



Hunter Regional Plan 2041



Merriwa

Contributors credits: Aleksander Derevnin, Amy Pryor, Andrew Hill, Anna Dang, Anton Kurniawan, Ben Holmes, Chris Ferry, Daniel Simpkins, Daniel Starreveld, Dylan Meade, Jose Sevilla, Katrine O'Flaherty, Kylie Dorsett, Lingsi Lu, Luke Fanayan, Mark Parker, Paul Maher, Rachel Murray, Thomas Holmes, Trent Bowman, William Oxley, Winny Luong.

Published by NSW Department of Planning and Environment

dpie.nsw.gov.au

Title: Hunter Regional Plan 2041

First published: December 2022

ISBN: 978-1-76058-653-9

Cover image: Newcastle Memorial Walk, The Hill. Courtesy of Destination NSW.

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning and Environment 2022. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose provided you attribute the Department of Planning and Environment as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a departmental website.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (December 2022) and may not be accurate, current or complete. The state of New South Wales (including the NSW Department of Planning and Environment), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.

Content

Acknowledgement of Country	4
Minister’s foreword	6
Parliamentary Secretary’s foreword	7
Introduction	8
The 2041 vision for the Hunter	11

Part 1

Making it happen	12
-------------------------	-----------

Urban development program	14
Infrastructure-first and place-based delivery framework	16

Part 2

Objectives	20
-------------------	-----------

Objective 1:	
Diversify the Hunter’s mining, energy and industrial capacity	23
Objective 2:	
Support the right of Aboriginal residents to economic self-determination	29
Objective 3:	
Create 15-minute neighbourhoods to support mixed, multi-modal, inclusive and vibrant communities	33
Objective 4:	
An inter-connected and globally-focused Hunter without car dependent communities	41
Objective 5:	
Plan for ‘nimble neighbourhoods’, diverse housing and sequenced development	53
Objective 6:	
Conserve heritage, landscapes, environmentally sensitive areas, waterways and drinking water catchments	64
Objective 7:	
Reach net zero and increase resilience and sustainable infrastructure	72
Objective 8:	
Plan for businesses and services at the heart of healthy, prosperous and innovative communities	82
Objective 9:	
Sustain and balance productive rural landscapes	86

Part 3

District planning and growth areas	90
---	-----------

Greater Newcastle District	95
Upper Hunter District	119
Central Lakes District	137
Hinterland District	151
Barrington District	157
Coastal District	163

Appendix A: Centres hierarchy	168
--------------------------------------	------------

Appendix B: Repealed plans and strategies	169
--	------------

Glossary	170
-----------------	------------

References	172
-------------------	------------

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Guringai, Biripi, Geawgal, Worimi, Wonnarua, Darkinyung, and Awabakal lands and waters on which we live and work and pays respect to the Elders past, present and future.

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* recognises that, as part of the world's oldest living culture, these Traditional Owners and Custodians share a unique bond to Country – a bond forged through thousands of years of travelling across lands and waterways for ceremony, religion, trading, and seasonal migration.

The regional plan acknowledges the value of Aboriginal people and would like to pay respect to over 60,000 years of culture, knowledge, and spiritual connections to the landscapes, waterways, sacred sites and native flora and fauna of the Hunter Region. The Hunter region contains many significant natural landscape features including Stockton Bight, Port Stephens, the Barrington wilderness and Myall Lakes.

Aboriginal people maintain a strong belief that if we care for Country, it will care for us. This responsibility to the land requires Country to be cared for throughout the process of design and development.

A Connecting with Country approach can give effect to statutory objectives that require Aboriginal culture and heritage sustainably managed in the built environment.

The NSW Government is committed to continue working towards reconciliation and self-determination of Aboriginal communities and the regional plan strives to develop relationships, collaboration and acknowledge the central role of Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) in the Hunter region. There are nine LALCs in the Hunter region; Awabakal, Bahtabah, Biraban, Mindaribba, Wormi, Forster, Karuah, Purfleet/Taree and Wanaruah. The NSW Government will continue to strive to develop connections and relationships with these LALCs to ensure continuity of Aboriginal culture, traditions and values.

The regional plan acknowledges Aboriginal connection and care to the land in the region and using comprehensive and respectful approaches, planning for the Hunter can build capacity and pathways for knowledge sharing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.



Minister's foreword

It's no secret the pandemic has changed the way we live and work. With its strong economy, vibrant metropolitan heart and stunning landscapes like the Hunter Valley vineyards and beaches of the Myall Lakes, there is little wonder why so many people are making the choice to call the Hunter home.

As Minister for both Planning and Homes, my focus is on increasing a diverse housing supply and ensuring the planning system is equipped to enable communities like the Hunter to continue to grow and flourish.

This regional plan represents a strategic vision and direction. While increased populations often lead to greater densities, this can be managed through a diversity of housing types, including attached dwellings, dual occupancies and multi-dwelling housing, organised and clustered to support walking, cycling and public transport within 15-minutes from homes.

Neighbourhoods need to become nimbler to accommodate different demographics. Neighbourhoods should support people to grow older in communities they know and allow people to stay in communities they grew up as kids. Rigid and difficult to change planning controls limit these choices.

This regional plan considers housing as both quantitative and qualitative outcomes: not just overall supply, but how that housing can contribute to create sustainable, resilient and vibrant places to live.

Our efforts to align state and local government strategic planning will support growth and change in the region over the next 20 years. The *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* is just one part of this. That is why we will continue to partner with local government, industry and stakeholders to ensure the right settings are in place so the Hunter is a desirable place to grow up, raise a family and retire.

This new regional plan is focused on delivery. It takes an infrastructure-first and place-based approach to materialise the plan's vision and objectives into tangible outcomes for the Hunter community.

Urban Development Program Committees are a core part of this delivery and will help manage land and housing supply and assist with infrastructure coordination. This will help ensure there is 5 years of zoned and developable land, enabling more homes for families and those seeking to be part of the great communities across the Hunter.

As the new Urban Development Program Committees get to work, our aim is to set the tone for greater housing choice, improved affordability and better connectivity in all Hunter communities.

Vibrant communities need to be supported by a robust economy and the regional plan strengthens the importance of the Hunter's economic powerhouse. Driven by the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors, the regional plan repositions the Hunter to focus on renewable energy and the circular economy. It seeks to streamline planning so that the Hunter's mining and energy lands can transition over time to the new economy. This is a first for the Hunter and NSW.

The Hunter is clearly a great place to live, work and visit. The best way we can celebrate this continued growth is to set our ambitions high for an even more prosperous and resilient place for people to call home.

I look forward to working with all stakeholders and the community in delivering the *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* to bring more jobs and diverse homes suited to all new, existing and future residents.



The Hon. Anthony Roberts, MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Homes

Parliamentary Secretary's foreword

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 responds to our time, promoting growth, stronger communities, and building resilience in a period of rapid change.

The regional plan opens up opportunities for re-using mining and energy generation lands and their infrastructure for new employment going forward.

The regional plan reimagines cities, towns, and suburbs across the Hunter as mixed neighbourhoods where people can access their everyday needs within a 15-minute walk or cycle from where they live.

It shifts development to urban centres and inner-city neighbourhoods to protect natural areas, promotes the circular economy, and seeks to expand green infrastructure and natural spaces.

New pathways are created to promote economic self-determination and recognition of traditional custodians. The regional plan supports greater connection with Country and integrating Aboriginal cultural knowledge and practice into planning.

Underpinning the regional plan is a new approach to how we plan for our communities. Infrastructure and place will be considered upfront in a co-ordinated way, ensuring new homes, jobs and great places will be delivered.

The regional plan sets a bold new direction for how we will work together to grow the region's successes and plan for a prosperous Hunter.



The Hon. Taylor Martin MLC
Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter

Introduction

A regional plan for the Hunter

This regional plan is a 20-year land use plan prepared under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). It applies to the local government areas (LGAs) of Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, MidCoast, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Singleton and Upper Hunter.

The regional plan draws from each council's local strategic planning statements and acknowledges common interests without duplicating effort.

As the Hunter grows, the region can become a healthy, sustainable and thriving place for everyone. This requires a strategic approach to provide greater housing diversity and affordability, in a region that offers equity and opportunity.

This regional plan sets the strategic land use framework for continued economic growth and diversification in one of Australia's most diverse and liveable regions.

This regional plan considers climate change and COVID-19, while representing a review of earlier strategic planning. It takes a more ambitious and focused approach, drawing on the concepts of sequenced planning and infrastructure, creating great places and enriching community character.

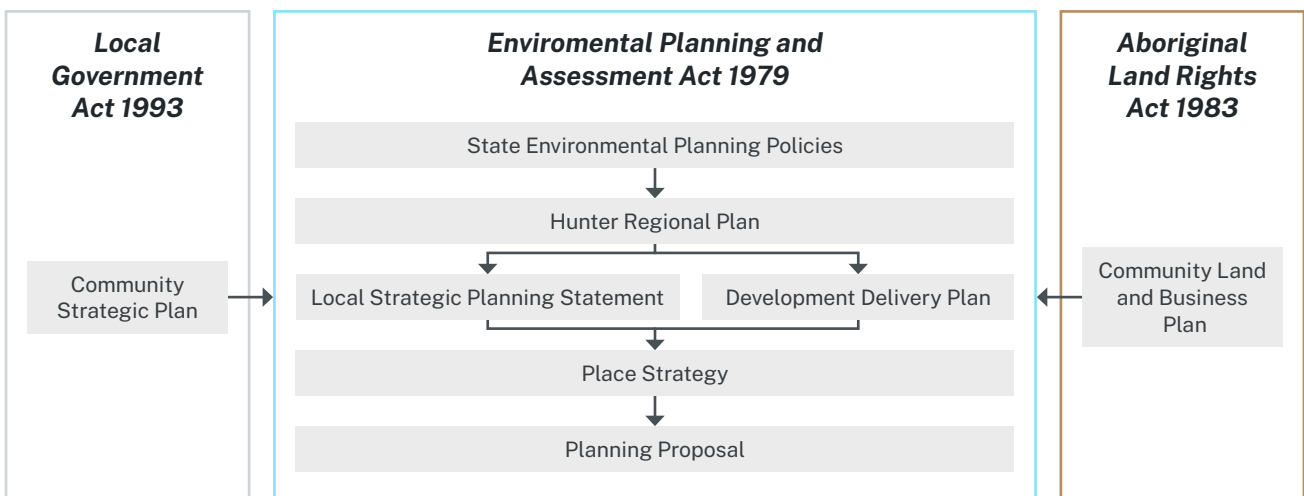
This plan aims to unlock sustainable growth opportunities and investments, as well as housing choice and lifestyle opportunities to retain the Hunter's position as a leading regional economy in Australia.

This regional plan has been prepared concurrently with Transport for NSW's *Hunter Regional Transport Plan*, a multimodal and integrated vision for transport planning in the region. It also aligns with the *Greater Hunter Regional Water Strategy* and the *Lower Hunter Water Security Plan*, long-term roadmaps to a resilient and sustainable water future, along with the State Infrastructure Strategy.

Together, they set a coordinated 20-year vision to manage growth and change for the Hunter in the context of social, economic and environmental matters.

The regional plan will shape how the Department of Planning and Environment will collaborate with councils, local aboriginal land councils, state agencies and stakeholders on the regionally significant growth areas that will underpin our ability to meet the regional plan's vision and objectives in the shortest possible time.

By working together, we can create a globally focused, resilient and equitable region, where people and businesses are well connected and our efforts are driven by a need to care for Country.



What are the big ideas in the new regional plan?

- **Greater diversification** of employment, mining and energy generation lands to support economic renewal and innovation and create opportunities for renewal and change to new land uses.
- A new approach to how we **sequence planning for new land uses and infrastructure** to accelerate proposals that support our vision for the region and bring even greater public value.
- New pathways to **promote economic self-determination, more meaningfully recognise and respect Traditional Custodians**, create true connections to Country and integrate Aboriginal cultural knowledge and practice into urban design and planning.
- Introducing **net zero emissions as a guiding principle** for all planning decisions.
- **Embedding resilience in planning and design decisions** to improve responses to chronic stresses and acute shocks.
- A focus on **15-minute mixed use neighbourhoods** where most needs can be met within a 15-minute walk, bike or drive for people in rural areas.
- **A preference for infill development** rather than greenfield development, where we plan for housing densities that align with how a neighbourhood functions and the type of public transport available, and establish flexible land uses to allow communities to evolve.
- **A renewed focus on green infrastructure, public spaces and nature**, using planning decisions to reinforce, enhance and improve quality of life.
- **Better access to and networks of walking, cycling and public transport** in urban areas, towns and villages.
- **A greater focus on equity**, meaning that people have greater choice in where and how they live, how they travel and where and how they work.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



Hunter Regional Plan Principles



Growth

Support a net zero emissions economy and foster employment growth, competitiveness and innovation.



Community

Promote places to be together by weaving nature into our towns and cities with having welcoming, safe streets and public spaces.



Resilience

Reduce risks associated with place-based shocks and stresses to improve the community's ability to withstand, recover from and adapt to changes and become more resilient.



Equity

Communities should be safe and healthy with residents having opportunities for economic advancement, housing choices and a secure retirement.

Six cities region

Acknowledging growth within and bordering Greater Sydney, the NSW Government uses a 6 cities regional approach to the broader region's future.

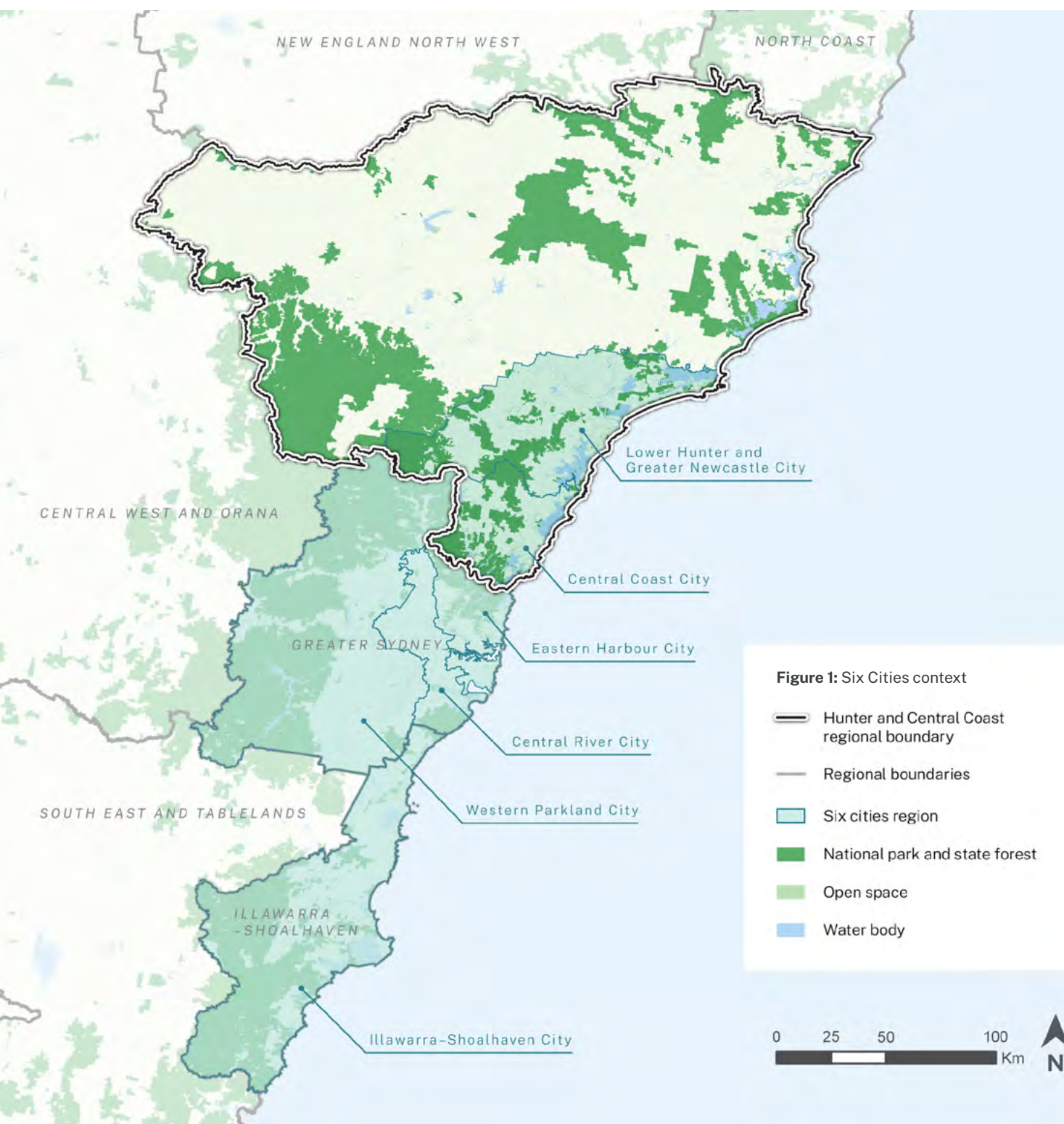
This region of 6 cities comprises the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City, Central Coast City, Illawarra-Shoalhaven City, Western Parkland City, Central River City and Eastern Harbour City.

As an innovation district, the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City will enable its identified and emerging innovation specialities, provide globally leading solutions to the world's most complex challenges and take its place in the innovation network across the cities.

This work will be led by the Greater Cities Commission, which will produce a six cities regional plan. Once that plan is adopted, the commission will then work towards a city plan for the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City.

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* has the status of a district strategic plan within the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City areas until the commission's Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City Plan commences.

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* will remain the regional plan for the Upper Hunter and MidCoast areas.



PART

1

Making it
happen





PART 1 Making it happen

An infrastructure-first and place-based approach will materialise the regional plan’s vision and objectives into outcomes for the community.

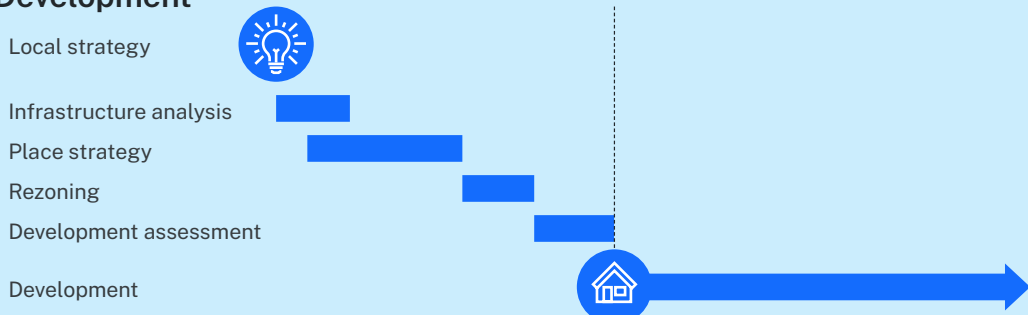
At present, strategic land use decisions, including those relating to state infrastructure contributions, often precede capital investment planning by infrastructure and service delivery authorities. Consequently, decisions on infrastructure investment often lag behind the identification and development of new growth areas and increased housing in existing places.

For a growing Hunter, uncoordinated provision of services and infrastructure is not sustainable, efficient, cost effective or equitable.

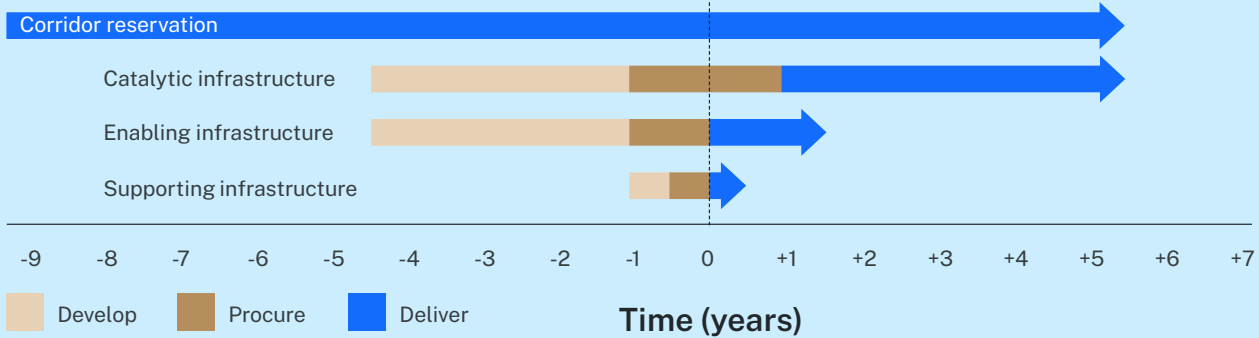
While the regional plan respects the ambitions of earlier planning, it catalyses a new approach to planning in the Hunter and generates wider conversations around a better, more coordinated planning system in NSW.

An infrastructure-first and place-based approach to development requires infrastructure providers, the development industry and public authorities to take an integrated and coherent place-based approach to land use planning. It includes an urban development program, infrastructure assessment and place strategies for specific areas.

Land Development



Infrastructure Development



Urban development program

The urban development program is the NSW Government's program for managing land and housing supply and assisting infrastructure coordination in the Hunter. It provides a strong evidence base through reporting of land supply, dwelling construction and demand.

The urban development program will incorporate LALC landholdings identified in development delivery plans to integrate more effectively into an overall program of urban development.

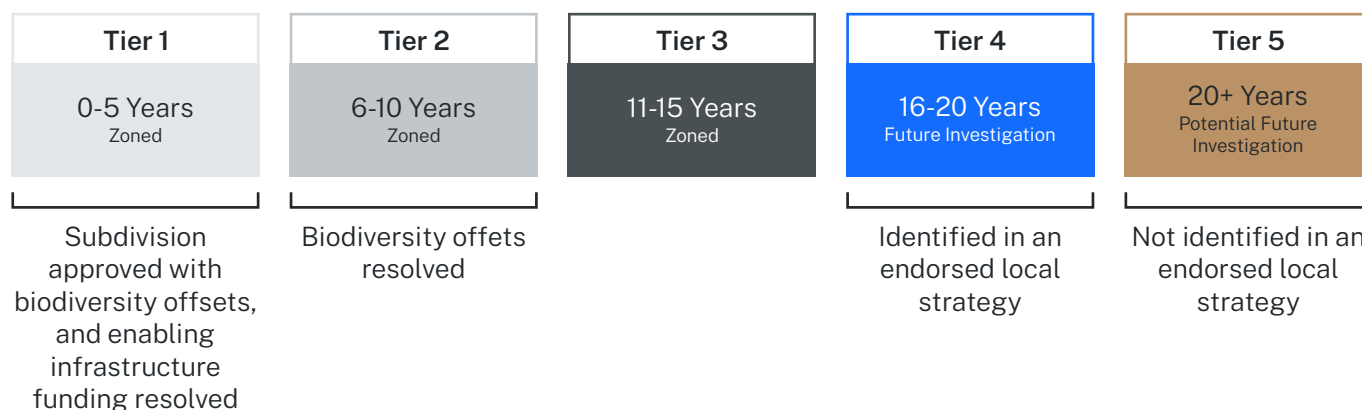
It will report on approvals and completions, including for employment land.

It will audit greenfield and infill areas through data from councils, infrastructure providers and industry. The audit will identify land that is:

- subdivision approved with biodiversity offsets, and enabling infrastructure funding resolved
- zoned and biodiversity offsets resolved
- zoned without any enabling infrastructure or biodiversity offsets resolved
- subject to a gateway determination and seeking to be rezoned
- identified for future investigation in a local strategy endorsed by the department, including its site-specific values and constraints.

The audit will clarify the pipeline of land from potential future investigation sites to zoned and serviced land to determine sequencing using the infrastructure-first place-based delivery framework.

Supply Pipeline Benchmarks



The urban development program committees will:

- identify and remove barriers and disincentives for infill housing
- oversee a pipeline of housing and employment land supply across the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle and Upper Hunter and Mid Coast
- track the supply of infill and greenfield land supply, completions, whether the land is serviced or contains biodiversity constraints/values, and infrastructure servicing data of housing and employment land
- identify opportunities to accelerate the supply of land for housing and employment including improvements to land rezoning, release, and servicing
- make land use and infrastructure sequencing recommendations that may result in more cost-effective housing and job delivery
- monitor the density of development across the region
- provide annual updates on the implementation of the regional plan
- provide annual updates to a sequencing plan and delivery report.

Region	Infrastructure and service providers	Local government & authorities	Industry & professional stakeholders
Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City <i>Department of Planning and Environment (Chair and Secretariat)</i>	AusGrid Health and Infrastructure NSW Hunter Water Corporation (HWC) School Infrastructure NSW Transport for NSW	Cessnock City Council City of Newcastle Council Department of Regional NSW Greater Cities Commission Lake Macquarie City Council Land and Housing Corporation Local Aboriginal Land Councils Maitland City Council Port Stephens Council	Housing Industry Association Planning Institute of Australia Property Council of Australia Urban Development Institute of Australia
Upper Hunter and Mid Coast Region <i>Department of Planning and Environment (Chair and Secretariat)</i>	AusGrid Council (Water and Sewer) Essential Energy Health Infrastructure NSW Hunter Water Corporation School Infrastructure NSW Transport for NSW	Department of Regional NSW Dungog Shire Council Local Aboriginal Land Councils MidCoast Council Muswellbrook Shire Council Singleton Shire Council Upper Hunter Shire Council	Housing Industry Association Planning Institute of Australia Property Council of Australia Urban Development Institute of Australia

Employment land

Continued supply of employment land in varying lot sizes and locations will help meet growing demand and provide for large and small businesses. With a shifting focus on supply chain reliability and timely access to goods and services, opportunities for strategically located employment lands will help meet these needs and challenges over the life of the regional plan. The supply of zoned and serviced employment land requires a partnership between the NSW Government and councils, infrastructure providers and the development industry.

The department will monitor the take up of employment lands and work with agencies and councils through the urban development program to meet industry demand.

The status, supply and challenges to delivering employment land will be reported as part of the urban development program.

Monitoring and performance measures

The department will produce an annual report on the delivery and implementation of the regional plan.

This monitoring will include a line of sight and an accountability framework to each action and objective in the regional plan.

Measures to be reported on will include the percentage of development that is either infill or greenfield, the timeframe and responsibility to complete each action, the number of years of zoned and serviced land, the average travel time and mode of choice between and within the region, the amount of land retained for areas of regional biodiversity value, auditing the performance of the regional plan including the number of low risk, no risk, or high risk planning proposals.

Infrastructure-first and place-based delivery framework

The department, through the urban development program, will guide an infrastructure-first and place-based delivery framework. This framework will inform the likely sequence of infrastructure and development to facilitate the cost-effective delivery of new homes and jobs in the region.

Assess infrastructure first to sequence growth opportunities

An infrastructure assessment framework will help the region to identify the infrastructure and sequence of development that will enable the cost-effective delivery of new homes and jobs. This framework will help to integrate future land use and infrastructure investment early in the planning process to ensure coordination and collaboration across development fronts and infrastructure sectors. This will generally begin with an assessment of the infrastructure to deliver the local strategic planning endorsed by the department, or where growth is proposed outside of these strategies.

The assessment will consider the:

- capacity of existing infrastructure
- potential take-up scenarios of future development
- extent, type and timing of new infrastructure
- cost of differing take-up scenarios
- ability for existing infrastructure or new infrastructure to service development.

The cost effectiveness of new infrastructure will influence government decision-making on where new homes or jobs should be located or prioritised.

Additional analysis to the infrastructure assessment will consider wider impacts and benefits resulting from this potential infrastructure investment.

This additional analysis will consider:

- **public benefits** – number of new homes, proportion of build to rent, social or affordable housing, public open spaces, green infrastructure, environmental benefits and quality design
- **catalytic opportunities** – linked to the provision and benefits from state or regional infrastructure investments.

This analysis will be presented in the urban development program as a sequencing and delivery report. The report will be prepared by the department in collaboration with stakeholders on the urban development program committee and will identify which sites should change tiers.

The report will include:

- recommendations to infrastructure providers on region-wide sequencing opportunities
- an update on roles and responsibilities for place strategies
- an outline on resourcing, collaboration and funding agreements required for place strategies.

Place delivery group and place strategies for stronger whole-of-place outcomes

For areas undergoing significant change (Table 1), the department will facilitate the stronger place-based approaches, through the formation of a place-delivery group and the delivery of place-strategies. These approaches will be provide a forum to facilitate collaboration, make efficient use of infrastructure, help-align state and local investment and lead to stronger place-based planning.

The place-based approaches will apply to areas moving from strategic planning to construction. It aims to accelerate the realisation of the regional plan's vision into on-the-ground outcomes.

What is a place delivery group (PDG)?

The place delivery group aims to resolve planning and infrastructure constraints for an area undergoing significant change. These areas include infill and greenfield developments.

The department will lead the place delivery group to ensure a consistent and transparent process. The department may consider the need for further guidance on the place delivery group process throughout its formation and progression.

A proponent or a council may wish to nominate a site through the place delivery group process to facilitate problem solving of complex areas or areas that contribute to regional development.

Once the place delivery group is formed, the department in collaboration with group members will prepare terms of reference, probity plans, and a project timeline that identifies clear milestones to develop:

- a place strategy and any other relevant planning documentation
- an infrastructure delivery plan, including where relevant infrastructure contributions schemes
- a streamlined assessment pathway.

Each place delivery group will:

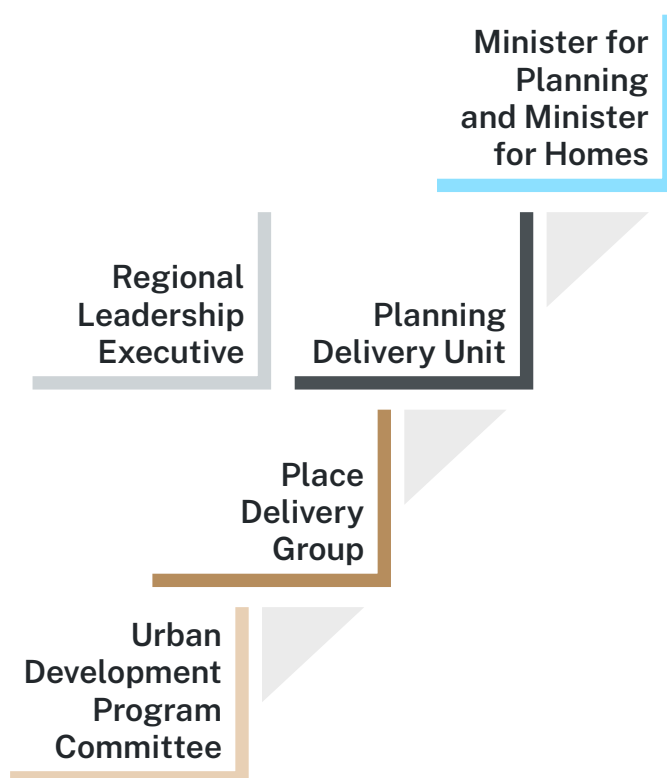
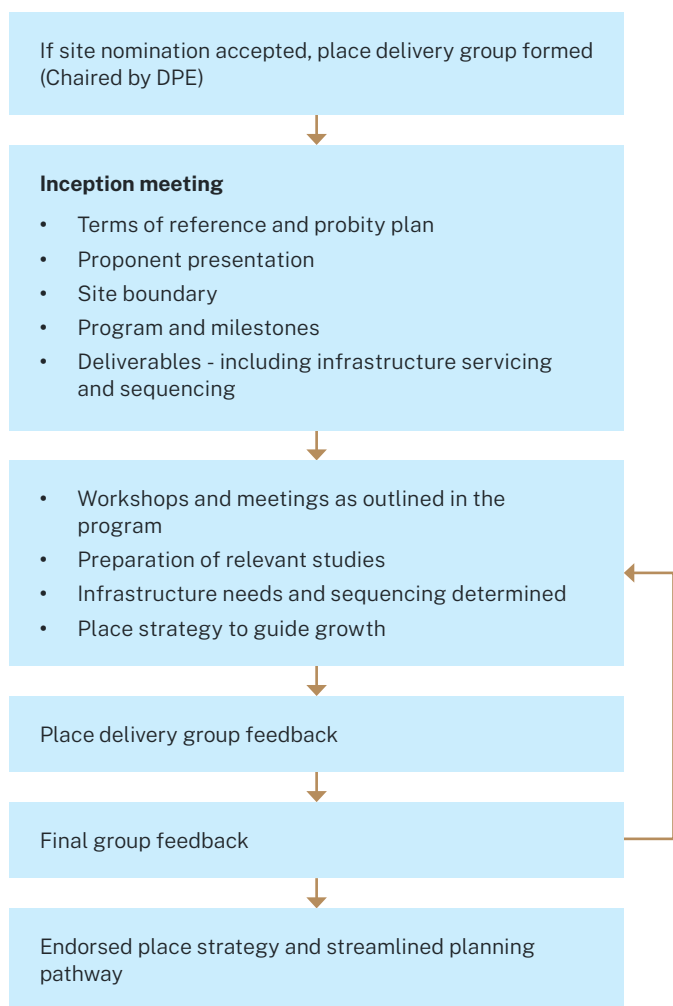
- be chaired by the department and be attended by relevant state agencies (including but not limited to Hunter Water Corporation, Biodiversity Conservation Division, Transport for NSW, Department of Education), councils, LALCs and where appropriate, proponents. The attendees of each place delivery group will be depending on requirements and issues
- determine technical investigation requirements and remove the requirement for subsequent public authority concurrences and referrals at rezoning stage
- track the performance of place strategies and escalate to the department’s Planning Delivery Unit where there are risks of not meeting milestones or delivering objectives of the regional plan
- endorse place strategies and infrastructure delivery plans
- provide certainty to proponents by confirming approval pathways.

Proponents or landowners that wish to nominate projects outside of the nominated regionally significant growth areas (Table 2) or as agreed by the urban development program committee will have access to the same coordinated approach but will need to fully fund place strategies. This will enable flexibility and agility to continue realising the objectives and district planning as circumstances change.

Where agreed milestones or deliverables are not being met, members of the place delivery group can escalate concerns to the Planning Delivery Unit for resolution.

The place-delivery group will be established to resolve planning and infrastructure constraints for an area undergoing significant change.

Figure 2: Place delivery group process



What is a place strategy?

Place strategies will aim to make efficient use of infrastructure, help align state and local investment and lead to stronger place-based planning. Place strategies will also result in endorsed place strategies to support future planning proposals, adding certainty and removing risk, while supporting planned development and investment in high quality places.

Place strategies will help provide certainty to community on areas of significant change and identify catalytic infrastructure to enable the cost-effective delivery of new homes and jobs.

Developed with community consultation, place strategies will consider transport upgrades, enabling infrastructure to support growth, biodiversity, flooding, and other relevant planning matters usually considered through each proposal, enabling a more holistic analysis of the issues across the place strategy area.

Place strategies will be subject to the same stringent checks, balances and community consultation that ensures transparency and public benefit.

The preparation of a place strategy will be overseen by a place delivery group for an area. The place delivery group will include relevant public authorities, the department, infrastructure providers, LALCs and councils to address agency referral and place-making matters.

Place strategies will enable quality development alongside open space, transport and community infrastructure investments. They allow for early public engagement, and early considerations around design, re-use of existing buildings, infrastructure and local assets. They are used to consider biodiversity, flooding, the cost of transport and infrastructure upgrades and other relevant planning matters usually considered through individual planning, enabling a more holistic analysis of an area.

For growth areas where new greenfield residential subdivisions are proposed, place strategies can encourage:

- a range of housing types and lot sizes
- higher yields near open space, retail, commercial, community, recreation facilities and public transport
- sustainable conservation and development outcomes
- an effective and efficient road hierarchy and network
- staged development for community facilities and services commensurate with community need.

The department will lead, support or collaborate with councils to prepare place strategies for areas undergoing change. Place strategies will be prepared for:

1. regionally significant growth areas
2. areas nominated by councils and identified in local strategic planning statements or local housing strategies that have been endorsed by the department
3. catalyst areas in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036.

These areas of change are typically of a scale that will facilitate more than 2,000 dwellings, promote significant investment, are of regional significance, contain multiple parcels of land or require complex resolution of planning matters.

If the parties responsible for a place strategy and the department's expectations on when a place strategy must be prepared differs, this does not prevent councils or proponents preparing place strategies or infrastructure servicing plans in collaboration with state agencies during other rezoning processes.

If there is a requirement for expedited infrastructure provision or coordination between agencies, councils and industry, the department's Planning Delivery Unit will work with stakeholders to resolve issues so that a decision can be made more promptly.

