



22 February 2018

Ms Monica Gibson, Director - Hunter  
Region  
Department of Planning and Environment  
PO Box 1226  
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

Contact: Martin Johnson  
Our Ref: DOC2018/005838  
Your Ref:

Dear Ms Gibson

**Cessnock City Council Submission on the Draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan. Council is generally supportive of the Plan; however it considers that additional aspects could be included to further promote the opportunities that are available in the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA).

Council supports the following key elements of the Plan:

- The recognition of the significant contribution that tourism and viticulture make to the Cessnock LGA and the Greater Newcastle area and the support of these industries.
- The improved connection of Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and the city core.

Council considers that there are aspects of the Draft Plan that could be further expanded to highlight the potential for areas in the Cessnock LGA to contribute to growth in the Greater Newcastle area. Commercial centres such as Kurri Kurri and Cessnock are identified as 'Strategic Centres' in the Hunter Regional Plan and have a significant potential to contribute to employment growth in the Greater Newcastle region. The role that these two centres can play should be further highlighted in the Draft Plan. In addition, areas such as Huntlee and Bellbird North should be included as priority housing areas for the Greater Newcastle region.

Appendix 1 provides detailed comments and suggested actions that you may consider in the finalisation of this document.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Council's Strategic Planning Manager, Martin Johnson on telephone 02 4993 4229.

Yours faithfully

Gareth Curtis  
Director Planning and Environment

## **Appendix 1: Comments raised by Cessnock City Council**

<b>General Comments</b>	<b>Suggested action</b>	<b>Document Reference</b>
The plan has a strong focus on Newcastle City. Council acknowledges a strong city centre is essential for the overall development of the region. However, this focus in the draft plan does not effectively recognise the contribution that the areas beyond Newcastle such as Cessnock and Kurri Kurri provide.	The role of strategic centres such as Kurri Kurri and Cessnock should be highlighted in the document, possibly where the catalyst areas are listed. Consider nomenclature such as 'economic activation precinct' to recognise their future role in strengthening the metropolitan area.	Whole Draft Plan
There are a large number of actions in the strategy that Councils are required to undertake. Council understands some of these actions can be picked up in existing projects however additional support may be needed.	Council would appreciate clarification on what support will be considered for Council to implement actions of the Plan.	Whole Draft Plan
<b>Outcome 1 - Create a workforce skilled and ready for the new economy</b>		
<b>General Comments</b>	<b>Suggested action</b>	<b>Document Reference</b>
This outcome highlights the existing economic strengths of Greater Newcastle e.g. Defence, health, tourism, viticulture. Other important industries such as mining and agriculture should be included.	Amend the figure on page 23 to include mining and agriculture.	23
Strategy 1.5 'Expand education and innovation clusters' contains a target to have four universities in the Greater Newcastle region by 2036. At least one of these should be located outside Newcastle LGA, preferably within the Cessnock LGA to ensure improved access to education for the Cessnock LGA and broader Hunter Region. Demographic analysis identified in the Census indicates educational attainment levels continue to increase in the Cessnock LGA. This is the case for secondary education levels and tertiary qualifications. Demand for access to tertiary education will also increase with the changing demographic, which will support establishment of tertiary institutions in strategic centres such as Cessnock or Kurri Kurri or accessible areas nearby those centres. Cessnock City Council would welcome and support as far as practicable the establishment of tertiary facilities in the LGA and would work with partner agencies to facilitate such an outcome.	Ensure the prospectus that is developed to market the Greater Newcastle region to Universities includes the benefits of the areas outside of the Newcastle LGA, including Cessnock City LGA.	30

