective manner.

In order to achieve the stated aims, Council has defined a range of locational criteria to determine:

- the appropriate location of potential rural residential having regard for relevant constraints and planning controls (termed exclusionary criteria); and
- the appropriate environmental, social and economic considerations when assessing this land use (termed management criteria).

This approach has not been widely (if at all) used for a broad based land use strategy for rural residential development within the region or State. Council is pursuing this approach as it enables:

- Clear identification of constraints and appropriate locations for potential rural residential development;
- Clear indication of the future growth and staging of this development type across the LGA;
- Clear guidance, through the spatial expression of the exclusionary criteria to the LGA, for Council and landholders; and
- Clear assessment criteria for planning proposals and/or land use investigations by Council in relation to rural residential development.

The Department of Planning and Environment have requested the criteria be reviewed to take greater consideration of environmental constraints and cost of providing infrastructure with a view of identifying one or two key locations in the LGA where rural residential development would be appropriate. This is consistent with the objectives of the draft Regional Plan which identifies a sufficient supply of land for rural living and any additional areas will have to sustain the region's agricultural and environmental values and minimise the costs of providing services.

The locational criteria approach could also be easily transferred to other LGAs and/or areas, which provides a further basis for consistency at a regional and/or state level planning for this type of land use. It is noted that an action is included to provide further guidance on rural residential subdivision and recommends that this existing strategy be used as a benchmark for further analysis.

### Urban Feasibility Model

Council is committed to delivering evidenced based strategic planning. This strategic planning is to be well-informed through a detailed understanding of development feasibility without the need to commission specialist studies. An excellent tool that has been developed by the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department) to assist with this goal is the Urban Feasibility Model (UFM). On a number of occasions Council has sought to use this tool to assist in the development of its land-use strategies, such as the Raymond Terrace and Heatherbrae Strategy 2011-2031. However, on these occasions we were informed that the Department no longer had the resources to provide Council within this model.

We strongly encourage the Department to devote resources to provide Councils with access to this model. This will lead to significant improvements and time savings in the outcomes that are sought from our land-use strategies.

Council supports the development of a Draft Hunter Regional Plan and looks forward to working with the Department in further developing the Plan before its finalisation.

Please contact Renee Read, Principal Strategic Planner on 4980 0163 if you would like to discuss any of the above points further. Council looks forward to your feedback on this submission.

Yours Sincerely



**Mike McIntosh**  
**Group Manager Development Services**

24 March 2016

Telephone enquiries  
(02) 4980 0319

Please quote file no: PSC2006-0553

## **ATTACHMENT 1 – PORT STEPHENS PROPOSED FRAMEWORK AND GOVERNANCE MODEL**

### **1) Importance of an effective Governance Model**

Local governments, Hunter communities and businesses seeking to invest in the Hunter require greater certainty on the following matters to have confidence in the State:

- the sustainable growth of the Hunter;
- delivering the infrastructure and services required to cater for projected population growth and promote economic growth;
- regularly listening, monitoring and reporting on the projected and existing needs, and aspirations of Hunter communities;
- an implementation program that;
  - is updated and reported on annually;
  - outlines all State planning and infrastructure commitments and actions;
- an infrastructure program that –
  - outlines infrastructure needs for the life of the regional plan;
  - outlines State infrastructure and emergency planning commitments, extending out 4-7 years;
  - outlines annual reporting and benchmarking on infrastructure demands and delivery.

Pivotal to the State's commitment to the items raised above and reducing the uncertainty currently in place is a sustained commitment to an integrated and sustained governance model that:

- informs and empowers local governments and delivery agencies to focus and prioritise State investment where required.
- is regularly informed by transparent monitoring, reporting and evaluation, including annual State of the Region reporting on:
  - housing land supply, employment land supply, catchment management etc.;
- places organisations at the decision table that represent local communities and manage and deliver land use and infrastructure resources; and
- includes effective representation from both State and Local government.
- Enables opportunities unforeseen by the strategy to be capitalised on.

