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27 February 2018

Mr Robert Hodgekins
Team Leader, Hunter
Department of Planning and Environment
26 Honeysuckle Drive
Newcastle NSW 2300

Dear Robert,

SUBMISSION - GREATER NEWCASTLE METROPOLITAN PLAN - STONY PINCH

This submission is made to the Department of Planning and Environment on behalf of the Stony Pinch Consortium (the Consortium) in response to the recently published Draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan (the draft Plan).

1. OVERVIEW

This submission is summarised as follows;

1. The Consortium compliments the Department on the release of the draft plan which followed the release of the Hunter Regional Plan 2036. The integrated framework of the plans provides a strong foundation for the long-term planning and investment required to support the efficient growth of the Hunter Region.
2. We request that the significance of Stony Pinch be recognised in terms of the long term future planning of the Hunter Region. Stony Pinch is a unique, significant (3,600ha) land holding under single ownership which provides the opportunity for the natural extension of the existing urban development pattern in well-considered form. The draft plan is inconsistent with the Hunter Regional Plan and should be amended to recognise Stony Pinch within a growth area.
3. We recommend that the future development of Stony Pinch be influenced and determined through a collaboration framework between the landowners, state and local government and relevant public stakeholders. Collaboration areas have been introduced in the Sydney metro area and we are of the opinion that a similar approach should be adopted to facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration for the redevelopment of Stony Pinch.

2. BACKGROUND

Donaldson Coal (a subsidiary company of Yancoal), Ashtonfields and the Bloomfield Group have been operating mining activities on part of the site for over 75 years, representing the three main landowner groups in Stony Pinch, known as the Consortium. Since the establishment of the Consortium in 2008, a number of planning, urban design and environmental studies have been undertaken to determine a

suitable redevelopment strategy for the site post mining. These studies have been informed by state and local government stakeholder engagement. Key steps which have been taken to date are:

- **October 2006** – The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006 was released and specifically identified the site as *a future freight hub and employment lands*.
- **September 2008** – As a result of the strategic recognition of the site in the 2006 Strategy and the direction to carry out structure planning, the landowners in formed a binding agreement facilitating them to act as a co-ordinated and single entity in the planning and development of Stony Pinch. This was the creation of the Stony Pinch Consortium
- **August 2010** – Application to the Department of Planning for the site to be listed as a State Significant Site in Schedule 3 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005.
- **March 2011** – The Department of Planning issued a letter recognising the need for an alternative decision making process to be considered for the site given its regional significance and its location across two local government boundaries.
- **March 2012** – Submission of a high-level structure plan to the Department of Planning for Stony Pinch including potential development yields, project justification, and an assessment against the State Significant Site Criteria.
- **September 2012** – Detailed Stage 1 Delivery Plan to the Department of Planning, outlining housing market demand, infrastructure serviceability of Stony Pinch, and the outcomes of consultation with key stakeholders.
- **December 2012** – In recognition of the work undertaken by the landowners, the Department of Planning issued a letter of recognition of the work to date, and notes the Avalon Forest Extension ‘...could be considered to be infill, or an extension to existing development using the current road access’ (See Attachment 3).
- **October 2013** – Stony Pinch was recognised in the Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy (MUSS) as a Preliminary Investigation Area
- **October 2016 – May 2017** – Finalisation and release of the Hunter Regional Plan which recognised the site within a growth corridor. Consultation with both Cessnock and Maitland Councils occurred following the release of the plan.
- **November 2017** – Submission of an updated site wide masterplan to Cessnock and Maitland Councils to inform the revision (Maitland) and preparation (Cessnock) of their Urban Settlement Strategies to reflect the release of the regional plan.
- **December 2017** – Release of the draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.

