

Submission to draft South East & Tablelands Regional Plan

Version 2 - August 2016



Civic Centre, Elizabeth St, Moss Vale, NSW 2577. PO Box 141, Moss Vale. **t. (02) 4868 0888** f. (02) 4869 1203
e. wscmail@wsc.nsw.gov.au DX 4961 Bowral ABN 49 546 344 354

www.wsc.nsw.gov.au

OVERVIEW – WINGECARRIBEE’S UNIQUE QUALITIES

Council appreciates that Wingecarribee Shire is recognised as a unique location within the South East and Tablelands Region. However, Council would prefer that the unique qualities of the Shire are acknowledged from the outset, embraced and positively considered within the draft Plan. In the draft Plan, Wingecarribee often appears as an ‘exception’ or ‘afterthought’. There appear to be more photographs of the Shire than actual references to it.

For example, managing growth opportunities deriving from the ACT is the focus of *Goal 1*, but the fact that much of Wingecarribee’s potential growth derives from Sydney is not mentioned or discussed until page 40, over half way through the draft Plan. Wingecarribee Shire does not really seem to enter the conversation at all until *Direction 2.4 (protect and secure the region’s water resources, page 34)* where confidence is expressed in the Shire’s water security, a confidence many residents in the Shire actually do not share due to ongoing uncertainty surrounding future mining potential. In fact, the most positive references to Wingecarribee Shire appear to surround its coal resources. More consideration of mining is included later in this submission.

The importance of the Shire to Sydney is further emphasised in the fact that Wingecarribee is included in the ‘Sydney Surrounds’ tourism promotion.

Where there are references in the draft Plan to state or federal strategies, policies or initiatives, Council recommends that the Plan actually articulate how the Region could contribute to those Policies and Strategies.

It is also noted that *Direction 3.4 (grow regional strategic assets to support economic growth across the region, page 57)*, focusses on existing infrastructure such as the Eden breakwater wharf and Canberra Airport. Council considers that a Regional Plan providing a 20 year blueprint should include the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment as a regional asset, as valuable and as much in need of management, as any wharf or airport.

Furthermore, Council believes the draft Plan should also encourage the identification and development of new regional asset opportunities which can assist in the growth of the region, as well as those already in existence. Wingecarribee Shire is exploring many new initiatives which could deliver benefits to the whole region, largely focussed on tourism and environmental sustainability and would welcome the recognition of such opportunities and initiatives in the Regional Plan.

More detailed discussion of these and other considerations follows.

GOAL 1 – SUSTAINABLY MANAGE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE ACT

The one key difference between Wingecarribee Shire and the other local government areas within the region is the fact that Canberra and the ACT are largely replaced by Sydney as a primary driver for growth and change. This difference is acknowledged in the draft Plan, but not until page 40. Council would prefer that this difference was more clearly

and positively enunciated in the Introduction rather than waiting until Goal 3. Alternatively, Goal 1 could be expanded to consider both growth opportunities deriving from Sydney as well as the ACT. Wingecarribee would not be the only local area that would be affected by Sydney drivers, both positive and negative and nor does such a relationship mean that the ACT plays no role in influencing Wingecarribee's future. The growth of Canberra Airport will enable even more overseas and interstate visitors to visit the Shire, in line with Council's tourism development strategies.

GOAL 2 – PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE REGION'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

As the introduction to this Goal states, the South East and Tablelands region is one of the most biologically diverse in the State, containing over 100 threatened plant species, 112 threatened animal species and 13 endangered ecological communities. Over 56% of the region has high environmental value or forms part of a national park or state forest. (page 23)

Wingecarribee Shire is acutely aware of the environmental sensitivity of the region. Some 45% of the Shire forms part of a national park or state forest, totalling an area of some 117,500 hectares. An additional 100,000 hectares is zoned E3 Environmental Management.

Council considers that the importance of protecting the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment should feature much earlier in the draft Plan. Because virtually all of the Shire, in conjunction with a significant portion of Goulburn Mulwaree and Upper Lachlan, is located within the Catchment, its protection is an impost on all residents and all development through the NorBE (Neutral or Beneficial Effect) requirements. As stated previously, Council considers the Catchment's contribution, not only to sustaining the population of the Greater Sydney Area, but also to agriculture, industry and development, warrants mentioning in the same context as Canberra airport and Eden port.