Table 1: Place Strategy and use of PDG

Place Strategy and use of PDG	
Regionally significant growth areas (Priority 1)	Required
Investigation areas in local strategies (Priority 2)	Optional
>2,000 dwellings	Required
Complex or Principal LEPs	Optional
Proponent-led outside local strategy and/or sequence	Optional
Already zoned	Optional

Local Aboriginal land Councils also have a program for short, medium and long-term development and conservation aspirations. The department will work with councils and LALCs to align their objectives with relevant place strategies (see Objective 2).

Roles and responsibilities

Table 2: Regionally significant growth areas and catalyst areas

Planning Pathway	Lead	Area
Place strategy	Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Pinch Point Scone Equine Precinct
	City of Newcastle, Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadmeadow
	Department of Regional NSW, Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post mining and power station sites (including the Liddell and Bayswater Power Station)
	Cessnock City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kurri Kurri Interchange Growth Area
	Cessnock City Council, Muswellbrook Shire Council, Singleton Council, Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunter Valley Viticulture Precincts
	Cessnock City Council, Maitland City Council, Singleton Council, Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branxton to Anambah
	City of Newcastle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kotara
	Lake Macquarie City Council, Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morisset North West Lake Macquarie
	Maitland City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Maitland Catalyst Area
State Environmental Planning Policy	MidCoast Council, Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taree Forster-Tuncurry
	Department of Regional NSW, Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Williamstown
	Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Port of Newcastle Tomago
	Health Infrastructure NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct
	University of Newcastle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Callaghan

Changes to or inconsistencies with place strategies

There may be a need to vary place strategies as new information becomes available or to correct anomalies. Any variation will consider the efficient use of infrastructure and services, significant environmental constraints and natural resources, and regional plan objectives.

Once place strategies are prepared, local strategic planning statements or local housing strategies are the preferred strategic planning mechanisms to make changes to an existing place strategy.

If planning proposals or developments are inconsistent with place strategies, the normal plan-making process, including demonstrating strategic merit, applies.

PART

2

Objectives



Manning Quays ~



Shoal Bay, Port Stephens. Credit: Destination NSW

PART 2 | Objectives

How to use Part 2 ‘Objectives’

Actions



Actions describe initiatives led by the department, with new actions identified during the next review.

Strategies



Local strategic plans

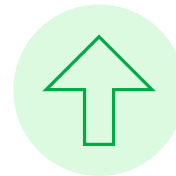
Rather than dictate additional actions for councils, the strategies identify policy positions and directions implemented through local planning (or reviews of local planning) or planning proposals.

Each strategy sets out the preferred pathway to achieve the relevant objective of the regional plan. If a local strategic plan or planning proposal is not consistent with a strategy, alternative approaches will be considered. Performance outcomes listed with each objective provide the assessment framework that determines whether an alternative approach achieves the objectives and vision of the regional plan.



Planning proposals

Assessment pathways for local strategic plans and planning proposals



No risk

Consistent with strategies

Complies with the strategy to achieve the objective.



Low risk

Consistent with performance outcomes

Proposes an alternative to the strategy to achieve the objective.



High risk

Not supported

Proposes an alternative to the strategy that does not achieve the objective.

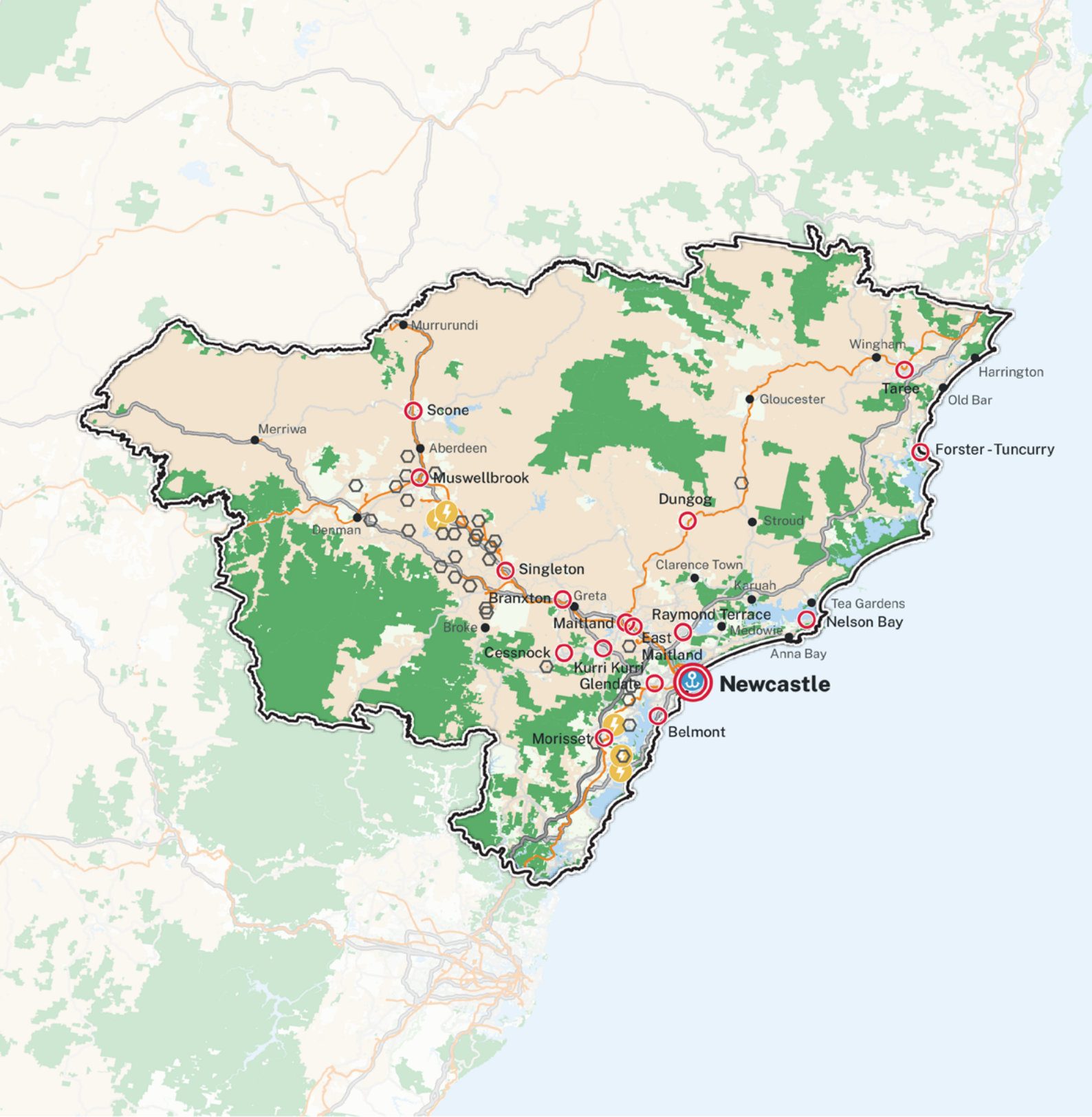








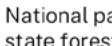


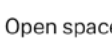


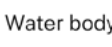



Figure 3: Mines and power stations



- | | | |
|--|---|--|
|  Hunter and Central Coast regional boundary |  Power station |  Rural land |
|  Metropolitan city |  Mine |  Existing urban area |
|  Strategic centre |  Highway |  National park and state forest |
|  Centre |  Motorway |  Open space |
|  Port |  Road |  Water body |
| |  Railway | |

OBJECTIVE 1:

Diversify the Hunter's mining, energy and industrial capacity



Coal train

Performance outcomes

Any planning proposal or local strategic planning statement that does not comply with a strategy in this objective must demonstrate how the following performance outcomes will still be achieved:

1. Power stations and coal mines facilitate diverse job opportunities on their land either during operation or following closure, with land uses responsive to the characteristics of the locality.
2. Employment lands provide a variety of employment uses and diversify the employment base.
3. Employment lands close to inter-regional links support freight, logistics and industries which benefit from connections to inter-regional or global markets.
4. Employment lands close to renewable energy zones support manufacturing related to renewables and energy intensive industries and clustering of business which supports those activities.
5. Circular economy industries and facilities are in appropriate sites.
6. New employment lands are serviced, manage biodiversity impacts and are situated to avoid land use conflict.
7. Employment lands are retained and safeguarded by limiting the encroachment of sensitive land uses.

The Hunter is an economic powerhouse, driven by the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors. These sectors will remain important contributors to the regional economy into the future, generating employment which sustains our communities.

Global economic and policy influences will open opportunities to diversify the Hunter economy as

NSW moves towards a net zero economy. In this respect, what happens in the Hunter is critical –it could be the opportunity for the Hunter to be a leader in a 21st century energy and industrial economy. The diversification of the Hunter economy is the question that all actions in the region must be the primary focus.

Alternative land uses for former mine and power station sites

Coal has a finite lifespan as an energy source and the world is transitioning to cleaner forms of energy. The NSW Government's *Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW* recognises how the NSW Government can help coal-dependent economies to diversify so local communities remain vibrant places to live with good employment opportunities.

There is a concentration of mine and power station activity in the Hunter with some sites becoming available as operations close.

Based on current approvals, many sites will be rehabilitated and returned to either agricultural or biodiversity land.

Rather than returning land to its previous state, we can utilise some sites to create an economic legacy – for example, rail loops and hard stand areas could provide for new jobs while voids and transmission lines could support renewable energy generation. The most appropriate uses will depend on the characteristics of each site and its surrounds.

Early planning

Alternative land uses should be considered at the design stage for a new or expanded mine, or when planning for rehabilitation and closure of existing mines.

Preventing voids in the design process and supporting adaptive rehabilitation over the life of the mine can retain natural looking landforms and support economic opportunities on the former mine land and surrounding areas, especially those like equine and viticulture which value scenic amenity. Community involvement ensures end-of-mine outcomes align with community values.

Environmental assessments for transitioning sites will require land to be remediated to allow for the alternative land use to occur safely. Other issues, such as regulatory settings, site constraints, landowner willingness, market demand and feasibility, will all have an influence on what new uses may occur.

Place strategy planning will evaluate how sites should be developed; as this comprehensive process occurs, there may be opportunities to bring in new uses early if land is well suited for re-use, such as existing hard stand, workshops, stores, treatment plants and rail loops.

New uses could occur while a mine continues to operate. Mine buffer lands or land already rehabilitated could be suitable for employment-generating purposes subject to site specific investigation.

The NSW Government will review the regulatory framework to identify barriers to achieving the development and adoption of post-mining land uses.

Action 1.1



The department will investigate the feasibility of expedited planning options to permit the change of one employment use to another employment use for parts of mine or power station sites where existing infrastructure like hard stand areas, workshops, stores, treatment plants and rail loops are concentrated.

This will also consider mechanisms to provide more flexibility in post mining land uses as part of the development consent process.

Timeframe: 2022-2023

Strategy 1.1



Planning proposals for mine or power station sites identified as regionally significant growth areas will be supported by a place strategy which demonstrates how the proposal will:

- maximise employment generation or will attract visitors to the region
- make use of voids and/or site infrastructure such as rail loops, hard stand areas, power, water and road access
- support the growth of adjoining industrial areas or settlement areas
- enhance corridors within the landscape such as biodiversity corridors or disused infrastructure corridors
- complement areas with special amenity value such as critical industry clusters, open space, villages and residential areas
- have considered the existing and likely future uses of adjoining land and avoid land use conflict
- align with any specific guidance in the district planning priorities section of this plan.

Renewable energy production

The NSW Government's *Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap* provides a coordinated framework for a modern electricity system and a plan to transform the electricity sector into one that is cheap, clean and reliable. The Hunter–Central Coast is one of at least 5 renewable energy zones in NSW.

Renewable energy zone (REZ)

REZs are clusters of modern-day power stations that combine renewable energy generation such as wind and solar, storage such as batteries, and high-voltage poles and wires. By connecting multiple generators and storage in the same location, REZs capitalise on economies of scale to deliver cheap, reliable and clean electricity for homes and businesses in NSW.

The development of the REZ will take advantage of transmission infrastructure, transport links like the Port of Newcastle, water resources and a skilled workforce. There is potential for new jobs in energy intensive industries like hydrogen and green chemical production, minerals processing, data centres, glass manufacturing and food processing.

Developing the Hunter–Central Coast REZ requires efforts to:

- declare the new REZ transmission infrastructure as critical state significant infrastructure (already occurred)
- plan for the REZ transmission infrastructure (underway)
- assess and consult on REZ transmission infrastructure and private sector energy generation and storage projects
- formally declare the intended network capacity (size), geographic area (location) and infrastructure
- finalise the access scheme for the energy projects that will participate in the REZ
- begin a competitive process for the REZ access scheme
- continue to consult with the community develop benefit-sharing schemes.

The Energy Corporation of NSW will coordinate the delivery of the Hunter–Central Coast REZ and lead consultation with councils, Aboriginal stakeholders and local communities. It will drive the upfront strategic planning and develop benefit-sharing schemes.

Strategy 1.2



Following completion of the Hunter–Central Coast REZ, local strategic planning should consider:

- opportunities to leverage new employment in related manufacturing and energy intensive industries that benefit from proximity to the energy infrastructure within the renewable energy zone
- the proximity of sensitive land uses to ensure sensitive land uses do not encroach on activities within the REZ.

Green hydrogen production

Green hydrogen production could reposition the Hunter as global leader in clean, zero emission energy. It utilises water, renewable energy and electrolysis to produce hydrogen which can then be used as a cheap and clean-burning fuel.

The *NSW Hydrogen Strategy* identifies the Hunter as one of two potential hydrogen hubs and work is ongoing to develop the hub into a commercial reality. The hub will focus efforts for innovation, cultivate industry ecosystems and build a hydrogen ready workforce. Coordinated action between industry and government will facilitate investment.

Hydrogen hubs will decarbonise heavy transport fleets, support economic diversification and capture longer term opportunities for hydrogen in the export, steel, electricity and synthetic fuel markets.

Advanced manufacturing, logistics and warehouses

Manufacturing in the Hunter has evolved from traditional manufacturing like steel-making to the advanced manufacturing now occurring at the aerospace and defence precinct at Williamtown.

This trend will continue with the emergence of smart manufacturing, artificial intelligence and robotics, and more distributed manufacturing. E-commerce increases demand for warehouse and logistic properties to accommodate automated warehousing.

Employment lands will need to be planned to respond to opportunities and technologies, including catalytic investments and the transition to net zero.

Manufacturing reforms will require an efficient supply chain and new industrial capacity close to and integrated with major population centres. Planning and development controls will need to be flexible, and development supported by the timely provision of the right infrastructure.

The changing nature of manufacturing may mean some locations or industrial sites are no longer appropriate for industrial uses. These sites could be re-used to utilise the infrastructure in place, providing contamination can be remediated, to meet demand in locations better suited to contemporary business requirements.

Strategy 1.3



Local strategic planning should consider:

- how existing employment land areas, including those that provide urban services, will be retained unless opportunities for urban renewal arise through the relocation of industry
- if there is sufficient supply of vacant, serviced employment land providing capacity for a range of different sized employment enterprises
- the employment land needs for the local government area and identify flexible planning and development control frameworks to support their growth
- opportunities to facilitate growth in logistics, circular economy, new economic enterprises and industries and their supply chains
- the suitability of transport interchanges and bypasses for employment lands in consultation with Transport for NSW
- lands around the interchanges of the M1 Pacific Motorway and Pacific Highway should be used for employment activities that benefit from easy access to key markets such as manufacturing, logistics and warehousing
- the proximity of sensitive land uses and ensure they do not encroach upon these areas.

Strategy 1.4



Planning proposals for new employment lands will demonstrate they:

- are located in areas which will not result in land use conflict
- can be adequately serviced and any biodiversity impacts are manageable
- respond to the employment land needs identified for that local government area.



Circular economy

The circular economy changes how products are made, assembled and sold to minimise waste. Products and materials are kept in use for as long as possible, encouraging cooperation across industries where waste streams from one industry become inputs to another.

A transition to a circular economy will generate jobs, strengthen the economy, increase accessibility of materials, maximise the value of resources and reduce waste. Already, the resource recovery industry is focused on value-adding and the production of high quality, well-sorted recycled materials.

The *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041* aims to reduce waste, increase recycling, reduce emissions and harm to the environment and realise the environmental and economic benefits of a circular economy. It identifies the types of facilities that will be needed and when they are likely to be required.

Circular economy principles

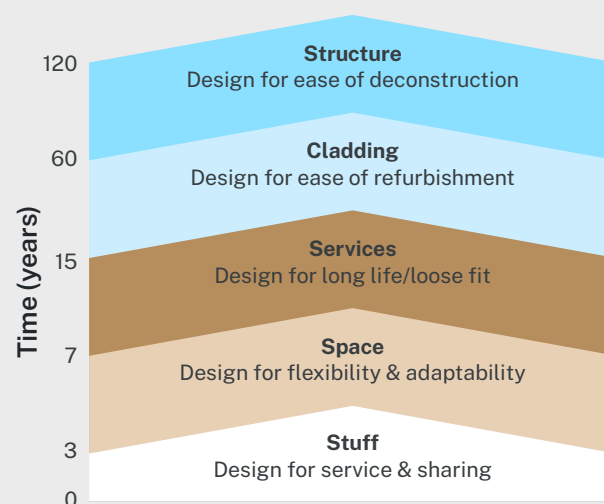
The Hunter will transition towards a circular economy by focusing on seven key principles:

1. Sustainable management of all resources
2. Valuing resource productivity
3. Design out waste and pollution
4. Maintain the value of products and materials
5. Innovate new solutions for resource efficiency
6. Create new circular economy jobs
7. Foster behaviour change through education and engagement

Designing for longevity, adaptability or flexibility in buildings

A building will typically be designed to last for 100 years or more. Features like the façade may be replaced a few times over the lifespan of a building, while bathrooms, kitchens, flooring, furniture and furnishings will typically be replaced more often. Predicted impacts of sea level rise for low lying areas will require more adaptable housing with 50-year horizon for building design.

Development should be designed to accommodate change, such as how often it will be reconfigured or remodelled, and how services, interior space and furnishings can support re-use or recycling. For instance, commercial buildings may provide generous floor to ceiling heights and open grids to ensure the interior can accommodate a range of tenants



Strategy 1.5

Local strategic planning should consider:








- alignment with the *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041* and the seven circular economy principles identified in this plan
- opportunities to support the circular flow of materials by enabling new remanufacturing, resource recovery, re-use and recycling facilities and the expansion of existing circular economy facilities
- the location of circular economy facilities and existing waste management centres, and ensure sensitive land uses do not encroach on these areas or limit their future expansion
- opportunities to promote circular economy outcomes through local policy guidance and development controls relating to building design, materials, construction, and waste management.





Figure 4: Local Aboriginal Land Councils



-  Regional boundary
-  Motorway
-  Metropolitan city
-  Highway
-  Strategic centre
-  Water body
-  Local Aboriginal Land Council

OBJECTIVE 2:

Support the right of Aboriginal residents to economic self-determination

Initiatives to advance Aboriginal land rights in the Hunter

Just as the *Uluru Statement of the Heart* calls for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution, this regional plan embeds First Nations' Voices in regional planning for the Hunter by:

- Involving LALCs in the regional plan's implementation and governance framework including the urban development program committee and place delivery group
- Adopting a vision that seeks to ensure equal access to local economic, employment and education opportunities for Aboriginal residents and connect all residents to Country
- Elevating the right of Aboriginal residents to economic self-determination as an objective of the regional plan to recognise the importance of delivering this aspiration in achieving the future vision of the Hunter
- Facilitating the opportunity for Aboriginal voice and self-determination regarding their future housing needs
- Recognising the value of Aboriginal knowledge in biodiversity conservation planning due to the interconnectedness of Aboriginal culture with Country, and the right of Aboriginal people to be involved in decision-making
- Identifying the strategic merit of LALC landholdings and their potential to deliver future jobs and homes
- Requiring the alignment of local strategic planning with any future LALC Development Delivery Plan (and by extension Community Land and Business Plan) to strengthen the link between Aboriginal land rights and the planning system.

As a land use plan, this regional plan acknowledges the importance of land to Aboriginal people and their sacred connections to Country. The NSW Government is committed to improving the economic self-determination of Aboriginal residents in the Hunter.

Elevating the aspirations of the Hunter Aboriginal residents in the regional plan provides the opportunity to do things better than we have in the past, and that is especially pertinent when it comes to the resolution of Aboriginal land claims and recognising native title rights and interests.

When undertaken in partnership with the Aboriginal community, regional planning can create opportunities for Aboriginal people to achieve their cultural, economic, environmental and social aspirations through land ownership, translating the potential values of returned land into real and tangible benefits.

Land rights

The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (ALRA) provides land rights to Aboriginal communities in NSW as compensation for the historic dispossession of these communities from their traditional lands.

Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) can activate landholdings successfully claimed under the ALRA to generate income, jobs, housing and local services in the Hunter

There are 9 LALCs wholly within the Hunter and further 6 have part of their land within the region.

Table 3: Hunter region LALCs

Hunter region LALCs

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| • Awabakal | • Forster |
| • Bahtabah | • Karuah |
| • Biraban | • Purfleet/Taree |
| • Mindaribba | • Wanaruah |
| • Worimi | |

It takes too long to process land claims or complete negotiation processes, with regulatory frameworks impacting the exercise of land rights. The inefficiencies of the Aboriginal land claim system in NSW are well known and these impact the social, cultural, environmental and economic aspirations of Aboriginal people. Conversely, the prompt, equitable and efficient resolution of Aboriginal land claims and negotiations to return Crown land to Aboriginal communities will pave the way for improved Aboriginal land planning outcomes, driving economic self-determination for Aboriginal people.

Aligning with the objects of the ALRA, the regional plan will support LALCs to improve, protect and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal residents by:

- creating an effective pathway for LALCs to pursue their short, medium and long-term development and conservation aspirations in their community land and business plan and/or development delivery plan
- aligning district planning priorities with LALCs' social, cultural, environmental and economic aspirations
- identifying matters for consideration in local and regional decision-making relating to LALC land, specifically for active planning proposals or short-term priorities (both development and conservation lands)
- recognising the strategic merit of sites within a development delivery plan and streamlining the assessment of planning proposals
- considering opportunities to integrate Aboriginal land claim and planning processes to streamline processes towards economic self-determination.

Many LALCs have successfully activated and utilised the economic potential of their land by forging working relationships with councils, state agencies and development partners.

Across the Hunter, individual LALCs have varying levels of engagement with the NSW planning system and agencies and councils have varying levels of knowledge and understanding about the land ownership, development aspirations and roles and responsibilities of LALCs.

The department will continue offering to conduct a strategic assessment of land held by LALCs to identify priority sites for further investigation of economic opportunities. This includes planning analysis reports of landholdings, including mapping, aerial photos, planning constraints, and general information about the suitability of land for other productive or beneficial uses. This can be precursor to LALCs being able to more effectively navigate the planning system.

The regional plan and local strategic planning statements are central to enabling LALCs to achieve the objectives of their community land and business plans.

Chapter 3 – Aboriginal land of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021* (Aboriginal Land SEPP) and associated planning measures aim to provide LALCs with greater certainty in developing their landholdings. For land where the Aboriginal Land SEPP applies, LALCs can utilise alternative pathways for planning proposals. This includes development delivery plans for priority LALC land to be considered during the assessment of planning proposals and development applications.

The department will work with the Hunter Aboriginal community to better align strategic planning and Aboriginal community aspirations. In practice, LALC lands will be considered across the hierarchy of strategic plans and environmental matters identified and resolved early in strategic planning.

Process for Identifying and endorsing LALC Sites for SEPP (Planning Systems) 2021



Native title rights and interests

The *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* provides legal recognition of the traditional communal, group or individual rights and interests which Aboriginal people have in land and water, where Aboriginal people have exercised their rights and interests in accordance with traditional law and custom pre-dating European settlement. Native title rights typically include property rights to:

- access and camp on an area
- visit and protect important places
- hunt, fish and gather food and bush medicine
- in some cases, possess, occupy, use and enjoy the area.

Aboriginal people need access to Crown land to exercise their native title rights and to care for Country and undertake cultural practices. To make this happen, the department will work with active native title claims and native title determinations (where they are positive) to protect native title rights and interests and to ensure the planning system does not restrict the use of land for spiritual, cultural or economic purposes.

Partnerships

Each Aboriginal community has its own priorities and interests. The department proposes a place-based approach to working with each community to identify land use opportunities on land successfully reclaimed.

By engaging with the local representatives of each place, we collaboratively assess opportunities and agree a way forward, recognising that an approach that works well for one place may not be suitable for another. This approach will be based on genuine partnerships with Aboriginal communities and a commitment to transparency.

We will also develop resources to Aboriginal communities about land development opportunities.

Action 2.1



The department will:

- work with the Purfleet–Taree, Forster, Karuah, Worimi, Mindaribba, Awabakal, Bahtabah, Biraban and Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Councils to identify priority sites that can create a pipeline of potential projects
- identify landholdings and map the level of constraint at a strategic scale for each site to develop options for the potential use of the land.

Action 2.2



The department will work with registered native title claimants and holders to strategically assess native title landholdings and identify opportunities to improve property rights.

Strategy 2.1



Local strategic planning will align with the Aboriginal land planning outcomes identified in any development delivery plan within the LGA to:

- account for local Aboriginal community interests and aspirations in strategic planning decision-making
- further partnerships with Aboriginal communities and build the delivery capacity of LALCs.
- maximise the flow of economic, social and cultural benefits generated by land ownership to Aboriginal residents
- streamline assessment processes for LALCs.



OBJECTIVE 3:

Create 15-minute neighbourhoods to support mixed, multi-modal, inclusive and vibrant communities

Performance outcomes

Any planning proposal or local strategic planning statement that does not comply with a strategy in this objective must demonstrate how the following performance outcomes will still be achieved:

1. Urban settlement patterns maximise the use of existing infrastructure and reduce travel demand, especially by car.
2. Neighbourhoods maximise mobility independence and active and public transport opportunities.
3. Neighbourhoods provide local access to education, jobs, services, open space and community activities.
4. Neighbourhoods encourage healthy lifestyles with opportunities to experience and engage in the cultural, entertainment, sport and recreation, and educational and activities.
5. Neighbourhoods establish or reinforce local identity.
6. Public spaces are designed to invite community interactions and economic, social and cultural activity. They enable a sense of social inclusion, wellbeing, comfort and belonging.
7. Places are designed to be greener to support the regeneration of and connection to the natural environment.

The following table identifies the indicators of performance.

Table 4: Indicators of performance

Context		Neighbourhood scale Homes are within a 15-minute:	Strategic centre scale Homes are within a 30-minute:
Urban	Urban core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walk or bike to most daily and weekly needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public transport to infrequent and specialised needs
	General urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walk or bike to many daily needs public transport to daily and weekly needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public transport to infrequent and specialised needs
Suburban	Inner suburban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walk or bike to many daily needs public transport to daily and weekly needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public transport to infrequent and specialised needs
	General suburban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walk, bike or public transport to some daily and weekly needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public transport to infrequent and specialised needs
Rural	Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walk, bike or drive to some daily and weekly needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drive to infrequent and specialised needs
	Rural residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drive to most daily and weekly needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drive to infrequent and specialised needs
	True rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-minute drive to most daily and weekly needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drive to infrequent and specialised needs

More people are working from home and use their local neighborhood centres and shops for everyday needs. This means people enjoy healthier lifestyles, with less pressure and time spent on commuter road and rail networks.

As life evolves to a new normal, we can actively address not only the learnings and challenges arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the pre-existing challenges and needs the region already faced.

Capitalising on these behavioral shifts requires a rethink of the role and function of neighbourhood centres to improve local services and public places, or to encourage a greater mix of shared facilities, working hubs with health, education, community and social services.

Options for a less car dependent future

Most Hunter neighbourhoods developed from the mid-20th century were designed for cars, whether these were long or short trips. This means that the places people live in today, and the different land uses, urban designs and transport infrastructure, make the car the most attractive and often the only realistic choice.

However, the combination of low density, separated land uses and car-prioritising infrastructure decisions has consequences in terms of household costs, equity and choice. If we reduce car dependency, and vehicle ownership, we can reduce public health and infrastructure costs; reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants; improve the environment; and increase personal health and social equity.

This requires better walking, cycling and public transport networks, ideally that also integrate nature into neighbourhoods to get more people outdoors while creating wildlife corridors and stormwater solutions. These networks can lead to better place-based connections, where more people participate in and feel part of community life.

We can realise these outcomes by designing new communities, and retrofitting existing low density residential areas, into 15-minute neighbourhoods.

Reducing car dependency

As car travel becomes more expensive and congestion remains a challenge, people need new transport options. As long as it is easier to move around in a car than walking, cycling or public transport, people who can afford to drive will do so.

Providing opportunities for getting to destinations without having to drive can help people save time and money, while opening up valuable street space for safer, more sustainable transportation options for all.

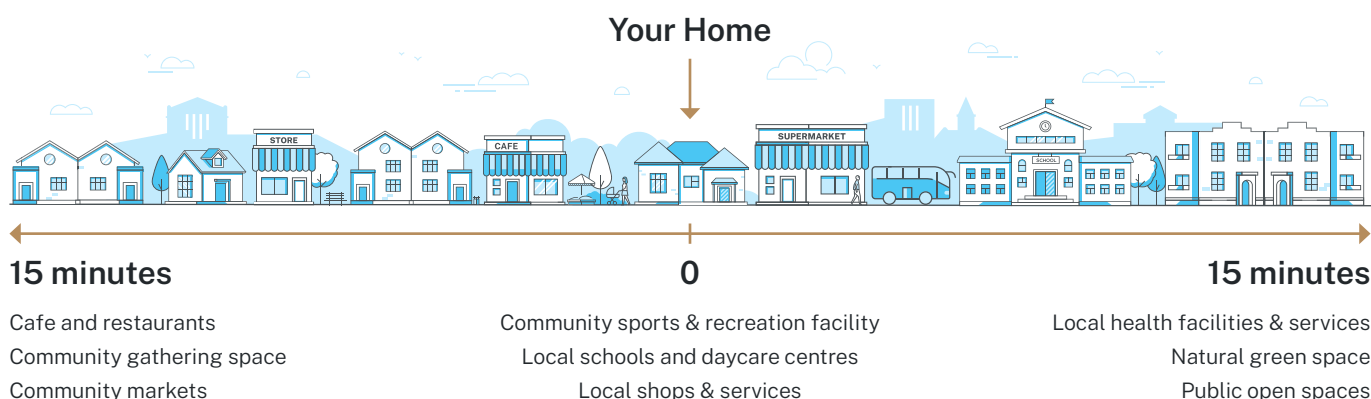
As people choose new ways of getting around, streets need to be able to serve everyone. By efficiently managing valuable kerb space for parking, new mobility options, delivery and freight, we can improve access and reliability for drivers, while creating opportunities for people who choose not to use a car.

The 15-minute neighbourhood

The 15-minute neighbourhood changes how we plan and design growth. It supports people who want to live and work locally and who seek to get around without a personal vehicle. It's already a concept that we can see in the region, in more traditional towns and suburbs developed before the 1960s, including Maitland, Raymond Terrace and Cessnock.

Rather than cities, towns, villages and communities being separate zones for living, working, education, recreation and entertainment, they can be mixed neighbourhoods where people can generally access most everyday needs within a 15-minute walk or cycle from where they live.

Instead of residential growth radiating from a strategic centre, the 15-minute neighbourhood re-establishes the role and convenience of local centres, public areas and attractive, healthy streets, alongside the still-important centres that provide major concentrations of goods, services and employment.



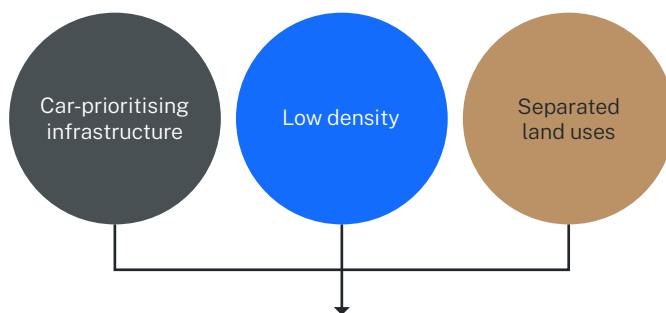
Centres hierarchy

Strategic centres are the primary activity destinations providing the highest level of community, cultural, civic and commercial uses and services.

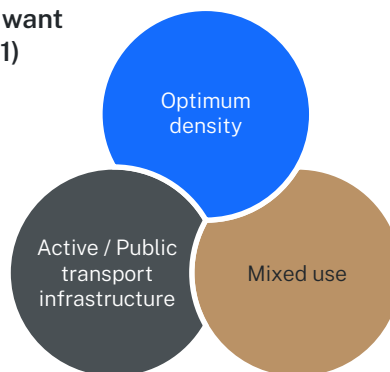
Local centres provide as shopping, dining, entertainment, health and personal services to meet the daily and weekly needs of the local community.

Neighbourhood centres are integrated within a residential neighbourhood and encourage people to walk to their daily needs in a place with a strong identity for the surrounding community.

Where we are (2022)



Where we want to be (2041)



The 15-minute neighbourhood includes:

- **mixed use** neighbourhoods that might include health providers, shops, artisans, markets, sports, cultural life, schools and parks near residential areas
- **access** to different attractions and everyday uses and services via active and public transport networks
- a **density** of human activity to support neighbourhood uses and services.

Planning proposals and development controls can also consider elements that make it easier to walk in a neighbourhood, like smaller street block sizes or more intersections.

It can be costly and time-consuming to retrofit structural walkability after new suburbs are built. These factors should be included as a priority in designing the 15-minute neighbourhood.

Achieving the 15-minute neighbourhood objective will require amendments to planning controls to enable a greater variety of land uses and diversity of housing, alongside investment in footpaths, bus stops, schools or parks. Infrastructure plans will need to be updated to align with the planning controls and the earlier introduction of walking, cycling and bus networks.

Potential conflicts between residential and non-residential uses, such as noise, smell, air emissions, waste water, waste products or traffic generation, should be managed through appropriate development controls or design solutions. They should not be used to justify prohibiting the mixing of land uses that create 15-minute neighbourhoods.

While many areas within the Hunter do not possess the qualities needed to support 15-minute neighbourhoods, opportunities to invest in these neighbourhoods over the 20-year life of the regional plan will realise the right growth, community, resilience and equity outcomes.



Different regional contexts

The Hunter contains many different communities across various urban, rural and coastal contexts, each of which will see the 15-minute neighbourhood take a different shape. This will depend on the elements of mix, access and density.

By recognising these various contexts in local plans 15-minute neighbourhoods will respond to the qualities of each community, with the appropriate for the level of services and quality of life. These different characteristics are considered in the following table.

Table 5: Regional contexts

Context	Current mix and density	Current access*
Urban core Metropolitan city centres with density around public transport.	High variety of land uses, urban activities and services. Predominantly apartments within medium to high rise buildings.	Multi-modal with higher-order public transport like light rail or rapid bus.
General urban Urban areas including strategic and local centres.	Variety of land uses and low to medium rise housing.	Mobility options with at least reasonably frequent, connected train or bus service.
Inner suburban More mixed use than car-dependent suburbs.	Mix of low rise housing around high streets or former village centres with established street trees. May include traditional civic landmark buildings.	Still somewhat multi-modal, usually with a general grid-like connected street pattern.
General suburban Greenfield urban release areas.	Generally segregated land use and mainly single detached housing. May include a shopping mall.	Almost all trips require a car.
Villages Relatively isolated centres to service the local rural or coastal community.	Compact settlements that include non-residential uses such as a local shop, pub or shared services.	Almost all trips require a car.
Rural residential Lifestyle locations with rural scenic outlooks and forms of small scale and niche agriculture.	Large lot serviced subdivisions without retail or commercial offerings.	Almost all trips require a car.
True rural Agricultural producing areas and locations with large environmental and wilderness areas	Predominately natural or agricultural areas with few dwellings.	Almost all trips require a car.

*May not apply to regional Hunter.

Applying the 15-minute neighbourhood concept within urban and suburban contexts creates the greatest opportunity given the concentration of people, access to services and infrastructure and desire to increase the proximity between residential and non-residential uses.

Strategy 3.3



Local strategic planning will identify the location of urban core, general urban, inner suburban and general suburban contexts that apply to the LGA and consider strategies to achieve 15-minute neighbourhoods in these areas.