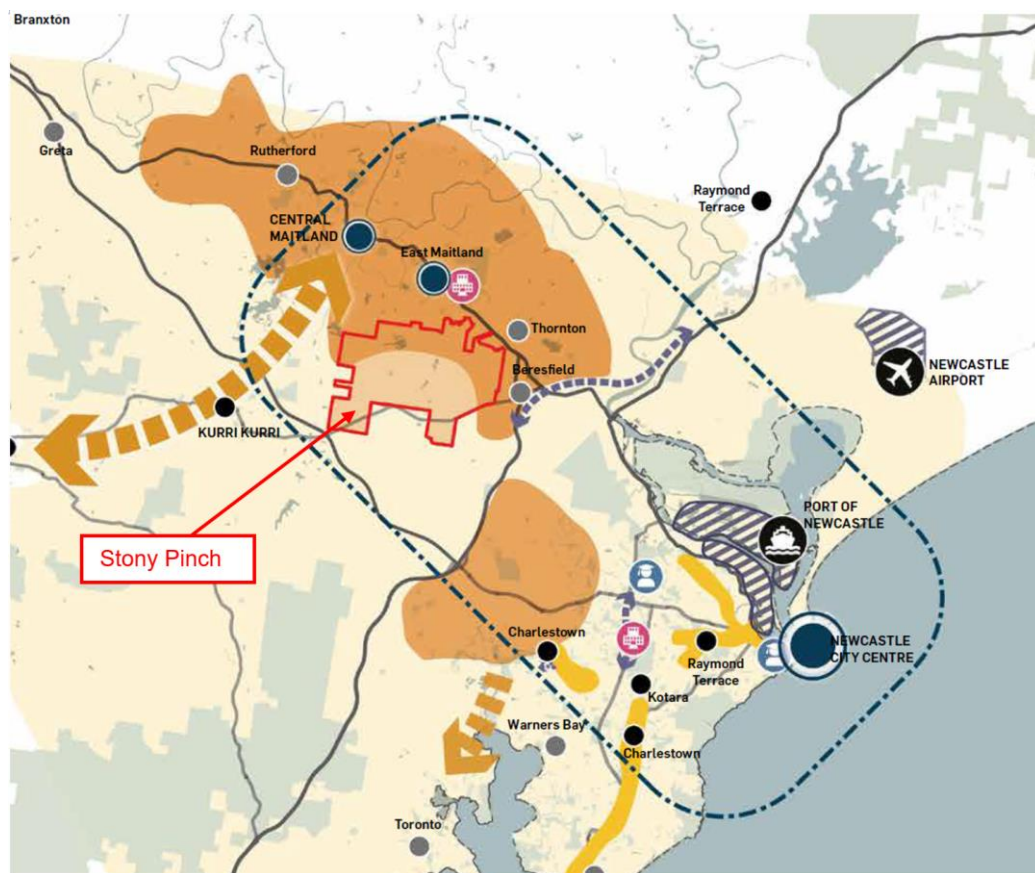
3. STONY PINCH

Stony Pinch is a landholding of approximately 3,600ha, centrally located within the Lower Hunter Region. The site is located partly within both the Maitland and Cessnock Local Government Areas (LGA), and the eastern boundary abuts the Newcastle LGA boundary.

The site has had an extensive history of continuous mining for a long period. The mining operations produce coal mostly for international export through the Port of Newcastle, directly from a rail loop on the site.

In recent times the coal mining operations on-site have evolved with the Donaldson open-cut mine closing in April 2013. The changes in the mining activity will result in a substantial reduction to the areas of the site required for mining and a natural catalyst for other land-use investigation.

Figure 1 – Site location



Source: Urbis

A structure plan has been prepared to provide a strategic framework for the transition of Stony Pinch from its historic mining role, to a future in providing a significant contribution to the provision of housing, employment and open space (for both recreation and ecological conservation purposes). The scale of potential future urban development on the site represents a project of regional and state significance, necessitating reference in state and local government strategic plans.

Features of the Stony Pinch Structure Plan include:

- **Housing** – Stony Pinch is surrounded by established existing residential communities to the north and north-west of the site, presenting the opportunity for the extension of the site to seamlessly integrate with these areas. These residential precincts are further supported by local centres and amenities to the north and to regional health and educational facilities.

The draft plan references the existing zoned residential land in the region. It is evident that there are existing barriers delaying the development of the land. Stony Pinch presents an opportunity for immediate development to address both short and long term housing demand.

The scale of Stony Pinch provides a long-term pipeline of land to support new housing, and providing the ability to be flexible to meet changing housing needs and affordability issues within the Region.

- **Employment** – Proximity to key regional road network providing connections in all directions to major centres and services.

The attached masterplan demonstrates the significant opportunities for employment land at Stony Pinch. John Renshaw Drive traverses the southern portion of the site and will link employment land to the Hunter Expressway, harnesses the benefits of the expressway and providing a corridor for freight transport.

