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Online Submission from company Lower Hunter Agricultural Water Users Association (org_comments)

Mar 24 (21 days ago)

j To:

The members of our organisation all operate within the boundary of the proposed Hunter city. The proposed city would see nearly all farms with an urban population on their boundaries. Many of these residents have no pretension at understanding rural issues - it is an affordable house within proximity to work. What are the issues for our members: (these are not in order of importance)

1. Biosecurity

Whether we grow vegetables, turf, or cattle or produce milk - we have standards that we have to comply with & are aware of our obligations not only on our own farm, but consider our neighbours.

There is concern about: Pests - Wild dogs are of great concern within our area; Weeds are not being managed now by lifestyle block owners - with consequences of weed invasions particularly after floods. Contaminants - how many urban dwellers are aware of their responsibilities with regard to what & when they spray?

2. Flooding

There are many issues surrounding flooding & we are aware that we operate within a flood plain.

Climate change models show that there is an increased risk of more frequent & more intense floods. The urban expansion has 2 impacts - hard concrete surfaces will mean that there is less absorption of water & urban expansion has been allowed onto the high ground (the 100 year flood mark) - so that farms have no high country to move cattle to - animal welfare issues & loss of productive capacity as these floodplain properties without high ground become useless for animal production.

3. Spraying - many enterprises need to spray their crops many neighbours do not understand this requirement.

4. Noise - Similarly there are agricultural enterprises such as hay making which take place at night & there are issues with neighbours complaining about noise pollution.

5. Odours - how many people really like the smell of chicken litter having been spread? It is really only the farmer that appreciates the crop growth which will occur.

6. Water - all our enterprises rely on irrigation....whilst there is some concern about water quality - there does not seem to be any concern about quantity.

It is of great concern that our enterprises will be squeezed for water. The regulated river system wants no water to go into

the tidal pool, other than environmental water. We need water too. I would imagine that the need for environmental water would increase significantly. You can't put an extra 200,000 people into an area without stress on the water systems & the estuary.

Where is the water coming from for the extra 200,000 people?

Where is the environmental water coming from to keep the river system healthy with increased urbanisation?

Will there be any clean water for us to continue our irrigation enterprises?

7. Vandalism - urban expansion puts an increased population close to farms. The current housing developments seem to be taking place without concern for any environmental or social issues.

Where are the parks in the new housing developments? Where are the facilities for young people to entertain themselves?

There does not even seem to be any dwelling:garden ratio. On the other hand there does not appear to be any medium density housing - just houses marching across the landscape.

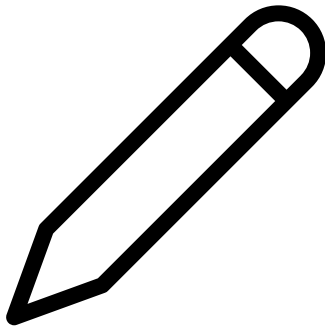
A frequent consequence of bored youth is vandalism - for the well being of our farms & communities there needs to be many more community facilities within developments to try to ensure there are not these social issues.

8. Reduction of Agricultural Services

A reduction in agricultural enterprises in the area will mean that there are less agricultural services - whether this is the reduction in farm produce stores, large animal vets or places to sell our product.

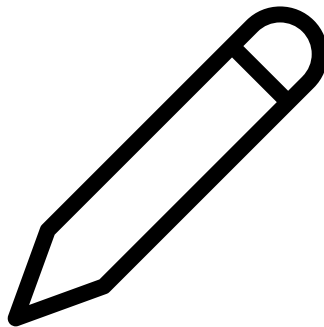
In summary

There is great concern about the future of agriculture in the area & that there will be a downward spiral as Hunter town continues to expand in a way which is most insensitive to social & environmental issues.



Email Details

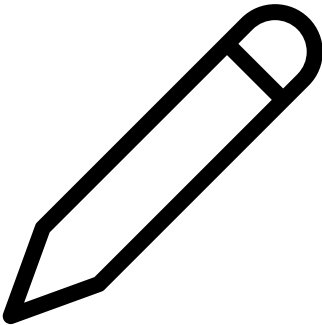
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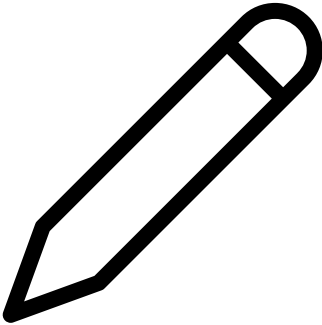
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