Strategy 1.6 'Respond to the changing land use needs of the new economy' is very much related to technological advances. It is important to ensure that core rural industries are also protected as this industry is a significant employer.	Consider and action to include protection of core rural industries (e.g. viticulture and agriculture) from encroaching urban development, tourism infrastructure and events..	32
Strategy 1.7 'Attract major events and sporting teams and increase tourism opportunities' contains an action for councils to align local plans to: 'increase flexibility for new tourism proposals (buildings, spaces and activities) within strategic centres and rural and environmental areas that do not affect the environmental features or natural amenity.' Agricultural land should be added to the qualification to protect rural activities.	Add the protection of agricultural land to the action.	34
<b>Outcome 2- Enhance Environment, amenity and resilience for quality of life</b>		
<b>General Comments</b>	<b>Suggested action</b>	<b>Document Reference</b>
The concept of "Blue and Green Grid" first appears on page 15 but is not defined until page 43. Given this is planning <i>jargon</i> it would benefit from being defined on the page or with a reference to the glossary.	Define blue and green grid on the page or reference the glossary and provide an explanation of its application in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.	Page 15
In the draft plan "Blue and Green Grid" is being uniquely applied to a subregional scale rather than the city scale. As there are significant biodiversity corridors and other environmental assets within the subregion (refer figure 1), the definition of the "Blue and Green Grid" should be amended to acknowledge these.  The existing explanation is: <i>"Greater Newcastle's Blue and Green Grid is the network of open spaces and waterways that include urban parks, bushland, farms, waterways, drinking water catchments, lakes and beaches intersecting with Newcastle City Centre, the city core, and arc of lifestyle centres."</i>	Amend the explanation of the "Blue and Green Grid" to include: National Parks, biodiversity corridors and environmental assets as recognised in figure 1 of the draft plan.	Page 15, page 43, glossary
Additional Parks in the Cessnock LGA could be included as Metropolitan Sport Facilities, including: - Baddeley Park: This Park is a significant sporting facility used by residents from across the metropolitan area. It has previously hosted sporting teams such as the Newcastle Jets and the Wallabies.	Include Baddeley Park, Kurri Kurri Park and Miller Park as Metropolitan Sport Facility in Figure 6: Blue and Green Grid	42

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Miller Park in Branxton: This Park is a significant sporting facility used by residents from across the metropolitan area. Sporting finales are frequently held here along with significant cricket events and increasing interest from regional cricketing associations as a regional base.</li> <li>- Kurri Kurri Park: This Park is a significant sporting facility used by residents from across the metropolitan area.</li> </ul>		
Strategy 2.4 'Protect rural amenity outside urban areas' is supported as it provides strategic support for protecting and enhancing rural amenity and rural industries. This direction could be enhanced by providing an action to manage dwelling numbers in rural areas.	An additional action could be included to manage the number of dwellings in rural areas.	44
The role that land use planning has in creating healthy and active lifestyles should be further emphasised in the document. Page 38 acknowledges the role that built environment has in creating healthy environment but the impact it has on improving the community's health should also be included.	Include actions to create healthy and active lifestyles	37-45
<b>Outcome 3 – Deliver Housing close to jobs and services</b>		
<b>General Comments</b>	<b>Suggested action</b>	<b>Document Reference</b>
The terms affordable and social housing should be separated. Both housing types are targeted at different housing markets and are often confused. Affordable and social housing should be highlighted in the plan with separate targets or goals for each housing market.	Affordable housing and social housing should be separately defined. Improving affordable rental housing should be added as a goal for the Plan.	47
Affordable living should be discussed in the plan in addition to affordable housing. This initiative promotes housing in areas that minimises living expenses such as travel costs and in a manner that reduces energy costs etc.	Please consider adding affordable living to the goals of the plan.	47
Huntlee and Bellbird North should be considered as priority housing areas. Development of these areas is more advanced than in some other areas shown in Figure 8. These two sites are already zoned for residential development and either have dwellings under construction or Development Applications lodged. Both areas are contributing	Amend figure 8 and the associated text to include Bellbird North and Huntlee as a priority housing release areas.	55

