

31 May 2016

P O Box 2068  
Port Macquarie NSW 2444

Director Regions  
North Coast Region  
Planning and Environment  
Locked Bag 9022  
GRAFTON NSW 2460

Dear Sir

RE: Submission to the Draft North Coast Regional Plan

This submission is made on behalf of Lewis Land Group for Sovereign Hills Project (SHP) in relation to the Sovereign Hills Urban Growth Area at Thrumster, Port Macquarie.

*Delivering the Plan*

SHP supports the overall intent and direction of the draft North Coast Regional Plan, in particular the proposal to establish co-ordination and monitoring of progress with key elements of the plan and its implementation as expressed on pages 13 & 15.

*Goal 2 – Focus growth opportunities to create a great place to live and work*  
*Direction 2.1.1 & 2.1.2 – Governance for delivery of investment and infrastructure and*  
*Regional Cities Action Plan*

SHP are the primary land owner within the Thrumster Urban Growth area and any Regional Cities Steering Committee needs to be comprised of a representative cross section, including key landowners and/major proponents. Comprising the committee of State and Local government representatives only will potentially result in decisions and directions made in a vacuum without benefit of the comprehensive project knowledge and internal project feasibility and cost issues held by major proponents such as the SHP, Sovereign Hills Project team.

Please note that Figure 14 on page 45 has completely omitted the entire Thrumster Town Centre commercial and residential zoned lands, which is central to the future community and long term viability of the Thrumster Urban Growth area. This mapping omission needs to be rectified urgently and accurately.



*Action 2.3.1 – Focus future growth into the mapped urban growth areas.*

This action is supported together with the *Urban Growth Area Variation Principles* at Table 3. Minor and contiguous variations to urban growth areas can achieve better utilisation of existing infrastructure and investment and potentially allow for a more environmentally responsive approach when developing urban growth areas.

The Urban Growth Variation principles should include a provision where the variation results in an overall better environmental outcome, such as swapping environmentally sensitive residential lands over to a contiguous or nearby area that is more appropriate to develop.

*Goal 3 – Housing choice, with homes that meet the needs of changing communities*

SHP support the principles of the draft plan to accelerate the development of proposed urban land and incorporates a range of smaller lot housing in the current estates at Sovereign Hills. The current demand for multi unit housing is significantly less than the 40% target as demonstrated demand is for single dwellings with modest lot sizes to serve the needs of families buying in the new release area.

The plan's recognition of the need for a modest housing surplus is also supported, as identified, delays in getting supply on the ground, uneven and unexpected increases in demand and population all affect tangible supply, versus nominal numbers of lots on a plan.

*Direction 4.5 Grow the region's commercial and business centres.*

*Direction 4.5.1 Plan for future retail and commercial needs.*

The North Coast Regional Plan identifies Thrumster as one of the key urban growth areas for the region with an ultimate potential population of 10,000 people anticipated for this area. Direction 4.5 correctly identifies that whilst it is important to support retail and business activity in existing commercial centres, Councils should regularly review the retail and commercial land supply and demand in areas experiencing population growth.

In relation to the Thrumster Urban Growth Area a centrally located and appropriately zoned retail and commercial centre is in place and is in early stages of development, including development of key community infrastructure such as the Community Centre and the Town Green. It is astounding that this Town Centre is not shown on the map in Figure 14 as a business centre.

Further, the North Coast Regional Plan needs to acknowledge the employment and amenity role of new town centres in major Urban Growth Areas as potential centres of community focus, social cohesion and employment opportunities. Consideration of infrastructure and service needs for emerging town centres needs to be recognised due to their important element to create social cohesion and local identity in new areas.



Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the draft North Coast Regional Plan and should you require any further information about points made in this submission or simply wish to discuss it further, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0439 836 711.

Yours faithfully



Geraldine Haigh

Director & Senior Planner

PIA NSW Division Committee (current), PIA North Coast Chapter Member and CPP

GEM Planning Projects

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