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ACN: 146 035 707 ABN: 54 146 035 707
Suite 7, Level 7, 100 Walker St,
North Sydney NSW 2060
P 02 9929 6974
enquiries@willowtreeplanning.com.au

NSW Department of Planning and Environment

SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT GREATER NEWCASTLE METROPOLITAN PLAN FOR KOTARA HOME CENTRE – ON BEHALF OF AVENTUS PROPERTY

To whom it may concern,

Aventus Property (Aventus) has requested Willowtree Planning Pty Limited (Willowtree) to prepare a submission on its behalf to the Draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan (DGNMP). The DGNMP is currently open for public submissions, with submissions due to close on 28 February 2018. This submission is made with respect to Aventus' Kotara Home Centre at 1 Kullaiba Road, 150 Park Avenue, and 14 and 18 Bradford Close, Kotara (Lot 220 DP1014716, Lot 19 DP786145, Lot 181 DP850168 and Lot 501 DP1174032 – refer to **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**).

In future, Aventus plans to redevelop the Kotara Home Centre as a mixed-use development. This would include:

- Significantly adding to and altering the existing Kotara Home centre to support a greater and more effective Gross Floor Area across the site;
- Provision of additional car parking to accommodate greater building footprint;
- Partial closure of Kullaiba Road;
- Adding suitable residential accommodation land uses to the site in the form of Shop top housing or Residential flat building design;
- Exploring the potential to develop the site as a precinct of significance under the relevant local and State planning strategies.

The site owned by Aventus and referred to as the Kotara Home centre within this submission is shown in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** below.

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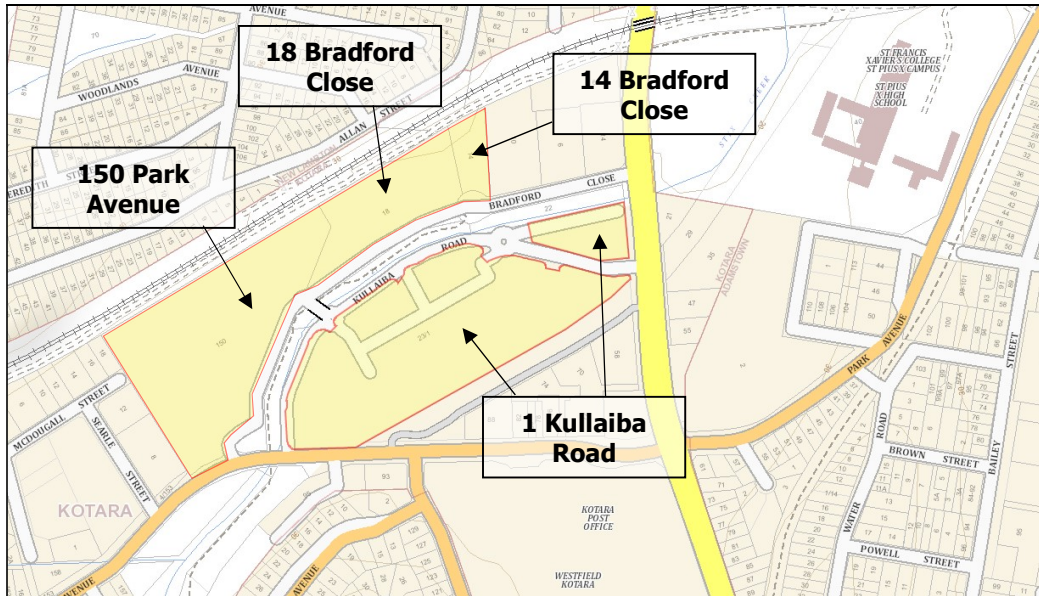


Figure 1 Site Context (SIXMaps, 2017)



Figure 2 Aerial Photo (SIXMaps, 2017)

1. THE DRAFT GREATER NEWCASTLE METROPOLITAN PLAN

The DGNMP is the region's first metropolitan plan, setting out strategies and actions to drive sustainable growth across the Cessnock City, Lake Macquarie City, Maitland City, Newcastle City and Port Stephens Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The previously released Hunter Regional Plan 2036 (HRP) recognises Kotara to be a Strategic Centre. The DGNMP draws on the HRP to provide more details on the Strategic Centres identified in the HRP. Under the DGNMP, Kotara would be located within the Newcastle City Core. The Newcastle City Core would frame the city by providing jobs and housing, with two-thirds of Greater Newcastle's homes and jobs located here.