30 General Suburban

40 Inner Suburban

50 General Urban

75 Urban Core



Café at Bulahdelah



Strategy 3.1

Planning proposals that propose a residential, local centre or commercial centre zone will not prohibit the following land uses within urban core, general urban, inner suburban and general suburban contexts:

- business premises
- restaurants or cafes
- take-away food and drink premises
- neighbourhood shops and supermarkets
- educational establishments
- early education and care facilities
- health services facilities
- markets
- community facilities
- recreation areas

Green infrastructure for a 15-minute neighbourhood

Green infrastructure assets that can contribute to 15-minute neighbourhoods include:

- tree-lined streets, including road verges
- squares and plazas with trees, planting and water sensitive urban design
- private and semi-private gardens around apartment buildings, backyards, balconies, roof gardens
- regional parks, urban parks, open space reserves, formal gardens and community gardens
- river and creek corridors, cycleways and safe routes along road, rail or light rail corridors
- ovals, school and other institutional playing fields, and other major parks and golf courses
- green roofs and walls including roof gardens and living walls.

A richer tree canopy makes a place more comfortable and attractive, diminishes traffic noise, absorbs air pollutants, screens unwanted views and can have positive economic impacts. It influences micro-climates by transpiring water, changing wind speeds, shading surfaces, protecting against over-exposure to UV radiation, and mitigating urban heat islands. Well-designed tree plantings can also alleviate concerns about needing to remove or modify trees to address engineering, wiring or maintenance issues.

Neighbourhoods should include outdoor furniture, covered spaces, bubblers and toilets. Their size and function should match their location; for instance, large open spaces with sports fields are best on the edge of neighbourhoods while small, civic spaces are best in a neighbourhood's centre.

Strategy 3.2

Planning proposals will incorporate:

- a small neighbourhood centre if the proposed residential yield exceeds 1,500 dwellings or
- a large neighbourhood centre if the proposed residential yield exceeds 4,000 dwellings.

The neighbourhood centre will:

- support a floor area informed by a local retail demand analysis
- have enough developable area to accommodate the uses over one level with at grade parking to reduce costs
- be located to maximise its convenience for the vast majority of residents of which it serves
- be located in a high profile location (i.e. main arterial road or precinct with strong pedestrian traffic)
- be supported by a walkable catchment and pedestrian friendly environment.

Strategy 3.4



Local strategic planning will propose goals and strategies to make a cooler region by greening urban areas, buildings, transport corridors and open spaces to enhance the urban forest.

Strategy 3.5



Local strategic planning should consider strategies to ensure 90% of houses are within a 15-minute walk of open space, recreation areas or waterways.

Benefits of green infrastructure



- 1 Reduces heating and cooling costs
- 2 Improves amenity
- 3 Promotes higher spending in retail areas
- 4 Reduces health care costs
- 5 Shades cools streets and public spaces
- 6 Supports community cohesion
- 7 Improves the life span of key assets
- 8 Improves air quality by removing dust and particles
- 9 Improves physical and mental health
- 10 Provides food and shelter for wildlife
- 11 Creates a sense of place and identity
- 12 Carbon sequestration
- 13 Reduces storm water run off

Space for people

For decades, streets have been designed for cars rather than people. Transforming streets for people will require a new approach to urban design and coordinated effort across governments, community and industry, focused on a holistic consideration of streets, public spaces and green corridors.

The street network is one of the largest public spaces for the community. When designed for people, streets contribute considerably to public life.

More people will walk or ride if they can access well designed streets, paths and public spaces separated from traffic, with clear wayfinding, end-of-trip facilities and adequate shade. Streets should offer continuous footpaths on both sides of the road, barrier-free access to public transport and services, and the ability for people to move easily between urbanised and more natural areas.

This includes children aged 8-16 who could walk or cycle beyond their trip to school – such as getting to sport and hobbies, or socialising with friends – while freeing up parents’ time. This preventative health approach could address physical and mental health and social isolation problems experienced by some young people, or overweight and obesity issues, especially for people living further from green spaces.

Strategy 3.6



Local strategic planning should consider local infrastructure and street design guidelines and controls to achieve safe, accessible and attractive streets for all modes of transport, as well as trails, parks and public spaces that will encourage active living, community interaction and opportunities to integrate nature in neighbourhoods.

Street without supportive greening



Street with supportive greening





Figure 5: Hunter inter-regional transport connections



- Cities and towns
- ⚓ Port
- ✈ Airport
- ▬ Lower Hunter Freight Corridor
- ▬ M1 Raymond Terrace extension
- ▬ Hunter Valley coal rail network
- ↔ Inter-regional Connection
- ↔ Railway (length reference)
- Roads

OBJECTIVE 4:

An inter-connected and globally-focused Hunter without car dependent communities

Kooragang coal loaders



Performance outcomes

Any planning proposal or local strategic planning statement that does not comply with a strategy in this objective must demonstrate how the following performance outcomes will still be achieved:

1. Access is provided to housing, jobs and services by walking, cycling and public transport.
2. Urban areas and densities support the efficient and viable operation of public transport services.
3. Key transit corridors provide for the efficient movement of freight.
4. Access to global gateways is maintained or enhanced and their operation is unimpeded by new development.
5. A robust digital infrastructure network to service business and social interaction.

Nearly every aspect of life in the Hunter is linked by transport. These systems can be seamless when they work well, but problematic when they leave people, goods or places behind.

While many workers shifted to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, people still needed to travel to work, especially those working in essential services. Today more people are returning to their workplaces. This requires a continued focus on congestion, the separation of home and work locations, worsening emissions and noise pollution, and heightened vulnerability to climate change.

These issues originate, in part, from decades of public and private development and transport investment decisions focused on cars. Reducing car dependence while maintaining easy access to destinations is an enormous challenge. We need to benefit both individual travellers and the region as a whole, including people without private car access.

Mobility

The upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic is influencing walking and cycling, digital connections, and demand for the delivery of goods to homes and workplaces. This may bring more people to the Hunter, particularly as connectivity across the Six Cities region becomes faster and easier.

The department has developed a 3-scale structure that drives our planning for residents, workers and visitors to access to goods and services they need without the time of travel reducing their quality of life.

The 15-minute neighbourhood, discussed in Objective 3, focuses on local connections and mobility around neighbourhoods as ‘feeders’ to mass public transport.

In rural contexts, it is ambitious to think local needs can be accessed within a walk or cycle; however, the department is aiming for people to be able to access most needs within a 30-minute drive to a strategic centre.

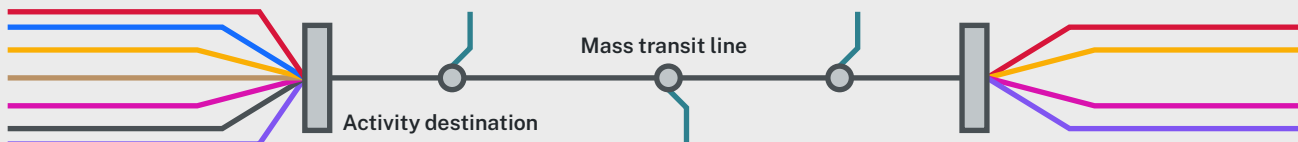
This allows for reasonably easy travel across communities and differing contexts by walking, cycling or public transport to less frequent, more specialised needs within 30 minutes. It emphasises public transport services between key destinations.

The 90-minute region will connect the Hunter to the Eastern Harbour City, Central River City, Western Parkland City, Central Coast City, and the Illawarra-Shoalhaven City. Fast rail will be essential to this vision.



Local, mass and fast transit

Local transit feeders



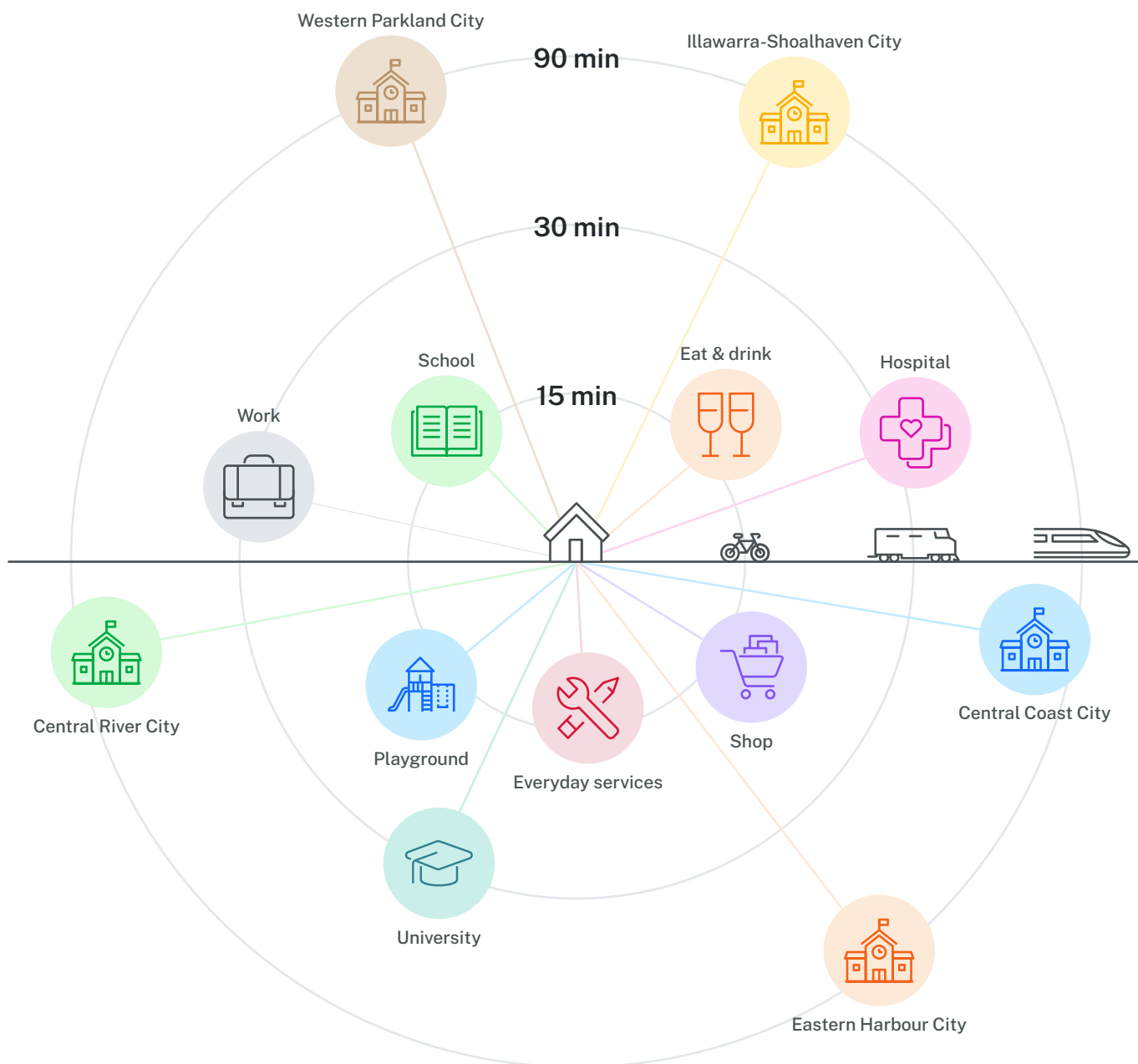
Local public transport

Local public transport serves neighbourhoods with sufficient human activity and a variety of land uses. The right service level should enable most people to do most of the things they want to do, most of the time, without needing a car.

A benchmark boarding rate of 8 passengers per service per hour is considered an economically warranted local bus service.¹

This is likely to require a 30-minute minimum service frequency for about 18 hours a day, with increased peak frequencies if loadings suffice.

Local services should be complemented by mass transit services operating at higher frequencies and over more direct routes, with a synchronised timetable.



One-second mobility

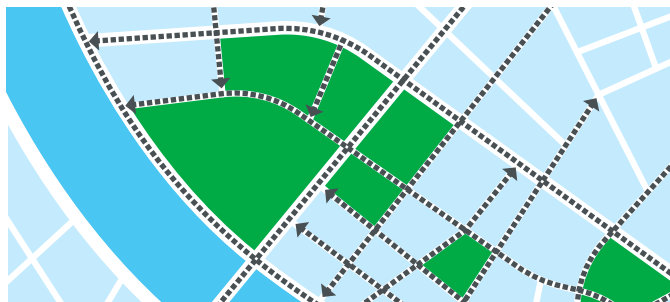
The digital or virtual environment is accessible instantly - we think of this as one-second mobility. It depends only on bandwidth speed and latency.

Transport systems interact with digital systems to provide benefits but also added complexities. For example, online shopping and physical parcel delivery has shifted the prominence of physical retail environments; ridesharing is shifting personal transport practices and casualising employment. These changes will continue to reshape transport demand, logistics and supply chains, fleet composition and employment opportunities.

Data-intensive high-bandwidth global practices must remain in reach for the region's prosperous and sustainable future within a global context. Here, we aim for local transport mobility to support people's local lifestyles, reinforced by regional, national and international accessibility well beyond the inevitable constraints of physical location.

Digital access reduces the need for travel and pressure on the transport network, given less people need to travel for banking, postal services, public administration, food and retail, or health and education.

Street pattern provides for a hierarchy with direct sightlines to key destinations



Protected bike lanes and off-street paths can connect people to commercial corridors, public transport stops and community places. Lower vehicle speeds will improve safety for all road uses, encouraging more people to cycle, walk and roll safely.

The configuration of streets for all users, not just drivers, will also make a difference. This requires wider footpaths; easier-to-use and safer pedestrian crossings; traffic-calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds; more curb space for public transport stops, small package deliveries, pick-ups and drop-offs; and repurposing street parking for outdoor dining.

Councils manage most of the roads, pathways, open spaces and land use zoning process in local neighbourhoods.

Pedestrians are given priority



Scale 1: 15-minute neighbourhoods

Walking and cycling

More people are cycling and walking for commuting, health and leisure. We need infrastructure and policy responses that contribute to the safety and comfort of pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders, and people who use wheelchairs or scooters.

Many of these responses can be achieved in the near term, and they would promote healthier, more environmentally friendly options for local trips or more convenient ways to access public transport or avoid parking.

Attitudes towards cycling

Research² around those who might cycle considers 4 broad groups, by proportion of the population:

1. **Strong and fearless** (1%): People willing to cycle with limited or no specific infrastructure.
2. **Enthusied and confident** (7%): People willing to cycle if some infrastructure is in place.
3. **Interested but concerned** (60%): People willing to cycle if quality infrastructure is in place.
4. **No way, no how** (33%): People unwilling to cycle even if quality infrastructure is in place.

Strategy 4.1



Local strategic planning will consider opportunities to:

- connect existing coastal walkways and cycleways to enhance the user experience and link coastal towns and villages
- integrate walking and cycling networks into the design of new communities
- prioritise walking and cycling in areas around schools, health services, aged care facilities, sporting, cultural and recreational facilities
- explore ideas from the *Streets as Shared Spaces* program.

Strategy 4.2

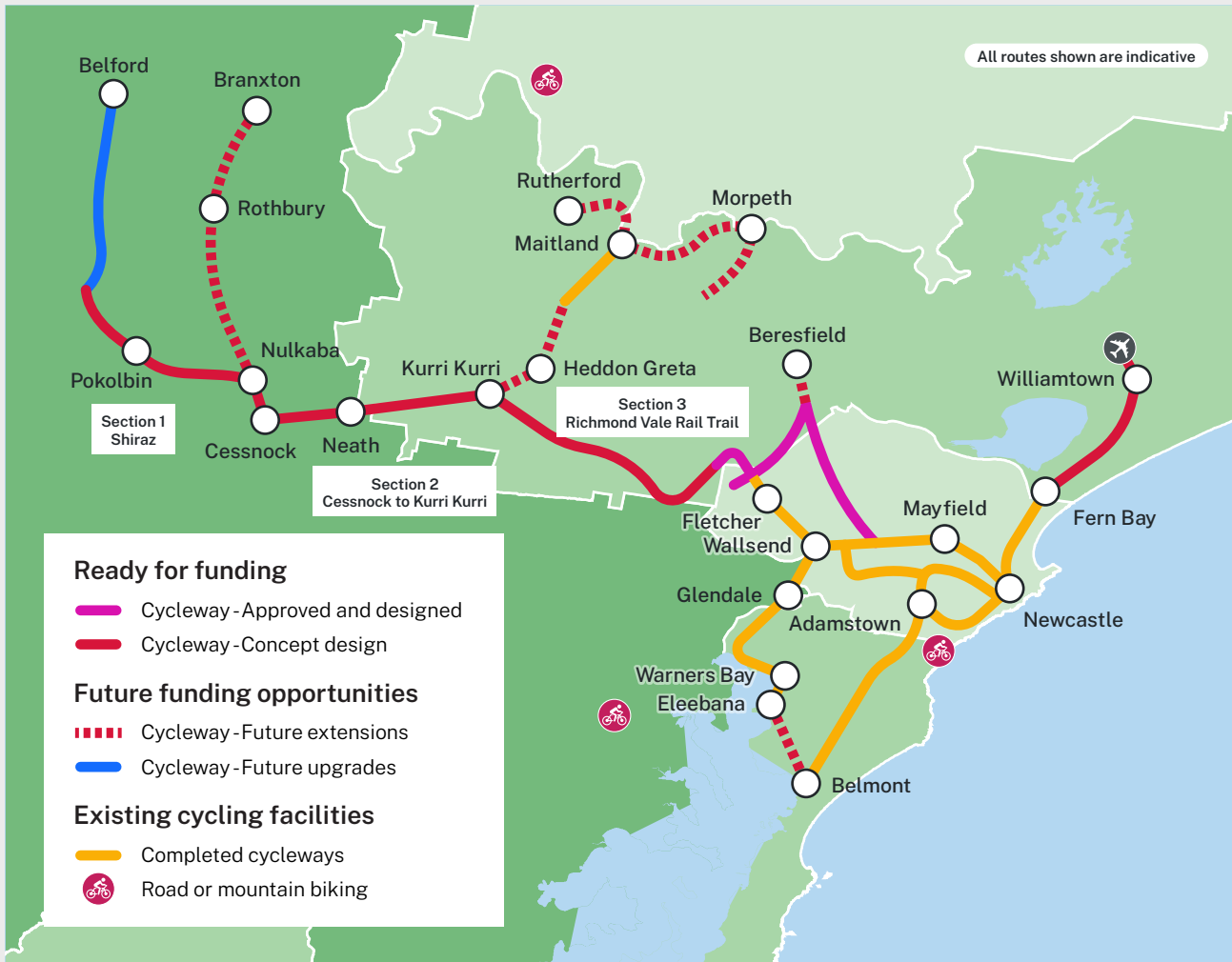


Local strategic planning will consider aligning active transport strategies (within and across LGA boundaries) with future growth areas and local infrastructure contribution plans to ensure development supports movement through walking and cycling.

Councils may consider minimum bicycle parking standards to reflect the aspirations of 15-minute neighbourhoods in the urban core, general urban, inner suburban and general suburban contexts.

Shiraz to Shore cycle trail

The Hunter Joint Organisation has proposed a Shiraz to Shore cycle trail to complement the Hunter's major tourism attractions. This will boost cycle tourism and take advantage of the region's flat river valley and surrounding hills to create an accessible cycle experience for all.



Strategy 4.3

Local strategic planning will consider transport initiatives to complement increased diversity of land uses and housing typologies in neighbourhoods by:

- rolling out low-speed zones supported by physical changes to the road environment
- upgrading existing paths and streets, with more crossing opportunities, and better landscaping, shading and lighting
- planting trees along streets and paths
- re-allocating vehicle lanes to other public space within and around key destinations
- prioritising pedestrian movements in and around key destinations, including at traffic signals
- using low-cost and/or temporary infrastructure to trial or test local initiatives
- streamlining processes for community or council led local walking, cycling and place making initiatives
- using technology to improve places and movements.

Car parking

Minimum parking requirements can lead to a glut of parking. This encourages driving, increases pollution, fosters poor urban design, and buries the costs of driving and parking in rents, goods and services.

Mandating parking supply levels creates more parking than most developers would otherwise build. Building car parking is expensive; costs can be reduced by reducing car parking in areas that don't need it.

Less space for parking means more space (and money) for housing, green infrastructure, and other better and higher uses. It also means fewer cars on congested roads.

Car parking needs to better reflect the context in which development is proposed, such as its proximity to public transport stops, bike or car share options, shops or other services.

Before**After****Strategy 4.4**

Local strategic planning should consider maximum parking limits in neighbourhoods and centres well served by walking, cycling and public transport and consider opportunities for park and ride, carpooling, car sharing and other initiatives that can help to reduce car dependency.



Newcastle Interchange
Credit: CCG Architects

Scale 2: 30-minute strategic centres

Mass public transport

The efficiency, simplicity and quality of connections between public transport modes can influence people's willingness to use public transport.

Key corridors between strategic centres should be the focus of high frequency public transport services such as light rail or bus rapid transit. Integrated land use and transport planning around key activity destinations and key transit corridors can support future transit opportunities.

The Lower Hunter Freight Corridor (rail bypass) will provide a dedicated freight rail line between Fassifern and Hexham, bypassing 10 train stations within Greater Newcastle. This will improve amenity for residents around these train stations and enable future transit-oriented development opportunities.

Local initiatives to promote use of public transport could include:

- focusing growth and providing a range of land uses around public transport nodes and along transit corridors
- linking public transport routes in growth areas to routes serving existing urban development, without gaps or circuitous routing, and doing so early to embed a public transport culture
- prioritising bus movements at intersections and along corridors
- providing good service information and customer experiences
- providing seating, shelter, lighting, electronic information, safe crossings and where appropriate amenities and food outlets at bus stops
- linking public transport to neighbourhood open space.

Strategy 4.5



Local strategic planning will spatially identify key activity destinations and key transit corridors and consider strategies to integrate land use and transport planning in collaboration with Transport for NSW.

Strategy 4.6



Local strategic planning should be integrated with transport planning to ensure:

- places maximise sustainable transport opportunities, including active and public transport that supports compact urban area
- ease of use and connection across the network, including mobility, accessibility, parking and how people get to and from transport
- inclusive and accessible systems for people of all ages and abilities.

Strategy 4.7



Local strategic planning will consider long term development opportunities surrounding train stations in Greater Newcastle that will be bypassed by the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor.



Figure 6: Key transit corridors








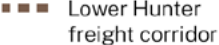

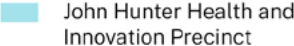


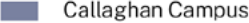


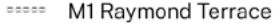
- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| Hunter region boundary | Rail | Existing urban area |
| Centre | Highway | National park and state forest |
| Key activity destination | Motorway | Open space |
| Key transit corridor | Road | Water body |





Figure 7: Freight rail bypass



- | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
|  | Metropolitan city |  | Port of Newcastle |  | Railway |
|  | Strategic centre |  | Train station |  | Existing urban area |
|  | Transit oriented development opportunities |  | Lower Hunter freight corridor |  | National park and state forest |
|  | John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct |  | Highway |  | Open space |
|  | Callaghan Campus |  | Motorway |  | Water body |
| | |  | M1 Raymond Terrace extension | | |

Scale 3: 90-minute region

The NSW Government's Six Cities vision aims to create jobs where people live, attracting world-class industry and talent and delivering the infrastructure to connect the cities together. Improving north-south connections within the Six Cities Region will increase access to more jobs for more people and enhance business-to-business links.

Fast rail

The *NSW Fast Rail Strategy* will be a blueprint for a future fast rail network. It will stage the delivery of improved rail connections for the Six Cities and beyond. This will strengthen the economic productivity and connect people to jobs, services, and more affordable housing.

A fast rail corridor from Sydney to Newcastle will influence the future prosperity of the Hunter. It could reduce travel times to give people more choice about where they live and work. It could also provide a catalyst for regional growth by attracting investment, creating jobs and supporting growth in key industries.

The department, Transport for NSW and councils will coordinate precinct planning around fast rail stations to integrate new vibrant places with existing communities. This will be complemented by regional development activities and new business investment that will see an increase in jobs, markets and workers. Integrated land use and transport planning will result in fast rail stations connecting with mass transit and local transport services to support 30-minute strategic centres, providing better connections to destinations throughout the Hunter.

Strategy 4.8



Local strategic planning will ensure land is protected to enable the long-term fast rail vision by preventing incompatible development occurring near alignments once corridors are identified.



Artist's impression of fast rail
Credit: Transport for NSW

Freight

Globally integrated transportation systems enable just-in-time production, reduce inventories and serve just-in-time consumption. The Hunter is integrated into an integrated global logistics system.

An efficient freight network supports the function of many economy sectors across the Hunter. Sustainable freight movements reduce road congestion, pollution and conflict with other land uses.

Newcastle Airport and the Port of Newcastle enhance the Hunter's global reach, particularly through new jobs and associated growth areas from the expansion and diversification of operations.

Global gateways and national security

The Hunter is positioned to support Australia's strategic defence interests while leveraging the increased defence spending in global markets, particularly the Asia Pacific. The region is home to Royal Australian Air Force Base Williamtown, the Singleton Military Area comprising the Lone Pine Barracks and the Singleton Training Area, and the Myambat Ammunition Depot near Denman.

Newcastle Airport at Williamtown and the Port of Newcastle provide national and international access. Efficient access for products and people in and out of these locations through connection to major transport networks and centres is essential.

Investment in both continues, with Newcastle Airport to receive funding to expand its international terminal. Funding has also been announced to facilitate construction of phase 1 of the Port of Newcastle's green hydrogen hub.

Port of Newcastle

The Port of Newcastle is connected to the national rail network and heavy vehicle road system. It also offers significant areas of vacant land and shipping capacity. As a state significant precinct, its development is managed through *State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021*.

The port's continued development and diversification is guided by the *Port of Newcastle Port Master Plan 2040*. This also addresses the need to avoid urban development from encroaching on port activities and transport corridors essential for its efficient operation.

The Commonwealth has announced the port is one of three potential sites for a future East Coast Base for increased naval capability, including a new submarine fleet. This would make the Hunter the site for the Army, Air force and Navy services of the Australian Defence Force.

Strategy 4.9



Local strategic planning will consider opportunities to:

- protect, maintain and improve the existing and approved freight transport networks
- balance the need to minimise negative impacts of freight movements on urban amenity with the need to support efficient freight movements and deliveries
- limit incompatible uses in areas expected to have intense freight activity
- limit incompatible freight uses in and near residential areas.

Strategy 4.10



Planning proposals will:

- align with the growth of defence, aeronautics, aerospace, freight and logistics capacity at Williamtown and the Port of Newcastle, taking into consideration the *Port of Newcastle Port Master Plan 2040*;
- maximise opportunities to increase capacity to manage freight through the ports/airports and provide access to new markets; and
- protect ports and airports via assessment of the impacts of development on the port/airport to avoid land limiting their future growth.

Strategy 4.11



Planning proposals must not undermine the long-term capacity of inter-regional connections to meet future freight and logistics movements.

Strategy 4.12



Local strategic planning will consider opportunities to improve freight infrastructure linkages between the Inland Rail project and Hunter export facilities.

Strategy 4.13



Planning proposals will not allow incompatible land uses that could affect the long-term growth of defence-related assets, key strategic links and training areas.



OBJECTIVE 5:

Plan for ‘nimble neighbourhoods’, diverse housing and sequenced development

Performance outcomes

Any planning proposal or local strategic planning statement that does not comply with a strategy in this objective must demonstrate how the following performance outcomes will still be achieved:

1. Efficient use of existing infrastructure and services.
2. Appropriate access to employment, goods, services and infrastructure.
3. A variety and choice of housing types for existing and future housing needs.
4. Densities support local business and public transport services.
5. Protection of agricultural, environmental, resource and industrial lands.
6. Maintains scenic and recreational values of natural, rural and coastal landscapes.
7. A diversity of housing provides for choice, independence and affordability to match the specific needs of different communities.

The continued growth and economic success of the Hunter brings challenges relating to affordable housing and homelessness. Smart and strategic housing construction is fundamental - it contributes to the region's economy, generates employment, and supports 15-minute neighbourhoods.

The regional plan considers housing to be more than a mathematical exercise. Housing needs to be considered for both quantitative and qualitative outcomes: not just overall supply, but how that housing can contribute to create sustainable, resilient and vibrant places to live.

Neighbourhoods need to become more nimble to accommodate different demographics. Neighbourhoods that support people to grow older in communities they know and allow people to stay in communities they grew up in as kids. Rigid and difficult to change planning controls limit these choices.

The *NSW Housing Strategy 2041* is underpinned by 4 pillars of supply, diversity, affordability and resilience. The regional plan gives spatial effect to these pillars in the Hunter and guides local land use and infrastructure planning.

Four pillars of the NSW Housing Strategy 2041



Supply

Includes amount, location and timing of the supply of new housing. Planning for the supply of new housing should respond to environmental, employment and investment considerations, and population dynamics.



Diversity

Considers different types of housing and looks at how a diverse choice of housing can reflect the needs and preferences of households.



Affordability

Recognises people live in diverse tenures based on their income and circumstances, and that housing should be affordable, stable and supportive of their aspirations and wellbeing.



Resilience

Includes matching housing to community and environmental issues, so people, communities and their homes are safe, comfortable and resilient.

Housing supply

The Hunter’s population is projected to increase to 949,850 people by 2041 requiring an additional 101,800 dwellings.³

Table 6: Required Dwellings to 2041

Local Government Area	Required Dwellings to 2041
Cessnock	12,600
Dungog	2,400
Lake Macquarie	20,250
Maitland	25,200
Mid-Coast	11,050
Muswellbrook	1,200
Newcastle	17,850
Port Stephens	11,100
Singleton	200
Upper Hunter	-

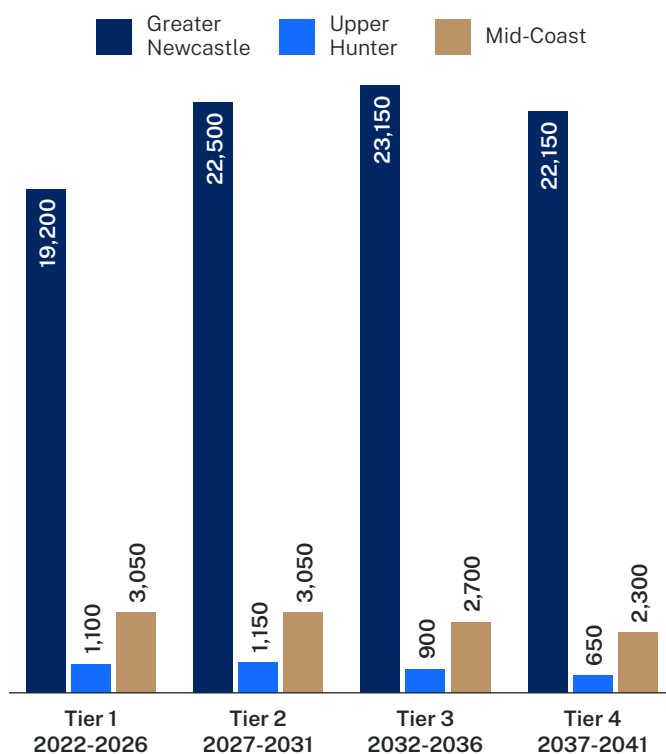
These projections are based on available evidence and represent a basis from which to plan from. The projections reflect current planning frameworks and strategies, and the potential demographic outcomes of contemporary decisions.

Future decisions, such as infrastructure investments and land use plans, will change future development patterns including growth and distribution. Local strategic planning may seek to accommodate growth beyond the base-level. This should be guided by the objectives and strategies to ensure long-term growth is consistent with the vision.

Planning for housing supply

The benchmark dwelling requirement is the minimum number of dwellings projected to be required to account for population projections. We plan for a contingency (i.e. additional dwellings) earlier in the planning process to account for the likely reduction in overall yield as sites are subject to more detailed assessment that refine the developable area. The contingency should be highest during strategy stages to reflect reliability and availability of information.

Projected dwelling requirements



Decisions about where and how to accommodate new housing influences people’s lifestyles, the natural environment, carbon emissions, public infrastructure costs, public health costs and outcomes, social equity and economic competitiveness.

More sustainable urban forms encourage efficient use of land and a greater diversity of housing to match how people live. This reduces the need for significant and costly new infrastructure while responding to market changes and local conditions.

Greenfield and infill housing

Greenfield housing is new housing in an area not previously used for urban purposes.

Infill housing is new housing in urban areas, where a site might be re-used within its existing footprint for new housing, businesses or other urban development. Infill housing occurs in urban core, general urban and inner suburban contexts.

Careful planning requires us to consider the proportion of greenfield and infill housing. Infill housing development reduces public infrastructure spending; increases support for walking, cycling and public transport; and lowers per-capita greenhouse gas emissions. It also contributes to 15-minute neighbourhoods.

Charlestown, Broadmeadow, Kotara, Adamstown and Mayfield could be revitalised with higher residential densities in areas near public transport and open space. We see other housing and urban renewal opportunities in Belmont, Central Maitland, East Maitland, Raymond Terrace, Toronto and Warners Bay.

Strategy 5.1

Local strategic planning should consider the following benchmarks as a guiding principle:



District	Infill	Greenfield
Greater Newcastle	80%	20%
Coastal	70%	30%
Hinterland	60%	40%
Central Lakes	60%	40%
Barrington	30%	70%
Upper Hunter	20%	80%

Action 5.1



The department will develop guidance to achieve desired density and allow an appropriate mix of building types and tenures within the general suburban context, along with well-designed and walkable streetscapes.

Strategy 5.2



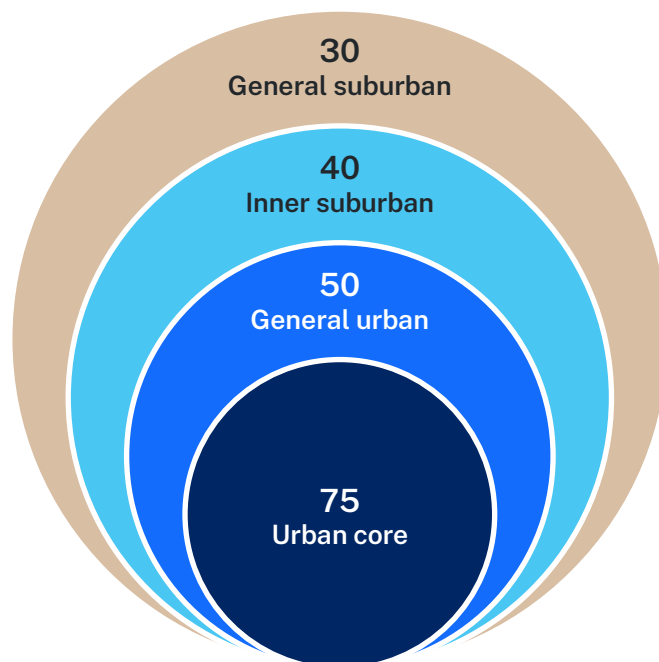
Local strategic planning will consider amendments to planning and development controls that reflect the desired density targets for the urban core, general urban, inner suburban and general suburban contexts.

Housing density and diversity

Housing needs to be planned in a way that meets varied and changing needs of people across their life, in areas where residents can access public transport, public open space and services, such as established towns and neighbourhoods. The regional plan is seeking a mix of densities in terms of the urban and suburban context, and has proposed minimum and desired dwelling density targets within urban and suburban contexts that will be implemented through local strategic planning.

These targets can be met through a diversity of housing types, including attached dwellings, dual occupancies and multi-dwelling housing, organised and clustered to support walking, cycling and public transport in 15-minute neighbourhoods.

Desired dwellings per hectare*



30 dwellings per ha, unless within 800 m of strategic centres and public transport corridors, which should achieve minimum 50 dwellings per ha

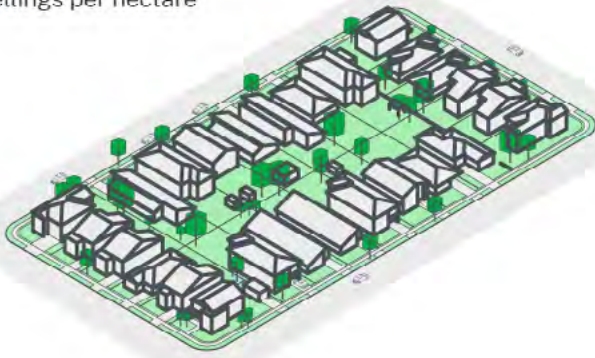
40 dwellings per ha, unless within 800 m of strategic centres and public transport corridors, which should achieve minimum 75 dwellings per ha

50 dwellings per ha, unless within 800 m of strategic centres and public transport corridors, which should achieve minimum 75 dwellings per ha

*For regional Hunter 15 dwellings per ha, unless within 800 m of strategic centres and public transport corridors, which should achieve minimum 30 dwellings per ha.

