

## The NSW Department of Planning: Draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan

### Climate Action Newcastle - Review and Submission

Climate Action Newcastle has reviewed the Draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan primarily in relation to climate change mitigation, and adaptation.

It is concerning to see that the Draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan, as per its parent documents (the Hunter Regional Plan and accompanying Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City), is still out of step with important current trends and factors such as:

- the urgency for climate change mitigation by every level of government
- the rapid uptake and availability of affordable renewable energy across the world
- Australia being at the forefront of the greatest rate of species extinction since the dinosaur age

From a climate change point of view the Draft Plan is concerning because:

- the Plan barely mentions *climate change* and does not address climate change *mitigation*
- the Plans contain no clear commitments to foster the development of *renewable energy* - which may see the Hunter miss out on the huge environmental benefits and economic opportunities that may be provided by RE if it is planned for and developed at the soonest time – particularly in light of the diversification of the Port of Newcastle and the “new economy” referred to throughout the Plan.
- The Plan evidences a fatalistic approach to the decline in native vegetation and critical habitat instead of *planning to protect* these habitats:
  - Despite the threat of climate change and the need to provide native species with a buffer of protection
  - Despite the release of carbon emissions from land clearing
  - With an unscientific over-reliance on ‘off-sets’ - even when there is no ‘like-for-like’ vegetation remaining to offset
  - Continuing to build homes in greenfield sites (bushland) and an emphasis on catering for new rural residential areas which are car-reliant, when all emphasis for increased housing should now be toward urban consolidation and increased density in existing areas. The emphasis within the new Draft Plan on building smaller houses/lots and urban consolidation in areas with public transport access, shops and facilities is acknowledged and supported.
  - The concept of “walkable suburbs” would be another welcome inclusion.
- Climate change adaptation is not explicitly addressed and is housed under ‘natural hazards’. Of this:
  - There continues to be an indication that the funding of coastal management strategies to protect existing communities and infrastructure from ‘natural hazards’ will fall onto local government and affected communities. More equitable funding mechanisms need to be defined – especially given that coal mining, the most carbon-polluting sector, exacerbates climate change, and is advantaged and encouraged by the NSW Government.
  - Responding to the effects of extreme heat is not addressed at all in the Plans

It is encouraging to see more mention of public transport in this Plan than the parent documents although more practical definition is required.

- The Plan needs to show more commitment to defined new public transport links and services
  - note: there will be increasing difficulty in planning and installing new public transport and freight infrastructure as city development encroaches – especially for a mode such as High Speed Rail. This should be addressed urgently.

Please see all other comments against Strategies and Actions in the following table.

Any questions regarding this submission can be forwarded to:

c/o The Committee  
Climate Action Newcastle  
PO Box 2309  
DANGAR  
NSW 2309

Yours sincerely,

Su Morley - Convenor  
on behalf of the  
Climate Action Newcastle Committee

Plan Strategies	CAN Comment
<p><b>COLLABORATING TO DELIVER THE PLAN</b>  <b>Collaborative governance framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing a Committee for Greater Newcastle to advise on metropolitan-scale collaboration between community, industry and government</li> <li>• stronger engagement with young people and community groups who do not typically get involved in strategic planning.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Questions arising:</b></p> <p>How is the advisory committee to be formulated?</p> <p>What is the definition of a group that does not typically get involved in strategic planning?  In the context that groups such as Climate Action Newcastle, (a long-standing community group with a track record of running successful community-based renewable energy uptake projects and accessible advocacy on climate change) has never previously had an opportunity to partake in any strategic planning collaboration.</p> <p>Is expertise from sincere advocacy groups such as Climate Action Newcastle being sought?</p> <p><b>Request:</b></p> <p>Please advise how CAN may be involved in local strategic planning for Newcastle via the contact details on this submission.</p>
<p><b>1. Create a workforce skilled and ready for the new economy</b></p>	
<p><b>STRATEGY 1.1 – REINFORCE THE REVITALISATION OF NEWCASTLE CITY CENTRE AND EXPAND TRANSFORMATION ALONG THE WATERSIDE</b></p>	
<p>Strategy 1.1 Actions (where relevant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordinate the delivery of frequent and reliable travel to and through the city centre via the Newcastle Light Rail, Newcastle Bus Interchange and Newcastle Interchange</li> <li>• provide new housing for workers and students</li> <li>• activate the waterfront by improving pedestrian, cyclist and public transport safety, amenity, access and connectivity to the waterfront.</li> <li>• identify, catalogue and re-use opportunity sites and buildings to continue regeneration and revitalisation, promote creative industries, innovation and entrepreneurship, and attract</li> </ul>	<p>Any increase in affordable, well planned, integrated public transport options is welcome and key to de-carbonising the city</p> <p>Should have an emphasis on efficient, low-energy sustainable buildings, with renewable energy options</p> <p>All cycling, pedestrian and public transport options welcome. Should be integrated into broader cycling and public transport networks.</p> <p>Innovation and entrepreneurship is welcome – however an overt emphasis on de-carbonising, renewable energy and sustainability is missing from this section</p>