### **2) Council Recommended Governance Model**

#### Purpose and Scope

The implementation, monitoring and review of the Hunter Regional Plan relies on the wide range of organisations, skills, tools and strategies available within the region. Therefore, a commitment to a governance model that establishes and maintains collaborative arrangements to deliver outcomes and monitor delivery should be a centre piece of the Plan. This includes involving all levels of government Agencies in its delivery, monitoring and review. This scope however is depended on a plan that has clear direction and deliverables.

Transparent and collaborative governance arrangements are required that recognise the broad ownership and influencers of planning and delivery within the Hunter.

They also need to be capable of:

- annually reporting on its delivery;
- advising on infrastructure priorities and timing; and
- informing a four yearly review of the Plan to align with Council integrated reporting framework.

The governance framework also requires the capacity to:

- provide the oversight and direction required to ensure the delivery the Hunter Regional Plan and other State and local government commitments within the region (this includes determining and prioritising objectives and actions);
- ensure emerging opportunities and challenges as well as new evidence collated through the delivery and monitoring phases of the program inform subsequent decision making; and
- inform and enact current and future implementation tools and strategies (including a regional infrastructure plan, a regional conservation plan as well as local land use and infrastructure plans) to detail directions and commitments to be enacted over the subsequent 12-24 months to progress the delivery of the regional plan.
- Reduce the complexity of implementation through reduction or removal of SEPP's with greater delegations back to Councils through planning consistency with the strategy.

**Figure 1. Governance – Connecting, Aligning and Empowering each component**



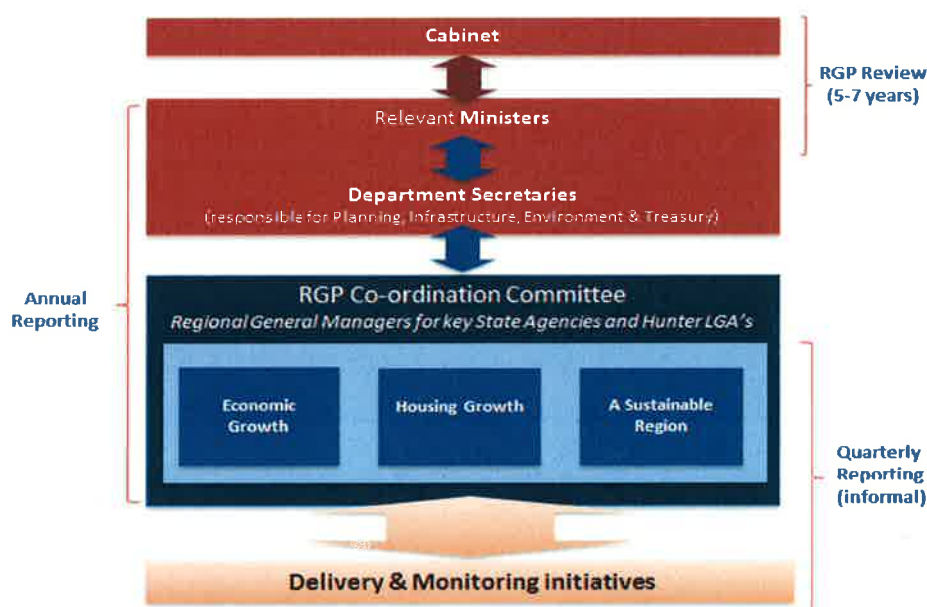
## Membership

Committee membership should focus on combined State and local government representation, with the committee empowered to enhance decision making within the Hunter through shared knowledge and advocacy, allowing their respective organisations to make more informed and effective decisions.

The role of committee members would be to review and recommend plans, projects and actions to advance the regional plan through their respective organisational executive as appropriate.

It is recommended that State agency membership focus on agencies directly involved in the delivery and shaping of planning decisions within the region, reflecting a strong emphasis on progressing the implementation of regional planning within the Hunter.