<p>strongly to the ongoing growth of Cessnock LGA into the future and the Metropolitan area as a whole.</p> <p>Cessnock LGA exceeded the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 dwelling projection target of 318 dwellings annually by 44% for 2016/17.</p> <p>The number of dwellings approved have continued to rise according to data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). In Cessnock City LGA there were 225 residential buildings approved to be built in the financial year 2017/18 November FYTD. This represents a figure of 70% above the YTD target.</p> <p>Cessnock LGA also has increased its share of the total NSW residential dwelling development value for three years running from 0.37% in 2015/16, 0.89% in 2016/17 and as at November YTD the value is 1.23% of the NSW total. The data shows significant trends and would support that the growth areas in Cessnock LGA should be recognised as priority housing areas in the plan (Source:ABS)</p>		
<p>The strategy focuses on providing housing within strategic centres and priority housing release areas. In addition, it supports development outside these locations if it supports the enhancement of local centres, improves public transport viability and is focussed in areas supported by enabling infrastructure, such as roads, sewer, etc.</p>	<p>The plan would benefit from tightening the criteria for considering development outside of strategic centres and priority housing release areas. In many areas it would be easy to justify development and it may lead to incremental sprawl of existing and planned release areas. More efficient use of infrastructure (roads, sewer etc) would be better achieved by promoting consolidation within existing centres and redeveloping existing residential sites to achieve greater density.</p>	48
<p>The plan contains an action that DoPE and Councils will identify future growth areas every five years as part of the review and update of this plan or as required to meet demand. It may be more appropriate to apply a supply threshold to this – i.e. 10-15 years supply, rather than commit to identifying future growth areas on a 5-yearly basis. Strategy 3.1 starts by stating: “There is enough land zoned in Greater Newcastle to cater for the expected housing and employment needs of more than 1.2 million people.”</p>	<p>Consider removing the commitment to identify new urban growth areas every 5 years and adopt a land supply threshold.</p>	49



<p>The commitment to identify additional urban growth areas obligates the plan to deliver continued urban sprawl rather than the consolidation and densification of existing urban centres.</p>	<p>Please consider emphasising the role of urban consolidation to meet future housing demands of the region.</p>	<p>49</p>
<p>The term; "Productive rural land" on page 57 would benefit from further explanation. It should recognise not only the good quality, agricultural land but also the land that supports it such as that land for infrastructure (sheds, yards etc) and for flood refuge of livestock and equipment during flood events. There is also rural land with production value that is not "soil based" such as poultry sheds that should be acknowledged. It should also be recognised that rural land uses change over time and rural land should be protected to provide opportunities for unanticipated future agricultural uses.</p>	<p>Please consider revising the term "productive rural land" to remove the perception that this is only the floodplain areas along the Hunter River.</p>	<p>57</p>
<p>There is significant pressure for Council to consider tourism related uses in the vineyard areas. Many of these uses are incompatible with agricultural activities including grape and wine production. Council intends to strengthen its policy framework around this issue to protect the primary agricultural use of the area. This stance would benefit from a stronger direction in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan plan on land use conflict. There is very little policy informing responses to land use conflict apart from the "Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) Guide" prepared by DPI.</p>	<p>Council requests that the Department provides greater direction on land use conflict to ensure that agricultural uses are protected from inappropriate land uses.</p>	
<p>The plan requires councils prepare a local housing strategy within two years that: achieves a minimum residential density of 15 dwellings per hectare in priority housing release areas, with 25% of lots capable of providing small lot and multi-dwelling housing types. Lot areas and dimensions to support these housing types are generally not compatible. For example, to regulate small lots the minimum lot size would have to be lowered, removed or a maximum set. Lots capable of multiunit dwellings are generally larger than a standard residential lot and certainly larger than a small lot.</p>	<p>Council requests that the Department provides guidance on how to achieve this target. Council is interested to understand how the Department recommends Council regulate these two housing types with the current suite of development controls available to councils.</p>	<p>57</p>
<p>Council would argue that lots greater than 2000m<sup>2</sup> should not be referred to as 'rural residential' rather they are more characteristic of 'large lot residential'. Rural residential should be reserved for rural land where the primary use is residential; however; the land is</p>	<p>Please consider or revisit the references to rural residential and large lot residential or amend the strategy to: "Deliver well-planned large lot residential housing areas".</p>	<p>59</p>