additional anchor institutions and cultural facilities.	'New economies' are low-carbon economies that actively face the challenge of climate change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General comments</li> </ul>	<p>Would like to see new public transport links clearly identified</p> <p>No planned infrastructure for electric vehicle infrastructure indicated.</p>
<b>STRATEGY 1.2 – GROW THE AIRPORT AND AEROSPACE AND DEFENCE PRECINCT AT WILLIAMTOWN</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions - General comments</li> </ul>	<p>All commitments to increased public transport welcome.</p> <p>New rail links preferred over new road corridors due to better energy efficiency, reduced pollution and less incursion into native remnant habitats.</p> <p>It would be useful to see the level of commitment toward enabling infrastructure for the DAREZ zone directed toward the generation, manufacture and use of renewable energy in this plan.</p> <p>With climate change exacerbating species-extinctions there should be more emphasis in the plan on development and transport that sustains no further loss of native habitats and coastal environments.</p> <p>Growth of DAREZ should be limited due to proximity to core habitat areas for coastal Koala populations already under extreme pressure – from climate change and development incursion.</p> <p>References to the Blue &amp; Green Grid and biodiversity protection throughout the Plan can be viewed as disingenuous when more pressure is being actively planned for regionally important habitats such as this area. These last remaining habitats cannot be viably 'off-set'</p>
<b>STRATEGY 1.3 – INCREASE DOMESTIC AND GLOBAL TRADE CAPABILITIES AT NEWCASTLE PORT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions - General comments</li> </ul>	<p>Re diversification:</p> <p>Climate Action Newcastle supports moves to close the T1 coal loader in Carrington - with the express view that CAN does also not want to see T4 built or</p>

	<p>any further expansion of coal export facilities on the Port of Newcastle</p> <p>All genuine commitments to increasing public transport welcome.</p> <p>Opportunities to activate the high-value high-skilled renewable energy manufacturing sector in or via the Port should be explored.</p>
<b>STRATEGY 1.4 – GROW HEALTH PRECINCTS AND CONNECT THE HEALTH NETWORK</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions - General comments</li> </ul>	<p>All genuine commitments to increasing public transport welcome.</p> <p>High energy efficiency and sustainability standards should be planned and fostered for new health buildings and infrastructure.</p>
<b>STRATEGY 1.5 – EXPAND EDUCATION AND INNOVATION CLUSTERS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions - General comments</li> </ul>	<p>High energy efficiency and sustainability standards should be planned and fostered for new education buildings and infrastructure.</p>
<b>STRATEGY 1.6 – RESPOND TO THE CHANGING LAND USE NEEDS OF THE NEW ECONOMY</b>	
<p>Strategy 1.6 Actions (where relevant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage initiatives to re-use power generating sites for renewable energy generation and re-purposing of electricity distribution infrastructure</li> <li>Greater Newcastle councils will work with infrastructure providers to amend local plans to facilitate the delivery of telecommunications infrastructure, including the NBN, early in the development of catalyst areas.</li> </ul>	<p>This action is welcome.</p> <p>All opportunities to foster the growth of renewable energy generation, use and manufacturing should be better scoped and presented in the Plan under headings such as the ‘new economy’.</p> <p>More emphasis on embedding renewable energy infrastructure would be welcome eg. Grid networking facilities.</p>
Strategy 1.7 Actions	No comment