With particular regard to certain Directions and Actions associated with Goal 2, Council offers the following comments and recommendations.

DIRECTION 2.1 Protect the region's diverse environmental values

ACTION 2.1.1 - Avoid, minimise and offset the impact of development on significant environmental assets

- **Council comment:** The identification and mapping of High Environmental Value land within the Wingecarribee Shire will be undertaken in late 2016 / early 2017 by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and Council under the "Green Web" strategy.

ACTION 2.1.2 - Protect the region's biodiversity corridors in local planning controls

- **Council comment:** The identification and mapping of corridors between High Environmental Value land within the Wingecarribee Shire will be undertaken in late 2016 / early 2017 by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and Council under the "Green Web" strategy.

- **Council comment:** Council is concerned that there may be inherent conflicts between the goals and directions of the Regional Plan and the proposed amendments to Biodiversity legislation. Council's Biodiversity submission is available on request.

ACTION 2.1.3 - Prepare a comprehensive koala plan of management for the Cooma-Monaro Local Government Area

- **Council comment:** It is recommended that the NSW Government support Wingecarribee Shire Council to develop and implement a Koala Plan of Management.

Like the Cooma-Monaro Local Government Area, Wingecarribee Shire has been working closely with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage since 2014 to develop and implement the Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project - (<http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/services/environment/environment-levy/koalas>).

This project has identified that the Wingecarribee Shire population is one of the least known and understood populations in NSW. In the last 12 months, work has focussed on data collection including satellite tracking of 18 koalas and habitat and occupancy surveys across the Shire with an investment in excess of over \$100,000.

Work is currently underway on integrating the survey and tracking data into the new Native Vegetation Map for Wingecarribee Shire, which is due for completion in August / September 2016. This work will drive the identification of koala habitat across the Shire and location of important corridor connections, and will be integrated into the Green Web strategy as key habitat for this threatened species.

Following the completion of Green Web, Council seek to have prepared a Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for the Shire and will, like Cooma-Monaro, be seeking NSW Government support in this process. Council would appreciate recognition of its koala population in the Regional Plan.

Apart from the environmental benefits of a sustainable koala population are the additional social and economic benefits as both residents and visitors are attracted by these animals. The Koala Hospital in Sydney attracts some 100,000 visitors a year.

DIRECTION 2.3 Build the region's resilience to natural hazards and climate change

ACTION 2.3.2: - Build on regional understanding of projected climate impacts and implement opportunities to respond

- **Council comment:** It is recommended that the NSW Government facilitate the extension of the South East Integrated Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Enabling Adaptation in the South East (EASE) project into

Wingecarribee Shire to provide a consistent, regional decision making framework for climate change adaptation.

Wingecarribee Shire Council was the only Local Government Area within the region not invited to participate in the EASE project and, as a result, there has been no identification or prioritisation of actions arising from these projects for the Wingecarribee Shire. Council received some feedback from OEH on this omission in May 2014 advising that OEH 'looked forward to liaising with Council in the future when OEH addresses the Southern Highlands, however there has been no communication received since. This is another example of how Wingecarribee seems to be an afterthought within the region, an attitude which Council considers unacceptable.

ACTION 2.4.2 - Prepare integrated water cycle management strategies

- **Council comment:** It is not clear exactly what type of “support” the NSW Government will provide to Councils who act as the “local water utility” so that they can undertake the preparation of an integrated water cycle management strategy as outlined in the draft Plan. Council currently does not have the resources to undertake such a study.

GOAL 3 – STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF THE REGION

Council notes the focus in the draft Plan on the six priority growth sectors of:

- Tourism
- Health, disability and aged care
- Public administration and defence
- Education and training
- Primary industries and renewable energy
- Freight and logistics

Of these, all but Public Administration and Defence are already well represented within the Shire as employment generators. In addition to these, IT and less traditional forms of primary industry are fast emerging as key growth sectors for the Shire and are directly relevant to Council's initiatives to offset expected job losses from more traditional employment sectors which are gradually being modified or replaced through new technology.

What particularly concerns Council is the way in which potential conflicts are to be managed, especially those involving mining.

DIRECTION 3.1 Support and promote the growth of the tourism industry

Council supports this Direction. Tourism generates over 2,500 jobs across the Shire, generating \$250 million for the local economy. Tourism is, therefore, a well established

and key economic generator within the Shire. The Shire's natural and agricultural environments and heritage provide the foundation for this strong economic base.