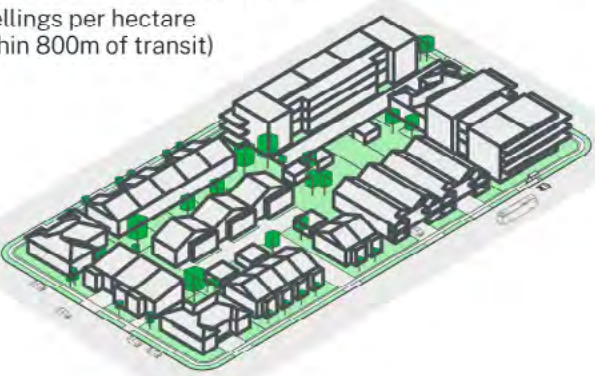
General Suburban Context

30 Dwellings per hectare



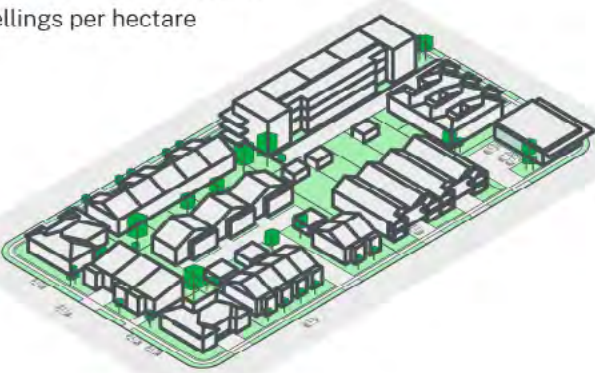
General Suburban Context

50 Dwellings per hectare
(within 800m of transit)



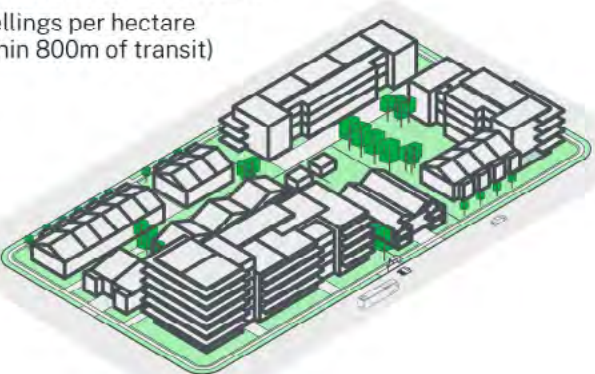
Inner Suburban Context

40 Dwellings per hectare



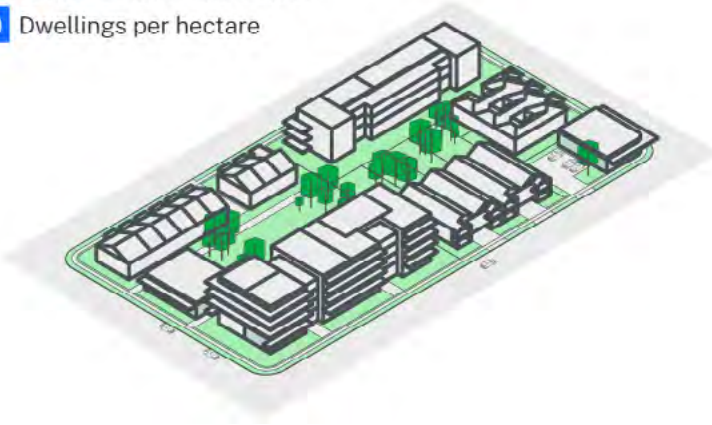
Inner Suburban Context

75 Dwellings per hectare
(within 800m of transit)



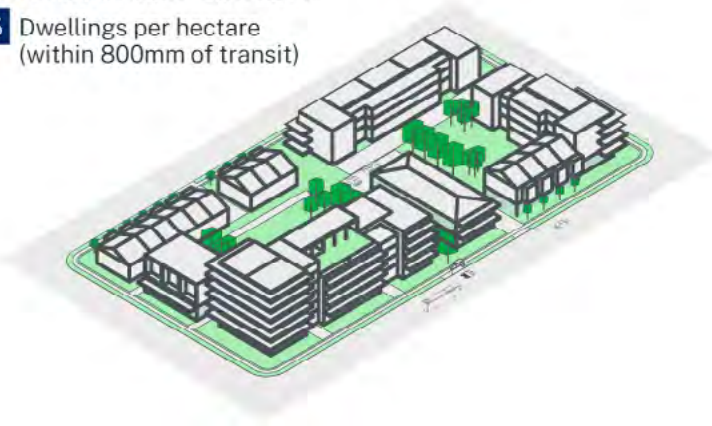
General Urban Context

50 Dwellings per hectare



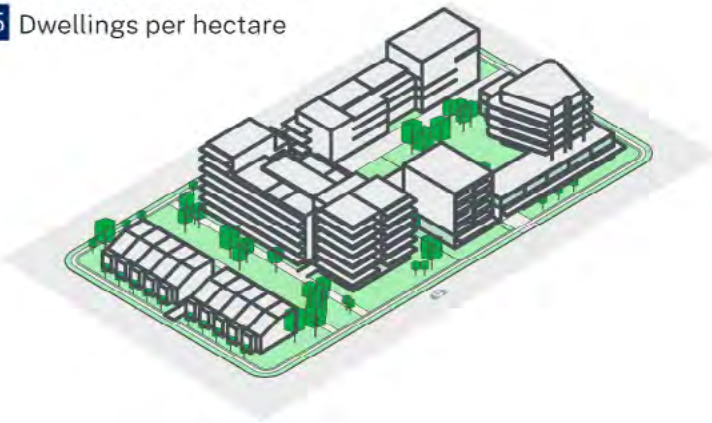
General Urban Context

75 Dwellings per hectare
(within 800m of transit)



Urban Core Context

75 Dwellings per hectare





Low to mid rise housing diversity

Low rise housing includes dual occupancies, manor houses and terraces (up to 2 storeys) that typically require less land and can improve housing affordability by providing smaller homes on smaller lots. Terraces, dual occupancies and manor houses can provide private open space, in most cases at ground level. These types of homes can be supplemented by mid-rise housing up to 4 storeys to promote human-scale built form.

A focus on building typologies between 2 and 4 storeys within walking distance of town centres, public open space and rail stations can balance the need for housing choice, while optimising existing infrastructure, protecting the natural environment and respecting local character.

Housing of this human scale can also support related housing and planning objectives, including:

- supporting small and medium-sized developers in providing new homes
- diversifying the sources, locations, type and mix of housing supply and the type of sites available in addition to larger renewal and release sites
- increasing housing provision in accessible parts of the Hunter to address demand and provide homes in more affordable price brackets
- providing opportunities for custom-build housing, social housing and community-led housing projects
- supporting town centre economies

- supporting public transport patronage and a mix of land uses in greenfield areas
- providing opportunities for contemporary methods of construction.

Strategy 5.3



Planning proposals will not prohibit the following housing typologies within residential zones that apply to urban core, general urban, inner suburban and general suburban contexts:

- attached dwellings
- boarding houses
- dual occupancies
- group homes
- multi dwelling housing
- secondary dwellings
- semi-detached dwellings.

Strategy 5.4



Local strategic planning will consider opportunities to support community driven innovative housing solutions, such as prefabricated and manufactured housing, 3-D printed housing, and tiny houses.

Focus for more housing density





Clarence Town

Affordable and social housing

Affordable housing is provided by community housing providers to very low, low and moderate-income households at a discount to market rent. Collaborating with community housing providers builds capacity, facilitates partnerships and helps to remove any planning barriers.

Social housing provided by the NSW Government was mainly built before the 1970s, when social housing provided a pathway to home ownership for low-income families requiring family-sized homes.

Increasing the overall supply of social and affordable housing will help the people who need it. However, this housing must also match need – for example, it must also meet the needs of smaller households.

Councils may consider incorporating affordable housing targets and measures such as utilising government-owned land or LALC land and collaborating with industry and community housing providers.

The department will provide support for councils considering an affordable housing contribution scheme or seek changes to their LEP to capture affordable housing contributions under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021* (Housing SEPP). This gives community and industry certainty about planned affordable rental housing and how affordable rental housing contributions will be determined and the rate applied.

Action 5.2



The department will establish Hunter Affordable Housing Roundtable with councils, community housing providers, state agencies and the housing development industry to collaborate, build knowledge and identify barriers to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Strategy 5.5



Local strategic planning should consider preparing an affordable housing contributions scheme with the support of the department.

Strategy 5.6

Local strategic planning should consider opportunities to work with affordable housing providers and identify sites that may be suitable for supported and specialist accommodation taking account of:

- local housing needs
- sites with access to relevant facilities, social infrastructure and health care, and public transport
- the increasing need for accommodation suitable for people with health conditions. Seniors housing.

The Hunter will experience substantial growth in its older population. Some districts, such as Coastal and Barrington, already have some of the most elderly populations in NSW.

Older people prioritise factors such as maintenance, the ability to move around, personal and property security, home size and ongoing costs. More manageable homes allow people to live independently in their local area as they get older.

Built-to-rent housing is owned corporately and, although not specifically targeted at seniors, could be suitable for seniors or anyone seeking to downsize without leaving their area.

Strategy 5.7

Local strategic planning should consider planning for appropriate locations for lifestyle villages, such as locations within 800m of local and strategic centres or key transit corridors.

Where lifestyle villages are proposed outside these locations, the village or community should be on unconstrained sites and have:

- reticulated water and sewer
- indoor and outdoor recreation facilities adequate for the number of proposed residents such as bowling greens, tennis courts, golf course, swimming pool, or off leash dog park
- community facilities that promote gathering and social connections such as a restaurant, community hall, or community garden
- access to bus services providing frequent trips to local centres and shops.

Short-term rental accommodation

The Hunter is a popular destination for visitors and for temporary workers associated with the mines. Short-term rental accommodation attracts visitors while also providing housing for temporary workers. Non-hosted short-term rental accommodation can be undertaken 365 days per year across most parts of the Hunter.

With several factors placing pressure on regional housing supply and affordable rental accommodation, a new regulatory framework is in place with a new planning policy, fire safety standards and a NSW Government-run register. Councils have access to the register for compliance monitoring and can use the information to inform local housing strategies and strategic planning for tourism and economic development.

Strategy 5.8

Local strategic planning should consider the demand for hotels, motels and short-term rental accommodation.



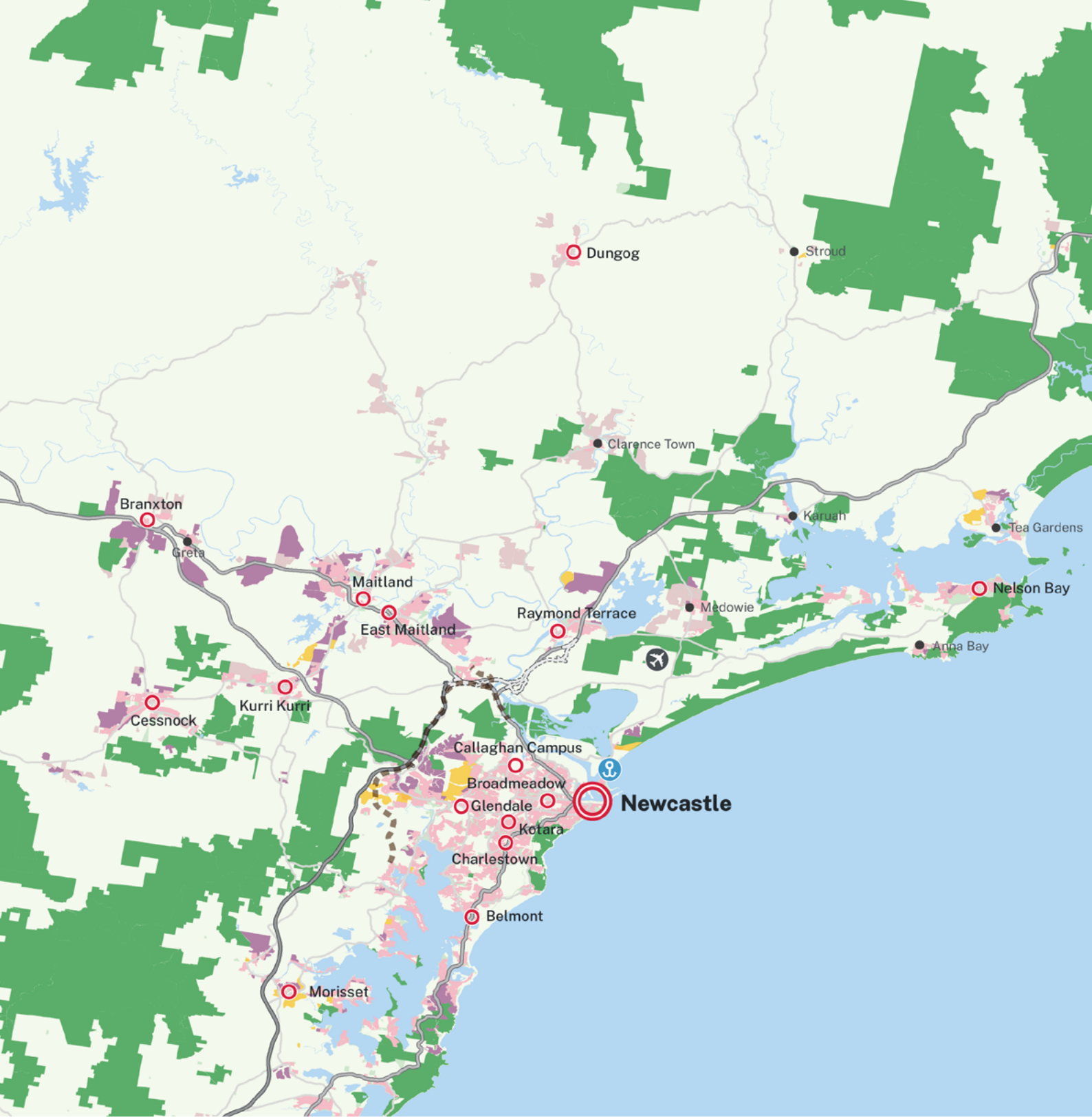


Figure 8: Housing



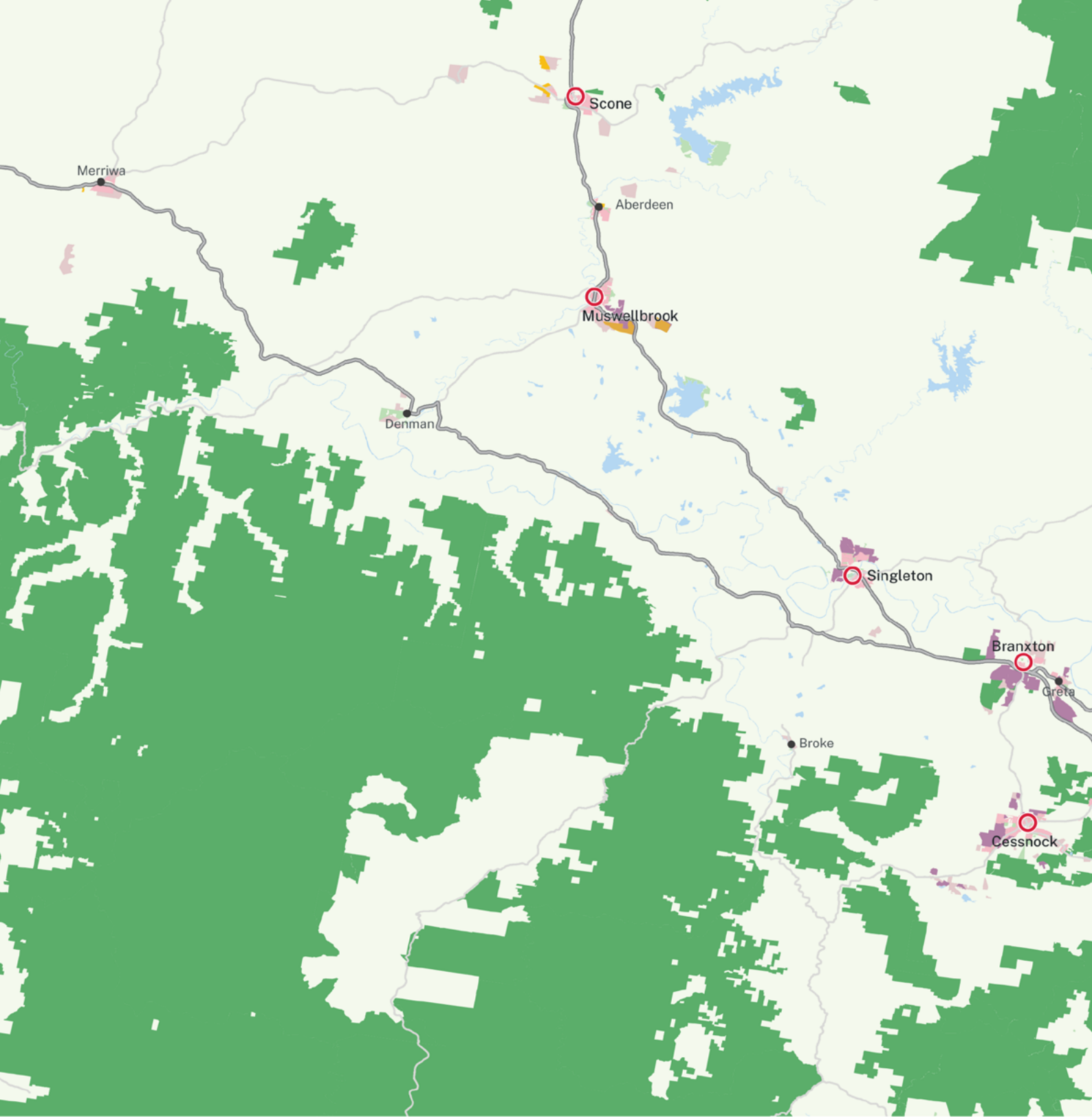













Figure 9: Housing

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
|  | Strategic centre |  | Housing investigation land |
|  | Centre |  | New residential land |
|  | Highway |  | National park and state forest |
|  | Road |  | Open space |
|  | Residential land |  | Water body |
|  | Existing rural residential | | |

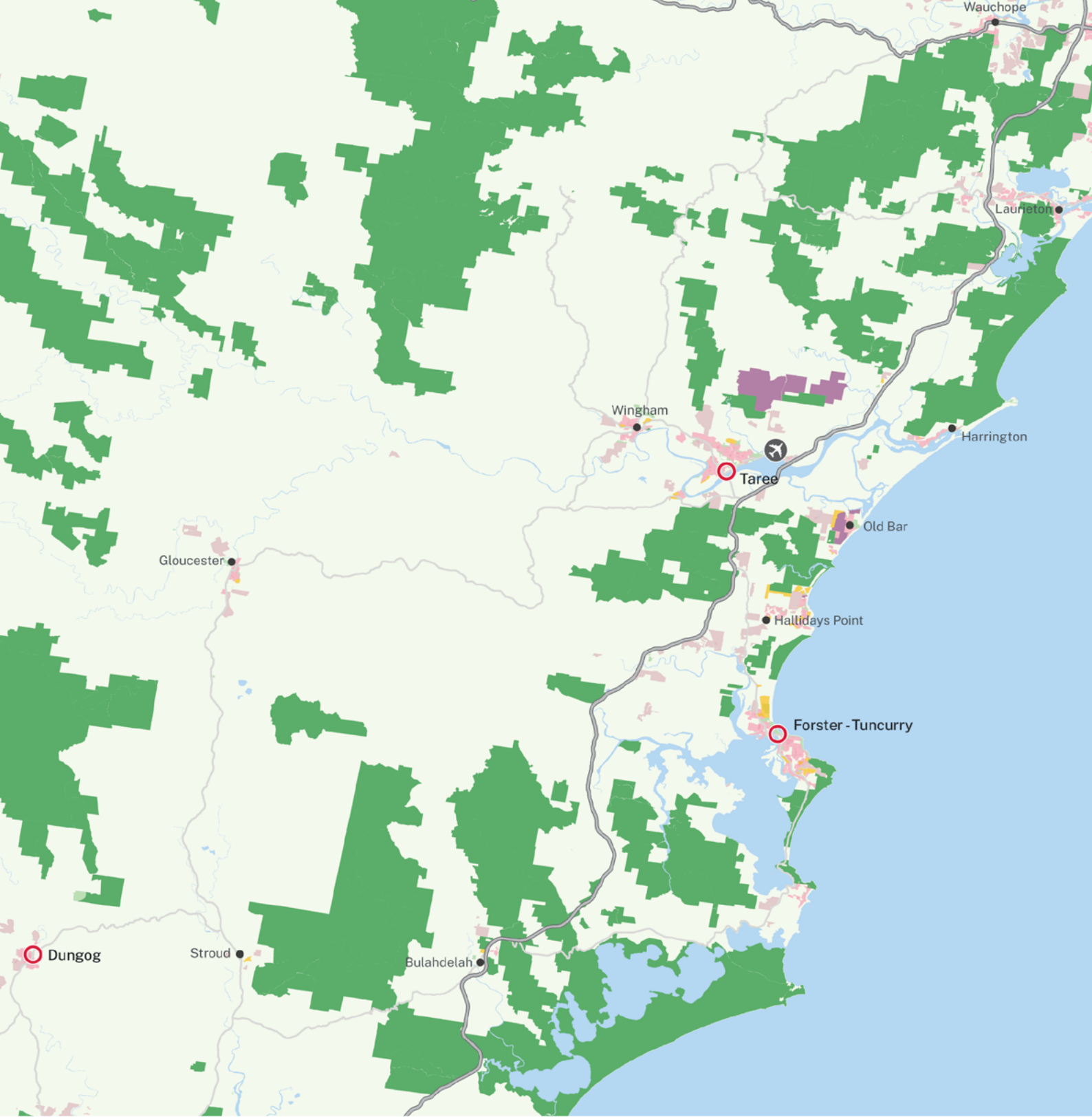


Figure 10: Housing

- Strategic centre
- Centre
- ✈ Taree Airport
- Highway
- Road
- Residential land
- Existing rural residential
- Housing investigation land
- New residential land
- National park and state forest
- Open space
- Water body

OBJECTIVE 6:

Conserve heritage, landscapes, environmentally sensitive areas, waterways and drinking water catchments

Performance outcomes

Any planning proposal or local strategic planning statement that does not comply with a strategy in this objective must demonstrate how the following performance outcomes will still be achieved:

1. Areas of high environmental value are protected to contribute to a sustainable region.
2. The biodiversity network is sustainably managed and provide social, environmental, health, cultural and economic benefits.
3. Development outcomes maintain or improve the environmental value or viability of the biodiversity network.
4. Connection with Country is at the core of designing and planning new projects and places.
5. Aboriginal cultural heritage is recognised and celebrated as living and dynamic and not dealt with statically through harm prevention and protection alone.
6. Items, areas, objects and places of heritage significance are conserved.
7. Water management uses innovative approaches in urban, rural and natural areas to enhance and protect the health of waterways, wetlands, coast and bays.
8. Water quality in drinking water catchments is protected.

A connection to nature is at the centre of this regional plan. The Hunter's natural areas, including waterways, national parks and World Heritage wilderness areas contribute to healthy lifestyles, liveability and economic prosperity. Year-long temperate weather; fresh food from local farms; and easy access to beaches, forests and mountains attract residents and visitors alike.

High environmental values

The NSW Government has adopted the following criteria to define areas within the state of high environmental value (HEV):

- areas protected for conservation including existing conservation areas, national parks and reserves, declared wilderness areas, marine parks, Crown reserves dedicated for environmental protection, and conservation and flora reserves
- important habitat mapping for serious and irreversible impact species
- koala habitat
- native vegetation of high conservation value, including vegetation types that have been over-cleared or occur within over-cleared landscapes, old growth forests and rainforests
- key habitat for threatened species and populations and threatened ecological communities
- wetlands, rivers, estuaries and coastal features of high value
- areas of geological significance.

Local strategic planning and planning proposals should ground truth data layers using the HEV criteria.

Biodiversity conservation planning

The Hunter exhibits high ecosystem and species diversity, including outstanding biodiversity assets which, in addition to their intrinsic values, provide clean air and water and the natural resources that underpin industries such as tourism.

Loss of habitat and carbon sink stores associated with clearing and increasing urbanisation is one of the main threats to biodiversity. Conservation planning protects the most important habitat to maintain the viability of species and identifies suitable development areas to accommodate urban growth. It can also identify offset areas suitable for biodiversity stewardship agreements or considered for acquisition or transfer into public ownership, such as a new or extended public reserve.

Conservation planning must recognise the Aboriginal knowledge of high environmental values, the connection of Aboriginal people to Country, and the right of Aboriginal people to be involved in decision-making. A collaborative approach to biodiversity conservation planning between the NSW Government, councils and land councils will benefit Aboriginal cultural heritage in all its forms.

Development certainty and conservation outcomes are best achieved by strategic planning, rather than development application processes. Local strategic planning and planning proposals should apply the 'avoid, minimise and offset' hierarchy.

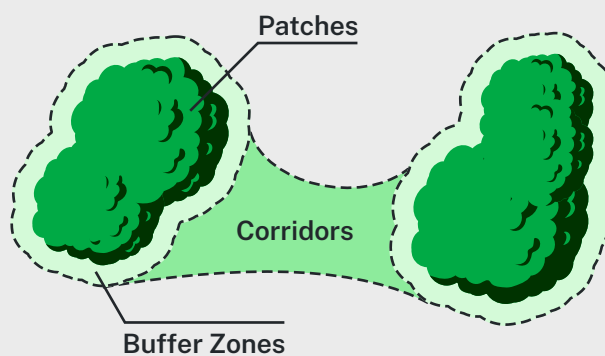
This requires local strategic plans and planning proposals to:

- demonstrate how impact to areas of high environmental value will be avoided
- provide measures to mitigate impacts on biodiversity
- provide offsets where there are unavoidable impacts.

Applying the avoid, minimise, offset hierarchy prior to or at rezoning will provide certainty for development outcomes and streamline assessment processes.

Biodiversity network

A biodiversity network includes **patches** - areas of remnant vegetation such as national parks, state forests and other core habitat – and **corridors** that wildlife use to move around. Networks support active, healthy and resilient communities, helps to mitigate climate change and improves air and water quality.



Hunter's biodiversity

Records of more than:



3,581

native plant species



131

native mammals



483

native birds



189

native reptiles and amphibians



162,233 ha

of rainforest



37,938 ha

of wetlands



12

wetlands of national significance




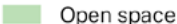
283.5 km

of coastline.⁴










Figure 11: Biodiversity network



- | | |
|---|--|
|  Regional boundary |  Railway |
|  Central Lakes district boundary |  Motorway |
|  Metropolitan city |  Road |
|  Strategic centre |  National park and state forest |
|  Centre |  Open space |
|  Airport |  Existing urban area |
|  Port |  Water body |

BIODIVERSITY CORRIDORS:

-  1 Jiliby to Wallarah Peninsula link and landscape break
-  2 Watagans to Stockton link
-  3 Upper Hunter Valley link
-  4 Liverpool Ranges link
-  5 Barrington Tops to Myall Lake link
-  6 Manning River link
-  7 Barrington to Port Stephens link

Biodiversity corridors

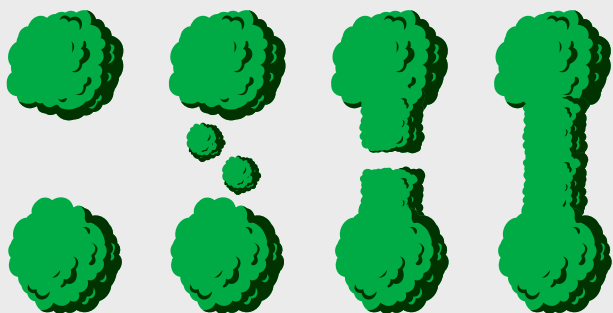
Biodiversity corridors support ecological processes for plants and wildlife movement. They help species to adapt to changes in habitat and climate, providing refugia where species can retreat and persist when environmental conditions change.

Large areas of remnant vegetation in the Hunter, such as national parks, state forests, council reserves, floodplains, foreshores and riparian vegetation, can be connected to secure biodiversity corridors.

Local, regional and even continental-scale actions will accrue benefits for specific populations and entire species, so that species can move to new areas as necessary under climate change.

Biodiversity corridor connections can be improved through the planning system by securing corridors in a conservation zone or revegetating corridor gaps as part of a biodiversity stewardship agreement.

Sustaining regional habitat connectivity



Lower Connectivity

Higher Connectivity

Jilliby to Wallarah Peninsula link and landscape break

This link encompasses major new land release areas in the Hunter and Central Coast. Conservation planning will identify and create habitat corridors between Jilliby State Conservation Area, Wallarah National Park and the Munmorah State Conservation Area. This will provide a landscape break between greenfield areas in southern Lake Macquarie and Central Coast.

Watagans to Stockton link

This link will accommodate north-south transport infrastructure and greenfield land in Greater Newcastle and the western and northern parts of the hinterland. Conservation planning will conserve remnant vegetation and rehabilitate land to strengthen the corridor between Watagans National Park and Port Stephens. Investment may be needed to rehabilitate land within the current corridor boundary or by extending the corridor boundary, subject to further assessment of the existing ecological capability as well as current and future land use demands.

Upper Hunter Valley link

This link contains valley floor forest and woodland remnants and covers the only viable north-south corridor across the Upper Hunter. Conservation planning will connect, protect and enhance large

patches of vegetation between Wollemi National Park, Manobalai Nature Reserve and the Liverpool Range through private land incentive programs and other mechanisms such as biodiversity offsetting.

Liverpool Ranges link

Conservation planning will use ridgelines and the higher slopes to maintain and enhance connections between Coolah Tops and Towarri national parks and further east, utilising private land incentive programs and other measures such as biodiversity offsetting.

Barrington Tops to Myall Lake link

This link is located between Barrington Tops National Park and large patches of existing vegetation in the Myall Lakes and Port Stephens areas. Conservation planning will protect landscape-scale connections through private land incentive programs and other measures such as land use planning and biodiversity offsetting.

Manning River Link

This link encompasses fauna corridors and large vegetation patches between Barrington Tops and Woko national parks across the Manning River floodplain to coastal reserves, such as Talawah Nature Reserve. Conservation planning will protect and enhance landscape-scale connectivity through private land incentive programs and other mechanisms such as land use planning and biodiversity offsetting.

Corridors identified in this plan are at a broad scale. Corridor mapping at different scales is available from the department and some councils. The appropriate scale of corridor should be referenced for the particular planning process under consideration.

Strategy 6.1

Local strategic planning will protect important environmental assets by:

- seeking advice from local Aboriginal knowledge holders to find common approaches that will support the health and wellbeing of Country
- maintaining and enhancing areas of high environmental value
- recognising areas of high environmental value in local environmental plans
- considering opportunities for biodiversity offsetting in areas of high environmental value
- minimising potential development impacts on areas of high environmental value and biodiversity corridors by implementing the 'avoid, minimise and offset' hierarchy
- improving the quality of, and access to, information relating to areas of high environmental value
- implementing appropriate measures to conserve areas of high environmental value
- identify, map and avoid, where possible, areas of high environmental value that occur within urban growth 'investigation' areas of this regional plan and local strategic plans.

Strategy 6.2

Local strategic planning will:

- identify regionally and locally significant biodiversity corridors and a framework for where conservation priorities and opportunities can be secured. The level of protection afforded to biodiversity corridors should be commensurate with the contribution they make to the wider ecological network
- consider the location and function of biodiversity corridors when determining future urban growth areas.

Strategy 6.3

Planning proposals will ensure the biodiversity network is protected within an appropriate conservation zone unless an alternate zone is justified following application of the avoid, minimise, offset hierarchy.

Strategy 6.4

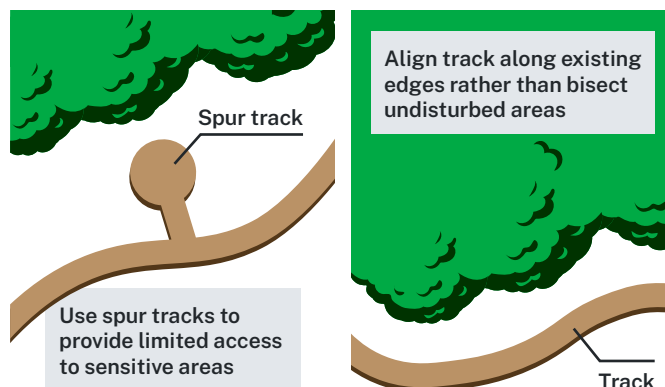
Planning proposals should promote enterprises, housing and other uses that complement the biodiversity, scenic and water quality outcomes of biodiversity corridors. Particularly, where they can help safeguard and care for natural areas on privately owned land.

Outdoor recreation

While the biodiversity network provides habitat for native species it can, when suitable and when well planned, be used for nature-based recreation. Identifying buffers around patches and corridors can inform the design of recreational tracks in appropriate locations, allowing people to connect with nature while maintaining the conservation role of the biodiversity network.

Other considerations for nature-based recreation within or adjoining the biodiversity network include:

- aligning tracks along or near existing human-created or natural edges rather than bisecting undisturbed areas
- keeping a track and its zone of influence away from specific areas of known sensitive species
- avoiding or limiting access to critical habitat patches
- providing diverse track experiences so that track users are less inclined to create tracks of their own
- using spur tracks or dead-end tracks to provide access to sensitive areas because these tracks have less volume
- generally, concentrating activity rather than dispersing it.



Urban forests

As climate change, population growth and urban heating place pressure on people and places, a healthy urban forest will contribute to the health and liveability of the Hunter. An urban forest, or thicker tree canopy cover, can provide shade and cooling, minimising urban heat island effect and improving street-level comfort for pedestrians. Other elements, like green infrastructure and ecosystem services, can also benefit communities, while reducing the cost of traditional hardstand infrastructure and improving the quality of the urban environment.

Urban forests also support a wide range of species, including endangered animals and other species of high environmental value. Even green roofs and walls can also provide habitat for wildlife. They meet other objectives such as achieving net zero emissions, improving resilience and reduce air pollution

To build the urban forest as a living ecosystem we need to select the right species, improve soil moisture retention, reduce stormwater flows, improve water quality and re-use, and reduce infrastructure conflicts.

Heritage

Aboriginal cultural heritage

Cultural heritage provides tangible connections to the past. Conserving Aboriginal heritage and respecting the Aboriginal community's right to determine how it is identified and managed will preserve some of the world's longest-standing spiritual, historical, social and educational values.

The landscape of the Hunter creates a cultural identity for the community, with scenic amenity providing a dramatic backdrop and setting for development. New development needs to respect the scenic values and character of different places.

The unique Aboriginal cultural values are interconnected with Country through interwoven and inseparable earth, water, plants, animals, knowledge, traditions and stories. These are living and dynamic values that cannot be dealt with statically through harm prevention and protection alone.

The **Ochre Grid** is an emerging approach to considering Aboriginal culture and heritage as part of a holistic concept of the urban environment.

Ochre is both a colour and a substance. By being a colour, it belongs to the grey (roads), green (parks, landscaping) and blue (waterways) layers of infrastructure familiar to current design and planning for the Hunter. Ochre is also used in ceremony and painting by Aboriginal people to share cultural knowledge.

By working collaboratively with the local Aboriginal community, we can infuse urban design principles with elements of Aboriginal culture. Greater representation of Aboriginal perspectives in local planning informs more sustainable land use practices, reduces socio-spatial disadvantage and strengthens Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Further partnerships with Aboriginal communities will ensure Country is cared for appropriately and sensitive sites are protected so Aboriginal people have access to their homelands to continue cultural practices.

Non-Aboriginal cultural heritage

The Hunter River Valley was the first area outside the Cumberland Plain to be permanently occupied by European settlement. But the first "settlers" were neither farmers nor pastoralists. They were described as the worst of the Colony's convicts, Irish insurrectionists, who spend their time cutting cedar and mining coal. Eventually, a new settlement was named Newcastle and a new county, Northumberland, was proclaimed in 1804.

This heritage has left a legacy that is fundamental to the region's cultural economy. Regeneration of heritage assets through adaptive re-use will create unique and exciting places, along with opportunities for investment and jobs. This is particularly important in neighbourhoods undergoing renewal and change including Newcastle, Maitland and Raymond Terrace.

Strategy 6.6



Local strategic planning will ensure all known places, precincts, landscapes and buildings of historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural and aesthetic significance to the region are identified and protected in planning instruments.

Strategy 6.7



Local strategic planning will consider Aboriginal cultural and community values in future planning and management decisions.



The blue grid

Waterways

Rivers and riparian corridors link landscapes into neighbourhoods, towns and cities. Many settlements are established alongside rivers and watercourses, with main streets evolving with the reliance on road transport – meaning many towns turn their backs on waterways.

