



BATHURST
REGIONAL COUNCIL



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Director Regions, Western
NSW Department of Planning & Environment
PO Box 58
DUBBO NSW 2830

Dear Sir/Madam

Draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan

Please find **enclosed** Council's submission in relation to the abovementioned draft plan.

Council supports the preparation of a regional plan to establish a land use vision for the Central West region. In particular Council supports and acknowledges the Department's Western Region in its process of consultation with local government in the development of the plan and its ongoing importance in delivering regional planning outcomes.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries. Council looks forward to the finalisation of the plan taking into account the matters raised in its submission.

Yours faithfully

J E Bingham
ACTING DIRECTOR
ENVIRONMENTAL, PLANNING & BUILDING SERVICES

Bathurst Regional Council Submission Draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan

Bathurst Regional Council supports the preparation of a regional plan to establish a land use vision for the Central West Region.

Council also strongly supports the efforts of the Department's Western Region to develop the plan in consultation with local government. Council continues to acknowledge the importance of the Western Region office of the Department in delivering regional planning outcomes.

In terms of the final Plan Council would support:

- The inclusion of clearer guidance on how the plan is to be implemented into local plans (akin to regionally based 117 directions). All goals/directions/actions within the plan should be supported by relevant planning principles (e.g. table 1: planning principles for industrial land identification).
- Clearer delineation of the plan as a regional landuse plan, if that is all it is, with a greater focus on landuse actions, policy and direction. The Plan's intent is blurred by actions that cannot be influenced by the landuse planning process.
- Clearer delineation within the Plan of its two sub-regions – Central West and Orana.

In respect of the contents of the draft Plan, the following specific comments are offered in chapter order.

Foreword

- The foreword should indicate the intent of the Plan – is it just a landuse plan or is it more than a landuse plan.
- Highlight the two distinct subregions that make up the plan – Central West and Orana.

Introduction

- The opening sentence to describe the Central West would be better stated as “a concentrated settlement pattern of regional cities, regional centres, towns and small villages....”
- Bathurst Council should be referenced as Bathurst Regional Council. Note reference to Bathurst City Council on pages 16, 39, 80 and 86.
- The introduction should include the current population figures and population projections for the two subregions and then total figures for the whole region. It should outline the regional drivers of change for each subregion and likely forward trends.
- Economic strengths in a general sense should also incorporate education and tourism.
- Figure 1 – needs to show the hierarchy of settlement within the subregion and how that settlement is connected internally. It should be accompanied by a map that shows how the

subregion fits within NSW and how it is connected to the rest of NSW. The hierarchy of settlement should include regional cities, regional centres, towns and villages - key towns must be better identified and separated from villages, e.g. Cowra and Forbes are far more significant centres than Hill End and Cumnock . If some villages are shown then all must be , e.g. why is Hill End shown on the map and not Trunkey Creek.

- Key principles underpinning the planning framework should include a reference to facilitating growth in cultural, recreational and social/community infrastructure that supports communities.

Vision

- Figure 4 is limiting in terms of identifying the regions key assets. It would be more appropriate to include mapping for each of the plans goals and show the existing economic, environmental and social/cultural assets of the region and then the preferred future.

Delivering the Plan

- The three regional cities should be represented on the coordination and monitoring committee.
- Council supports local plans being consistent with the regional plan.
- There should be ongoing participation of the CENTROC planners' technical group in the implementation of the plan.

Goal 1 – A Growing and diverse regional economy

- Council generally supports the directions and actions under this goal.
- Note that most of the communities within the region are not reliant on only a single industry. Connections to Canberra should be highlighted.
- Action 1.1.1: Council supports the need for local government to undertake local strategic planning to protect the agricultural supply chain. This needs to be supported by appropriate SEPPs and more detailed research and investigations of issues such as landuse buffers, minimum lot size and so on. This action should also highlight the region's strengths and opportunities to build on those strengths.
- Action 1.3.2: Landuse policies could be included to identify and protect the region's mineral and energy resources and the potential for urban areas to be adversely impacted by mining.
- Action 1.4.2: There are unlikely to be any local planning barriers to the expansion of the education and training sector. The key barriers are likely to be non landuse based, e.g. NBN rollout to support online education.
- Action 1.4.3: Government should also review and update SEPPs that might negatively impact on regional tourism assets (e.g. SEPPs that encourage permanent housing in close proximity to Mount Panorama). Government should also ensure that the SILEP is capable of protecting local/regional tourism assets (e.g. ongoing negotiations over many years were required to secure special provisions in the Bathurst LEP to protect Mount Panorama from commercial motor race hosting).
- Action 1.5.1: The government should also identify (and fund) regionally significant local infrastructure to support industrial and commercial lands (e.g. Bathurst southern ring road concept seeks to link key industry/commercial locations).

- Action 1.5.2: Council strongly supports this action. It should be widened to include working with Councils to establish appropriate retail hierarchies within towns and cities and protecting those hierarchies through appropriate planning controls. This action should be supported by a set of planning principles akin to table one which establishes principles for industrial land identification.

Goal 2 – A region with strong freight transport and utility infrastructure networks that support economic growth.