The recently adopted Wingecarribee Local Planning Strategy 2015-2031 explores options to promote the tourist potential of these resources while also protecting them through long term sustainable policies and practices. These are discussed further in the submission and suggested Directions and Actions to reinforce their value within the region are offered. Council welcomes any support the state government can offer to improve tourism related transport services in order to complement Council's efforts in this regard, especially as the Shire moves towards increasing the rate of overseas visitors. (Action 3.1.1).

DIRECTION 3.2 Enhance the productivity of primary industries

Council supports this Direction. Privately owned environmental zoned land, most of which supports some form of agriculture, represents some 25% of all land within the Shire, which together with rural zoned land represents almost 40% of Wingecarribee Shire. The Shire is ideally located for agricultural business in terms of transport routes to markets in Sydney, Wollongong and Canberra, as fresh produce can easily be moved to all three locations. This in turn provides opportunities for expansion into international markets. Increasingly, markets are emerging locally as visitors take advantage of local produce while visiting the area.

Increasingly, new agricultural activities are being developed within the Shire including crops such as grapes, olives, lavender and other plants for the cut flower industry and for the production of food and drink products. Livestock farming is expanding from dairy and beef cattle into alpacas and goats and equine based activities are also expanding. These industries reinforce the relationship between agriculture and tourism previously discussed.

The Shire is identified as a peri-urban area. Peri-urban areas are largely defined as the areas that surround our metropolitan cities - neither urban nor rural in the conventional sense. Peri-urban areas are often contested spaces, largely regarded as being in transition. They are areas with a wide range of uses. They may form water catchments or provide large areas of land for forestry. They offer valuable farmland and they also provide a valuable resource for recreation and tourism.

For residents they offer a unique environment and lifestyle which is becoming increasingly attractive, especially if transport and internet facilities enable them to remain connected to source of employment. However, they are also often most vulnerable to bushfire and loss of biodiversity and vegetation and their rapid residential growth leads to burgeoning demands on health, transport and education services.

Sydney's peri-urban areas are currently undergoing dramatic change. A sound strategic approach is required to manage these areas to ensure that their inherent rural values are not overlooked in the discussion of how to meet population and housing demand across the Region. Council considers that one of its primary roles is to protect and enhance the significant qualities which make the Shire so important to residents and tourists alike, balancing competing and potentially conflicting drivers for change, seeking to act at all times for the greater good.

The University of Technology Sydney's (UTS) Food Futures mapping project identifies Wingecarribee as the potential food bowl for Sydney. Council initiatives to develop Food Security, and other related economic drivers should be recognised in the draft Plan.

- In the meantime, Council welcomes the state government's initiatives in mapping regionally important agricultural lands to inform local planning decisions. This mapping, in conjunction with the mapping of high value environmental value lands, should do much to highlight potential land use conflicts and encourage a 'whole-of-government' response (page 48). Council recommends that the final mapping of regionally important agricultural lands provide the ability to generate a set of layers which includes at least land use, zoning, slope, soil, watercourses, aquifers and bores.

DIRECTION 3.3 Support the productivity and capacity of the region's mineral and energy resource lands

Council is confident that it can manage the balance between the agricultural and residential uses of rural land, however of more concern is the management of rural land with regard to the potential demands of agriculture and extractive industries. Council is more concerned regarding potential conflicts arising from coal mining. The draft Plan notes that conflicts are most likely to occur where development of mineral and energy resources coincides with:

- water resources;
- environmental values;
- land that currently, or may in future accommodate agricultural activities; and
- land that may in future accommodate urban activities." (p47)

It is acknowledged that there is a responsibility at both the state and federal level to protect the nation's natural resources, especially mineral resources and in this context it is acknowledged that all of the Regional Plans contain the same section on mining. However, the statement that "*Coal resources are concentrated in the Wingecarribee Local Government Area.*" (page 46) emphasises that this burden, within the region, falls heavily on Wingecarribee's shoulders. What particularly concerns Council regarding this fact is that Action 3.3.5 "*Implement a robust assessment process to consider social, economic and environmental implications of mining activities and manage these throughout the life of the project.*"(p57) treats coal mining as the highest priority and a forgone conclusion. There is no consideration that the robust assessment might actually determine that coal mining is not environmentally, socially or even economically viable when the benefits are compared with the costs.