Connections with waterways can draw from an area's heritage and create attractive public spaces or recreation areas. This can occur alongside improvements to riparian zones and river channels.

Waterway restoration and creek rehabilitation helps to stabilise riverbanks, mitigate flood, avoid erosion and protect fish habitat vegetation management and artificial wetlands. Work ranges from the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme to repairing local tributaries.

Water quality

The connection between water and settlements is felt in the towns and villages within drinking water catchments, such as Clarence Town and Dungog. These places are attractive places to live and important to the tourism and agricultural sectors. However, new development or land uses within drinking water catchments could degrade water quality, increasing the costs of treating water.

The *NSW Water Strategy* identifies the need for sustainable water use and protecting water quality and drinking water supplies in the face population growth and climate change.

A risk-based approach to land use change in water catchments considers mitigation and infrastructure measures to manage water quality and supplies. Neutral or beneficial water quality objectives will be applied to land use planning in surface and groundwater drinking water catchment areas to protect waterways, including watercourses, wetlands, groundwater dependent ecosystems, riparian lands, estuaries, lakes, beaches and marine waters.

On-site sewage treatment, often associated with rural residential development, is a risk to water quality. Increasing water and wastewater capacity to towns and villages, after undertaking a servicing strategy investigation, will benefit communities and the Hunter.

Coastal environments

The connection to water also extends to the coastline, including inland and coastal lakes. These are the places where communities and visitors go to celebrate the outdoors and experience the rich terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

The Hunter contains ecologically sensitive coastal ecosystems, including coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests. The NSW coastal management framework guides the management of sensitive coastal lakes and estuaries, and coastal wetlands and littoral rainforest ecosystems that are susceptible to the impacts of land use development or that may be subject to coastal hazards exacerbated by climate change.

Strategy 6.7



Local strategic planning will identify and protect drinking water catchments and storages ensuring that incompatible land uses will not compromise future water security.

Strategy 6.8



Local strategic planning should identify opportunities to rehabilitate critical waterways in partnership with Local Land Services.

Strategy 6.9



Local strategic planning will ensure identification of future urban growth areas has considered water and sewer infrastructure needs within drinking water catchments.

Strategy 6.10



Local strategic planning will support the sustainable growth of recreation and tourist facilities in inland and coastal lakes and encourage non-polluting passive enjoyment where possible whilst maintaining a natural shoreline.

Strategy 6.11



Planning proposals will demonstrate that development within a drinking water catchment or sensitive receiving water catchment will achieve a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality.

OBJECTIVE 7:

Reach net zero and increase resilience and sustainable infrastructure

Performance outcomes

Any planning proposal or local strategic planning statement that does not comply with a strategy in this objective must demonstrate how the following performance outcomes will still be achieved:

1. Communities are designed and equipped to be safe, hazard-resilient places.
2. Neighbourhoods have inbuilt flexibility and adaptability to accommodate new uses and users in the long-term.
3. The effects of climate change are managed to optimise safety and resilience for communities and the natural environment.
4. Development is located away from high-risk areas to avoid community exposure to natural hazards as far as is practical.
5. Places are designed to support the goal of net zero emissions by 2050 and opportunities for mitigation and adaptation to a changing climate and environment.

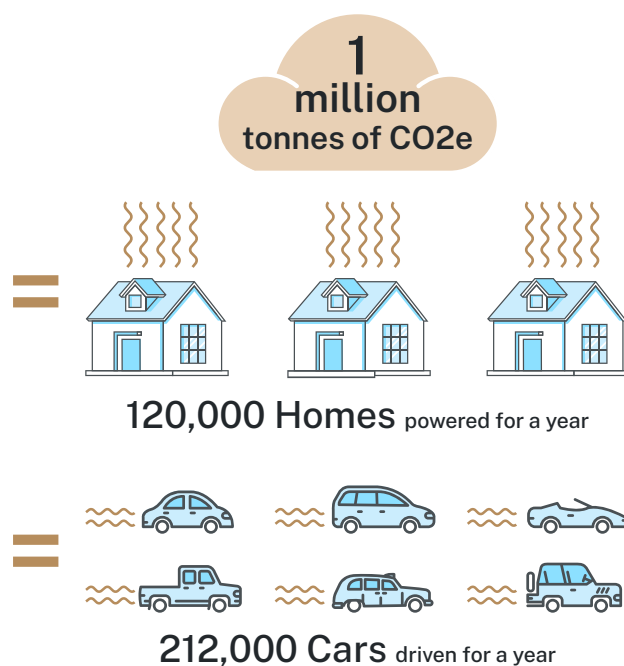
There is a growing risk of climate-related impacts people, cultural, natural and economic systems and the built environment. Embedding resilience in strategic planning and identifying workable adaptation and mitigation measures will be the key to the future.

The *NSW Climate Change Policy Framework* commits NSW to achieving net zero emissions by 2050, starting with a 50 per cent cut in emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. This includes *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020–2030*, which outlines how we will reduce emissions while growing the economy, creating jobs and reducing household costs.

The Hunter is at the forefront of collaborative approaches to assist reduce emissions, support clean air, promote a circular economy and low emissions transport. In response, this regional plan considers the effects of climate change as a guiding principle for all planning decisions. Further, it aims to stimulate the green economy by facilitating innovation, greener design and place-based solutions, complemented by initiatives to reduce energy use such as BASIX.

Local strategic planning can plan for a net zero future consistent with the regional plan by enabling:

- 15-minute neighbourhoods
- compact settlement that focus on redevelopment of urban centres and inner-city neighbourhoods
- development in town centres and main streets rather than car-dependent commercial developments
- micro-mobility solutions such as shared bikes and electric bikes to cover the tricky last mile of journeys
- green building design and district renewable approaches
- renewable energy developments, using materials with low embodied emissions and the circular economy
- green infrastructure and natural spaces
- place-based planning approaches that holistically consider ecologically sustainable development.



Greenhouse gas emissions

Reducing emissions will avoid significant human interference with the climate system so that ecosystems can adapt naturally to climate change. It will protect food production and enable sustainable economic development.

The shift to a net zero emissions economy will also create opportunities in sectors in which NSW has a competitive advantage, such as professional services, agriculture, advanced energy technology, property management and financial services.

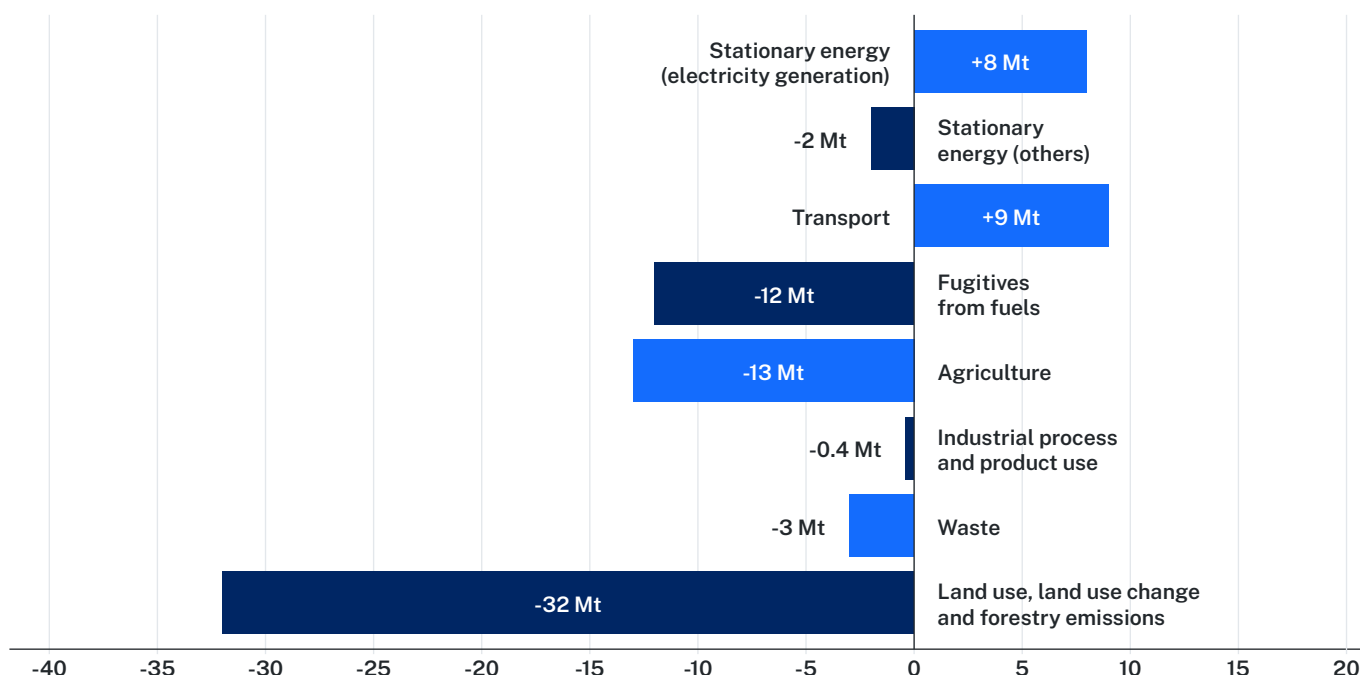
We measure greenhouse gas emissions in terms of millions of tonnes (Mt) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). In 2019, around 141 megatonnes (Mt) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) was emitted in NSW, excluding the land sector.

Total NSW emissions were 25% lower in 2019 than in 1990. While emissions from stationary energy for electricity generation and transport increased, all other sources decreased.

Land use, land use change and forestry reduced total NSW emissions by 5 Mt (3%) as a result of more carbon dioxide being absorbed by plants than released from land use and land clearing.

Many types of trees, agricultural land and waterways have climate change mitigation benefits through carbon sequestration. Landowners and managers could participate in growing carbon markets by establishing carbon offsets on private, public or Aboriginal managed lands. Further, blue carbon sequestration – where mangroves, salt marshes, seaweed and seagrasses remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere – make vegetated coastal ecosystems highly efficient carbon sinks.

Change in Emissions from 1990 to 2019 in Mt CO₂e



Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and cities

The IPCC's *Climate Change 2022, Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* report emphasises that what cities do in the next decade matters a great deal.

Cities are responsible for the majority of CO₂ and methane emissions, producing between 67 and 72 percent of emissions in 2020.

Without immediate and significant action, urban emissions could double by mid-century as urban populations, land areas, and economic impact continue to grow. The actions cities take in the next decade is a significant matter.

The IPCC report outlines three strategies for cities to dramatically reduce their emissions:

- reduce urban energy consumption across all sectors, including through land use and transportation planning and infrastructure
- electrify and switch to net zero emissions resources
- enhance carbon stocks and uptake through urban green and blue infrastructure, which can also offer multiple co-benefits.

This regional plan seeks to ensure the Hunter takes decisive action to support the behavior change needed, including on reducing private car use and the associated emissions.

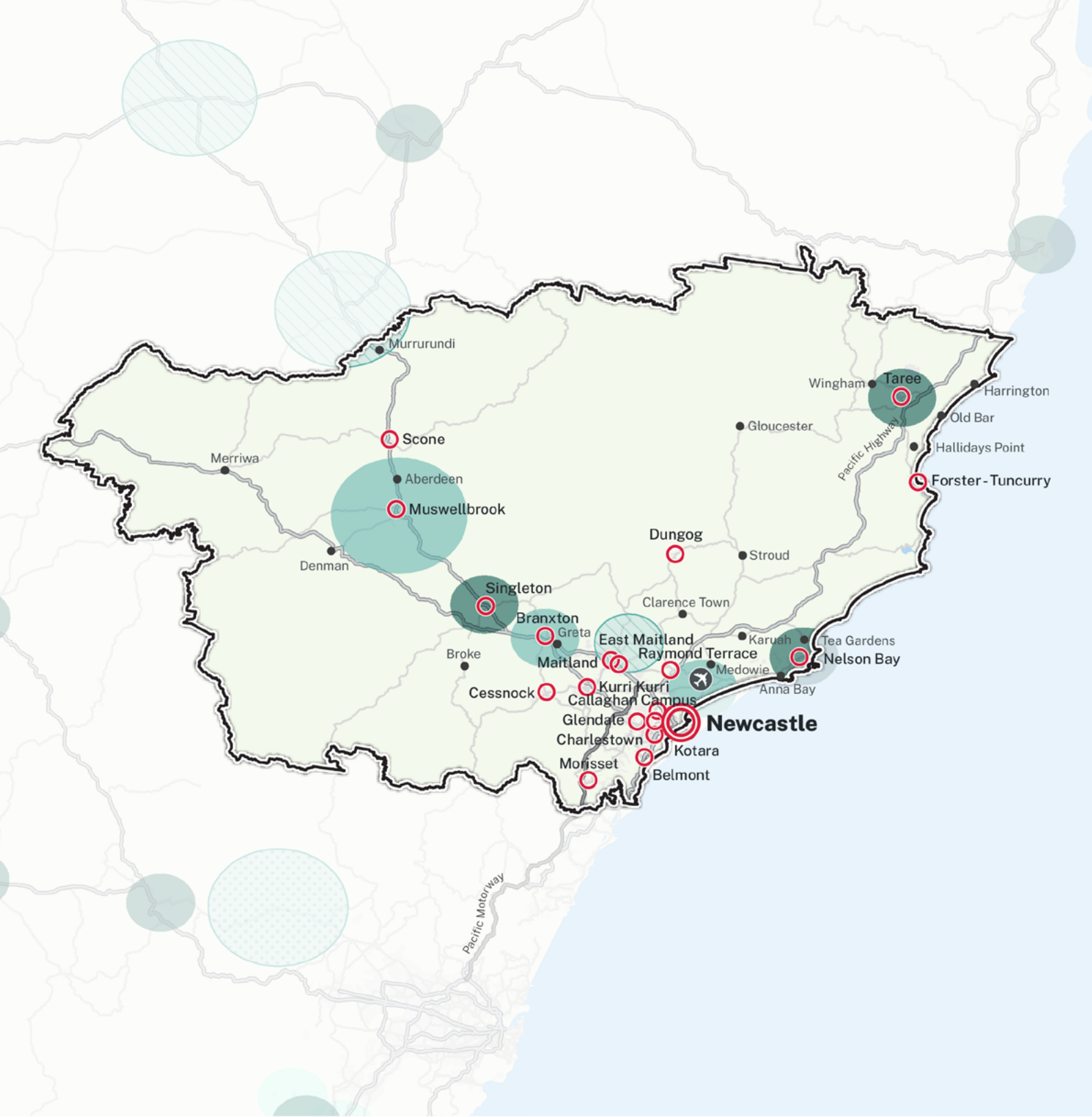
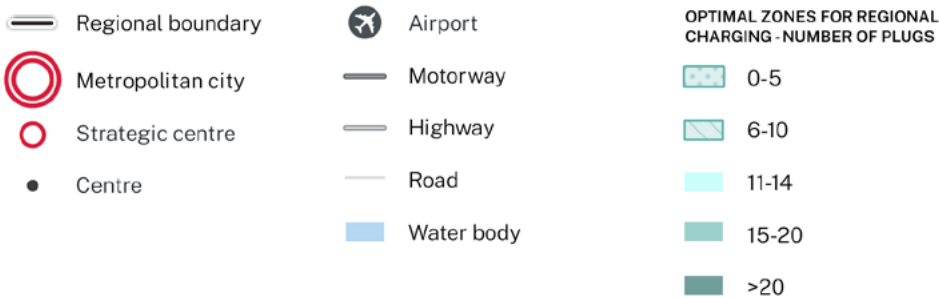


Figure 12: Electric vehicle charging stations





Solar farm solar panels.

Energy generation systems

The *NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap* sets out the NSW Government's 20-year plan for the generation, storage, firming and transmission infrastructure needed for clean, cheap and reliable power.

This can reduce the impact of rising energy prices and the cost of transition to a net-zero emissions economy while making NSW the national leader in energy efficiency, including through programs for vulnerable households.

Other opportunities to grow emerging industries in areas ready to accommodate this change including the Liddell and Bayswater power stations regionally significant growth area, Tomago industrial area and Eraring Power Station.

Net zero transportation

The first goal is to reduce the use and need for private cars, with the second goal to be that cars are as low emissions as possible and need to be driven less.

Future Transport 2056 sets out potential cost-effective pathways to support net zero emissions by 2050, including low-emissions vehicles and a cost-effective, low-emission energy supply. The *NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy* also aims to make electric vehicles affordable to run and buy in NSW.

The lack of public charging infrastructure is a barrier to the uptake of electric vehicles, as is the need for home charging systems. A regional approach to planning for new charging points for electric vehicles can incorporate council infrastructure to support fleet transitions and collaborations with industry partners.

The NSW Government is investing in electric vehicle super highways by co-investing in ultra-fast chargers at minimum 100 km intervals across all major NSW highways. Several locations in the Hunter are within optimal zones for charging. This will improve access to charging infrastructure and encourage more visitors.

Strategy 7.1



Local strategic planning will:

- identify opportunities to increase active transport choices
- establish minimum electric vehicle parking requirements in new development
- consider opportunities to deliver micro-mobility transport infrastructure in areas of the region where topography, distance or climate makes walking and cycling challenging.

Strategy 7.2



Local strategic planning should support the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure by identifying potential sites for charging stations, including council-owned land, and how these locations can be activated as places.

Strategy 7.3



Local strategic planning will protect and enhance the region's carbon sinks.

Air quality

Poor air quality has direct impacts on the health, quality of life and life expectancy of residents. Exposure to air pollution can cause cardiovascular and respiratory disease and some cancers, with impacts often greater for children, older people or those with chronic health conditions such as asthma.

Improving air quality, and protecting people from exposure, is essential to overall community health, especially as forces such as climate change and population growth increase pressures on air quality.

This regional plan sees no impediment to the Hunter achieving the World Health Organisation's targets for nitrogen dioxide and other pollutants, such as particulate matter.

Major sources of air pollution include wood heaters, mines, power stations and transport-related emissions. Smoke from bushfires and dust storms also result in serious health impacts and climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of these extreme events.

The *NSW Clean Air Strategy* includes commitments to integrate air quality considerations into strategic and local planning. This should occur as early as possible in the planning process, so that sensitive land uses such as childcare centres and aged care facilities are located away from emission sources, to avoid street canyons and improve air flows and dispersion of pollutants, and to integrate green infrastructure to separate pollution from sensitive uses and to disperse and absorb pollution.

Strategy 7.4



Local strategic planning should ensure that air quality considerations are integrated into decision-making at the earliest stage of planning processes.

Strategy 7.5



Planning proposals will protect sensitive land uses from sources of air pollution, such as major roads, railway lines and designated freight routes, using appropriate planning and development controls and design solutions to prevent and mitigate exposure and detrimental impacts on human health and wellbeing.

Resilience and climate change

Climate change was felt directly during the widespread bushfires of 2019–20, flooding of 2021–22 and increased coastal erosion.

The Hunter is expected to experience an increase in its average, maximum and minimum temperatures for the near future (2030) and far future (2070). Rainfall on the Hunter is expected to increase in Autumn and decrease in Spring and Winter.

These changes in climate are likely to increase the risk from natural hazards including coastal processes, storms and floods, bushfires, heatwaves and drought. Natural hazards can disrupt road and rail networks and interrupt access to essential services including water, sewerage, power, telecommunications and digital connectivity.

Residents, visitors, towns and communities can become isolated for extended periods, which can impact social networks. Visitors may not be aware of the dangers and emergency procedures. Over long periods of time this can be detrimental to local economies that rely on tourism.

A more climate resilient region will increase the capacity of individuals, communities, businesses and systems to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what stresses and shocks they face. The land use planning system is essential to creating resilient places.

Given the uncertainty of exactly how and when these hazards will manifest, we need common sense solutions to better prepare residents for any scenario. Good land use planning can help avoid or mitigate the worst effects of natural hazards and ensure sensitive land uses and infrastructure such as homes, hospitals and schools are appropriately located to allow people to safely evacuate if there is an emergency.

The Hunter and Central Coast Regional Adaptation project identifies how climate change may affect local communities and identifies responses. Councils are already building this work into their strategic planning and other processes and the NSW Government will continue to work with councils as required.

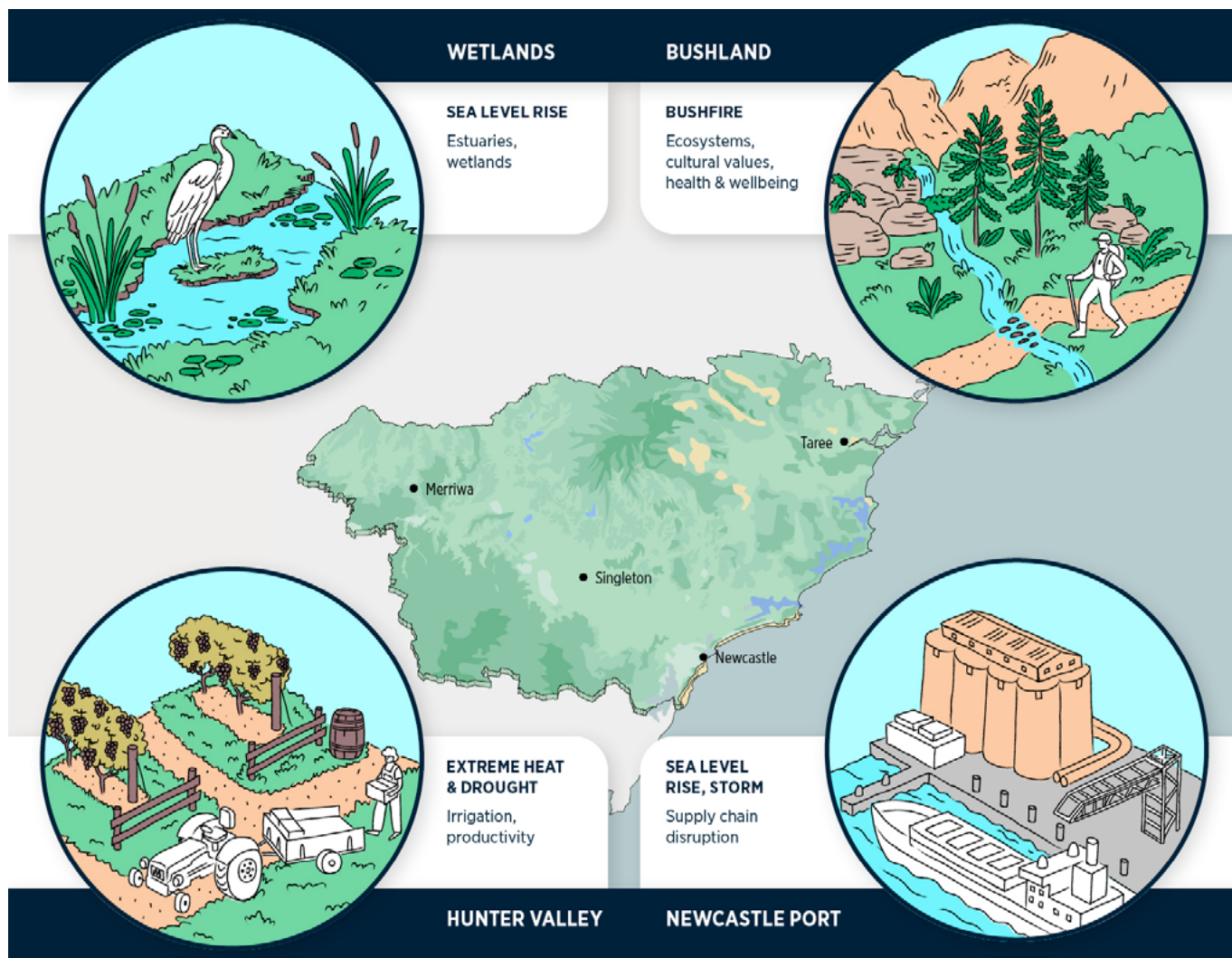
Camping along Barrington River



Land use planning resilience principles

- 1 — Resilience is a foundational characteristic of sustainable places and communities.
- 2 — Risk is identified and addressed for sustainable and adaptable places and communities.
- 3 — Governance and accountable decisions are improved for the long-term benefits of the community and the place.
- 4 — Resilience is embedded into the regulatory framework.
- 5 — Settlement planning is informed by resilient social, cultural, economic, environment and built outcomes.
- 6 — Resilience is advanced through locally led and place-based approaches for shared responsibility.
- 7 — Recovery, adaptation and transition pathways are business as usual.

Regional impacts



Strategy 7.6



Local strategic planning will consider pathways to build resilience, reduce vulnerabilities, and support initiatives that can transform the region.

Strategy 7.7



Local strategic planning will demonstrate alignment with the NSW Government’s natural hazard management and risk mitigation policy framework including:

- *Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019*
- *NSW Coastal Management Framework*
- *Floodplain Development Manual and the Flood Prone Land Policy*
- *Planning for a more resilient NSW: A strategic guide to planning for natural hazards*
- any other natural hazards guidance that is released

Strategy 7.8



Local strategic planning will ensure future residential areas are not planned in areas where:

- residents are exposed to a high risk from bushfire, flood and/or coastal hazards, considerate of how these may be impacted by climate change
- evacuation is likely to be difficult during a bushfire or flood due to its siting in the landscape, access limitations, hazard event history and/or size and scale
- any existing residential areas may be placed at increased risk
- increased development may cause evacuation issues for both existing or new occupants

Communities connected to water

A connection to water is what attracts people to the Hunter. We need to improve the way we plan for these communities in line with the changing climate so people can continue to enjoy this connection without increasing risks to property and life.

Sea level rise and inundation

The most recent sea level rise projections are from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predict an increase on the central NSW coast of:

- between 0.21m and 1.06m by 2100
- between 0.28m and 1.95m by 2150.

Sea level rise is predicted to impact coastal developments and must be considered in planning for new settlements. Sea level rise may result in inundation of low-lying areas, adversely impact building structures and foundations, damage or compromise infrastructure, and negatively impact coastal ecosystems. Over the longer term, loss of sand and permanent inundation of land around beaches will impact local tourism and local economies.

Sea level rise and inundation risks is highest around tidal lakes and close to the larger and more heavily populated coastal river systems such as areas adjoining the Hunter River, and around coastal lagoons including the Blake Head Lagoon. Much of this development is only marginally above current high tide levels and is highly vulnerable to sea level rise.

Considering sea level rise and inundation when planning future development will reduce existing risks to the community, and avoid creating additional risks in new settlements. Where risks can't be reduced over time, adaptation of existing settlements will be necessary. This includes considering the interactions between sea level rise and other hazards, including coastal hazards, storms and flooding.

Coastal hazards

The Hunter is already subject to coastal erosion, shoreline recession and cliff or slope instability risks. These can damage properties and infrastructure, and reduce the amenity of beaches and coastal foreshores. These hazard events are expected to become more frequent and severe with climate change.

Areas at Old Bar Beach, Winda Woppa – Jimmys Beach and Stockton Beach are at high immediate risk from coastal hazards with houses, infrastructure and community facilities threatened.

These risks, and the cost of responding to hazard events, are projected to increase significantly over the next 50 to 100 years, exacerbated by sea level rise.

Land use planning informed by coastal management programs, will consider coastal hazards to avoid or acceptably mitigate risks for future development.

Storms and flood

Regional areas of the Hunter are particularly vulnerable to flooding and future development must ensure there is no increased risk to residents and that flood impacts are not exacerbated.

Land use planning must also take account of risks presented from concurrent storm and flooding events in low-lying areas around coastal lakes, lagoons and estuary openings, where the interaction of floodwaters and tidal surges from storm events occur concurrently and at increasing intensity.

To adapt to storms and floods, we need to understand how they interact with coastal hazard risks, and plan for the risks they present to communities.

Planning for future growth areas needs to consider carefully the risks and mitigations for flooding and evacuation. Care should be taken to understand how climate change may change risk profiles and the impact this would have on communities.

2022 NSW Flood Inquiry

Following the February-March 2022 flood event, the NSW Government commissioned an independent expert inquiry to investigate issues related to the preparation for, cause of, response to and recovery from the 2022 floods. The report of the NSW Independent Flood Inquiry included 28 recommendations, across a broad range of areas, including emergency management arrangements, land management and planning, equipment and technology, capacity and capability building and research.

The NSW Government has supported, either in full or in principle, the recommendations of the Inquiry and noted some will require further work on implementation, including further consultation with local and Commonwealth governments.

Consistent with the outcomes of the Inquiry the NSW Government has now established the NSW Reconstruction Authority (November 2022). The Authority will have the responsibility and power to facilitate the protection, recovery, and reconstruction of affected communities following a natural disaster. Once the Authority has been stood up and fully operational, it will also be responsible for:

- Developing a State disaster mitigation plan and material to guide councils to prepare adaptation plans; and
- Ensuring development needed to prevent or recover from a natural disaster can be delivered quickly.



Drought

Drought impacts the environment, industries, economy and people—including physical and mental health risks. Climate change is increasing temperatures and affecting rainfall and climate systems. This combination of effects is likely making drought conditions worse.

The *Greater Hunter Regional Water Strategy* is designed to manage water needs over the next 30 years. The strategy looks at existing and near-future risks to water security, and factors that could affect these risks. In particular, it considers the risk of a drought that would be worse than the worst drought on record and the effect it would have on water security.

Strategy 7.9



Local strategic planning will:

- map areas that are projected to be affected by sea level rise and other coastal hazards to limit the potential exposure of new development to these hazards
- be consistent with any relevant coastal management program adopted and certified for that area
- consider opportunities to adapt existing settlements at risk of exposure to sea level rise and coastal hazards in accordance with the NSW Coastal Management Framework, such as:
 - raising houses and roads
 - relocating or adapting infrastructure to manage coastal hazard risks, such as ingress of tidal water into stormwater systems and/or
 - undertaking beach nourishment
- consider opportunities to maintain natural coastal defences against sea level rise, such as:
 - maintaining or expanding coastal and riparian buffer zones
 - replanting and protecting coastal dune systems
 - fencing creeks and rivers to keep livestock out, limit erosion and protect water quality
 - controlling invasive species and/or
 - protecting and restoring mangroves and salt marsh areas to limit flooding, inundation and erosion.

Resilience to bushfires and heat waves

Bushfires

The Hunter is at high risk of bushfire, and this risk is increasing with climate change. Increases in fuel load, fuel dryness, fire weather and lightning strikes are together likely to result in more frequent bushfires.

Bushfires can cause loss of life, property and infrastructure, poor air quality, and long-lasting impacts to soil and water quality. They have devastating impacts on plants, animals, ecosystems and economies that rely on the land such as viticulture.

There are many semi-rural and coastal settlements with a direct interface with dense bushland. While these areas offer lifestyle benefits and access to nature, the increased bushfire threat must be carefully considered in future land use planning.

Heatwaves

A heatwave is when maximum and minimum temperatures stay unusually high for 3 or more days. They affect human health and kill more Australians than any other natural hazard. Heatwaves also put pressure on infrastructure and services, and affect the environment and agriculture.

Adapting built environments and homes can minimise the impacts of heatwaves. We can design the urban environment to reduce how much heat is absorbed by buildings and roads can reduce heat island effect and help to keep temperatures down.

Designing homes to keep cool in summer without using energy can make them more comfortable and reduce pressure on the energy supply.

As urbanisation increases impervious surfaces, future development controls will need to integrate adequate green infrastructure into the design of urban buildings, streets and spaces.

OBJECTIVE 8:

Plan for businesses and services at the heart of healthy, prosperous and innovative communities



Signal Box, Newcastle
Credit: Destination NSW

Performance outcomes

Any planning proposal or local strategic planning statement that does not comply with a strategy in this objective must demonstrate how the following performance outcomes will still be achieved:

1. The function and vitality of centres, and main streets is strengthened, and urban renewal responds to heritage and local character.
2. Centres and main streets provide a diverse array of land uses and activities.
3. New centres or main streets support the existing network and do not undermine its function or future growth.
4. Centres and main streets adapt to the demands of a transitioning economy, serve the current and future economic and social needs of the community and business, and drives productivity, collaboration and economic growth.
5. Knowledge clusters are globally and nationally connected vibrant, collaborative places that drive innovation and creativity in the market, attract investment and enhance human capital.
6. Tourism activities support domestic and international visitors, providing diverse and sophisticated tourism experiences, and complement the landscape setting and avoid land use conflict.

Town centres and main streets are central to the lives of residents. They provide a focus in a post-pandemic society for the local community, both geographically and in relation to the sense of identity and broad mix of services they provide.

The Hunter offers world-class facilities, diverse employment and entertainment, and transport networks. It is this lifestyle which sets the region apart from other parts of NSW.

The spaces within and around town centres and main streets have an important public function, with public space, markets, parks, gardens and other open space providing opportunities for people to gather, meet, socialise and be entertained.

Key to this success is the network of centres ranging from the bustling Newcastle City Centre to villages in the Upper Hunter and MidCoast. They provide a sense of identity and a focus for the community, both geographically and in terms of the broad mix of uses they provide. The diversity and vitality of the Hunter's centres will need to evolve as economic trends, technology advances and community behaviours change.

Centres and main streets

Centres and main streets support a variety of uses, from business and services, to civic and community functions, to housing. They contain diverse activities for people throughout the week (day and night) and offer plenty of places for people to connect.

Centres and main streets need to be visually engaging, embrace heritage and Country, and celebrate local identity. They need to be resilient and able to adapt to changing needs, like the shift to working from home. The 15-minute neighbourhood objective of this plan seeks to build on that momentum.

Retailing is evolving. It is now a mix of physical stores, click and collect distributors, direct delivery to homes, and workplaces and showrooms for digital businesses. This may require new spaces where there is identified demand, or see a transition of surplus retail floor space to more intensive forms of mixed use development that include a residential component.

The last mile needs of freight must still be considered, and developing appropriate freight facilities in commercial areas can reduce congestion, improve local amenity, and free up kerbside space from cars to other uses.

Scone, Gloucester and Dungog provide a range of rural community services, cultural activities and shopping, yet their main streets are increasingly facing pressure from larger centres. Main streets must be positioned for continued success and evolution so they continue to support local communities and drive growth.



Strategy 8.1



Local strategic planning should consider:

- encouraging resilient, accessible and inclusive hubs with a range of uses including town centre uses, night-time activities and civic, community, social and residential uses
- focusing commercial and retail activity in existing commercial centres
- identifying locations for mixed use and/or housing-led intensification in and around centres and main streets to strengthen and support existing uses while enhancing local character and heritage assets
- planning for last mile freight, accessibility, and attractive active and public transport access from adjoining neighbourhoods both within and to centres and main streets
- activating centres and main streets through active street frontages, restaurant/café seating, digital connectivity, outdoor entertainment, community gardens, place-making initiatives and events
- ensuring centres and main streets are the primary locations for commercial activity and contributors to the local as well as district-wide economy and that new areas complement the function of existing centres and main streets
- managing parking to encourage active streets and public spaces and reinforce compact centres
- providing well-designed built and natural shade for comfort and protection against overexposure to UV radiation
- enabling a diverse range of tourism accommodation and attractions in centres and particularly main streets.

Strategy 8.2



Planning proposals will accommodate new commercial activity in existing centres and main streets unless it forms part of a proposed new community or is an activity that supports a 15-minute neighbourhood.

Night-time economy

The night-time economy can encourage people to dine out or enjoy entertainment or cultural experiences. Industries like transport and logistics, cleaning, education, manufacturing, retail and health care also employ workers that work through the night. The night-time economy refers to all economic activity taking place between 6pm and 6am.

Both communities and visitors expect cities and town centres to provide a safe and flourishing economy and community life from late afternoon to early morning. The Hunter can become a 24-hour global region, with businesses and people looking to expand beyond the usual daytime economy into new night-time economic opportunities.



Opportunities to encourage expansion of the night-time economy include:

- supporting small business entrepreneurs through the approval process
- reviewing operating hours of public transport, shopping districts, and community facilities
- supporting street markets and footpath dining and activation of the streets and public domain
- extending hours of recreation, cultural and community facilities
- investing in outdoor lighting at skateparks, ovals or sporting facilities
- managing noise impacts and working with NSW Police and councils to ensure safe night-time environments.



Civic Theatre, Newcastle
Credit: Destination NSW

Strategy 8.3



Local strategic planning should consider:

- opportunities to promote the night-time economy in suitable centres and main streets, particularly where night-time public transport options are available
- how to improve access, inclusion and safety, and make public areas welcoming for consumers and workers
- diversifying the range of night-time activities, including extending opening hours for shops, cafes, libraries, galleries and museums
- addressing the cumulative impact of high concentrations of licensed premises and other noise generating activities to manage land use conflict in these areas
- fostering the relationships between the creative industries, live performance and the night-time economy.