**Figure 2. Potential Governance Model**



A sustained commitment to a meaningful governance process is required. This cannot be achieved if reliant on a non-statutory regional plan with ambiguous intent and insufficient direction on major issues impacting upon the Hunter. Therefore, it is recommended that the governance process be integrated into the finalised Joint Organisation model and its future recognition in State legislation. This has the additional advantages of utilising the governance process to give greater certainty to how a future Hunter JO will input into future regional planning strategies and decisions and advise the State on the needs and priorities for the region. It would also assist in ensuring all local governments within the Hunter are represented, whether by the JO or as an individual entities.

### Operation and Effect

The Hunter Plans provide for multiple means of delivery and for alternate local outcomes to result where consistent with the strategic directions outlined in the Plan. However, to ensure this can occur, the Plans should:

- provide further detail on its role and operation in relation to other plans and strategies;
- accommodate the use of a range of current and future implementation strategies to be the means of further outlining short to medium term priorities and commitments; and
- enable local plans to establish the best way to deliver regional and State policy, having the capacity to take into account local context and circumstance.

As a result, the Hunter Regional Plan would have a very minor role in day to day operation and delivery, with other fit for purpose plans and tools fulfilling these roles. However, their intent and direction will align with and further the Hunter Regional Plan and ancillary strategies.

## **ATTACHMENT 2 – REGIONAL LANDSCAPES AND HUNTER CITY PRECINCTS**

An outline of the role of key communities and centres within the Port Stephens LGA and specific actions recommended for inclusion in the draft Plan.

### **Raymond Terrace**

Raymond Terrace is the LGA's major regional centre. Its growth as a regional centre is attributed to its proximity to growing centres of employment, such as the RAAF Base Williamtown, Newcastle Airport and the industrial concentration of Tomago. Raymond Terrace has a range of regional level facilities, including a concentration of businesses, higher order retailing, employment opportunities and civic and professional services.

#### **Key Actions:**

- Rail connections to Newcastle
- Identify as a stand alone key regional centre, focussing on the needs of the LGA, rather than identifying it with Hunter City
- Contribution towards place making initiatives including upgrades to William Street

### **Heatherbrae and Tomago**

Tomago is the LGA's largest industrial precinct and is dominated by manufacturing activity, split between heavy and local light uses. Tomago is home to a conglomerate of local and global operations that service the region's local mining industries and export goods and services to the world based on its proximity to the Port of Newcastle. In June 2007, 351 hectares of land at Tomago was declared a State significant site.

Heatherbrae has more diverse industry types than Tomago. Due to its position on a major highway route, it has a mix of uses, from businesses catering for passing traffic to industrial land dominated by construction manufacturing uses. Due to the planned M1 – Pacific Highway bypass and an increase in population in nearby areas, it has been identified as the target area for bulky goods retailing.

#### **Key Actions:**

- Commitment to providing the M1 Pacific Motorway link road
- Identify Heatherbrae as a centre for bulky goods
- Include in global transport gateway

### **Medowie**

Medowie is located in the geographical centre of Port Stephens LGA and has experienced significant growth due to proximity to Raymond Terrace and the RAAF Base Williamtown / Newcastle Airport and recent land release.

Rural residential development in the area is extensive and will continue to be part of its character. Land ownership in some parts of Medowie is also fragmented, presenting



difficulties to the delivery of residential urban release areas. This presents an opportunity for accommodating some further rural residential development, while maintaining the environment ('a place of tall trees') and semi-rural character of the area.

The expansion of Medowie is limited by a number of factors, including environmentally significant lands, flood prone land, groundwater catchment areas for the Tomago Sandbeds, Grahamstown Dam and its drinking catchment, Department of Defence land (associated with the Salt Ash Air Weapons Range) and the RAAF Base Williamtown / Newcastle Airport.