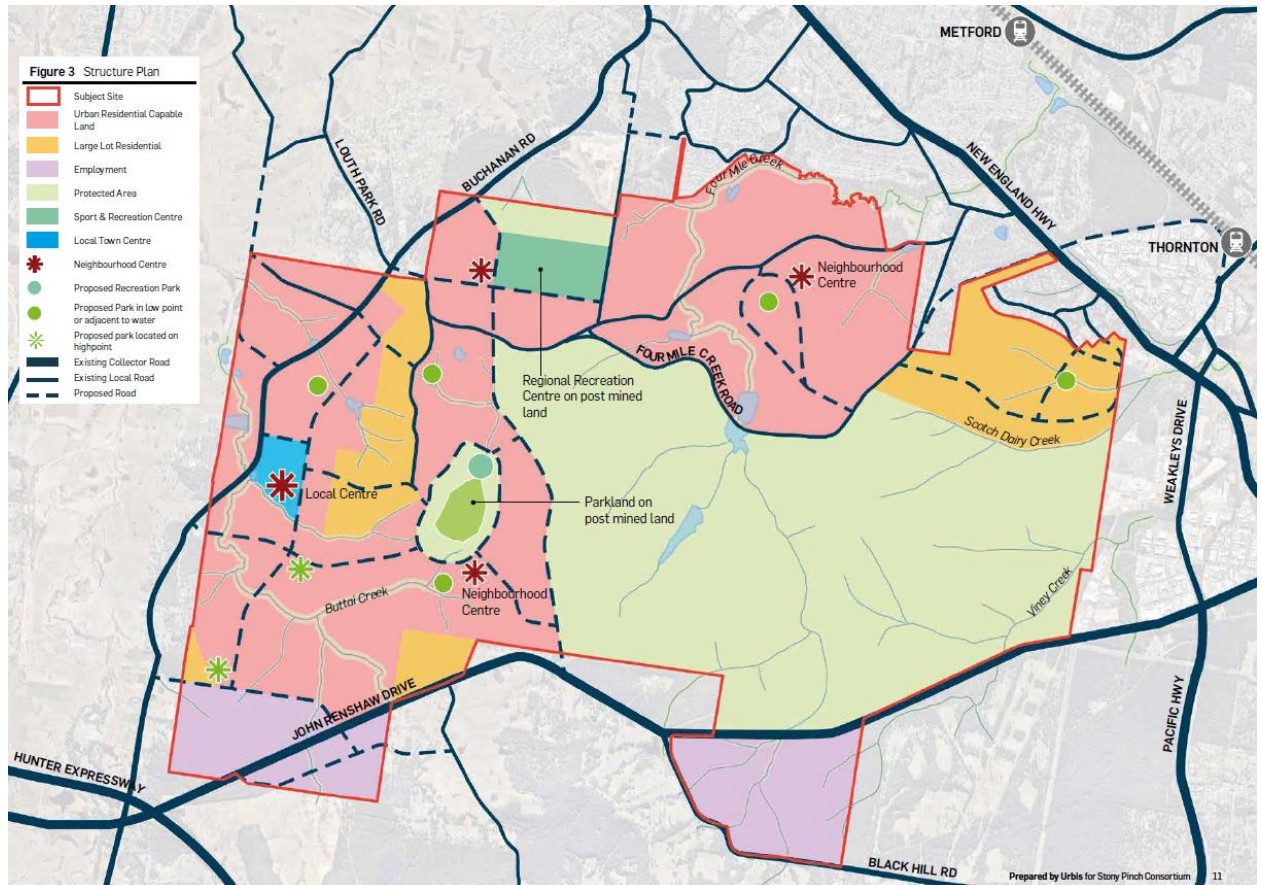
The draft plan discusses the need to support ‘*a skilled workforce ready for the new economy*’. Stony Pinch is ideally placed to facilitate the transition from mining to other forms of industry. The site adjoins Blackhill and Beresfield and has the available land to facilitate large industrial floorplates.

- **Available Infrastructure** - The site maintains readily accessible transport links, utility services with electricity, potable water, gas and fibre optic infrastructure traversing through the site. An existing rail carriage loop and overpass already connects to established areas to the north-east and to Thornton Train Station. This can be re-conceptualised in the future to provide active linkages for the new communities at Stony Pinch.

Further, the site is directly accessible to Buchanan Road, John Renshaw Drive which connect to both to the New England Highway and the Hunter Expressway.

- **Riparian Corridors** - Stony Pinch features vegetated areas that have been established as part of its post mining rehabilitation program as well as high value vegetation that have been mapped in previous studies. Riparian corridors also traverse the site, providing a truly unique natural setting from which new communities in Stony Pinch will flourish.