Knowledge and innovation clusters

The Hunter has a wealth of specialist clusters that attract well-paid knowledge-based jobs. These centres will attract new investment, foster entrepreneurs and provide the training opportunities to give workers the skills needed for the jobs of tomorrow. Digital networks will ensure the Hunter's innovation clusters remain national and international players.

The aerospace, equine and viticulture industries are national leaders and will grow as the Hunter's economy diversifies. Opportunities to leverage this expertise along with the specialist capabilities of institutions like the Hunter Medical Research Institute and the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources will help expand the region's knowledge capacity.

Emerging industries will also provide opportunities for specialist expertise. Renewable energy and green hydrogen production present potential as new knowledge and innovation clusters.

The University of Newcastle and John Hunter Hospital campuses provide world class-education, health and research services. They are complemented by a network of hospitals like the New Maitland Hospital, TAFEs and other training organisations like Tocal College, Avondale University and Taree Universities Campus.

Access to health care services and education improve quality of life and boost workers' skills. With a growing and ageing population, and an increase in complex and long-term health conditions, planning needs to support hospitals and ancillary services. Education and training facilities should also be supported.

Strategy 8.4



Local strategic planning should consider:

- identifying knowledge and innovation clusters and specialist industries
- opportunities to consolidate growth and allow them to intensify and specialise over time
- supporting the co-location of mutually supportive and value-adding activities that do not compromise the primary function of the cluster
- emerging industries and technologies and opportunities to support growth.

Visitor economy

With the Six Cities Region, the Hunter could be a world-class location for sustainable nature-based and cultural tourism, drawing from the vineyards and equine districts, rugged landscapes of the Barrington Tops, or one of the region's pristine beaches.

Existing tourism infrastructure, access to domestic and international markets, and environmental and cultural values attract visitors. Improved transport connections will enable a diversity of experiences.

More nature and agri-based tourism could be coupled with walking and cycling connections, so that visitors can immerse themselves in the landscape and better appreciate the Hunter's lifestyle and Country. Large-scale tourist attractions should be provided in areas that are easily accessible and are compatible with their surrounds.

The network of towns and villages serve as focal points for tourism. This mix of centres, villages and main streets are gateways from which visitor experiences in surrounding areas begin. As attractive places of activity they should provide a diverse entertainment offering, reflect local community values, embrace scenic vistas and celebrate both heritage and Country. Digital technology and night-time economy initiatives in these areas will improve the visitor experience and maximise opportunities for local business.

Improving the availability of accessible serviced accommodation is important to ensuring that as many visitors as possible can stay in the Hunter and experience its visitor attractions and businesses.

Strategy 8.5



Local strategic planning should consider:

- identifying towns and villages which have a strong tourism presence and/or serve as gateways to visitor experiences in surrounding areas
- supporting a diverse range of tourism development, including events and place-making initiatives which celebrate the local community, heritage and Country
- implementing planning and development controls which support nature-based and agri-based tourism while maintaining scenic views and amenity, environmental or cultural values, or primary production activities of that locality
- identifying opportunities to leverage digital technology and infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience
- identifying strategies to grow active transport connections both within tourism gateways and their surrounding landscape
- promoting serviced apartments in centres, main streets and regionally significant growth areas where they are well-connected by public transport.

Strategy 8.6



Planning proposals to facilitate tourism activities will:

- demonstrate that the scale and type of tourism land use proposed can be supported by the transport network and complements the landscape setting
- be compatible with the characteristics of the site and existing and likely future land uses in the vicinity of the site
- demonstrate that the tourism land use would support the function of nearby tourism gateways or nodes
- be supported by an assessment prepared in accordance with the Department of Primary Industries' Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment Guide if the use is proposed on or in the vicinity of rural zoned lands.

OBJECTIVE 9:

Sustain and balance productive rural landscapes

Aberdeen, Hunter Valley



Performance outcomes

Any planning proposal or local strategic planning statement that does not comply with a strategy in this objective must demonstrate how the following performance outcomes will still be achieved:

1. Mines, quarries and irrigated or important agricultural lands are protected from encroachment by sensitive uses.
2. Food and fibre processing facilities, service and value-adding industries related to agriculture and primary industry production are increased.
3. Dispersed rural settlement is prevented to protect agricultural production and avoid unreasonable or uneconomic demands for public infrastructure or services.
4. Existing towns and villages in and around the equine and viticulture clusters are strengthened by orienting residential growth toward these locations.
5. The productive capacity and resource base for agriculture is recognised and managed for long-term agricultural production, particularly for irrigated or important agricultural land.

The Hunter's landscapes are an important resource for the region and its rural communities, sustaining some of the most mature, diverse and successful rural and resource industries in NSW. They provide security through food, fibre and lumber production, support economic diversity and resilience, and contribute to local identity and sense of place.

These areas will evolve as agricultural techniques change and the need for coal, construction materials and emerging minerals shift. With access to global gateways, the Six Cities, and markets in the Central West and Orana and New England North West, the Hunter is well positioned to maximise these opportunities.



Resources

The *Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW* recognises the global transition to a low carbon future. While this will result in regional variations in terms of coal production, with some areas seeing a gradual decline, the Hunter is likely to see continued demand over the short to medium term. Planning needs to recognise the potential for coal mines to grow, subject to rigorous assessment and extensive community consultation.

Critical minerals and high-tech metals are a new opportunity, enabling growth in industries like advanced manufacturing, batteries, defence and aerospace, technology-enabled primary industries, and renewables.

The *NSW Critical Minerals and High-tech Metals Strategy* acknowledges the Hunter's gold and lithium deposits could be developed, as well as the growing need for downstream processing capacity, with the majority of value-adding and job creation in the technology-intensive processing stage. Former mine and power station sites could be repurposed to support these activities, benefiting from strong transport links and future access to renewable energy delivered through the REZ.

NSW needs a reliable supply of construction materials to support continued growth. These include sand and gravel, crushed rock, recycled materials and secondary aggregates created from construction, demolition and excavation.

Future planning will need to consider the appropriate supply bank on the Hunter to meet future demand across the Six Cities.

Strategy 9.1



Planning proposals will consider the location of mineral and energy resources, mines and quarries and ensure sensitive land uses would not encroach on those operations. A noise study may be required to demonstrate impacts on the operations can be avoided or mitigated.

Agriculture

The Hunter is recognised for its agricultural diversity, from quality beef and lamb production to sustainable boutique markets, such as olive groves and oysters.

The Hunter's agricultural sector benefits from the quality of natural features and systems and the competitive advantages of infrastructure networks and proximity to markets, including the global gateways of Newcastle.

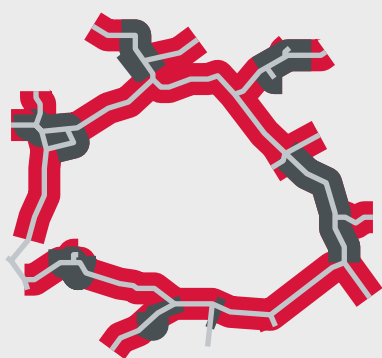
Rural towns and villages

Rural areas provide a unique lifestyle choice, offering landscape settings and main streets. While these areas will not accommodate significant growth, they do need to grow sustainably, be resilient, and respond to change. The maximum scale of any growth, relative to the existing scale of the townships, must be in proportion to the growth expected in the LGA overall.

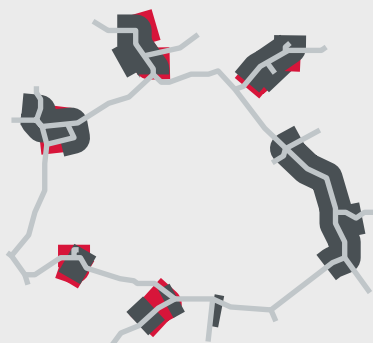
Planning for these areas must be consistent with the district planning principles and be able to be supported by local infrastructure.

Rural town and village growth boundaries

Development without growth boundary



Development with growth boundary



- New development
- Existing development
- Road

Identifying rural town and village growth boundaries will protect rural land with important agricultural, ecological, scenic or heritage value and sustain the viability of services and infrastructure in existing settlements. This approach will attract new residents to sustain rural towns and villages particularly as digital connectivity improves and working from home opportunities increase.

Strategy 9.5



When identifying expansion opportunities for rural towns and villages (including rural-residential), local strategic planning should consider the location of primary production and conservation lands and determine appropriate rural town and village growth boundaries to limit the encroachment of development into areas that have important agricultural, ecological, scenic or heritage value.

Strategy 9.6



Planning proposals to expand rural town and village growth boundaries will be supported by an assessment prepared in accordance with the Department of Primary Industries' Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment Guide to limit or avoid conflicts between residential uses and agricultural activities.

Slow Food Earth Market, Maitland
Credit: Destination NSW



However, the supply of alluvial river flats for agricultural uses in the Hunter is limited – this is an important consideration for the region’s food production. Growth will place pressure on the supply of these lands as urban growth encroaches on agricultural activities.

Councils should identify and consider important agricultural lands in local strategic planning to minimise land use conflicts with future rural residential and urban development. Planning controls for rural lands should help communities to adapt and build on strategic advantages to continue the profitability and sustainability of existing and emerging rural enterprises and activities.

Opportunities should encourage the intensification and diversification of on-farm agricultural activities and the introduction of new rural value-adding activities, such as farm stays, camping, farm gate or events.

Enabling intensive agriculture and ways to facilitate downstream value-add like food and fibre processing and their supply chains should also be explored.

Strategy 9.2



Local strategic planning should consider:

- protecting important agricultural lands, rural industries, processing facilities and supply chains from land uses which may result in land use conflict or fragmentation
- opportunities to promote the diversification and innovation of agricultural activities and ways to facilitate the upscaling of productivity without acquiring more land
- supporting activities to value-add and provide additional income streams for farmers
- ensuring the impacts of development on aquatic habitats in aquacultural estuaries are minimised to support aquaculture.

Equine and viticulture

The Hunter region’s equine industry is centred in Scone and is home to the largest concentration of thoroughbred studs outside of Kentucky in the United States. Its horse breeding and sales underpin the Australian racing industry.

The success of the cluster depends on the scenic and landscape values that form part of its international reputation. Proximity to airports provide ready access for interstate and international buyers.

Opportunities to diversify equine related activities should be explored with industry to promote employment growth.

The Hunter Valley vineyards have global brand recognition and are known for producing premium wines. The 3 established clusters around Cessnock, Denman, and Broke–Fordwich are distinctive areas that will support viticulture growth and serve as a basis for further place-based planning.

Like the equine industry, the viticulture clusters leverage landscape values to support their global image and grow ancillary uses like cellar doors, restaurants and tourist accommodation. This requires a measured approach that responds to local circumstances and maintains wine production capacity and scenic amenity.

Strategy 9.3



Local strategic planning for equine and viticultural areas should consider:

- maintaining lot sizes that allow for adequate setbacks and buffers
- measures to protect the environmental and scenic values of critical industry cluster land
- retaining and strengthening the local character, reputation, and brand
- enabling a diversity of equine and wine related experiences and opportunities
- facilitate future adaptation or expansion within the industry.

Strategy 9.4



Planning proposals for lands within or near critical industry cluster land will demonstrate they are compatible with equine and viticultural activities and:

- complements scenic values, visual amenity and local character
- provides suitable separation distances for sensitive uses, like tourist accommodation, having regard to spray, noise, and lighting considerations
- considers existing and likely future agricultural and rural uses of adjoining lands and the cumulative impact of similar proposals on the locality.

PART

3

District planning and growth areas





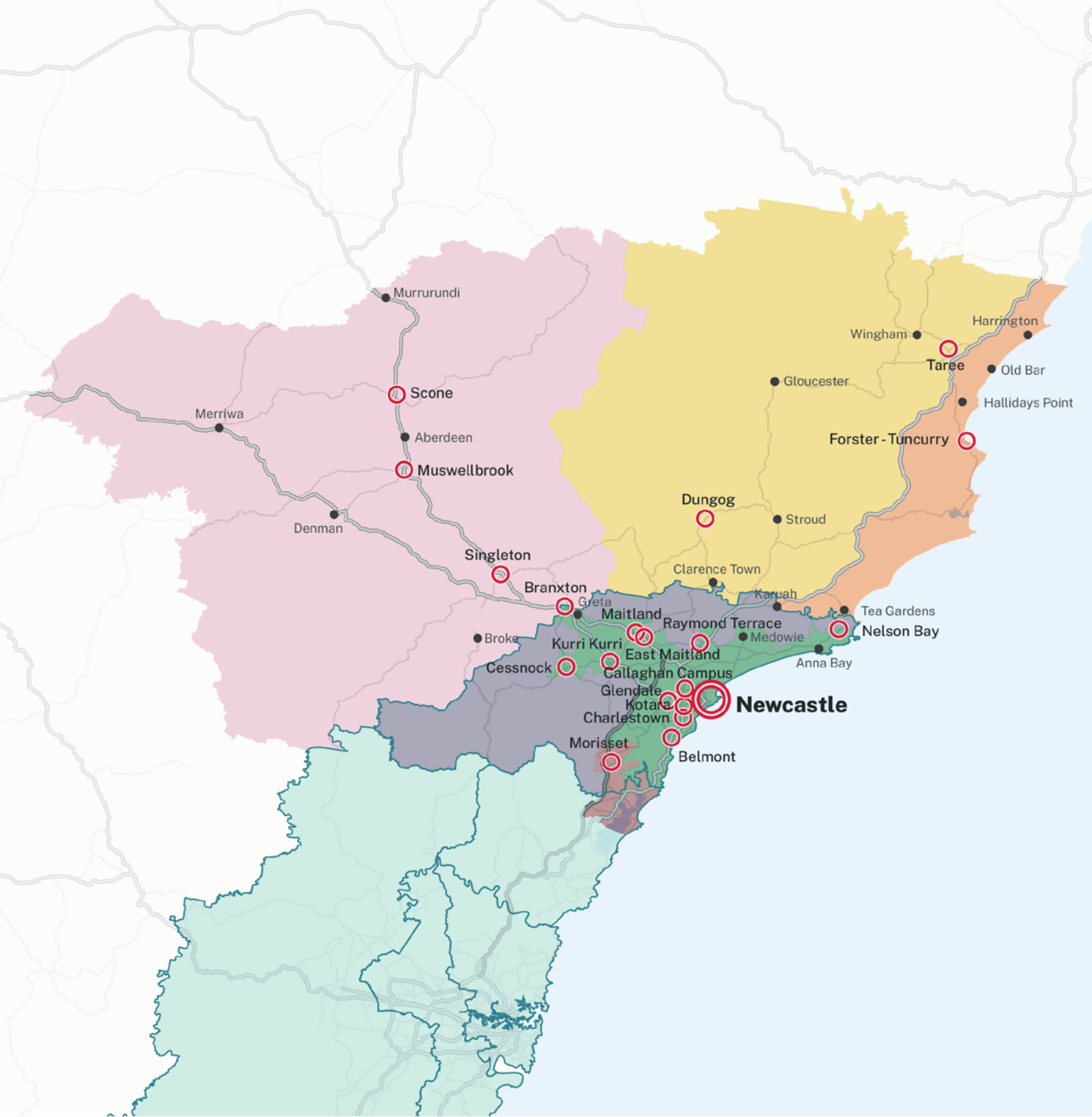
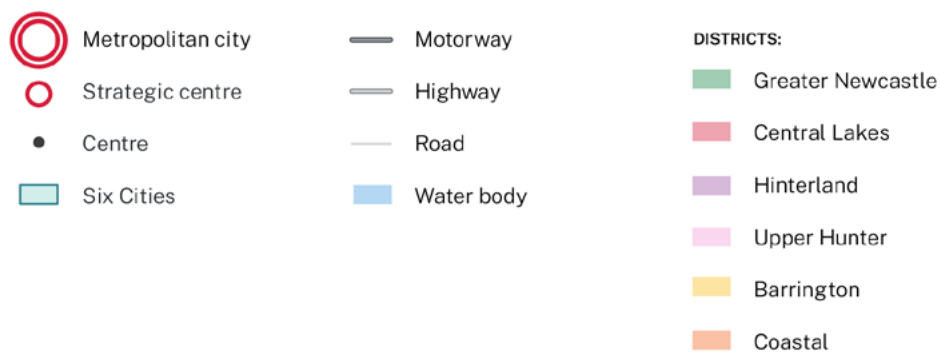


Figure 13: Hunter districts





Shoal Bay, Port Stephens
Credit: Destination NSW

PART

3

District planning and growth areas

The Hunter features diverse urban, rural and natural landscapes and characteristics. The regional plan divides the Hunter into 7 districts that each share similar characteristics, such as economic and infrastructure, geography and settlement patterns, housing markets, community expectation and levels of self-containment.

We use this district-based approach to:

- identify planning priorities that build on and provide greater clarity and direction to the regional plan vision and objectives
- identify regionally significant growth areas and actions for achieving the regional plan objectives
- guide the application, weighting and prioritisation of state interests set out in planning mechanisms
- inform other plans and programs, including local strategic planning statements and local plans and place strategies, to prioritise and coordinate the planning and provision of infrastructure and services.

The NSW Government and councils will work together on each district's planning priorities, including local planning responses that sequence both planning and investment.

Councils will reflect the planning priorities in local strategic planning. Matters not addressed in the priorities will be implemented in line with the regional vision and objectives.

Growth areas address regionally significant locations requiring further investigation, tailored planning responses, activation and or specific infrastructure investments.

Regionally significant growth areas will be the basis for preparing more detailed place strategies that integrate the Movement and Place Framework, *Better Placed*, *Greener Places Guide* and *NSW Public Spaces Charter*.

Planning proposals prepared on land within or immediately adjoining these areas before the adoption of a place strategy must be consistent with the place strategy outcomes identified in this plan for each regionally significant growth area.

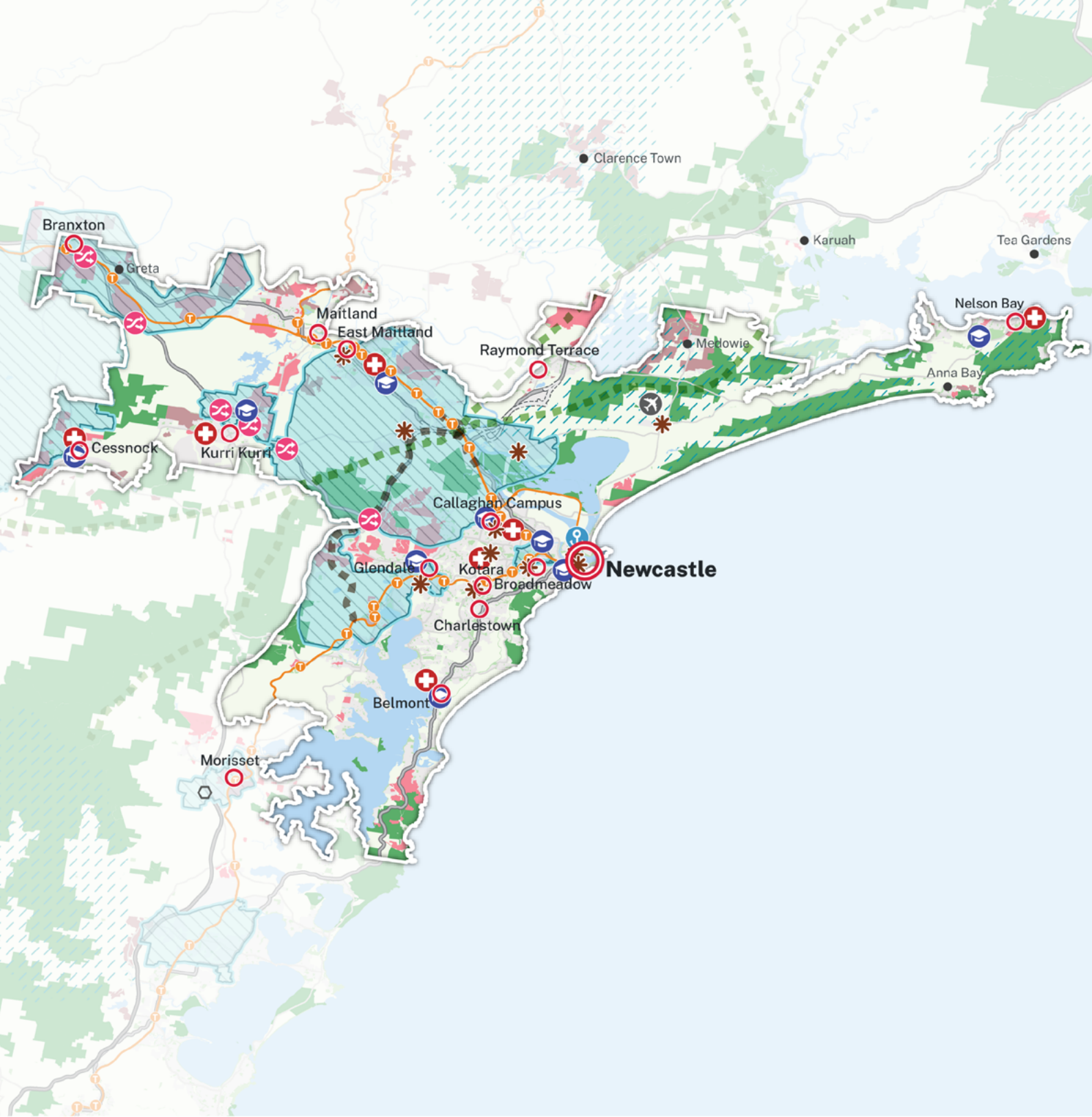


Figure 14: Greater Newcastle district



- | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | District boundary | | Port | | Highway | | Drinking water catchments |
| | Metropolitan city | | HEX interchange | | Motorway | | Hunter UDP |
| | Strategic centre | | Hospital | | M1 Raymond Terrace extension | | Existing rural residential |
| | Centre | | Education | | Road | | Existing urban area |
| | Catalyst area | | Mine | | Railway | | National park and state forest |
| | Train station | | Lower Hunter freight corridor | | Regionally significant growth area | | Open space |
| | Newcastle Airport | | Biodiversity corridor | | | | Water body |

Greater Newcastle District

The *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036* built on the dynamic and entrepreneurial city centre, strong industrial employment base, diversified economy and desirable lifestyle. It capitalised on extensive investment from all levels of government and private partners by coordinating and linking places and ideas.

At the heart of Greater Newcastle is the Newcastle City Centre, the capital of the Hunter. The revitalisation of the City Centre features the iconic buildings of the University of Newcastle NUspace campus, the Newcastle law courts, Interchange at Wickham, and the activated waterfront.

The University of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport, Port of Newcastle and the John Hunter Hospital are metropolitan assets that could grow the service economy and support ongoing economic diversification.

Creating optimal densities in locations with services and infrastructure requires further renewal opportunities within centres and infill sites, including the redevelopment of larger infill sites. Strategic centres such as Charlestown could provide new jobs and housing if development feasibility can be increased.

To ensure adequate supply in the medium to longer term, new urban areas are being progressed at North West Lake Macquarie, Wallsend, Eden Estates and at the Hydro site at Kurri Kurri.

The department will continue to work with stakeholders to implement the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036*, and with Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation, councils and Transport for NSW on the catalyst areas.

Newcastle Mines Grouting Fund

The NSW Government established the \$17 million Newcastle Mines Grouting Fund as a complement to the \$650 million transformation of the city centre. The fund addresses the uncertainty of mine grouting by capping the cost of grouting which provides greater investor certainty and confidence.

Developers pay the full cost of grouting up to a capped cost. If the actual cost of grouting exceeds the cap, the fund reimburses extra approved costs after the works are validated by Subsidence Advisory NSW.

The NSW Government is reviewing the fund with findings to be published in late 2022.

Greater Newcastle will be Australia's newest and emerging economic and lifestyle city. This will be achieved by:

- prioritising housing within 30 minutes of the Williamstown Special Activation Precinct
- reinforcing revitalisation of Newcastle City Centre and continuing transformation along the waterside
- growing Charlestown as a diverse, vibrant and mixed use strategic centre
- growing Maitland's strategic centres along the New England Growth Corridor
- expanding John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct
- supporting the *NSW Koala Strategy*
- enhancing the blue and green grid and urban tree canopy
- planning for alternative land uses for former mining sites
- protecting drinking water catchments
- planning for the Broadmeadow regionally significant growth area
- planning for the North West Lake Macquarie regionally significant growth area
- planning for the Hunter Expressway Corridor regionally significant growth area
- planning for the Anambah to Branxton regionally significant growth area
- planning for the National Pinch Point regionally significant growth area.

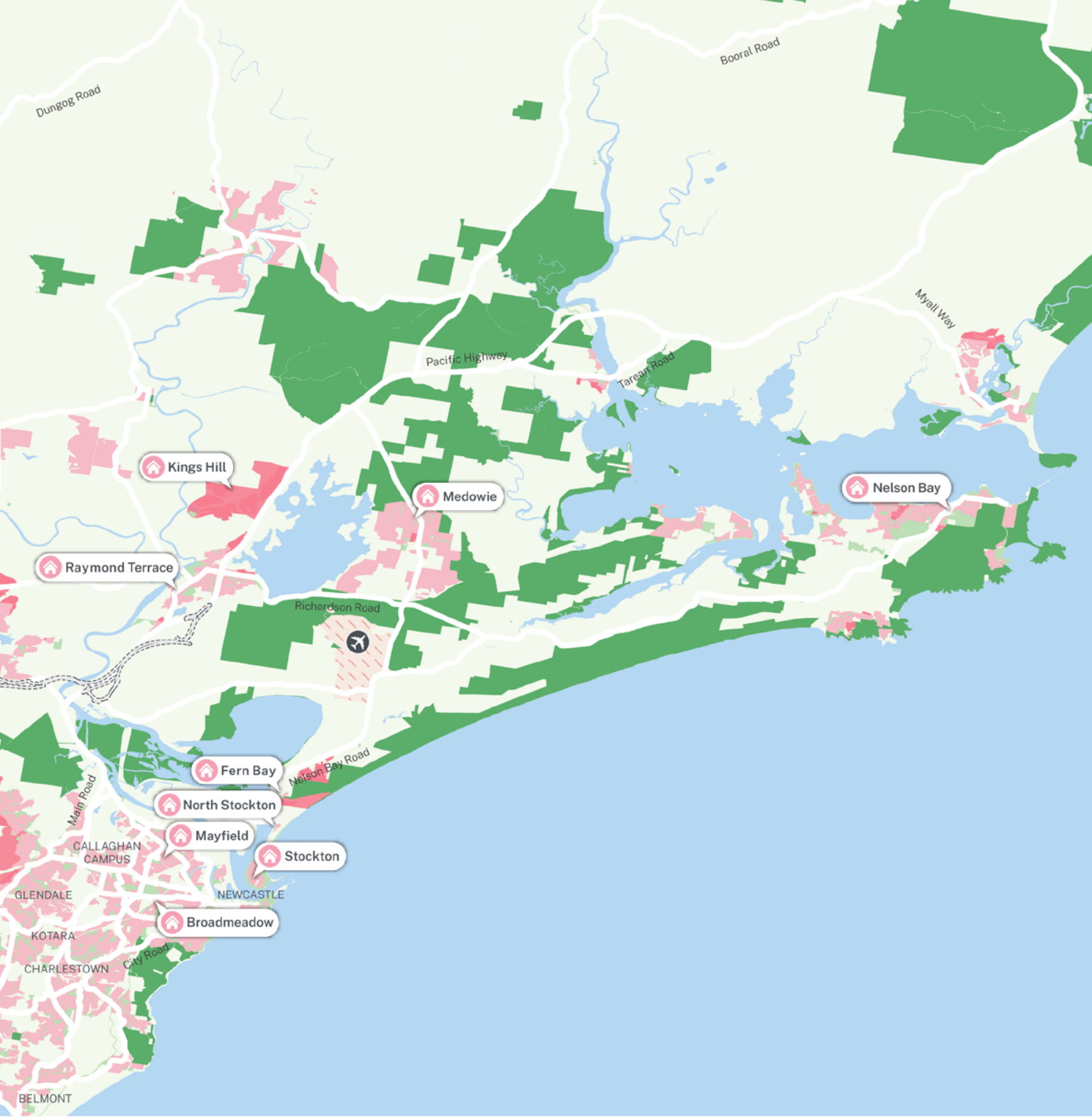











Figure 15: Priority locations for future housing around Williamstown



- | | |
|---|--|
|  Hunter UDP |  Airport |
|  Residential land |  National park and state forest |
|  Catalyst area boundary |  Open space |
|  M1 Raymond Terrace extension |  Water body |
|  Priority locations for future housing | |

PLANNING PRIORITY 1:**Prioritise housing within 30 minutes of Williamstown SAP**

Williamstown will increase its role as a nationally significant aviation and defence hub, with a major role in the Asia Pacific.

Williamstown Special Activation Precinct (SAP) builds on Hunter's history of serving national security and emerging aerospace industry. It is located around the Royal Australian Air Force base and Newcastle.

The Australian Government has committed \$66 million towards Newcastle Airport's runway upgrade to an international standard (Code E), which will allow long-range and wide-bodied aircraft. There is also a funding commitment for the new international terminal.

The RAAF Base employs over 3,500 people and is the primary location for the new Joint Strike Fighter (F-35) squadron. It will also be the maintenance facility to service these advanced fighters from countries across the Asia Pacific.

This investment demonstrates the ability of Hunter to meet the needs of the Australian Defence Force into the 21st century and the global role for the Hunter. The SAP will attract new industries and investment to establish the region as Australia's leading defence, research and development and aerospace industry hub.

We need to plan for housing that matches these employment opportunities. New housing is being provided within 30 minutes of Williamstown at Thornton and Newcastle City Centre, however more will be needed.

Any housing growth will need to be outside the aircraft noise exposure forecast (ANEF) area. Planning for housing growth also needs to consider better public transport from the following centres to the SAP.

City of Newcastle and Port Stephens councils have adopted the *Fern Bay and North Stockton Strategy* to coordinate housing development and required support services across LGA boundaries.

New town centres should complement the areas and people they serve, offering space to meet the daily needs of the current and future community. They should be planned for in areas that everyone can get to, particularly on foot or by bike.

Table 7: Priority locations for future housing to service the SAP

Priority locations for future housing to service the SAP

Broadmeadow

Mayfield

Raymond Terrace

Medowie

Nelson Bay

Fern Bay

North Stockton

Stockton

Kings Hill





Cams Wharf, Lake Macquarie
Credit: Destination NSW

PLANNING PRIORITY 2:

Reinforce revitalisation of Newcastle City Centre and expand transformation along the waterside

Investment in commercial office space and residential apartments over the last 10 years has helped to meet demand for jobs and housing close to public transport, night-time activity and public spaces.

Protection and sensitive re-use of heritage buildings and places in the eastern end of Newcastle City Centre is spurring on further renewal. We are seeing more commercial floor space towards Newcastle West as sites in the eastern end of the City Centre are transformed for housing and other uses.

Development controls will support future growth of regionally significant commercial floor space, particularly near the Newcastle Interchange. Light industrial zones in Carrington, Islington, Tighes Hill and Maryville should be retained for urban services, especially as the population increases.

Planning controls are needed to support the Tudor Street renewal corridor and justify future transport investment between Wickham and Broadmeadow.

PLANNING PRIORITY 3:

Grow Charlestown as a diverse, vibrant and mixed use strategic centre

Charlestown is a regionally significant centre with a broad range of businesses and services serving the Hunter and beyond. Finance, public administration, health care, retail and information technology are key sectors making Charlestown a major hub for Greater Newcastle. A cluster of medical activities could be enhanced by proposals for further investment.

We need to promote development that further diversifies economic activity and brings vibrancy to Charlestown, and enhance public and open spaces. Lake Macquarie City Council's plan to expand Lions Park will support this aim.

The Pacific Highway is a key transport corridor for the future of Charlestown, and helps to form the area's identity. Using the Movement and Place Framework to classify streets for their best use will improve street amenity and transport.

Planning also needs to consider housing diversity throughout the centre and a mix of uses in the existing retail core, including high density residential areas.

Museum Park
Credit: Hunter and Central
Coast Development Corporation



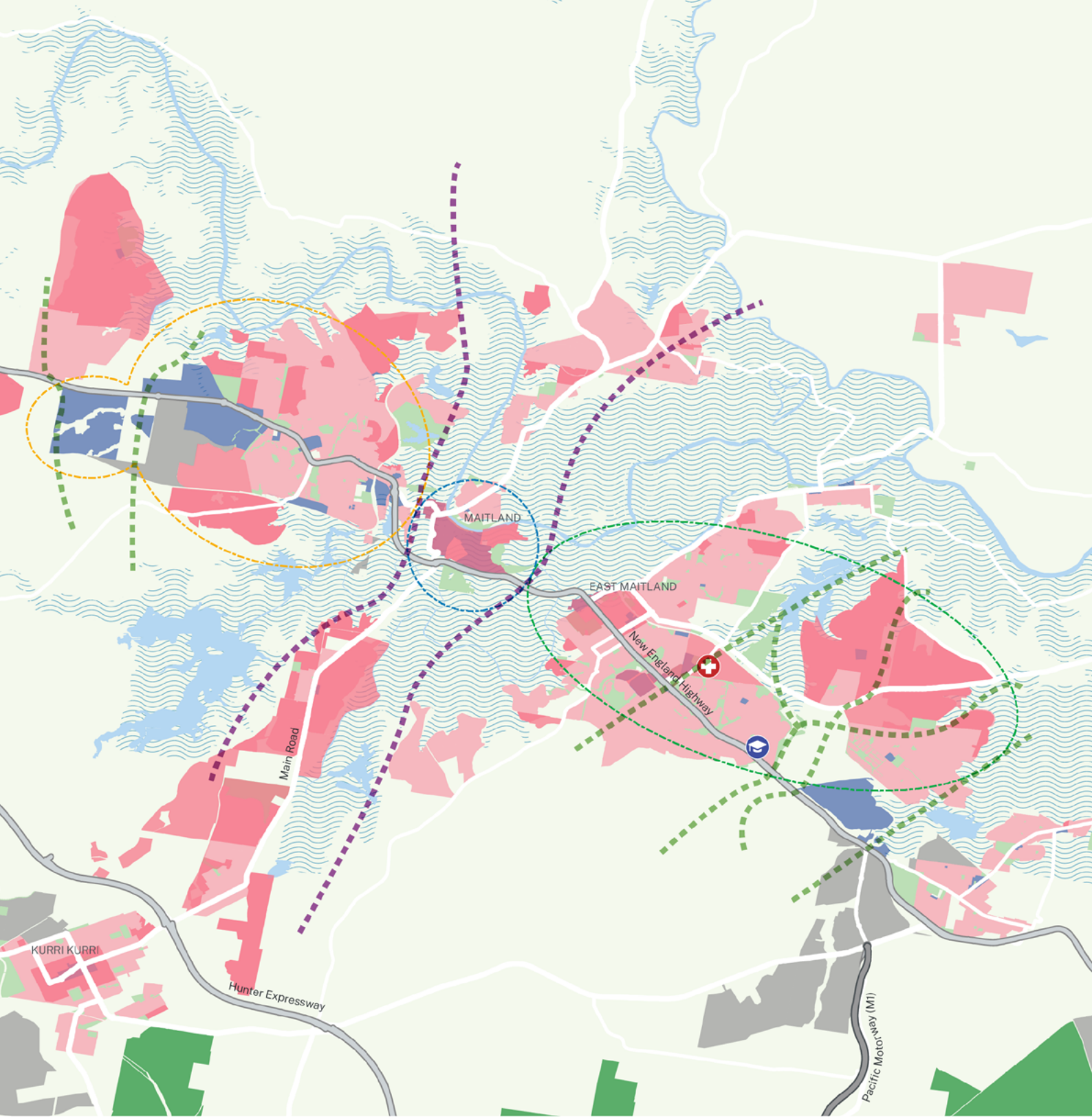


Figure 16: New England Growth Corridor



- | | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| West Maitland | 1 in 100 year flood extent | National park and state forest |
| Central Maitland | Biodiversity corridor | Open space |
| East Maitland | View corridor | Water body |
| Hunter UDP | Highway | |
| Business land | Motorway | |
| Industrial land | Education | |
| Residential land | Hospital | |

PLANNING PRIORITY 4:

Grow Maitland's strategic centres along the New England Growth Corridor

Maitland is a growing metropolitan area, with strategic centres servicing the hinterland and rural areas of Dungog, several large urban release areas, centres undergoing revitalisation and historic rural villages.

Given the challenges in servicing this number of development fronts and increasing dwelling density near centres, transport nodes, the NSW Government and Maitland City Council will coordinate services and infrastructure to enable the provision of new housing and employment.