According to the DGNMP:

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people living in the City Core will enjoy a cosmopolitan lifestyle focused around strong local communities and place, jobs and services, and a range of recreational opportunities in parks and reserves between the coast and the adjoining hinterland....The City Core is well positioned for improved integration of transport and services. Many residents live within 30-minutes of their work place or centres providing services for their daily needs.

The following outcomes and strategies under the DGNMP are directly relevant to the redevelopment of Kotara Home Centre:

- 3. Deliver housing close to jobs and services:
 - 3.1 Prioritise the delivery of housing supply;
 - 3.2 Unlock supply in priority housing release areas and strategic centres;
 - 3.3 Prepare local housing strategies; and
 - 3.4 Deliver well-planned rural residential housing areas;
- 4. Improve connections to jobs, services and recreation:
 - 4.1 Integrate land use and transport planning;
 - 4.2 Create higher speed connections to Sydney to encourage new employment opportunities;
 - 4.3 Protect major freight corridors;
 - 4.4 Prepare for technology-enhanced mobility changes that improve connectivity.

Aventus is excited about this overall vision for Greater Newcastle, and supports these outcomes and strategies in principle as they relate to its current and future interests in the Kotara Home centre.

2. KOTARA AS A CATALYST AREA

Kotara is also recognised as a Catalyst Area within Greater Newcastle. Catalyst Areas are considered to be places of metropolitan significance where a planned approach will drive the transformation of Greater Newcastle as a metropolitan city. These locations will underpin new job opportunities in specialised employment areas for health, defence, education and research, as well as new mixed employment areas, with a focus on integrating land use and infrastructure, open space and urban design.

The desired role of Kotara within the Greater Newcastle area is:

Diverse employment centre with mixed-use and high density residential connected to frequent public transport services.

While Kotara provided employment for 5,500 people in 2016, this is expected to increase to 6,350 by 2036. Targeted new jobs and dwellings for the entire Kotara Catalyst Area by 2036 are 800 and 400 respectively.

Aventus is excited for the future identification of its Kotara Home centre within this mapped Catalyst Area of Greater Newcastle. In particular, Aventus notes that its proposed future redevelopment of the Kotara Home centre would contribute to the forecasted employment rates of this Catalyst Area by creating more employment floorspace. The proposed redevelopment of Kotara Home would continue to provide for a diverse mix of employment uses including anchor shops, large format retail stores, food and drinks premises, and speciality retail offerings. It also seeks to provide residential accommodation at the site with two options proposed to achieve a transit-oriented development outcome: either with the relocation of Kotara Station directly north of Kotara Home; or with the active transport connection of Kotara Home to the existing Kotara Station, Adamstown Station, Kotara Park and the St Pius X High School.

Aventus' proposed redevelopment of Kotara Home would therefore respond directly to the desired role of Kotara as a Catalyst Area within the Greater Newcastle area.

The Aventus site lies within the mapped New Kotara Town Precinct of the Kotara Catalyst Area (refer to **Figure 3** below).