Where conflicts are considered it is to facilitate their management throughout the duration of mining activities, rather than to question the viability, or otherwise, of that activity in the first place. Council is of the view that the nation should be as concerned about Water Security, Food Security and Biosecurity through protecting its water and food supplies and its natural and agricultural lands, as it is concerned about its mineral resources.

It is noted that the discussion of land use conflicts occurs in various sections of the draft Plan. For example, Action 3.2.1 recognises that the identification of regionally important agricultural land can highlight areas with potential for land use conflicts, such as the expansion of rural residential uses. Action 3.2.2 references biosecurity risks. Coal mining risks are referenced in Direction 3.3 and in the listing of the NSW Government's policies and legislative tools with a more expansive consideration on page 47. Council considers there may be merit in grouping these disparate conversations into a stronger, stand-alone section which really comes to terms with the nature of these conflicts and how they can be addressed.

The development of a cost-benefit model which provides a qualitative as well as quantitative assessment of the full economic life of a project, not just mining, would enable economic justification, environmental sustainability and social amenity to be measured and accounted for.

The application of such a model to the merits and consequences of mining coal which is principally coking coal, not thermal coal, might do much to highlight the inherent conflicts which must be compared and measured. As stated previously, Council considers that one of its primary roles is to protect and enhance the significant qualities which make the Shire so important to residents, businesses and visitors, balancing competing and potentially conflicting drivers for change, seeking to act at all times for the greater good. Therefore, it is essential to assess all potential impacts, environmental, social and economic.

Above ground coal 'stock piles' provide one example of potential environmental, social and economic damage. Regardless of the height of any stock pile it can be expected that those same winds which make the region so ideally suited for wind power (page 7), also have the capacity to carry coal dust into neighbouring natural areas, agricultural lands and communities. Preliminary assessments indicate that coal dust from the proposed Hume Coal mine stock pile could impact the enterprise corridor to the north west of Moss Vale, development in New Berrima and Boral, and residential development from Moss Vale north to Burradoo and Bowral.

The difficulty in assessing potential impacts is that so often qualifiers are used to describe impacts. Rarely is an impact totally avoided, but rather 'avoided as far as possible', or 'minimised'. For example, Hume Coal intends to transport coal in covered rail wagons, using new technology, to 'reduce' dust emissions during transportation. Surface infrastructure is proposed to be developed on sites that are 'relatively free' from environmental and other constraints, set back from sensitive receptors 'where possible', to 'minimise' the potential for visual, noise, dust and amenity impacts. (Hume Coal PEA, p6)

The resultant mine infrastructure design is also stated to avoid 'most' threatened fauna habitat, endangered tree species and Aboriginal heritage sites. Although it completely avoids State-listed heritage items and direct impacts to locally-listed heritage items, it may still 'indirectly' impact on locally-listed items, of which there are many in the Berrima village and surrounds. (PEA, p43).

Council is concerned at the level of qualification (reduce, minimise, relatively free) contained in these statements. It is understood that a more complete Environmental

Impact Statement has yet to be placed on exhibition and perhaps it will address these concerns.

Social and Economic conflicts

Council acknowledges that coal mining is an economic generator. However, as stated earlier, tourism is one of the key economic drivers for Wingecarribee Shire, one that can be measured. Council subscribes to the old adage that “if you can’t measure it you can’t assess it and you can’t manage it.” Tourism currently provides some 2,500 jobs across the Shire and generates an estimated \$250 million each year, 10% of the entire Wingecarribee economy. Council’s Economic Development Strategy plans to generate an estimated 8,500 jobs over the next 15 years, 3,000 of them in the food and wine sector alone.

The potential conflicts associated with coal mining could severely impact on this Strategy affecting both agricultural lands and their products as well as the general ambience of the Shire which visitors find so attractive.

Council considers that a far more sustainable and acceptable approach would be to focus on the economic opportunities associated with renewable energies and developing technologies. Council recommends that Renewable Energy be given far greater prominence in the Regional Plan. At the moment it is limited to Action 3.3.1 (Implement the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan to increase renewable energy generation), but Figure 5 which is referred to under that Action, does not appear to identify any renewable energy opportunities in Wingecarribee.