Central Maitland will continue to service the surrounding areas and the growing population given its rich heritage and renewal opportunities. Development should expand Central Maitland's civic, educational, commercial and retail function. Additional residential development and urban renewal must consider flood mitigation infrastructure and initiatives.

East Maitland, as an emerging strategic centre for health and retail, will accommodate economic, housing and services growth. The health precinct around the new Maitland Hospital will provide modern healthcare facilities and be a place of innovation and high-quality healthcare for decades. The Greenhills precinct will remain a place for modern retail, dining and entertainment, together with diverse housing options.

Western Maitland, one of the largest growth areas in the Hunter, is a fast-growing residential and employment area from Rutherford to Lochinvar.

It is expected to house more than 30,000 people over the next 20 years and critical industrial and specialised retail precincts. Challenges include providing infrastructure and services, ensuring connectivity along the New England Highway into Maitland, maintaining important vistas, and enhancing biodiversity corridors.

These development fronts form the New England Growth Corridor, with each area enjoying its own distinct character. A holistic and coordinated planning approach will ensure each area achieves its potential.

The Levee in Maitland

The Levee project has transformed Maitland's CBD and lifestyle precinct. Drawing from the amenity of and access to waterways, it included an upgrade and connection to High Street Mall and the Riverlink, connecting main street shopping to the Riverside Walk.

This project provides space to exercise, socialise and celebrate the landscape.

This is a blueprint for other riverside towns to reinvigorate and broaden the role of a town centre beyond commerce, and create a place where people meet and relax and enjoy the waterside open space. Buildings identified for renewal can become landmarks seen from surrounding vantage points that also provide a strong sense of place.



Chisholm, East Maitland

PLANNING PRIORITY 5: Expand the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct

The John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct is the Hunter's busiest health precinct, the tertiary referral hospital for northern NSW, a provider of private hospital services and one of two forensic services within NSW. It provides education, training and medical research facilities through a partnership between the Local Health District, University of Newcastle and Hunter Medical Research Institute.

A state significant development application by Health Infrastructure NSW has been approved for the construction and operation of a new multi-storey acute services building and refurbishment of parts of the existing hospital buildings.

Further opportunities should be pursued for the development of allied health, education, training, hotels, aged care and research facilities at the John Hunter and Innovation Precinct.

PLANNING PRIORITY 6: Support the *NSW Koala Strategy*

The NSW Koala Strategy sets an ambitious target to double koala numbers in NSW by 2050. Local strategic planning that identifies koala habitat, avoids clearing and fragmentation of koala habitat, and aims to increase and restore connectivity of koala habitat is required to achieve this goal.

The Greater Newcastle district supports the Port Stephens and part of the Lower Hunter koala populations. The Port Stephens population has been identified in the NSW Koala Strategy as a priority for immediate investment and the Lower Hunter population is prioritised to fill knowledge gaps and deliver local actions.

Many of NSW's coastal koala populations, particularly those that are east of the M1 Pacific Highway are in long term severe and on-going decline. Without significant action, these populations may be extinct within the next 30-50 years. Coordinated and strategic conservation efforts are required at all levels of government to ensure intervention efforts are successful.

Both the Port Stephens and Lower Hunter koala populations are under increasing pressure from competing land uses for urban development such as new housing. Habitat loss is one of the key threats to koala populations. Local strategic planning like housing and local place strategies needs to avoid or mitigate impacts on koala habitat, so it is not fragmented or lost. Habitat loss increases the risk of vehicle strike incidents, domestic dog attacks, populations becoming isolated, and greater rates of disease.

Knowledge on the Port Stephens and Lower Hunter koala population is low but anecdotal evidence suggests this population has severely declined to very low numbers and requires substantial mitigation measures to increase the population.

The NSW Koala Strategy supports councils undertaking ecological assessment and community engagement to develop koala habitat maps. The maps will guide local strategic planning and ensure councils can strategically conserve habitat and connections using measures like directing growth to urban areas. Through effective planning, impacts to the koala can be avoided.

PLANNING PRIORITY 7: Local open space plans integrate the blue and green grid, extend urban tree canopy and include water management

Greater Newcastle's blue and green grid creates the connections to nature and opportunities for healthy lifestyles, protection of environmental qualities all needed for a growing population.

As councils continue to develop local strategies for public spaces and/or recreation areas, efforts should be focused on forming a network that creates open spaces near homes, integrating with and complementing the blue and green grid, and increasing tree canopy in public places. Further, an integrated water management approach should be applied, using recycled water and stormwater to irrigate public spaces.

Public space strategies can be a key requirement for a successful greenspace funding program, should the Metropolitan Greenspace Program be extended to include the Hunter, while initiatives like the Shiraz to Shore cycleway can provide economic benefits.

PLANNING PRIORITY 8:

Plan for alternative land uses for former mining sites

Several large mine sites have substantial infrastructure and vegetated areas near urban areas, making them potentially suitable for various new land uses as operations close down over the 20 year horizon of this plan.

This includes the West Wallsend Colliery, which includes a rail loop, power, water and sewer services near an existing population and the proposed Hunter Freight Bypass, national highway system and passenger rail network, including a future fast rail station.

The Austar site is in care and maintenance to transition to closure, including rehabilitation. The site, on the outskirts of Cessnock, could be used to support biodiversity, strengthen rural and scenic values or potentially provide for employment land or intensive agriculture.

The Donaldson and Abel mines near Beresfield could be used for employment, freight and logistics or biodiversity. These mines are in the Four Mile Creek precinct in the National Pinch Point regionally significant growth area.

The Newstan Centennial Coal site has been in care and maintenance since 2014, with underground mining proposed to restart. It is near residential and vegetated areas. Future reuse could enhance biodiversity corridors and scenic amenity.

Myuna at Wangi Wangi may also provide opportunities, noting its proximity to urban areas, Lake Macquarie and the historic Wangi Power Station.

Place strategy planning will consider these opportunities for the sites.

PLANNING PRIORITY 9:

Protect drinking water catchments

Water catchments need to be protected to maintain high quality and dependable water supplies. Local strategic planning will apply the neutral or beneficial water quality objectives when considering development impacts on surface and groundwater drinking water catchment and storage areas.



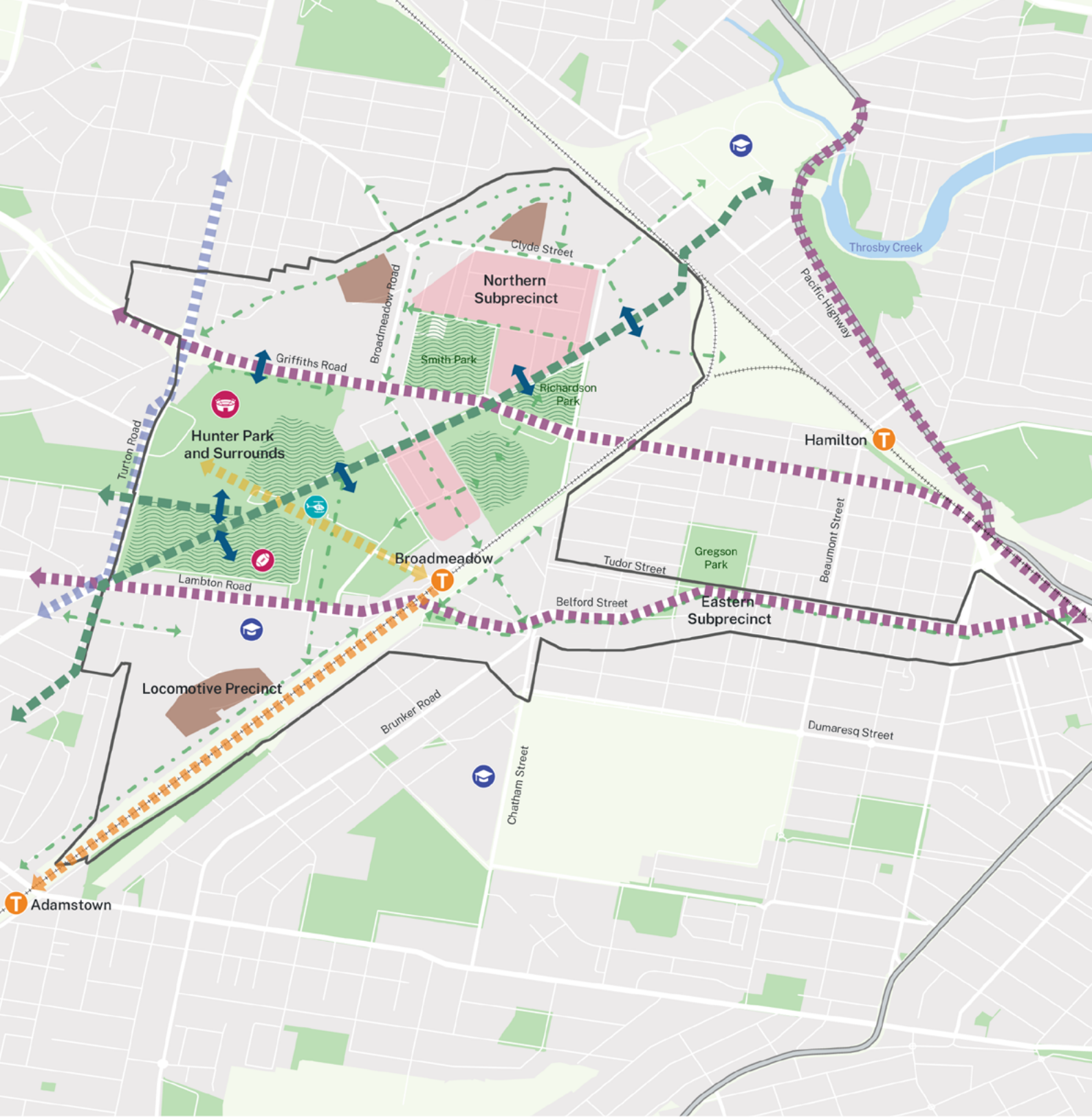


Figure 17: Broadmeadow regionally significant growth area

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------------------------------|
| — Growth area boundary | ↔↔ Blue and green grid links | T Train station | Existing urban area |
| ■ Leverage heritage assets for place making opportunities | ↔↔ Potential active transport connections | Existing volunteer Westpac Rescue Helicopter Base | ■ National park and state forest |
| ■ Leverage existing low density residential areas | ↔↔ Opportunity for pedestrian boulevard | Education | ■ Open space |
| Open space opportunity | ↔↔ Priority multimodal transport corridors | McDonald Jones Stadium | ■ Water body |
| ↔↔ Key connections | ↔↔ Future Fast Rail | Newcastle Knights Centre of Excellence | |
| ↔↔ Major landscape spine and opportunity for flood mitigation | Railway | | |
| | — Highway | | |

Broadmeadow regionally significant growth area

Broadmeadow's central location will support diverse and affordable housing options, continuing to service the strong growth of Newcastle and the Hunter. Broadmeadow will also become a nationally significant sport and entertainment precinct for Greater Newcastle and the Hunter. Development will respect the local character of its area and celebrate its diverse past.

Broadmeadow can showcase 15-minute neighbourhoods with a diversity of housing ranging across low to high rise choices.

As a regionally significant growth area, Broadmeadow can deliver exceptional place outcomes for Greater Newcastle, which is well integrated into the district, equitable and resilient that respects and celebrates local character and its diverse past. Broadmeadow will showcase how the vision and objectives of this regional plan can be realised for the community of the Hunter.

Planning for Hunter Park and Broadmeadow

The NSW Government wants Hunter Park to be the first choice for sporting, leisure and entertainment as well as an important precinct for new homes and jobs close to Broadmeadow Station. The Hunter Park Urban Regeneration Program will transform underutilised government-owned lands into a nationally significant sporting and entertainment destination within a new urban precinct.

The City of Newcastle is leading the Broadmeadow Place Strategy, which will integrate with the Hunter Park master plan. The department, Council and other stakeholders will work together on the Broadmeadow Regionally Significant Growth Area and its collection of unique neighbourhoods to deliver a range of affordable and diverse housing options for Broadmeadow that contribute to housing needs for the Hunter.



Place strategy outcomes

1. Diverse and affordable housing.
 - Planning for Broadmeadow will promote new 15-minute neighbourhoods with housing and job options for the precinct.
 - Broadmeadow’s connectivity and access to transport infrastructure will drive opportunities for optimal density and diversity in housing types.
 - Housing choice will be supported where a diversity of dwelling types, including apartments and multi-dwelling housing is provided close to high-frequency public transport and open-space assets.
2. Blue and green heart of Newcastle
 - Create vibrant community spaces through quality public spaces and plazas.
 - Revitalise Styx Creek to enable a well connected green and blue heart at the centre of Broadmeadow.
 - Undertake ecological restoration and urban greening.
 - Cool places by retaining water and expansive tree canopy in the landscape.
 - Establish a hierarchy of open spaces for legibility and wayfinding.
3. Active and public transport
 - Improve walking and cycling connections across Styx Creek, the rail line and Griffiths, Lambton and Turton roads.
 - Improve public transport, including potential light rail connections.
 - Create accessible spaces for all members of the community.
 - Protect and secure land for transport upgrades, including potential light rail and fast rail.
4. Heritage assets
 - Re-use heritage sites and significant buildings for residential, employment or tourism uses as part of the Locomotive Precinct.
 - Integrate significant landscape sites into the fabric of Broadmeadow.
 - Engage and celebrate Aboriginal and European heritage.
5. Nationally significant precinct
 - Leverage upgrades to the Hunter Park to create a world-class sport and entertainment complex.
 - Make Broadmeadow as a destination of choice for entertainment, housing, recreation and discovery.
 - Achieve optimum densities of the regional plan and promote employment and tourism activities near high-frequency public transport, open space and walking and cycling connections.
6. Urban renewal and climate change adaptation
 - Encourage sustainable built form and public spaces.
 - Encourage affordable housing choices that respects local character.
 - Manage flooding/water cycle from Styx Creek and its tributaries.
 - Provide opportunities for land uses to transition and adapt in a changing landscape.
7. Unique areas of change
 - Land in and surrounding the Locomotive Precinct (an item of state heritage significance) will be investigated for potential housing, employment or unique cultural tourism opportunities. Urban design will integrate heritage into the fabric of the precinct including connections to and through the site and between adjacent uses such as the Hunter School of Performing Arts and brownfield sites. Site-specific matters such as flooding, heritage, feasibility, traffic and how they relate will guide change.
 - Land north of Griffiths Road including properties in Hamilton North, the Goninan’s site and other industrial assets on Clyde Street and Chatham Road could revitalise and refresh the northern gateway of Broadmeadow. These brownfield sites can provide new walking and cycling connections and affordable housing within easy walking reach of daily needs and local social hubs. Each neighbourhood would have its own distinct character, spatial layout and built form. This northern precinct development will benefit from safe and convenient connections across Griffiths Road to adjacent suburbs and from Hunter Park and Broadmeadow Rail Station.
 - Development will only proceed once contamination and flooding are resolved.
 - Open space and quality urban design will provide a platform for optimum densities of the regional plan and a unique and diverse skyline.



Hunter Stadium, Newcastle
Credit: Destination NSW

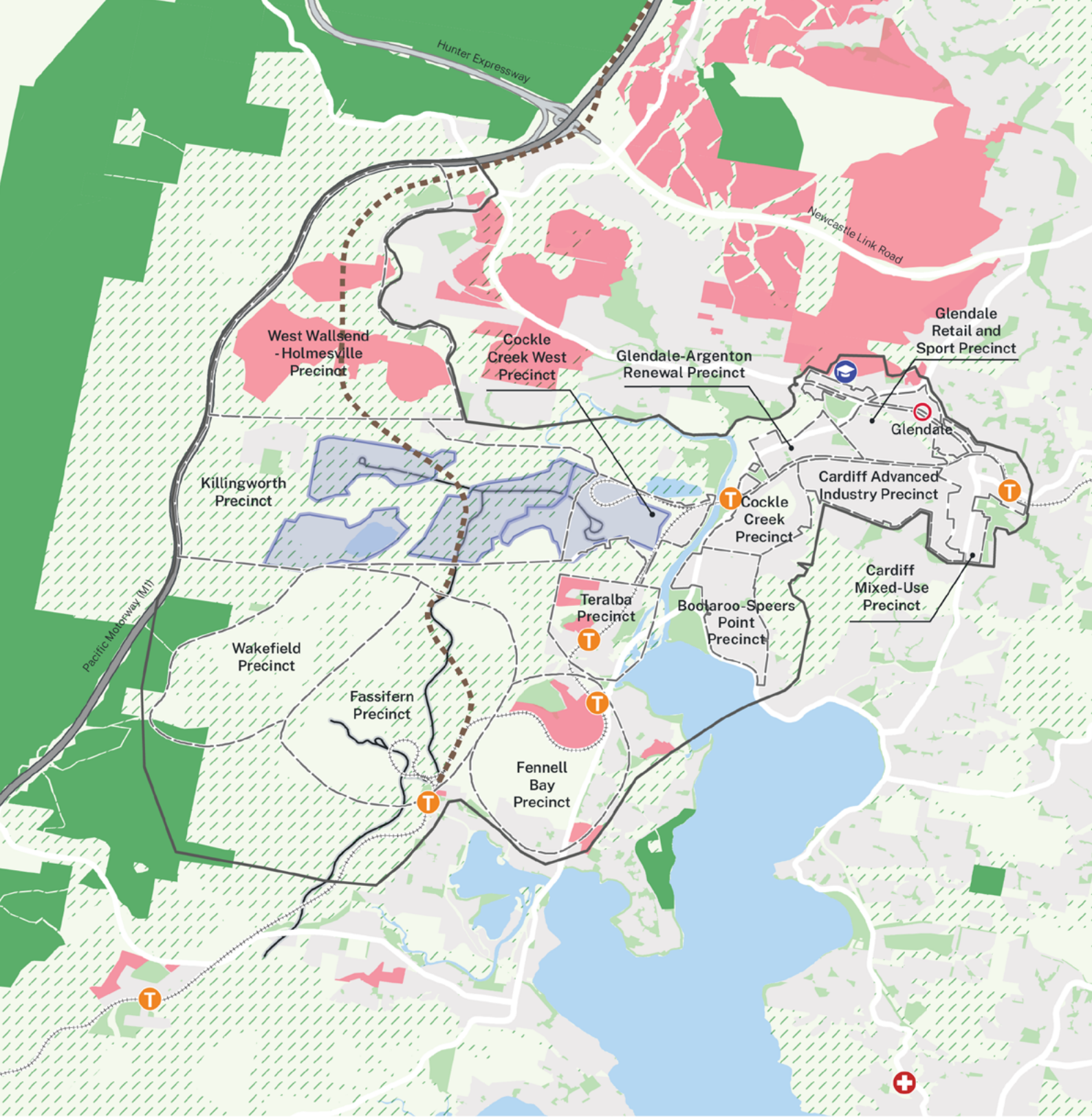


Figure 18: North West Lake Macquarie regionally significant growth area



- | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| — Growth area boundary | Train station | --- Lower Hunter Freight Corridor |
| - - - Precincts | Education | Existing urban area |
| Strategic centre | Hospital | National park and state forest |
| Mixed-use investigation area | ----- Railway | Open space |
| Hunter UDP | — Highway | Water body |
| Conservation zone | — Motorway | |
| | — Private coal road | |

North West Lake Macquarie regionally significant growth area

North West Lake Macquarie is evolving into a housing and employment hub with intensive mixed use development; public transport and walking and cycling; retail; advanced manufacturing and urban services; and office and services employment. The precinct will include compact 15-minute neighbourhoods that incorporate shops, services, work from home opportunities, shady streets, and public and green open spaces that also serve a wider regional community.

Over the next two decades the urban area east of Cockle Creek will welcome 10,000 new residents, with more than 4,000 new dwellings and space for 6,000 new jobs. Strategic planning to support this growth will focus on the optimal densities of the regional plan, enable flexibility to transition employment for future jobs, enhance open space and vibrancy of centres, and investments in critical state and local infrastructure.

Land to the west of Cockle Creek presents a significant opportunity for new urban growth, brownfield redevelopment and an innovative re-use of mining lands that support economic diversification for 15-minute neighbourhoods. The area could provide more than 750 ha of developable land that could support 20,000 dwellings, thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of economic activity.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Boolaroo-Speers Point Precinct

- Continue to enhance Speers Point Park, Cockle Creek and Cockle Creek foreshore while mitigating flood and lake level rise impacts and providing accessible transport connections.
- Revitalise the Boolaroo and Speers Point local centres to support business activation and housing diversity.
- Create a 15-minute neighbourhood from Munibung Hill, Boolaroo and Speers Point local centres to Speers Point Park and Lake Macquarie foreshore.
- Improve the intersection on the Esplanade, Five-Islands Road and TC Frith Avenue.

2. Cardiff Advanced Industry Precinct

- Expand flexible employment land uses and building provisions to foster the transition to an innovative industrial precinct.

- Ensure the Munibung Road corridor provides access to national freight networks, buses and the principal pedestrian footpath network.
- Work with Transport for NSW to develop the Pennant Street bridge.

3. Cardiff Mixed Use Precinct

- Create 15-minute neighbourhoods that connect a diversity of new housing, services, jobs and public open space, in particular a new public space in the Cardiff strategic centre.
- Enhance access, connection and visibility of Cardiff Rail Station, including the commuter car park.
- Create more walking, cycling and public transport connections for 15-minute neighbourhoods.
- Improve Myall Road and the Macquarie/ Munibung intersection.
- Revitalise the Winding Creek Corridor.

4. Cockle Creek Precinct

- Establish an iconic city landmark for visitors, workers and customers from outside the area.
- Provide a diversity of jobs in commercial and employment precincts such as retail, tourism, innovative, and knowledge-based industries.
- Create people-oriented places that are inviting, entertaining, safe, convenient and integrated with active public transport, particularly along TC Frith Avenue, Main Road and Munibung Road.
- Expand Cockle Creek rail station and explore a multi-modal interchange to support growth.
- Enhance open spaces and connect the cultural and recreational potential of Munibung Hill.

5. Cockle Creek West and Killingworth Precincts

- Investigate suitable and sustainable re-use of mining land to balance environmental systems while leveraging existing power, water, sewer, rail loops and roads to facilitate a range of employment and urban uses.
- Ensure land investigated for urban and employment use is near rail and road infrastructure, and is supported by 15-minute neighbourhoods and optimum density.

- Plan for transport connectivity and multi-modal opportunities that connect with the Northern Railway, proposed Lower Hunter Freight Bypass and new road connection from the M1 Motorway to Cockle Creek.
6. Glendale–Argenton Renewal Precinct
- Facilitate affordable housing choices near education clusters and the Glendale town centre.
 - Improve Lake Road and the Argenton local centre.
 - Improve transport networks and services, including walking and cycling connections across Lake Road, Fredrick Street and Main Road.
 - Plan for an accessible, mixed use education and innovation hub around Glendale TAFE.
 - Rejuvenate and connect existing open spaces.
7. Glendale Retail and Sport Precinct
- Work with Transport for NSW and Stocklands on a potential Lake Macquarie transport interchange.
 - Support the expansion and intensification of the Stockland retail centre with street tree planting.
 - Support the expansion of the Hunter Sports Centre and Trampoline Centre of Excellence.
 - Support the use and development of surplus Transport for NSW land to connect with open public spaces and mixed use development along Main Road.
 - Improve walking and cycling paths on Stockland Drive and within the Stockland retail centre.
 - Ensure efficient movement of public bus services into the precinct.
8. Fassifern Precinct
- Support extractive industries while preparing for end-of-operational life and future re-use of mining land.
 - Investigate new land uses near Fassifern Rail Station, the north-south rail loading loop and private haul road linking the colliery and Eraring Power Station to the south.
 - Explore mixed use and mid-rise residential development around Fassifern Rail Station for existing and new development.
9. Fennell Bay Precinct
- Consider further urban development designed around 15-minute neighbourhoods and optimal densities.
 - Integrate mixed use development with public transport, walking and cycling and main road corridors.
 - Preserve and enhance natural areas, creeks and conservation lands.
10. Teralba Precinct
- Reinvigorate Teralba local centre using heritage as a point of difference.
 - Protect the heritage values within the Teralba Heritage Conservation Area.
 - Improve accessibility and multi-modal transport connectivity at Teralba and Booragul rail stations.
11. Wakefield Precinct
- Promote adventure and recreational tourism.
 - Productive rural lands and the natural rural character.
 - Conserve natural areas, creeks and wetlands alongside recreational uses of these assets.
12. West Wallsend and Holmesville
- Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation and Council to investigate suitable land uses for land zoned for transition.
 - Support and progress proposals for critical infrastructure such as the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor and potential for fast rail.
 - Ensure new development complements and enhances the West Wallsend Heritage Conservation Area.
 - Recognise, manage and conserve the Aboriginal cultural heritage significance of Butterfly Caves, Mount Sugarloaf and Mount Sugarloaf Range.



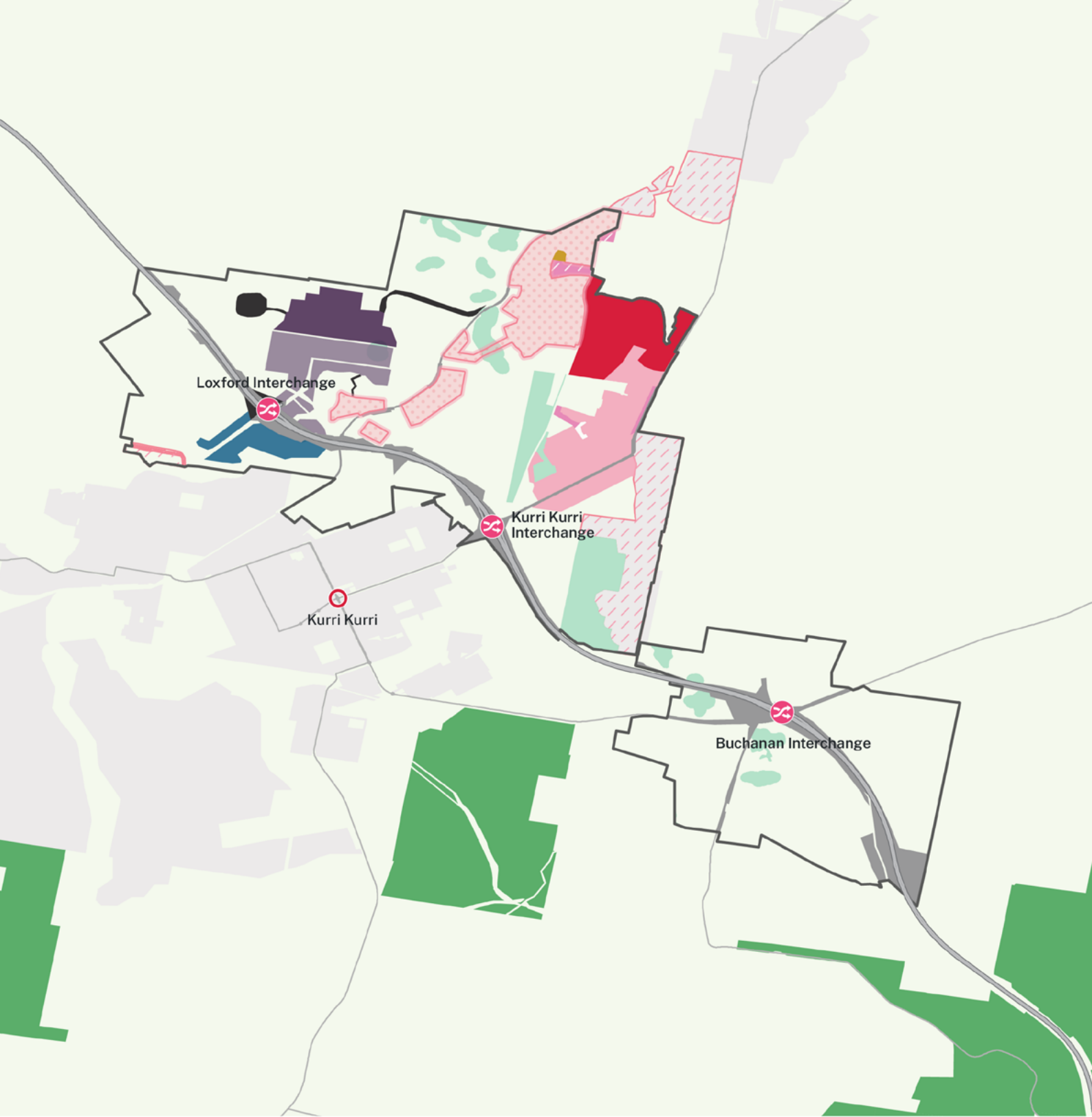


Figure 19: HEX regionally significant growth area



- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| HEX interchange growth area | Recreation | Residential zone (developed) | Railway |
| Strategic centre | Proposed recreation | Residential zone (undeveloped) | Highway |
| Centre | Under construction | Proposed residential | Road |
| Environmental zone | Proposed business | Proposed neighbourhood centre | Expressway interchange |
| Existing urban areas | Proposed heavy industrial | National park and state forest | |
| Infrastructure | Proposed general industrial | | |
| Proposed infrastructure | | | |

Buchanan, Kurri Kurri and Loxford interchanges regionally significant growth area

Expressway interchanges are well located for new development connected to the freight network and growth corridors. Land use and infrastructure will be planned to maximise benefits while protecting the regional shaping role of the expressway and its interchanges. This will occur specifically in the Interchange Growth Areas.

Change is already occurring with the Hydro planning proposal at Loxford Interchange. As such, there may not be an immediate need to review land uses in the short term for the other two Interchange Growth Areas.

The Kurri Kurri and Loxford interchanges could operate as a single Interchange Growth Area. These interchanges have unique characteristics and different potential for growth and change in the short, medium and long term.

Land currently zoned for development or subject to a gateway determination will not need to address any additional matters to be consistent with the interchange regionally significant growth areas.

Hunter Expressway principles

- Maximise accessibility through the existing interchanges to maintain connectivity and productivity across Greater Newcastle.
- Protect high value land adjacent to each interchange for industrial and freight and logistics uses.
- Protect the operation of the Hunter Expressway by limiting the encroachment of residential uses.

In 2020, the Hunter contained 49,000 potential lots in zoned and undeveloped residential land and 1,507 ha undeveloped employment land. Additional potential lots are subject to a gateway determination. Undeveloped zoned residential and employment land may face barriers to development such as infrastructure provision or biodiversity protection.

Some larger areas of zoned employment land in the region located away from transport corridors may not suit the changing nature of employment and freight, whereas land near Interchange Growth Areas are accessible. This may also attract a greater diversity of retail and businesses; however, bulky goods, big box superstores and factory outlet style retailing will be located outside of the Interchange Growth Areas unless subject to an existing planning proposal.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Interchange Growth Areas

- Define land available to investigate for release in local strategies, noting that not all areas will be suitable and further detailed assessment will be required.
- Consider other uses compatible with the Hunter Expressway principles and that respond to constraints after detailed planning.
- Prohibit rezoning for residential or rural residential development, other than land in a current proposal or any endorsed local strategy.

2. Planning for employment

- Focus new housing in existing towns and centres to retain the interchanges for employment land uses.
- Consider opportunities for intermodal terminals, freight and logistics that require efficient supply chains, access to customers, land availability and access to main roads.
- Plan for these elements while optimising road and rail network improvements.

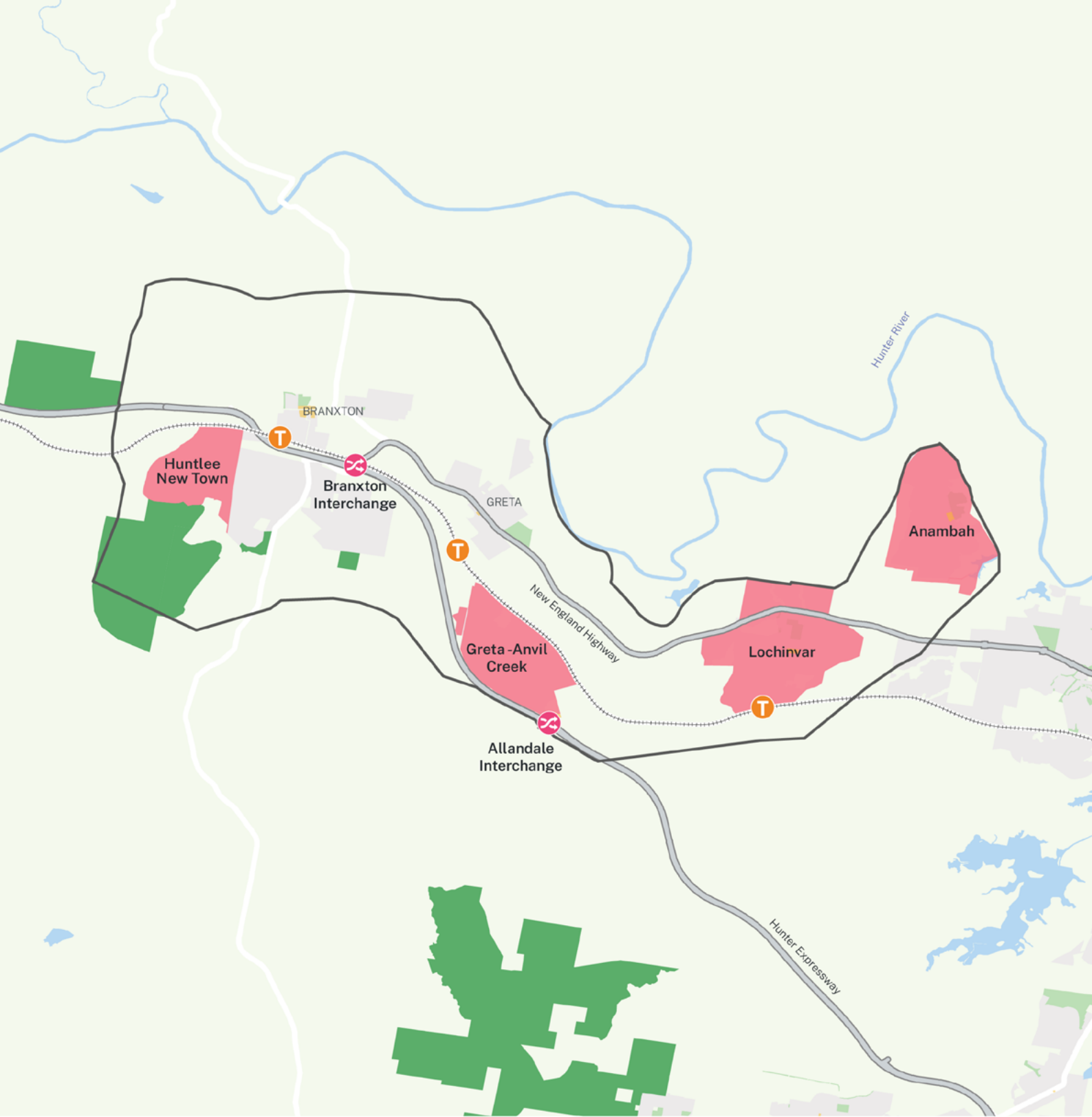


Figure 20: Branxton to Anambah regionally significant growth area



- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| — Growth area boundary | ----- Railway |
| ○ Strategic centre | — Highway |
| Ⓣ Train station | ▒ Existing urban area |
| ⊗ Transport interchange | ■ National park and state forest |
| ■ Hunter UDP | ■ Open space |
| ■ Commercial land | ■ Water body |

Anambah to Branxton regionally significant growth area

The Anambah to Branxton area is the convergence of the growth corridors of the New England Highway, Hunter Expressway and the Great Northern Railway. Its accessibility to employment areas in both the Greater Newcastle and the Upper Hunter districts by road and rail has resulted in rapid growth, with places like Huntlee developing faster than originally envisaged. This trend is likely to continue as employment growth at Expressway interchanges and Black Hill commences.

While growth in the short to medium term can likely be accommodated within existing zoned areas, planning is needed to ensure orderly and efficient growth. The growth area sits across three LGAs and service providers vary. Greater coordination will ensure a cohesive mix of commercial, employment and residential growth opportunities, with sequenced infrastructure investment and provision.

Place strategy planning will examine opportunities for the land between and including Anambah urban release area, Allandale interchange and Branxton and their surrounds.

A number of new town centres across the Growth Area are already emerging and planned. The scale and sequencing of future opportunities in the Growth Area will be considered in light of current and planned infrastructure capacity, and the ability of the Growth Area to deliver 15-minute neighborhoods, optimum densities and not car-dependent communities.