capable of rural activities. Large lot residential should be applied to land where there is no potential to use the land for rural purposes.		
<b>Outcome 4 – Improve Connections to jobs, services and recreation</b>		
General Comments	Suggested action	Document Reference
<p>Strategy 4.1 'Integrate land use and transport planning' is supported by Council. Council is supportive of improved bus and rail connection to centres. It is suggested that an action is included to investigate opening the Cessnock to Maitland and the Maitland to Branxton rail corridors for passenger services to support greater access to the rail network.</p> <p>Investigations into the Railway lines should be given priority consideration for use as public transport rail services. There is substantial urban residential growth along Main Road / Cessnock Road corridor including Gillieston Heights, Cliftleigh and Hydro, as well as the existing residential development at Kurri Kurri, Weston and Abermain and Cessnock. The Branxton Station has potential to service the future population of Huntlee and Branxton. It would be beneficial for investigations to also consider supporting bus services to rail services connections.</p> <p>If passenger services are not viable at this time, at a minimum the rail corridor should be preserved to allow for future population growth.</p>	<p>Add an action to preserve the rail corridor or investigate the opening of the Cessnock to Maitland and Maitland to Branxton rail corridor for passenger services to support greater access to the rail network.</p>	63
<p>Cessnock Airport is ideally situated to become a large regional aviation centre. Newcastle Airport (a key piece of regional infrastructure) is leased from the Department of Defence and general aviation is not the key priority for the site.</p> <p>The Draft Future Transport 2056 Strategy notes that the purpose of the Regional Airports Program is to increase efficiency, accessibility, competition, commercial viability and sustainability of regional aviation in NSW. The Draft Future Transport 2056 Strategy also includes supporting connections through the provision of funding to upgrade and maintain regional airport facilities.</p> <p>The Hunter Strategic Infrastructure Plan has identified passenger servicing limitations at Newcastle Airport (due to on-ground facilities). As a result, there is the opportunity for Cessnock Airport to become</p>	<p>Add actions to encourage the Cessnock Airport to become the region's second airport.</p>	61-68

<p>the region's second airport, to accommodate smaller aviation operations and provide a back-up facility if Newcastle Airport is unavailable or required for its primary purpose.</p> <p>Since Cessnock Airport is in closer proximity (than Newcastle Airport) to the heavy rail network (Hunter Valley Coal Chain) and the inter-regional road freight corridor – HEX there are excellent opportunities for logistics companies for freight management and movement.</p>		
<b>Catalyst areas</b>		
<b>General Comments</b>	<b>Suggested action</b>	<b>Document Reference</b>
Catalyst areas - should consider including Hydro/Kurri to Maitland corridor as a catalyst area due to its future employment/residential focus.	Add Hydro/Kurri to Maitland corridor as a catalyst area or recognise the potential growth this area has to offer in some other form in the document.	Whole document
Areas such as Kurri Kurri, Cessnock, Branxton/Huntlee need to be recognised in some way if not catalyst centres. Council has done a significant amount of Strategic Planning for these areas and this planning should be supported by the Draft Plan.	Add Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Cessnock and Branxton/Huntlee as a catalyst area or recognise the potential growth these area have to offer in some other form in the document e.g. economic activation precincts.	Whole document
<b>Local Area Narratives</b>		
<b>General Comments</b>	<b>Suggested action</b>	<b>Document Reference</b>
The rapid transport connection from Cessnock and Kurri Kurri to Maitland and the city core is strongly supported by Council. This action could be further strengthened by linking it back to the strategies in the document, e.g. this action could also be listed under Strategy 4.1 'Integrate land use and transport planning' in addition to the local area narratives.	The creation of a rapid transport connection could be included as an action under Strategy 4.1.	91