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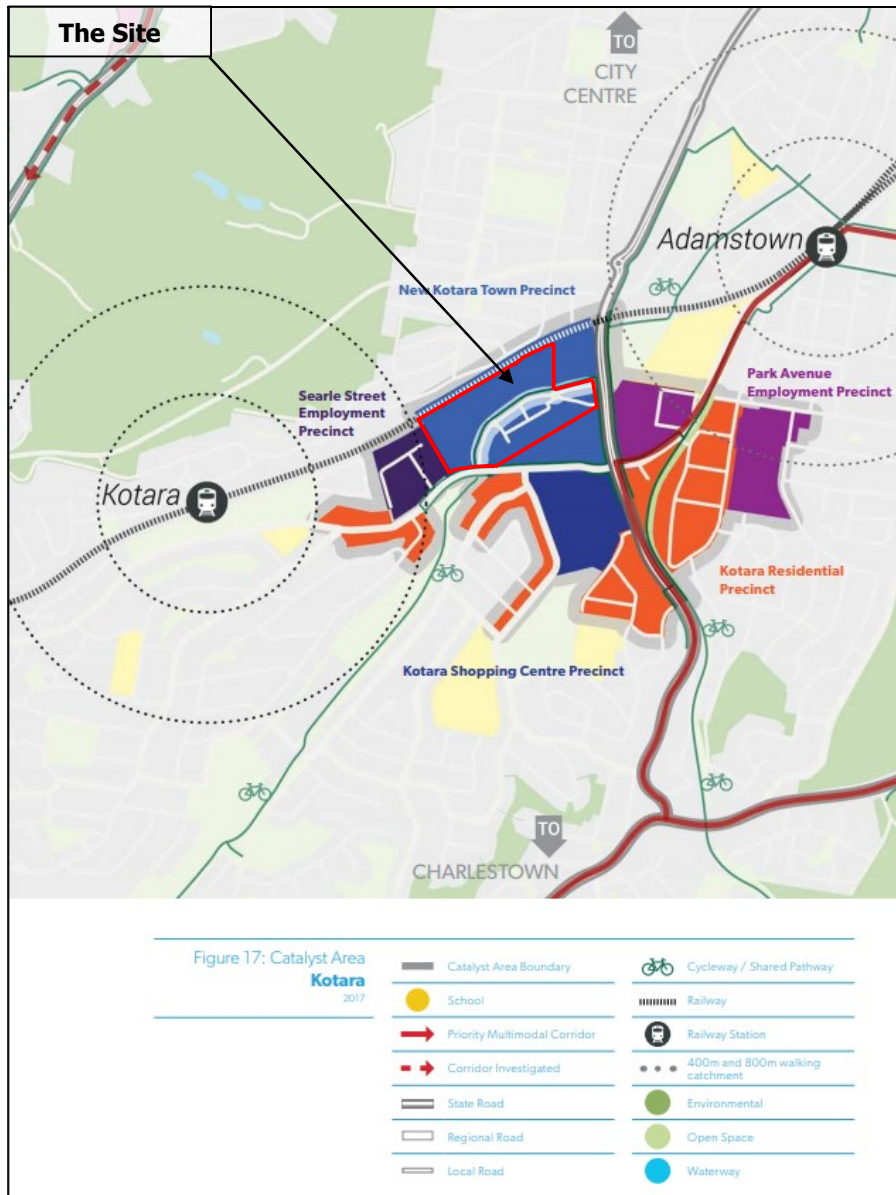


Figure 3 Catalyst Area: Kotara (NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2017)

Under the DGNMP, Newcastle City Council commits to:

- Align local plans to facilitate commercial and business land uses and creation of main street character along Kullaiba Road;
- Improve pedestrian amenity and connections to New Lambton, Adamstown and Kotara Stations;
- Manage flooding and drainage constraints and apply the Green Infrastructure Principles;
- Align local plans to facilitate office and residential uses adjacent to the rail corridor;
- Align local plans to provide a minimum population density of 75 people per hectare; and
- Work with Transport for NSW and NSW Department of Planning and Environment to improve access to Kotara Railway Station, and better integration into the broader transport network to reflect its role as an important activity hub.

It is recognised that the Kotara Residential Precinct and the Kotara Shopping Centre Precinct have been earmarked for the provision of residential development within the Kotara Catalyst Area under the DGNMP, in line with the suitable range of population densities recognised in the DGNMP. However, this recognition of

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residential land use outcomes has not been extended into the New Kotara Town Precinct area of the Kotara Catalyst Area.

It is Aventus' submission that the DGNMP recognise the provision of high density dwellings as a desired planning outcome for the New Kotara Town Precinct. Indeed, this is currently permitted at the Kotara Home centre in the form of Shop-top housing as per the site's B2 Local Centre zoning under the *Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2012*. Aventus' plans for limited, suitable residential land uses at the site would be integrated as part of an overall masterplan for the Kotara Home site which would include the provision of additional open space, improved ecology and amenity of the currently under-utilised Styx Creek, improved onsite active transport and vehicle linkages, and the delivery of transit-oriented development outcomes for the New Kotara Town Precinct with respect to the surrounding public transport network.