DIRECTION 3.4 Grow regional assets to support economic growth across the region

Council supports this Direction but considers that limiting its scope to the two existing infrastructure items within the region is neither far sighted nor fair. It is noted that the Federal Government expects Australia to lose 40% of its current jobs by 2031 due to advances in technology. This equates to 8,000 jobs lost across the region. The initiatives identified in Wingecarribee’s Economic Development Framework could generate an estimated 8,500 sustainable jobs during the same period. This does not include coal mining. Further details are available at www.southernhighlandsdevelopment.com.

Virtually all of Wingecarribee Shire comprises part of the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment and also contributes to the Shoalhaven Catchment. Council believes the region’s water resources as valuable a regional asset, and as much in need of management, as those already recognised.

In view of the environmental concerns surrounding coal mining expressed previously in this submission, Council does not share the Plan’s optimism for the region’s water security. Research indicates that water loss through evaporation from the Shoalhaven Catchment together with increased demand from Sydney will create a 35% decline in water by 2031. Council is concerned that aquifers are not well documented, nor interactions between them well understood. Council also believes the many bores require better documentation and management.

Therefore, Council considers that the inclusion of the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment within this Goal is not only relevant but also highly prudent.

Council strongly believes that Food Security should also be addressed in the Plan in the same way as Water Security and Biosecurity and that Food Futures be included as a regional asset. The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) has undertaken 'food futures' mapping (www.sydneyfoodfutures.net) which strongly indicates that Wingecarribee Shire is set to become the 'food bowl' for Sydney. This is a potential 'asset' with the ability to generate significant economic, social and environmental benefits to the whole region, not just Wingecarribee and this should be reflected in the Plan.

GOAL 4 – BUILD COMMUNITIES THAT ARE STRONG, HEALTHY AND WELL-CONNECTED

Council's adopted Wingecarribee Local Planning Strategy 2015-2031 places high priority on actions to meet this Goal and these actions reflect the Directions and Actions contained in this section of the draft Plan.

Direction 4.1 Provide sufficient housing to suit the changing demands of the region.

Council is actively seeking ways to encourage the increased provision of housing particularly suited to older residents as well as for residents needing assistance to enter the housing market.

Of particular concern to Council is how to encourage housing providers to identify and provide for the needs of all population groups, and to do so in a sustainable manner in terms of affordability, 'operating' costs and ageing in place strategies. Council is pleased to see that a whole of government approach is being applied to consideration of these issues and awaits outcomes and recommendations. (p63)

Council's recently adopted Local Planning Strategy places strong emphasis on all elements of Goal 4 and Council supports these initiatives in the Regional Plan. The following recommendation in the Local Strategy adopted by Council specifically addresses this concern:

Encourage the development of housing choice across the Shire through the re-establishment of the Demographic and Housing Working Group comprising representatives from Council, housing providers, service providers, estate agents and various population age groups within the community to investigate how to increase demand for different forms of housing and how to meet that demand, with particular reference to multi dwelling housing and residential flat buildings.

Council is aware of the potential problems associated with rural residential development. The planned review of WLEP2010 this year will specifically address the location and extent of the RU4 and E4 zones. The following recommendation in the Local Strategy adopted by Council specifically addresses this concern:

Defer, for a period of two (2) years, any submissions to rezone or reduce the minimum lot size for residential purposes, of any environmental or rural zoned land outside the current town and village boundaries.

Direction 4.2 Plan for facilities, including health and education, to service the region's growing and changing population

Of particular interest are two Directions which specifically address infrastructure which is largely state provided, 4.2 (Health and Education) and 4.5 (Transport).

With regard to Health, Council has particular concerns regarding how health services are provided within Wingecarribee. The Shire does not seem to neatly fit into any NSW Health delivery model, resulting in inefficiencies and missed opportunities. Increasingly, Council is concerned about the Shire's inability to provide adequate mental and physical health services. This situation extends to the provision of affordable housing. Where improvements are proposed, such as upgrades to Bowral Hospital and to Bowral Public School, and the construction of a new Regional Police premises at Moss Vale, they are not included in the draft Plan. Council recommends that the Bowral Hospital and Public School upgrades at least be recognised in the Plan and that an Action be included under Direction 4.2 to identify improved means of delivering all forms of health services into Wingecarribee Shire.