Medowie has some unique demographics compared to the wider Port Stephens LGA, such as

- Has a higher percentage of children (0-14);
- A lower percentage of seniors (55+);
- A higher percentage of detached dwellings;
- A higher average household size;
- Full-time employment and householder incomes are higher in Medowie than the rest of the LGA;
- The main employment industries are manufacturing and public administration/defence; and

Key Actions:

- Not suitable for inclusion in boundaries of Hunter City

## **Williamtown**

Newcastle Airport is a key economic driver for the Port Stephens LGA and the Lower Hunter Region. The importance of this driver is recognised in various regional strategies and plans, including the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy which identifies this area as a specialised centre capable of generating 3000 jobs.

Recent developments within this precinct have included the a 2,600m<sup>2</sup> extension of the airport terminal to prepare it for international flights and the recently commenced upgrade works at RAAF Base Williamtown to cater for the introduction of the Joint Strike Fighter. These projects have created a renewed focus on development.

Council has a range of land strategies for this precinct including:

- Newcastle Airport Master Plan (Council is a shareholder of Newcastle Airport);
- Defence and Aircraft Related Employment Zone (DAREZ) lands, which relate to approximately 90ha of land zoned to accommodate commercial land uses to support the Newcastle Airport/RAAF Base Williamtown area. There is an existing master plan and consent for the development of this area, with limited development owing to a range of identified constraints;
- Williamtown Land Use Strategy (draft) is being finalised by Council to examine the further release of commercial land to the south of the Newcastle airport.

In order to support the future development of this area, these strategies have identified a range of infrastructure requirements to assist in the development of these areas.

Major infrastructure items identified include:

- 1) Construction of a round-a-bout and connector road that would intersect with Cabbage Tree Road from DAREZ – estimated costs of \$5M plus;
- 2) Various drainage upgrade works with an estimated cost of \$10M including:
- 3) Dawson's Drain: 2.5km. The creation of an additional discharge point at the end of Dawson's Drain to alleviate increased stormwater run-off from development;
- 4) Nelson Bay Table Drain: 1.2km. Analysis suggests that this section is required to be widened to approximately 30 metres wide;
- 5) Middle Drain (Leary's Drain): 800m. Analysis suggests that Leary's Drain be widened to approximately 12 metres;
- 6) 14 Foot Drain: 2.2km. Analysis suggests that a number of minor upgrades will be required in addition to a number of conditioned works that are required through the Maria's Veggie Farm Development Approval; and
- 7) Moor's Drain: Analysis and anecdotal evidence suggests that maintenance works are required to assist with flooding management down stream of RAAF Base Williamtown stormwater management system.

In addition, due to the varying nature of the ownership and controls of the existing drainage lines within this area, Council has identified the potential need for the acquisition of drainage easements to enable future development. The cost to acquire lands for easements is very difficult to determine, however has historically ranged from hundreds of thousands to millions.

Given the regional importance of the future development of the Newcastle Airport and surrounds and the nature and costs of works involved, Council has identified that collaboration with regional and state bodies is critical for the provision of this infrastructure.

### **Nelson Bay/ Tomaree Peninsula:**

Nelson Bay is the primary tourist and service centre of the Tomaree Peninsula and of Port Stephens LGA. Nelson Bay contains a considerable amount of retail and commercial floorspace; however the nearby Salamander Centre has become the focus for weekly retail shopping as well as being the location of community facilities such as a library and community centre.

Nelson Bay is the entry point to the Port Stephens waterway for many tourists, and contains the highest concentration of tourist facilities in the area. The town experiences high seasonal variations in tourism.

The Tomaree Peninsula has a substantial residential population. Due to its attractiveness as a retirement destination, a significant proportion of the population is aging, with 40.4% over the age of 55 years.

A key issue for Nelson Bay and the Tomaree Peninsula is achieving an appropriate balance between permanent residential and tourist accommodation.

**Key Actions:**

- ageing population – a commitment to providing better facilities and services for an ageing population, including medical facilities (population must currently travel to Newcastle for higher order needs) and seniors living/ aged care.