Overall, the provision of residential accommodation at the site would assist in meeting transit-oriented development outcomes for the New Kotara Town Precinct, providing new housing stock close to employment floorspace and the proposed surrounding integrated public and active transport network. The reasoning for this provision of high density dwellings within the New Kotara Town Precinct is emphasised by the fact that, under the DGNMP, the Kotara Catalyst Area is supposed to be part of the short-term focus for housing, employment and infrastructure investment.

It is furthermore noted that the DGNMP aims to create main street character along Kullaiba Road. Kullaiba Road, an internal road within the Kotara Home site, is currently subject to the following constraints:

- It divides the Kotara Home centre into separate parcels. This is further exacerbated by the location of Styx Creek, ultimately resulting in a site which is divided into three parcels;
- It results in separated car parking areas, creating an inefficient shopping experience and limiting the feasibility of providing pedestrian connections throughout the site;
- It encourages local residents to use the Kotara Home car park as a rat run, thus avoiding a series of five signalised intersections along Park Avenue and Northcott Drive. This creates further congestion within the Kotara Home car park and reduces the performance of its internal road network;
- It requires service and loading vehicles to share access with the wider public, worsening congestion and impacting the overall efficiency of the large format retail trading conditions; and
- It creates a lack of focus at the Kotara Home centre, resulting in visitor disorientation and a reduced sense of place.

Aventus therefore proposes to partially close Kullaiba Road, as conceptually demonstrated in **Figure 4** below. Traffic along this portion of Kullaiba Road would instead be diverted onto Bradford Close (refer to **Figure 4**).

This would improve circulation and access within the site, as well as overall way-finding and legibility. It would also:

- Bring focus back onto the key site entries; and
- Allow for one of the three separated parcels within Kotara Home to be amalgamated.

It would furthermore support:

- A network of secondary laneways to isolate and streamline access for services and loading, through the edges of the site, further liberating the centre of the site for active uses;
- The introduction of North-South pedestrian connections at ground and first floor levels at the site; and
- The distribution of anchor tenancies to intensify a network of new pedestrian connections that help stitch North and South together as one.

Overall, it is considered that the partial closure of Kullaiba Road is necessary in order for Kullaiba Road to meet its desired future character outcome as a main street. Aventus submits that the DGNMP recognises this potential road closure, so that Aventus may in future submit such a road closure application which is not contradictory to the DGNMP.

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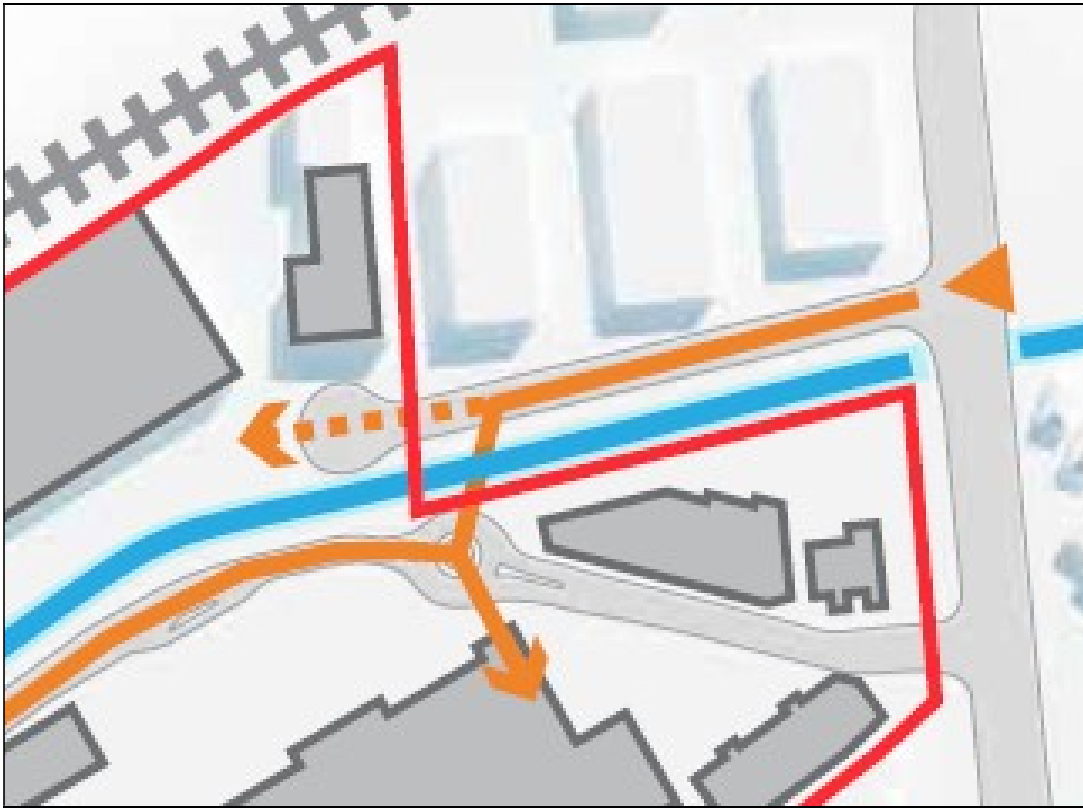