<b>2. Enhance environment, amenity and resilience for quality of life</b>	
<b>DESIGN OBJECTIVES FOR NSW</b>	
2. Better performance: sustainable, adaptable and durable 5. Better working: functional, efficient and fit for purpose 6. Better value: creating and adding value	<p>In the context of already-advanced climate change, we recommend more focus on these design principles throughout this Plan and subsequent nested plans – including more emphasis on renewable energy deployment and modern electricity grid networking that “shares value for people and communities and minimises costs over time” as stated in the Plan.</p> <p>Appropriate sustainable development practises and standards should be mandated for new design not just optional.</p>
<b>STRATEGY 2.1 – CREATE BETTER BUILDINGS AND GREAT PLACES</b>	
Strategy 2.1 Actions (where relevant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhance the design quality of the built environment by implementing the Design Objectives for NSW in local plans</li> </ul>	This action is welcome – see above comments re design principles
<b>STRATEGY 2.2 – CREATE MORE GREAT PUBLIC SPACES WHERE PEOPLE COME TOGETHER</b>	
	No comment
<b>STRATEGY 2.3 – ENHANCE THE BLUE AND GREEN GRID AND THE URBAN TREE CANOPY</b>	
Strategy 2.3 Actions (where relevant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhance Greater Newcastle’s Blue and Green Grid by implementing the Green Infrastructure Outcomes of the Greener Places policy in local plans</li> </ul>	<p>In light of the significant impact climate change is already having on the survival of species and vegetation communities this action is strongly supported and should be implemented.</p> <p>Eg. No further incursions into vulnerable remnant vegetation communities such as coastal wetlands and floodplains, coastal forests supporting Koala populations, or endangered communities such as the Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark forest. These remnant environments cannot be offset.</p> <p>An emphasis on Objective 1 of the Policy is recommended over new ‘greenfield development.</p> <p><i>1. To protect, conserve and enhance NSW’s network of green and open natural and cultural spaces</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make a cooler Greater Newcastle by greening urban areas, buildings, transport corridors and open spaces to enhance the urban forest.</li> <li>The Office of Environment and Heritage, with support from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment and Greater Newcastle councils will complete the long-term protection of regionally significant biodiversity corridors</li> </ul>	<p>Supported</p> <p>Supported – noting that all remaining ‘corridors’ are already highly degraded with roads and other developments and should sustain no further weakening through development incursion.</p>
<b>STRATEGY 2.4 – PROTECT RURAL AMENITY OUTSIDE URBAN AREAS</b>	
	No comment
<b>STRATEGY 2.5 – IMPROVE RESILIENCE TO NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE</b>	
<p>Strategy 2.5 Actions (where relevant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Newcastle councils will apply the following principles to land use planning and development assessment decisions: etc.</li> <li>NSW Department of Planning and Environment will work with Greater Newcastle councils to plan for a changing climate by: etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Climate Action Newcastle broadly supports these actions and clear planning for climate change adaptation actions noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in each of these Action sub-sets the onus is placed on local government to cover the huge cost of upgrading and building new infrastructure—particularly to adapt to rising seas and flooding</li> <li>while not paying for these consequences of climate change, the NSW government has also continued to approve new coal mines – with coal having the greatest known contribution to carbon emissions and dangerous global warming. Climate Action</li> <li>The responsible path to reducing risk is for the NSW Government to cease approving all new coal mines and mine extensions.</li> </ul>
General comments	<p>Apart from the glossary description, this section contains the only reference to climate change – covering adaptation but no <u>mitigation</u>.</p> <p>Given the urgency and impacts of climate change and the huge role that cities are to play, it is a notable omission for this Plan to not expressly focus on <u>climate change Mitigation Actions</u>.</p> <p><u>This is a serious omission and should be rectified in the preparation of the final Plan.</u></p>

### 3. Deliver housing close to jobs and services

#### STRATEGY 3.1 – PRIORITISE THE DELIVERY OF HOUSING SUPPLY

##### Strategy 3.1 General comments

- Given existing pressure on native species and vegetation communities, and the importance of maintaining all remnant vegetation – urban infill should be prioritised over any new housing release
- High efficiency and sustainability design standards for all new housing should be effected through any available mechanism.

#### STRATEGY 3.3 – PREPARE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGIES

##### Strategy 3.2 Actions

- delivers the overall 40% greenfield and 60% infill housing split across Greater Newcastle by 2036

- There are so little natural remnants in Greater Newcastle it is difficult to see where 40% new housing may be established without very poor outcomes for local biodiversity – already under urban and climate change pressures.
- The 40% ratio should be dramatically revised down.

##### Strategy 3.3 General comments

- Other strategies for managing new settlement around existing transport and infrastructure are welcome.
- A focus on ‘walkable’ communities would be a useful inclusion for climate change mitigation and social cohesion goals.

#### STRATEGY 3.4 – DELIVER WELL-PLANNED RURAL RESIDENTIAL HOUSING AREAS

No comment



## 4. Improve connections to jobs, services and recreation

### STRATEGY 4.1 – INTEGRATE LAND USE AND TRANSPORT PLANNING

#### Strategy 4.1 General comments

- Any increase in the availability, frequency and efficiency of public transport options is welcome as part of climate change mitigation.
- More specific detail and planning is required regarding new routes. For example - light rail from the CBD to John Hunter Hospital is recommended.
- Electrification of the Hunter Rail Line is encouraged – especially if in concert with renewable energy inputs.
- Identification of the potential High Speed Rail Corridor is a welcome inclusion in this section – and should be scoped and progressed further.

### STRATEGY 4.2 – CREATE HIGHER SPEED CONNECTIONS TO SYDNEY TO ENCOURAGE NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### Strategy 4.2 General comments

- A reduction in journey time on the Newcastle-Sydney rail is supported as it may lead to fewer car movements and beneficial for climate change mitigation efforts.

### STRATEGY 4.3 – PROTECT MAJOR FREIGHT CORRIDORS

#### Strategy 4.3 General comments

- Prioritisation and protection efforts toward freight rail is consistent with climate change mitigation efforts and is supported by CAN

### STRATEGY 4.4 – PREPARE FOR TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED MOBILITY CHANGES THAT IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

#### Strategy 4.4 General comments

- Electrification of transport modes may reduce carbon emissions if displacing fossil fuel use – especially if it can be through use of renewable energy. This should be explored further.
- Improvements in public transport efficiency and use are supported