Similarly, an Action could be included under Direction 4.2 to identify improved means of utilising the TAFE land in Moss Vale. Council considers this resource to be greatly underutilised. This tertiary education complex in Kirkham Street comprises the Illawarra TAFE and University of Wollongong. The Shire specifically and the region generally would benefit from a strategic plan of management for these facilities which ensured that they are developed into relevant and dynamic regional assets. The provision of courses which particularly aligned with emerging employment sectors would be most advantageous. Also, offering secondary students the opportunity to complete first year university courses or bridging courses could delay the need to leave the Shire to pursue tertiary education.

With regard to transport, Council suggests that the High Speed Rail at least be discussed in the Plan even if only in general terms. Council appreciates this is a dynamic matter, but there is a lot of uncertainty surrounding it at the moment and some discussion in the Regional Plan would be helpful.

Council suggests that there should also be some acknowledgement of the need for electric vehicle infrastructure (charging facilities), particularly along the Sydney to Canberra corridor. It is considered that this is a missing gap, which once filled, will open up new, environmentally sustainable, transport options and economic opportunities for the entire Region.

Direction 4.3 Strengthen the commercial function of the region's centres

Table 2 (p66) identifies Bowral as the dominant town in the Shire, designating it as a Regional Centre. However, this situation is rapidly changing. Bowral's future expansion is significantly constrained by geographical boundaries. Infill development potential is similarly limited by conservation issues.

By comparison, both Mittagong and Moss Vale already have more business zoned land than Bowral with capacity for more. Council is currently considering an application for a Woolworths store in Moss Vale, taking the number of supermarkets to three, as has Bowral. Mittagong has developed as the large-footprint retail area for the Shire (7.45ha of Business zoned land, compared with 4.56ha for Moss Vale and 2.09ha for Bowral. Moss Vale has developed as the principal civic centre containing the Council offices, TAFE and a campus of the University of Wollongong and Indoor Aquatic Centre with a new Police Station about to be built.

Supporting this structure, the residential area of Moss Vale will be larger than Bowral with several urban release areas adjacent to the town under development or being considered. Also, both Mittagong and Moss Vale have more opportunity for medium density development, reflected in WLEP2010.

It is noted that this unique settlement pattern originates from the fact that Wingecarribee Shire was formed by the amalgamation of three local government areas, each with its own urban centre, and requires a unique interpretation, one in which each town's individual contribution is recognised and supported.

It is recommended therefore that the term 'Wingecarribee Regional Centre' (representing the three towns of Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale) replace Bowral on page 66.

The South East and Tablelands Region is bounded by Metropolitan Sydney and the Central West and Orana Region to the north, the Riverina-Murray Region to the west and the Illawarra Shoalhaven Region to the east. Matters dealt with in each of the Regional Plans obviously cross regional boundaries, therefore synergies and consideration of adjoining drivers of change and proposed actions are required. Council recommends that the draft Plan contain a statement identifying the linkages between this Region and others across NSW.

The draft Plan does note that Sydney is a key driver of change, specifically with regard to demand for housing, the protection of the Drinking Water Catchment and the continuation of wildlife and ecological corridors.

Moss Vale Enterprise Corridor

The Moss Vale Enterprise Corridor is an area of some 630 hectares of land located between Moss Vale and Berrima with links to highways and rail transport. The Corridor offers a complementary solution to the greater Sydney logistics strategy. The rail link (Unanderra Line) between Port Kembla and Moss Vale is an important existing transport corridor with spare capacity. The Corridor is strategically situated to utilise both the spare capacity of the Unanderra line and the connection with the Main Melbourne-Sydney rail line. The convenient location of the Corridor to the Hume Highway further enhances this

major transport interchange providing the opportunity to establish an 'Inland Port' to complement existing freight strategies to facilitate distribution out of Port Kembla.

In addition to these opportunities, Council is also developing a strategy for the future development of the Corridor to promote it to "best practice" organisations, wherever they are in the world, that are seeking to relocate their innovation teams and/or head offices. An existing example is the world-renowned Garvan Institute which has had a research centre in the Corridor for several years.

Council's strategic objective is to have 3 world-leading organisations relocate to the Southern Highlands by 2031 working in each of the key sectors identified by Council. Council estimates an average of 50 new full-time sustainable jobs per company, i.e. a total of 1500 new positions.

Hallmarks of the intended promotional strategy include:

- Promotion on a 'targeted' basis rather than a "scatter gun" approach.
- Connecting with the 'Southern Highlands Lifestyle' as well as business related comparative advantages.
- Highlighting the alignment between the prospective tenants in the Corridor and at least one Sector in the Economic Development Framework.
- Connecting with and engaging local people who are passionate about the same issues/sectors as each prospective new tenant.