Figure 4 Proposed Partial Closure of Kullaiba Road (Aventus Property, 2018)

The future of Kullaiba Road also forms part of the goal for Newcastle City Council to align local plans to facilitate commercial and business land uses and create a main street character along Kullaiba Road. Aventus' future plans for the site include broadening the range of commercial and business land uses at the site to support a greater mix of suitably located finer grain uses, particularly along the current Kullaiba Road and Styx Creek corridors traversing the site. This would in turn encourage street-level activation and ultimately create the desired future character of Kullaiba Road as a main street.

It is noted that the reference to applying the Green Infrastructure Principles at Styx Creek refers to the following principles enunciated within the DGNMP:

- Conservation of the natural environment;
- Increased access to open space;
- Improved connectivity to promote active living; and
- Increased urban greening to ameliorate climate extremes.

The revitalisation of Styx Creek as a functioning element within the New Kotara Town Precinct is something which Aventus is committed to delivering. It is envisaged that this would assist with delivering suitable urban amenity to residents, workers and visitors to the New Kotara Town Precinct, whilst also delivering a superior ecological outcome for the area more generally.

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA NARRATIVES

Matters within the DGNMP which specifically relate to the Newcastle Local Government Area and Aventus' future plans for Kotara Home include:

- Significant amounts of sensitive and feasible infill development will occur in the short term, in urban renewal corridors including Newcastle City Centre, Kotara and Broadmeadow. There are

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- opportunities for smaller-scale redevelopment that maintains the liveability and place character of The Junction, Waratah, Jesmond and Wallsend, Lambton and New Lambton. Longer-term renewal will also occur around train stations and brownfield sites, as they become available;
- Improved connectivity to global, national, regional and metropolitan destinations are focused around the rail, road, port and airport networks. This must be supported by priority bus corridors, improved road planning, growing public transport mode share to reduce road congestion, and new rail corridor infrastructure investment;
- The urban renewal corridors are the potential focus for future transit improvements with immediate bus routes improvements and the introduction of frequent services supporting increases in connectivity between strategic centres; and
- **Catalyst areas as the short-term focus for housing, employment and infrastructure investment** are Newcastle City Centre, Beresfield-Black Hill, Broadmeadow, Callaghan, John Hunter Hospital, **Kotara** and Newcastle Port.

Aventus supports these local government area narratives as they relate to the Catalyst Area of Kotara. However, Aventus reiterates its submission that the DGNMP recognised the New Kotara Town Centre as providing for residential accommodation in line with the surrounding Kotara Residential Precinct and the Kotara Shopping Centre Precinct within the overall Kotara Catalyst Area.

4. OUTCOMES

4.1 Deliver Housing Close to Jobs and Services

Aventus' proposed redevelopment of the Kotara Home site would meet this key outcome of delivering housing close to jobs and services. Aventus therefore reiterates its submission that the DGNMP recognised the New Kotara Town Centre as providing for suitable residential accommodation.

4.2 Improve Connections to Jobs, Services and Recreation

The DGNMP recognises how the Greater Newcastle area has developed in a spread-out manner, with resulting greater use on private vehicles and numerous development fronts competing for infrastructure funding. This affects housing delivery, creating unclear market signals and hampering the ability to achieve a cost-efficient and affordable housing pipeline. While options for different transport modes (cars, trains, buses, cycling and walking) are available within most of the region's Strategic Centres. This presents an opportunity to integrate land use policies for a more efficient and equitable transport system that encourages walking, cycling and public transport within the Kotara Strategic Centre.