- Council generally supports the directions and actions under this goal.
- Figure 10 - Should include the proposed road realignment to the south of Bathurst (southern ring road – both a bypass and local link road between industrial and commercial areas of the City). The Grainforce terminal is currently the only operational intermodal terminal in Bathurst. A DA for the Gateway Enterprise Park intermodal is yet to be received (should be shown as potential future). Bathurst Rail Intermodal has been approved but is currently not operating.
- Action 2.1.2: This action also needs to consider pinch points outside of the region – e.g. Bells Line Expressway is missing from the plan. Needs to be a state/regional commitment to funding pinch point improvements. It is unlikely that improvements will be achieved at the local level.
- Action 2.1.4: The action needs to include protecting key corridors on LEPs both within and outside of the region.
- Action 2.2.1: Whilst Council supports actions to coordinate infrastructure provision across the region it firmly maintains the continuation of local public ownership of water and sewer assets, as is the case in the Bathurst Region. Council notes with frustration the current Urban Release Area process in relation to State Infrastructure funding to support regional development. This process has and will continue to delay the release of new residential lands in the Bathurst Regional local government area.
- Action 2.2.2: As above, Council notes with frustration the current Urban Release Area process in relation to State Infrastructure funding to support regional development. This process has and will continue to delay the release of new residential lands in the Bathurst Regional local government area. There is a need to plan ahead of urban release not just monitor it. Support should be given for section 94 planning. Has the Department finalised its guidelines for section 94 planning?
- Figure 11 – Dam safety upgrade required for the Winburndale dam.

Goal 3 – A region that protects and enhances its productive agricultural land, natural resources and heritage assets.

- Council generally supports the directions and actions under this goal.
- It is noted that directions and actions under this goal do not deal with public and private forestry assets.
- Figure 12 – It is very difficult to identify the strategic agricultural lands at this scale. Will this data be provided to councils? Is the mapping consistent with the Agricultural Land Study?
- Figure 15 – It is assumed this data is the same as the Minerals Audit received in April 2015 and currently being used by Council.

- Action 3.1.1: Consideration needs to be given as to how to protect regionally important agricultural lands from mining activities.
- Action 3.1.2: A review of SEPPs that allow incremental creep of urban uses (e.g. seniors housing) into rural areas needs urgent attention. Again no mention is made as to how to protect agricultural lands from mining activities.
- Action 3.1.3: An understanding of required buffer areas is required before they can be implemented.
- Action 3.2.1: Does not deal with the inherent conflict between protecting agricultural lands versus mining resources. Figure 15 identifies the potential for conflict between the two objectives. Direction 3.3 discusses this point but it would appear that regional level strategic agricultural lands may still come under threat regardless of the Strategic Release Framework – when does agriculture become more important than mining?
- Action 3.3.1: Agree with the statements made but some loss of land will be an unavoidable outcome particularly as the regional cities grow. There will always be a need for some compromise to ensure appropriate urban growth can still occur. Growth should not be locked out by encroachment but considered appropriately against a range of alternatives.
- Action 3.4.1: Figure 16 Water Governance – Council firmly maintains the continuation of local public ownership of water assets and governance of those assets, as is the case in the Bathurst Region.
- Direction 3.5, Figure 17 – The scale of this plan is not very enlightening. The figure does not include assets such as European heritage. Perhaps not required as LEP mapping is already available and comprehensive.
- Action 3.6.1: The landuse outcomes relate only to flooding not to other hazards such as bushfire lands, mine subsidence. Where will funding come from to update flood mapping?
- Action 3.6.2: Has the location of naturally occurring asbestos been mapped and given to councils? Is any additional research required?

Goal 4 – Strong communities and liveable places that cater for the region's changing population

- Council generally supports the directions and actions under this goal.
- Figure 18 – The Grainforce terminal is currently the only operational intermodal terminal. A DA for the Gateway Enterprise Park intermodal is yet to be received (should be shown as potential future). Bathurst Rail Intermodal has been approved but is currently not operating. The proposed neighbourhood business precinct at Eglinton is not shown. Council would prefer figure 18 to distinguish between the different types of business precincts so that an argument cannot be made that bulky goods locations are not any different to the CBD. Part of the urban release area at Warabindi to the north of the McDiarmid Street extension is a business release area. It would be appropriate to highlight the Mount Panorama precinct as a special area precinct particularly given Council's intention to pursue a second circuit/motor racing business park at the Mount.
- Suggest a revised hierarchy of centres that includes: regional cities, regional centres, towns (or regional to/major towns) and villages (or small towns/villages) – e.g. Cumnock and Hill End are

not the same as Cowra and Forbes. Or possibly drop “regional” and adopt a simple hierarchy of cities, centres, towns and villages.

- Action 4.1.3: Could include working with CENTROC to develop model consultation guidelines between councils and the aboriginal communities, particularly in relation to development activities. It would also be worthy to include an action to encourage the aboriginal communities to tell and share their stories within the region.
- Action 4.3.1: Council again highlights the frustrations it has experienced with the current Urban Release Area process in relation to State Infrastructure funding to support housing development. This process has and will continue to delay the release of new residential lands in the Bathurst Regional local government area.
- Action 4.3.2: Council remains frustrated with provisions within the Seniors Living SEPP that enables seniors housing on rural lands adjoining urban areas contrary to local land use strategies. This leads to land use conflicts, loss of agricultural lands and overall poor planning outcomes. There are sufficient residentially zoned lands to cater for such developments.
- Action 4.3.4: Current zoning arrangements should be reviewed for rural lifestyle housing. The Bathurst Region typically has two types of rural lifestyle housing: large lot residential, close to urban areas and fully serviced and the other is small lot rural that is not serviced and is generally close to the rural villages. The current R5 Large Lot Residential zone (the only zone available for rural lifestyle locations) implies an urban residential zoning of land which is not the case in un-serviced locations.

Appendix A

- Split the appendix into the two subregions.
- Add regional centres and main towns.
- Are population figures ERP or counts? – include in the table heading.
- Include a plan implementation checklist.
- Include a summary of planning principles/ checklist of planning principles to consider when preparing local plans.