



23 February 2018

Greener Places  
Government Architect New South Wales  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Contact: Martin Johnson  
Our Ref: DOC2018/011650  
Your Ref:

Dear sir or madam:

**Cessnock City Council Submission on the Draft *Greener Places***

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft *Greener Places* document prepared by the NSW Government Architect.

Council is very supportive of the document: *Greener Places*, and its objective to improve the urban environment by establishing, protecting and enhancing green assets. Council looks forward to reviewing the forthcoming manuals and toolkits and additional policy outcomes proposed in the document.

One of the key policy outcomes of *Greener Places* is to introduce requirements and incorporate policies through the regional and district plans. The Department of Planning and Environment has recently finalised the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 and exhibited the Draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan. The draft Plan proposes policies to protect and enhance the blue and green grid. However, neither plan references *Greener Places*. As the draft Plan has not been finalised, it may be timely to request *Greener Places* be included in that plan. It may also be appropriate to rationalise or coordinate language so that the documents talk to similar concepts. For example; the draft Plan uses *blue and green grid* to refer to the network of open space and waterways including recreation areas, bushland, farms, drinking water catchments, rivers, lakes, other waterways and beaches. An action of the draft Plan is to implement green infrastructure outcomes. The *Greener Places* uses *green grid* and *green and grey infrastructure* to refer to these elements of the urban environment.

Section 1.6 of the *Greener Places* document states: "The principles in this document can help guide the determination of planning applications" and section 3.1 states: "The final *Greener Spaces* policies should operate within the strategic planning framework established in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Its consideration should be an early and mandatory component of the strategic growth and infrastructure planning undertaken by State Agencies and local councils."

The status of this document should be clarified in the context of the NSW State planning framework. It is recommended that *Greener Places* be implemented through local planning strategies and development control plans where individual councils can apply the principles to local circumstances.

Section 3.1 of *Greener Places* states: "Funding – existing and future funding mechanisms need to be linked and enhanced as required to ensure identified actions are developed in a coordinated manner by the most appropriate stakeholder." The Department of Planning and Environment recently exhibited the Draft Hunter Special Infrastructure Contribution: Proposed approach for consultation. The document included a schedule of works. However, no public domain works or greening works are identified. As this document is a preliminary draft, there may be an opportunity for the Government Architect to appeal to the Department to include greening projects.

Section 3.5 of *Greener Places* flags that selected councils will undertake pilot urban canopy and green space linkage projects. Cessnock Council has recently adopted detailed and costed public domain plans for all its major centres including Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Weston and Branxton. Each centre has extensive greening projects consistent with the principles of *Greener Places* and its own challenges that are proposed to be addressed by public domain and greening works.

For example; Branxton is a compact town centre with a strong heritage streetscape and an highly engaged local community. It was recently bypassed by the Hunter Expressway. The public domain plan seeks to transform the centre from a highway service centre to a focal point of the community and a gateway to the Hunter Region vineyards. Extensive greening works are proposed including: two new public spaces, a highly vegetated public domain and links to open space and recreation assets including Branxton Oval and Miller Park (refer attachment A).

Cessnock Council is well placed and highly motivated to be included in this pilot. The diversity of greening projects and challenges in each centre is a unique opportunity to test many of the principles of *Greener Places* and in a regional context.

If you wish to discuss any of these items please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 4993 4229 or at [martin.johnson@cessnock.nsw.gov.au](mailto:martin.johnson@cessnock.nsw.gov.au).

Yours faithfully,



Martin Johnson  
Strategic Planning Manager

Attachments

Attachment 1: Branxton Town Centre Proposed Public Domain Works.

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Maitland Street, Branxton – Existing



Maitland Street, Branxton - Proposed





Maitland Street, Branxton – Existing



Maitland Street, Branxton – Proposed