Figure 2 – Stony Pinch Site-wide Masterplan



Source: Urbis

4. SUBMISSION

On behalf of the Consortium, we make the following submission regarding the draft Plan:

4.1. ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Consortium complements the Department on the preparation of the next stage of the strategic planning framework for the Hunter Region. However, we raise issue with the omission of Stony Pinch from the draft plan. As demonstrated above, the vision for the site has been defined by close consultation and recognition in the historical key planning documents for the area.

The integrated framework provided in the previous regional plans (including the Hunter Regional Plan 2036) provided a much needed and strong foundation for the long-term planning and investment required to support the success of the Hunter Region. This included Stony Pinch. We

request that the Department amend the draft plan to recognise Stony Pinch as an appropriate land release area in keeping with the Hunter Regional Plan.

We also refer to the recent release of the Draft Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan (October 2017). The plan includes long term transport upgrades surrounding the site including high speed rail and electrification of the Newcastle to Maitland train connection. The site would benefit from any such infrastructure improvements, again highlighting its proximity to existing urban land and ability to contribute to the continued growth of Maitland.

4.2. STATE AND REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Stony Pinch is a significant land holding under single ownership. The site is unique in terms of land size, the availability of infrastructure and services and proximity to major strategic centres such as Maitland.

The site in our opinion presents a region shaping opportunity to create a defined sustainable community. We recognise the focus of the plan in connecting the Hunter region to Newcastle. The plan also emphasises the need to provide employment due to the transition occurring in the region from mining to the other forms of employment.

The Consortium supports this recognition and Stony Pinch presents the opportunity to facilitate a unique transformation from an active mining land-use to a new community facilitating open space, recreation areas and a diverse mix of housing and employment opportunities. The Consortium seeks to redefine the perception of mining as a land use and deliver a long term outcome for the site that benefits the Hunter region.

The site presents both long and short term development opportunities. We reference the attached masterplan which identifies areas we believe can facilitate immediate development, such as;

- **Employment**
 - o Lands adjoining the Hunter expressway to the south-west of the site,
 - o Lands adjoining Beresfield and Blackhill industrial areas to the south-east of the site,
- **Residential**
 - o Lands to the north-west of the site adjoining Buchanan Road,
 - o Lands the north-east of the site as a natural extension of the existing urban pattern.

The masterplan presents a considered approach to the land use planning of the site and demonstrates the enormous potential to be unlocked at Stony Pinch. We recommend that this significance be recognised and acknowledged in the draft plan.

4.3. COLLABORATION AREA

The draft plan identifies a number of 'catalyst areas' being;

'a place of metropolitan significance where a planned approach will drive the transformation of Greater Newcastle'

Surrounding Stony Pinch, Beresfield/Blackhill and East Maitland are identified as catalyst areas in the draft plan. The scale of Stony Pinch differentiates it from a catalyst area. As you are aware, the draft revised district plans were released by the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) in November 2016. The plans identify 'collaboration areas' across Sydney. The GSC note;

'Collaboration Areas have been established to achieve a whole of government approach to managing places that either hold great potential or face complex challenges in meeting the demands of urban growth.'

Stony Pinch presents a significant site that holds great potential. The site is immediately available for development and provides established access roads, infrastructure, utilities and servicing. The size and location of Stony Pinch, at 3,600ha across Cessnock and Maitland Councils and adjoining Newcastle LGA, requires a collaborative framework to achieve common outcomes. Examples of collaboration areas include;

- Greater Penrith
- Campbelltown – Macarthur
- Bankstown Airport

We are of the opinion that Stony Pinch should be recognised as a 'Collaboration Area' and a cross sectoral approach established to determine the future long term development of the site.

5. CONCLUSION

The Consortium supports the release of the draft plan. The Consortium also strongly supports continued economic growth in the Region and the need to continue to plan for a viable pipeline supply of employment and residential land.

Focusing the planning for future population and employment growth in and around centres is supported and will enable a more sustainable future pattern of urban development in the Region.

Stony Pinch is undeniably a strategically located site in the context of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area. Its central location and accessibility to major centres by existing road and rail infrastructure makes the site an attractive location and one that meets the underlying pre-eminent state planning principle of integrating land use planning with transport, infrastructure and services.

This submission supports the strategic planning framework guiding and shaping the region. However, it is critical that Stony Pinch continues to be a part of the future vision for the area. The Consortium would be happy to meet with you to progress a collaboration framework for the site.



If you have any questions about this submission, please contact Meadhbh Nolan or the undersigned on 02 8233 9900.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Wynne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Wynne" clearly distinguishable.

John Wynne
National Director - Urban Planning