The DGNMP also identifies Greater Newcastle as a suitable location to trial automated buses, shared connected and automated vehicles, e-bikes and mobility-service platforms. Development opportunities near stations including Kotara require precinct-wide approach integrating land development with stations. It is recognised that stations should include commuter parking and better walking, cycling and bus route connections. The proposed Lower Hunter Freight Corridor will also improve amenity around some rail stations by diverting rail freight. This in turn would support further revitalisation of employment and new housing.

The DGNMP sets out the following actions for Transport for NSW, working with Greater Newcastle councils to:

- Improve public transport services between Newcastle City Centre, Broadmeadow, John Hunter Hospital, Callaghan, Cardiff, Charlestown and Kotara;
- Implement travel demand management programs to respond to growth in transport demand;
- Provide early and effective public transport services and active transport infrastructure in priority housing release areas that is well-connected to key destinations and public open space;
- Investigate reprioritising road space for higher occupancy vehicles as a response to increase demand from population and economic growth;
- Manage the supply of new car parking in strategic centres to avoid road congestion; and

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- Identify improvements to active transport networks, and provide unobstructed well-connected pedestrian paths and a network of off-road separated cycleways to key destinations, including schools, employment hubs, shops and services.

With the rise of online shopping both locally and internationally, there will be increasing demand for faster delivery of goods to homes and workplaces. Automated vehicles and drone technology will transform the way these goods are delivered, and significantly change logistics supply chains in the coming years. Whilst the full extent of these implications are unknown, automated vehicle and drone technology could result in reduced heavy vehicle movements, particularly in Strategic Centres.

Aventus supports these investigations into new and proven methods of transport and logistics within the Greater Newcastle Area, and is willing to work with local and State authorities in order to support about such projects.

5. PLAN DELIVERY

5.1 How will the Metropolitan Plan be Delivered?

The DGNMP will be delivered via the following:

- Preparation of local strategies including local housing strategies;
- Preparation of development control plans, including comprehensive master planning;
- Preparation of planning proposals consistent with the actions in this draft Plan; and
- Assessment of development applications with reference to the outcomes of this draft Plan, or amended development control plans that are consistent with this draft Plan.

When Planning Proposals are progressed, the proponent is generally required to demonstrate how the Planning Proposal is consistent with the Section 117 Ministerial Directions prepared by the Minister for Planning. The DGNMP states that a Planning Proposal within the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan area may only be inconsistent with the Section 117 Ministerial Directions if it is inconsistent with the DGNMP.

It is for this reason that Aventus submits that the DGNMP recognises the potential road closure of Kullaiba Road and the provision of suitable residential accommodation within the New Kotara Town Centre. This would reduce the likelihood that Aventus would have to submit a planning proposal which in future may contradict the outcomes of the DGNMP.

5.2 Committee for Greater Newcastle

There is an opportunity to become involved in the Committee for Greater Newcastle.

This would involve collaboration between all tiers of Government as well as business, industry and the community including:

- A collaborative agreement between the NSW Government and the five Greater Newcastle Councils to coordinate funding and sequence growth opportunities;
- Establishing a Committee for Greater Newcastle to advise on metropolitan-scale collaboration between community, industry and government; and
- Stronger engagement with young people and community groups who do not typically get involved in strategic planning.

These partnerships would help coordinate planning for growth, optimise opportunities for transformation, and drive the emergence of Greater Newcastle as a metropolitan city on the global stage. Hunter Development Corporation will lead the collaboration process.

Aventus welcomes the invitation to be involved in such future planning processes within the Greater Newcastle Area.

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6 DISCUSSION

We trust the above outlines key matters of both concern and support on behalf of Aventus Property with respect to its Kotara Home site under the DGNMP. If you wish to discuss the content of this letter in further detail, please contact Jessica Miller on 0402 845 415 or jmiller@willowtreeplanning.com.au.

Regards,



Jessica Miller
Willowtree Planning Pty Ltd