To maximise these opportunities, Council intends to:

- **Consider renaming the Moss Vale Enterprise Corridor.** At this time Council is considering Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP). The name aligns with our overall Economic Development strategy and our regional identity.
- **Service the SHIP with a very high speed Internet capability (1Gbit+ capable).** It is essential to provide the standard on internet infrastructure such business expect.
- **Establish a 'Concierge' service able to provide related advice/support to decision makers considering relocation** (e.g. schools, housing, social activities, etc).

Council recommends that such initiatives be incorporated in the Regional Plan.

Direction 4.4 Build social inclusive, safe and healthy communities.

Council is currently in discussion with the Department of Planning and Environment regarding the Urban Release Area known as Chelsea Gardens/Coomungie. Of particular concern to Council is that, although the land is a designated Urban Release Area, Council does not believe that it is necessary to rezone the land at this time due to its assessment that there is more than sufficient zoned land available to meet projected housing demand to beyond 2031.

The Regional Plan would be the appropriate location for a Regional Urban Release Plan which provided a framework of planning for a staged release of new urban land

opportunities intended to provide sustainable communities and urban environments across the region. Urban Release Plans would be aligned with Council's water, sewer and transport servicing programmes and the state government's health, education and transport programmes.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN

It is noted that Actions within the Regional Plan will be implemented through Ministerial Directions under section 117 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, whole-of-government policy alignment and regional collaboration.

It is also noted that a Coordination and Monitoring Committee will be established to oversee the implementation of the Regional Plan and that Regional Joint Organisations will provide the only opportunity for ongoing involvement at the local level.

Council supports, in principle, the JO model outlined in the Office of Local Government Background paper, in particular the core functions of strategic planning and priority setting, inter-governmental collaboration and regional leadership and advocacy. Council has made a submission to the Background Paper recognising the benefits of active participation in the Canberra JO, while noting and wanting to continue previous and ongoing regional alliances.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are contained in this submission. It is recommended THAT:

- Where there are references in the draft Plan to state or federal strategies, policies or initiatives, the Plan articulate how the Region could contribute to them. (Page 2)
- Amend Goal 1 to include Wingecarribee Shire by reference to Sydney drivers as well as the ACT. (Page 3)
- Expand the list of Regional Assets to include the Sydney Water Catchment (Page 4)
- The NSW Government support Wingecarribee Shire Council to develop and implement a Koala Plan of Management. (Page 4)
- The NSW Government facilitate the extension of the South East Integrated Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Enabling Adaptation in the South East (EASE) project into Wingecarribee Shire to provide a consistent, regional decision making framework for climate change adaptation. (Page 5)
- Food Security be recognised as a future Regional Asset (Page 7)

- Final mapping of regionally important agricultural lands provide the ability to generate a set of layers which includes at least land use, zoning, slope, soil, watercourses, aquifers and bores. (Page 7)
- The 'robust assessment' of mining include the option of not mining. (Page 7)
- The current dispersed discussion of conflicts throughout the draft Plan be consolidated into one stronger, stand-alone section which really comes to terms with the nature of these conflicts and how they can be addressed. (Page 8)
- Renewable Energy be given far greater prominence in the Regional Plan. (Page 9)
- The Bowral Hospital upgrade be recognised in the Plan and that an Action be included under Direction 4.2 to identify improved means of delivering all forms of health services into Wingecarribee Shire. (Page 11)
- The Bowral Public School upgrade be recognised in the Plan. (Page 11)
- An Action be included under Direction 4.2 to identify improved means of utilising the TAFE land in Moss Vale. (Page 11)
- The term 'Wingecarribee Regional Centre' (representing the three towns of Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale) replace Bowral on page 66. (page 12)
- The draft Plan contain a statement identifying the linkages between this Region and others across NSW. (Page 13)
- Goals and Directions which reflect Council's initiatives for the Moss Vale Enterprise Corridor be included in the Regional Plan. (Page 13)
- Urban Release Plans be included in the Regional Plan. (Page 13)

Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft Regional Plan. Further information may be obtained from Susan Stannard, Acting Coordinator Strategic Planning, by email to susan.stannard@wsc.nsw.gov.au or by telephone on 02 4868 0854, who is available to assist with the drafting of Goals and Directions as recommended.