Coal train



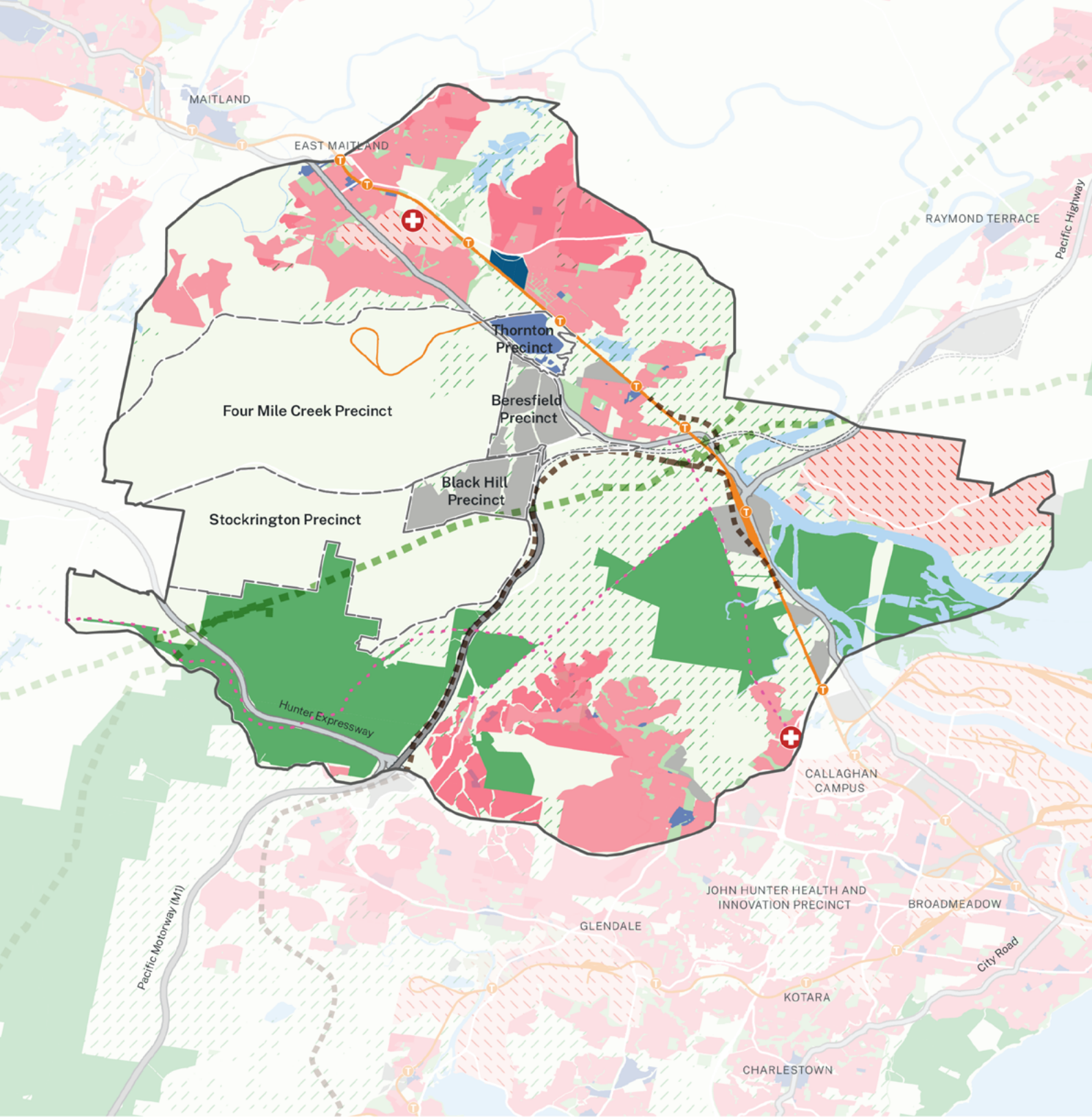


Figure 21: National Pinch Point regionally significant growth area



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| — National Pinch Point place area | ▨ Catalyst area boundary | — Railway |
| - - - Precincts | ▨ Conservation zone | — Motorway |
| ■ Hunter UDP | Ⓣ Train station | — Highway |
| ■ Business land | ⊕ Hospital | - - - M1 to Raymond Terrace extension |
| ■ Proposed business | ▨ Biodiversity corridors | ■ National park and state forest |
| ■ Industrial land | ▨ Lower Hunter freight corridor | ■ Open space |
| ■ Residential land | ⋯ Richmondvale rail trail | ■ Water body |

National Pinch Point regionally significant growth area

The National Pinch Point is the convergence of national road and rail routes between Hexham and Buchanan. The M1 Pacific Highway, Hunter Expressway, New England Highway, Main Northern Rail Line, North Coast Rail Line and the Hunter Valley Coal Chain collectively provide passenger and freight transport connections to Sydney, Brisbane, north western NSW, the Central Coast and across the Hunter.

Initiatives to improve the operational efficiency of transport links and connectivity include the M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace and Lower Hunter Freight Corridor.

The Richmond Vale Rail Trail is a unique opportunity to link Greater Newcastle urban areas with a natural breaks. Upgrades will promote walking, cycling, heritage, and biodiversity conservation along its route.

Planning for transport corridors will need to conserve and restore biodiversity, and particularly habitat connectivity across the Watagans–Stockton corridor. New proposals for employment land will leverage opportunities associated with inter-regional transport connections.

Greenfield areas close to the pinch point – like Thornton, Chisolm, Minmi, Hydro and Wallsend – will continue to grow and provide housing. Transport infrastructure is critical to these areas.

Planned infrastructure upgrades

The M1 Pacific Motorway and Pacific Highway are critical links in the National Land Transport Network and among the busiest transport corridors in Australia. The M1 Extension will deliver a 15 km dual carriageway extension of the M1 Pacific Motorway connecting the motorway at Black Hill to the Pacific Highway at Raymond Terrace.

The Lower Hunter Freight Corridor will help to separate freight and passenger movements on the rail network and improve the rail service reliability.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Black Hill
 - Expand freight and logistics, manufacturing and other light industrial uses.
 - Protect the proposed M1 Extension and Lower Hunter Freight corridors.
 - Promote rural lifestyles and the growth of rural enterprises.
2. Beresfield
 - Expand freight and logistics, manufacturing and other light industrial uses.
3. Thornton
 - Reinforce business and light industrial uses to service the surrounding residential community and to complement services offered at Thornton local centre.
 - Create a continuous green corridor linking land south of the rail line through to land north of Raymond Terrace Road.
 - Encourage development of the former brickworks site on the corner of Haussman Drive and Raymond Terrace Road into a new employment precinct.
4. Four Mile Creek
 - Encourage employment uses that leverage the access and proximity to M1 Pacific Motorway or rail infrastructure, including freight, warehousing and logistics, and that complement nearby centres.
 - Repurpose existing infrastructure to support transition to new uses.
 - Conserve high environmental value lands and support biodiversity connections across the site.
5. Stockrington
 - Conserve high environmental value lands.
 - Promote rural lifestyles and the growth of rural enterprises.
 - Enable ongoing resource extraction.

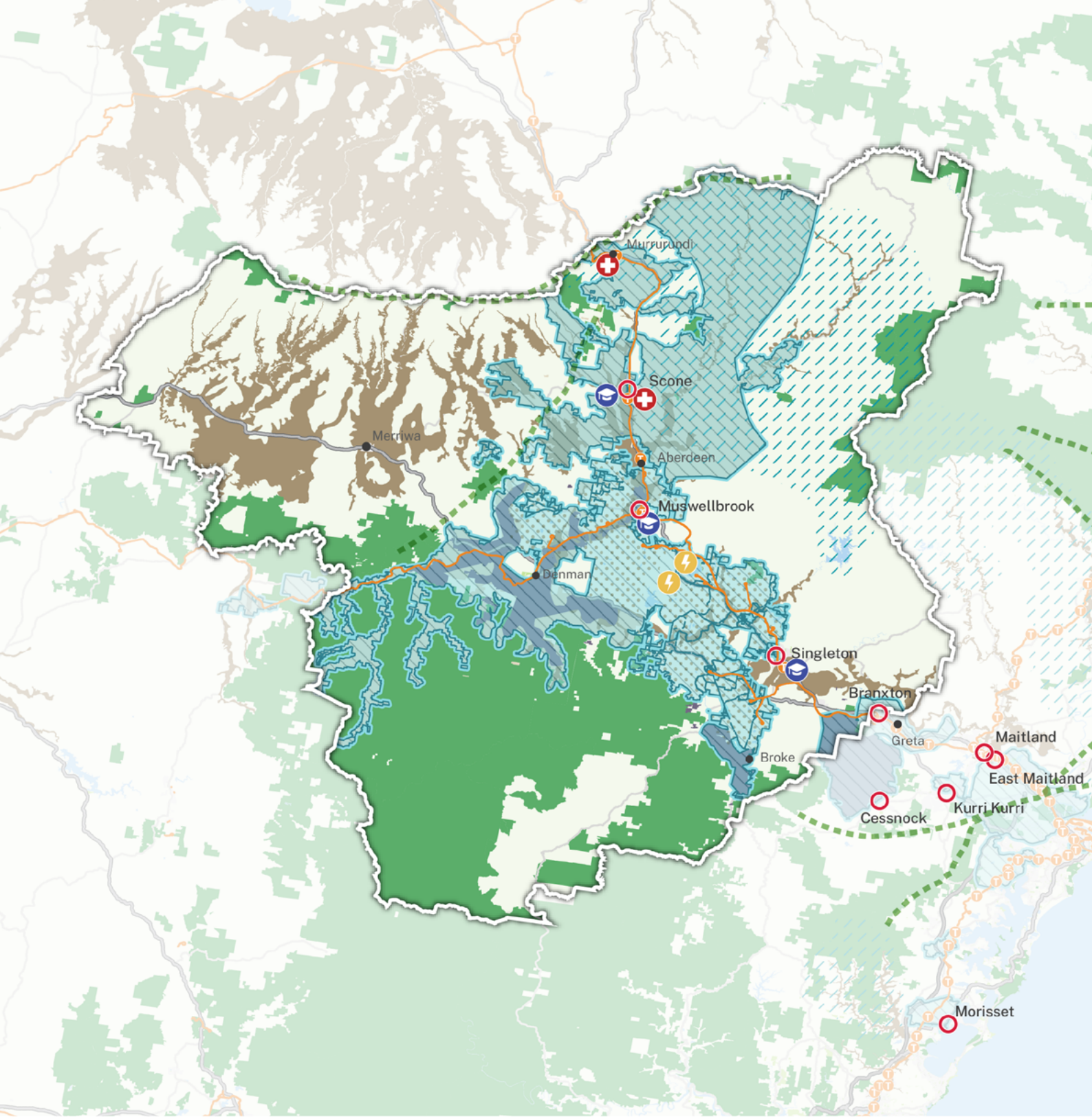


Figure 22: Upper Hunter district



- | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| | District boundary | | Education | | Regionally significant growth area | | Viticultural strategic agricultural land |
| | Metropolitan city | | Power station | | Mining land | | Existing urban area |
| | Strategic centre | | Biodiversity corridor | | Drinking water catchments | | National park and state forest |
| | Centre | | Highway | | Biophysical strategic agricultural land | | Open space |
| | Train station | | Motorway | | Equinal strategic agricultural land | | Water body |
| | Hospital | | Railway | | | | |

Upper Hunter District

Merriwa



The Upper Hunter district is anchored by the bustling towns of Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone, which support an array of villages and rural residential areas. These settlements are nestled in a diverse landscape that sustains heavy industry, agriculture, tourism and biodiversity.

Landscapes vary from open cut mines and electricity generators to the rainforest areas of Mount Royal, the vast bushland of Howes Valley and Putty, and the sandstone escarpments and plateaus of the Goulburn River and World Heritage-listed Wollemi National Park.

Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Shire LGAs contain a thriving network of horse studs while vineyards within Singleton and Muswellbrook LGAs at Broke–Fordwich and Denman stretch across gently undulating hills set against the backdrop of the valley's rugged walls.

The district sits on the doorstep of the Six Cities Region and has links to the Central West, New England and North Coast. This, coupled with its infrastructure assets, means the district is uniquely placed to diversify its economy.

The Upper Hunter district will be a diverse energy, innovation and industry centre with efficient freight and transport connections. It will benefit from enhanced biodiversity and scenic values to support an enviable rural lifestyle and the growing world class viticulture and equine sectors. This will be achieved by:

- creating housing diversity and sequenced development
- leveraging the Upper Hunter's connection to the Six Cities Region and global economy
- enhancing town centres once highway bypasses are completed
- leveraging scenic landscapes and enhancing biodiversity and the natural environment
- supporting productive agricultural land for rural prosperity
- protecting drinking water catchments
- planning for land uses in former mining regionally significant growth areas
- planning for the Liddell and Bayswater power station regionally significant growth areas
- planning for the viticulture regionally significant growth area
- planning for the Scone and Equine regionally significant growth area.

PLANNING PRIORITY 1:

Create housing diversity and sequenced development

Housing diversity can be achieved through a combination of infill and greenfield development, and rural residential housing. A range of housing types will support the changing needs of the community and attract new residents. Residential communities will be planned for in the following areas:

Table 8: New residential communities

New residential communities
Branxton
Huntlee
Singleton Heights
Hunterview –Wattle Ponds
Gowrie
Sedgefield
Muswellbrook Candidate Area B

Local strategic planning determines the locations for new residential communities by understanding environmental constraints like bushfire, ecology and flooding and the feasibility of infrastructure provision. The urban development program will clarify infrastructure constraints so that development can be sequenced and the new housing sites considered.

Low rise housing –like dual occupancies, townhouses and secondary dwellings in Muswellbrook, Singleton, Scone and Denman town centres can leverage the easy access to the main streets. There are also opportunities around rail infrastructure, especially as faster rail evolves.

PLANNING PRIORITY 2:

Leverage the Upper Hunter’s connection to the Six Cities and global economy

The Inland Rail project, highway bypasses and the planned upgrade of the New England Highway to dual carriageway between the Hunter Expressway and the Golden Highway at Belford will improve connections to the Six Cities Region and global gateways.

Local strategic planning will review employment land capacity and take advantage of opportunities associated with former mine and power station sites. This includes opportunities to diversify industry and leverage employment opportunities arising from renewable energy investment.

Planning and development controls will protect these lands and their key transport connections. Freight efficiency and employment growth will be protected by preventing encroachment of sensitive land uses.

PLANNING PRIORITY 3:

Enhance town centre amenity following completion of highway bypasses

Main street and town centre master plans can shape the future once traffic conditions improve, bringing better places that celebrate local identity and encourage walking and cycling. They will be attractive for business investment and residential development, drawing visitors and new residents. Local strategic planning will support new commercial development, events and place-making initiatives in these areas.



PLANNING PRIORITY 4:

Leverage scenic landscapes and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment

Scenic rural and natural landscapes frame the district's towns and villages and are critical to equine and viticulture clusters. With better tourism and enhanced visitor experiences, more people will enjoy and explore these landscapes and tourism will be a stronger part of the Upper Hunter's diversified economy.

Local strategic planning should identify important scenic landscapes and how best to support nature-based and agri-based tourism in these areas, focusing on lifestyle, culture, food, nature, recreation and adventure. This includes opportunities for boutique accommodation, farm stays and camping as a seasonal product or utilising heritage buildings. Planning and development controls should ensure development in these areas is sympathetic to the landscape values.

These activities will be complemented by enhanced biodiversity connections and natural environment improvements to correct earlier land clearing. Mine and power station land holdings, coupled with mine approval biodiversity offset and rehabilitation requirements, will grow and expand biodiversity in the district. Local strategic planning should identify potential corridors and green breaks to further enhance the landscape.

Vegetated riparian corridors help with bank stabilisation, filtering sediment and contaminants from land-based activities and temperature control, while providing habitat and corridors for movement of wildlife. Understanding and prioritising improvements to natural watercourses and riparian corridors is an important first step towards better water flows, water quality, and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

PLANNING PRIORITY 5:

Support productive agricultural land for rural prosperity

The Upper Hunter's agricultural diversity means there is growing demand for the district's wine, beef and other agricultural products, including dairying and cropping. These industries benefit from the quality of the district's landscape of broad valley floors with rich alluvial soils and extensive volcanic soils of the Merriwa Plateau.

The district also offers access to markets and processing facilities and fewer development pressures, meaning the district can capitalise on new and emerging opportunities in domestic and international markets.

Local strategic planning will ensure that farms are of sufficient scale to support sustainable and profitable agricultural practices, and that infrastructure required for ongoing operations can be retained. Key infrastructure such as sale yards and abattoirs, and access to these and markets, need to be protected from inappropriate uses.

Rural land should principally facilitate agriculture, given its importance to the regional economy. However, planning and development controls need to be responsive to emerging agricultural trends, smaller-scale rural enterprises in less productive areas, and the opportunities afforded by former mine and power station sites. These activities need to be protected by encroachment of sensitive uses.

PLANNING PRIORITY 6:

Protect drinking water catchments

Water catchments need to be protected to maintain high quality and dependable water supplies. Local strategic planning will apply the neutral or beneficial water quality objectives when considering development impacts on surface and groundwater drinking water catchment and storage areas.



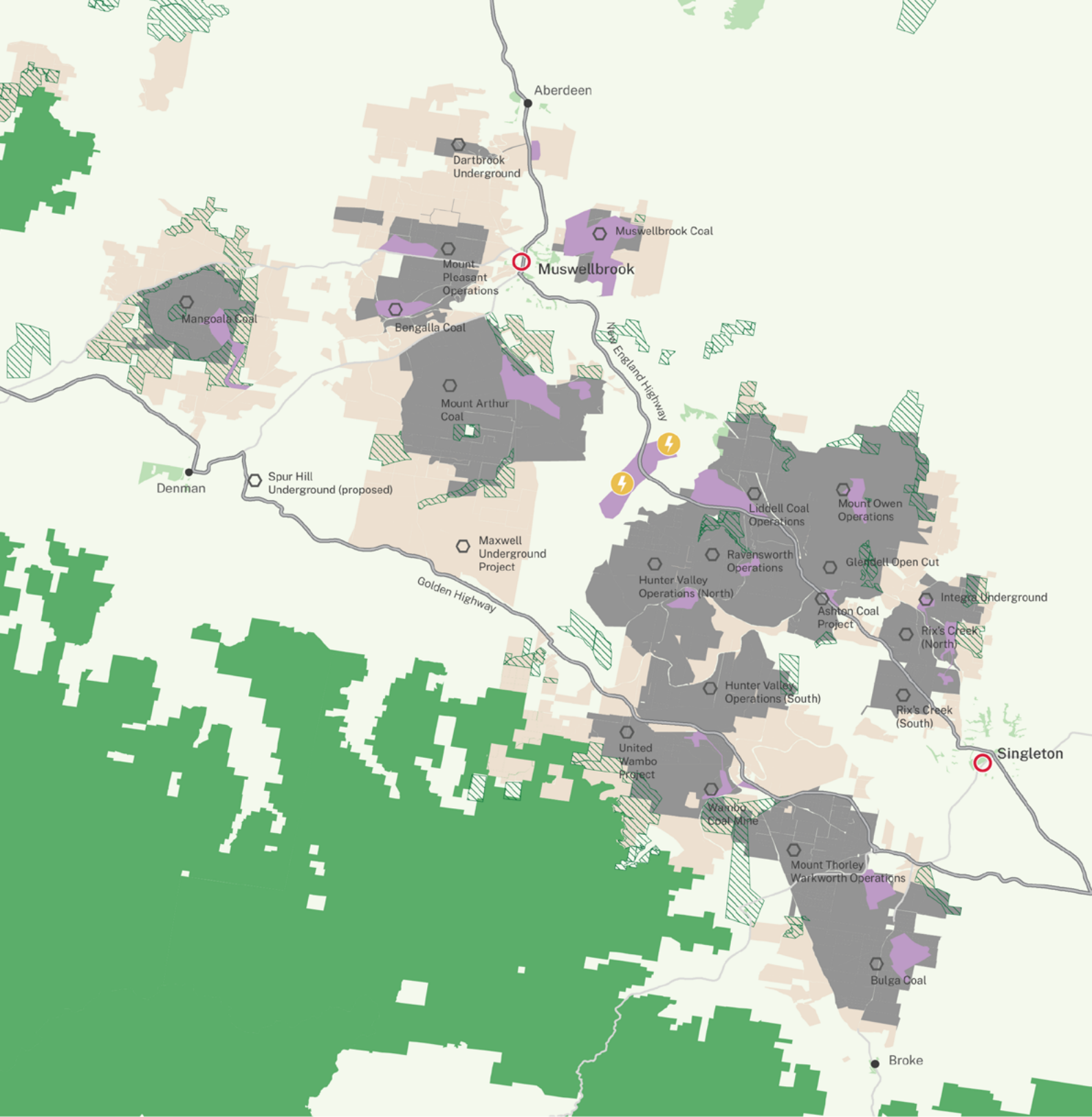


Figure 23: Post Mining regionally significant growth area



- Strategic centre
- Centre
- Areas of interest
- Mining (operations land)
- Mining (non-operational) land
- Mine
- Power station
- Biodiversity offset
- Highway
- Road
- National park and state forest
- Open space

Former mining regionally significant growth areas

Several mines in the Upper Hunter district will likely cease mining and commence closure shortly, while others may expand. Both scenarios could enable alternative post-mining employment and economic diversification uses.

Should these sites want to pursue alternative land uses, place strategy planning will consider the employment uses, landform, voids and visual impacts for the equine and viticulture industries. Opportunities to connect biodiversity offsets⁵ and other vegetated areas and connections across the valley will also be explored.

Definitions

For the purposes of this section, mine land is defined as:

1. **Operational land:** land historically or actively used for mining operations or approved for mining operations that has been directly affected by mining and will require rehabilitation works.
2. **Non-operational land:** land managed by mining operations but not part of active or historical mining operations. This land will not require rehabilitation and may be used as a buffer.
3. **Areas of interest:** operational land well suited for alternative post-mining land uses that generate employment. This land includes mine infrastructure such as hard stand areas, workshops, stores, treatment plants and rail loops.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Areas of interest
 - Ensure intensive employment activities (Table 9) take advantage of screening, utilise existing disturbed areas and leverage repurposed mine infrastructure.
2. Operational lands
 - Ensure employment generating activities complement the constraints associated with these lands such as slope, stability and visual impacts.
 - Consider tourism or existing rural industries, such as food and fibre production.
 - Repurpose voids where possible to support renewable energy generation or as resource that supports employment uses elsewhere on the site.
 - Promote biodiversity corridors, connecting sites to vegetated areas including those required under the rehabilitation requirements of adjoining mines.
 - Understand and support cultural and scenic values.
3. Non-operational lands
 - Ensure employment generating land uses are appropriate to their surrounds and are undertaken either concurrently or following the completion of mine operations.
 - Use areas with alluvial soils or irrigation for intensive agricultural land uses.
 - Promote biodiversity corridors and connect them to adjoining vegetated areas including those required under the rehabilitation requirements of adjoining mines.
 - Buffer or visually screen employment generating uses located elsewhere on the former mine site.

Potential post-mining land use opportunities for areas of interest

Table 9: Potential post-mining land use opportunities for areas of interest

Site	Area (ha)	Potential land use opportunities
Bengalla	269	Industrial, manufacturing, intensive agriculture
Mangoola Coal	391	Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing, offensive industry
Mount Arthur Coal	704	Industrial, manufacturing, intensive agriculture, energy generation, food and fibre processing
Drayton	92	Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing, energy generation
Dartbrook	64	Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing
Mt Pleasant	264	Industrial, manufacturing, intensive agriculture
Liddell and Bayswater Power Station	830	Industrial, manufacturing, energy, intermodal (inland rail), intensive agriculture, food and fibre production
Liddell	640	Industrial, manufacturing, energy, intermodal (inland rail)
Ravensworth Operations	86	Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing, offensive industry
Mount Owen Operations	217	Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing, offensive industry
Hunter Valley Operations	135	Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing, offensive industry
United	72	Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing, offensive industry
Wambo Coal Mine	149	Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing, offensive industry
Mount Thorley-Warkworth	300	Industrial, manufacturing, intensive agriculture, energy generation
Ashton Coal	48	Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing
Rix's Creek / Integra	163	Industrial, food and fibre processing
Bulga	399	Industrial, manufacturing, intensive agriculture, energy, defence
Integra	64	Industrial, food and fibre processing
Muswellbrook	1,171	Industrial, manufacturing, intensive agriculture, energy generation



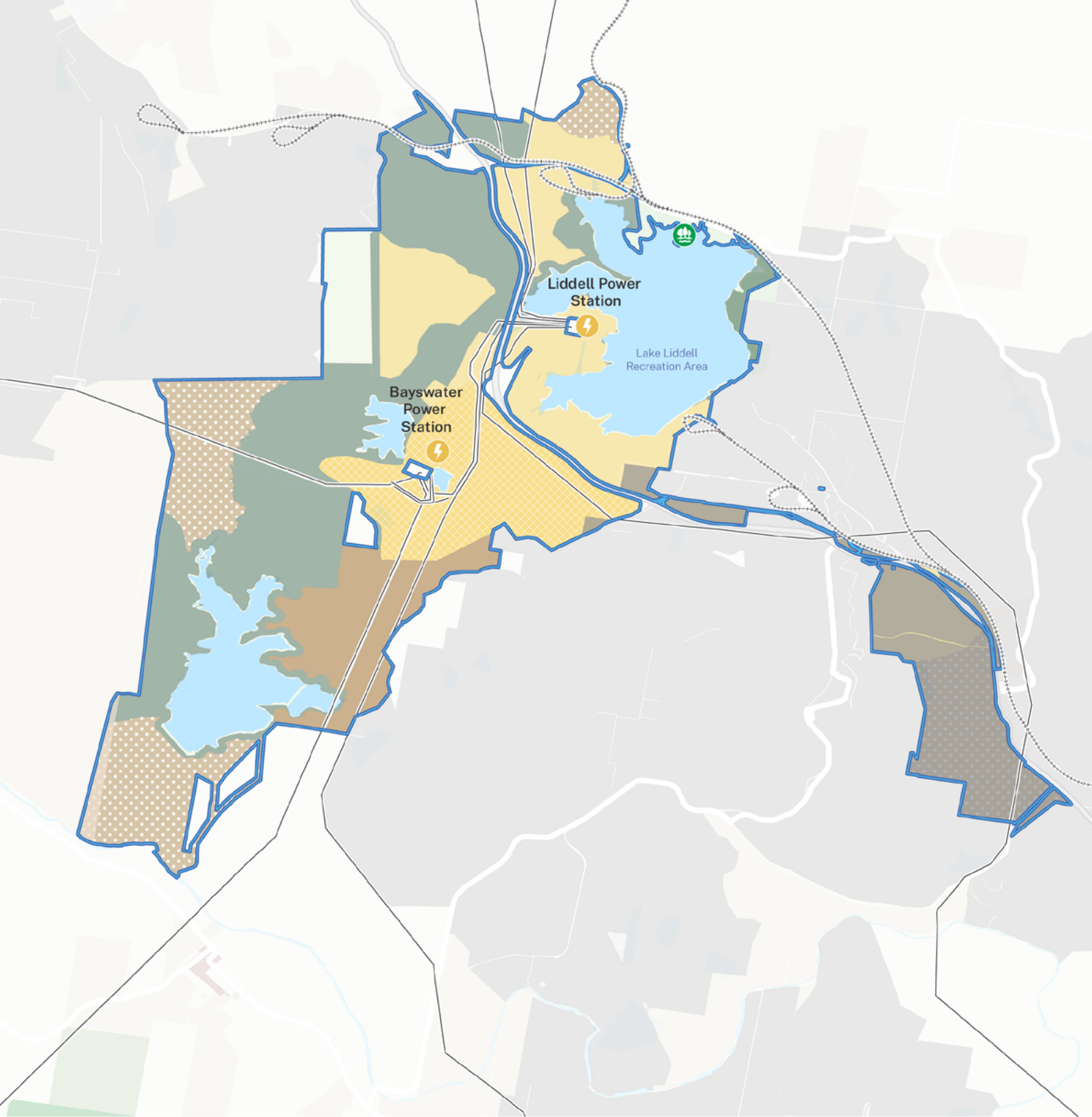


Figure 24: Liddell and Bayswater regionally significant growth area

- | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| AGL owned land | Integrated industrial energy hub investigation precinct – stage 1 | Railway | Existing urban area |
| Existing rural residential | Integrated industrial energy hub investigation precinct – stage 2 | Highway | National park and state forest |
| Intensive agriculture investigation precinct | Mining (operations land) | TransGrid transmission lines | Open space |
| Passive agriculture investigation precinct | Mining (non-operational) land | Lake Liddell Recreation Area | Water body |
| Environmental corridors investigation precinct | | Power station | |

Liddell and Bayswater power station regionally significant growth area

The Upper Hunter's power transmission lines allow ready access to the grid for energy projects. The closure of Liddell power station in 2023 and Bayswater in 2030-2033 could provide the region's first renewable energy hub. Plans announced for the site include solar and thermal storage systems, grid-scale batteries, an energy from waste facility, and exploring the feasibility of a hydrogen hub.

Opportunities to co-locate other employment-generating activities on the Liddell and Bayswater site are being explored. The site is in single ownership, has both rail and highway access, and offers land, water and infrastructure assets. It suits jobs in the manufacturing, waste, freight, hydrogen, data and agribusiness sectors. Circular economy opportunities should be investigated.

Water availability is a challenge in this part of the Hunter and the planned closure of the power stations provides an opportunity to consider how water assets should be used. The area's substantial vegetated lands could support biodiversity corridors and re-green the valley floor in response to losses from land clearing. Place strategy planning will investigate how these outcomes can be delivered on the site.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Water storage precinct
 - Use water infrastructure and resources to enable and maximise employment growth.
2. Employment investigation precincts
 - Plan renewable energy generation to take advantage of transmission infrastructure.
 - Leverage access to energy and site infrastructure like rail and highway access when planning for employment land.
 - Use screening to soften non-rural land uses when viewed from the New England Highway.
3. Environmental corridors
 - Retain vegetated areas and promote biodiversity corridors, connecting the site to adjoining vegetated areas including those required under the rehabilitation requirements of adjoining mines.

Bayswater Power Station



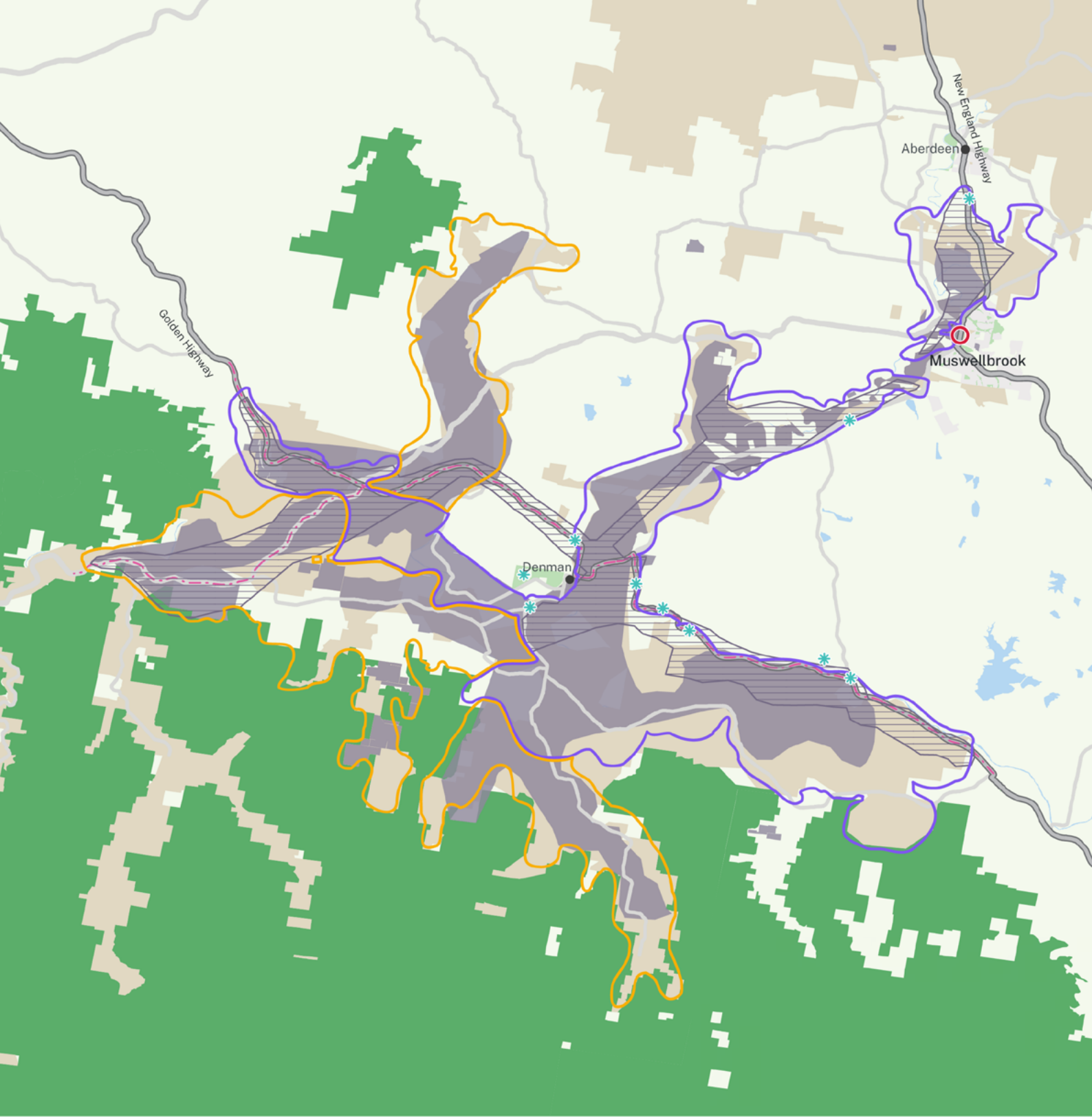


Figure 25: Upper Hunter Vineyards regionally significant growth area



- | | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Town Precinct | High visibility area | Existing urban area |
| Valley Precinct | Highway | National park and state forest |
| Strategic centre | Road | Open space |
| Centre | Scenic route | Water body |
| Viticultural strategic agricultural land | Main viewpoint | |
| Equinal strategic agricultural land | | |

Denman and Broke–Fordwich viticulture regionally significant growth areas

Productive vineyard areas at Denman, Broke–Fordwich and Hermitage Road are renowned for premium and boutique wines, set amongst picturesque scenic rural landscapes. Place strategy planning will continue to focus on retaining a critical mass in the viticulture industry and optimising planning controls and infrastructure investment to leverage tourism opportunities.

Development adjoining scenic areas must consider the area's landscape values and viewpoints, with adverse visual impacts or encroachment of incompatible land uses on existing viticultural areas discouraged. Orienting residential growth and larger scale tourism to existing towns and villages will minimise rural land use conflicts, make more efficient use of land and infrastructure, and retain the attractive vineyard landscapes and unique centres for residents and visitors.

Denman and surrounds

The Denman vineyard cluster is positioned for the growing viticulture tourism industry, and its co-location with the equine industry will strengthen the area's brand while creating new jobs. Activities must remain compatible with the valuable scenic landscapes and agricultural productivity.

The Golden Highway and Denman Road are important regional freight routes. Business frontage, access from these routes, and future upgrades to the state and local road networks will need to consider wayfinding, visitor experience and safety, and scenic amenity.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Town and valley precincts
 - Ensure town approaches and established wineries have a memorable landscape character with large street tree plantings and controlled development.
 - Plan for diverse housing for the local wine industry workforce, visitors and residents.
 - Create town precincts with a visible level of tourist activity, supporting growth and diversity in visitor experience balanced with business operations, scenic amenity and future winegrowing capacity.
 - Concentrate major development and large-scale tourist activity in town precincts to preserve strategic agricultural land, landscape values and the unique character of the scenic valleys.
2. Highly visible areas
 - Implement planning controls to manage how built form is seen from or within these places.
 - Subject new development within or seen from highly visible areas to a visual impact assessment.
 - Maintain and enhance long distance views from public areas and scenic viewpoints through setbacks and landscape screening.
3. Scenic routes and viewpoints
 - Implement planning controls to manage how built form is seen from or within scenic routes and viewpoints.
 - Plant large trees and use consistent signage on major roads and scenic routes to direct people to key features, cultural items and visitor destinations.
 - Minimise visual impacts when upgrading regional freight routes and scenic routes.
 - Develop well-located public visitor facilities in attractive and convenient locations.

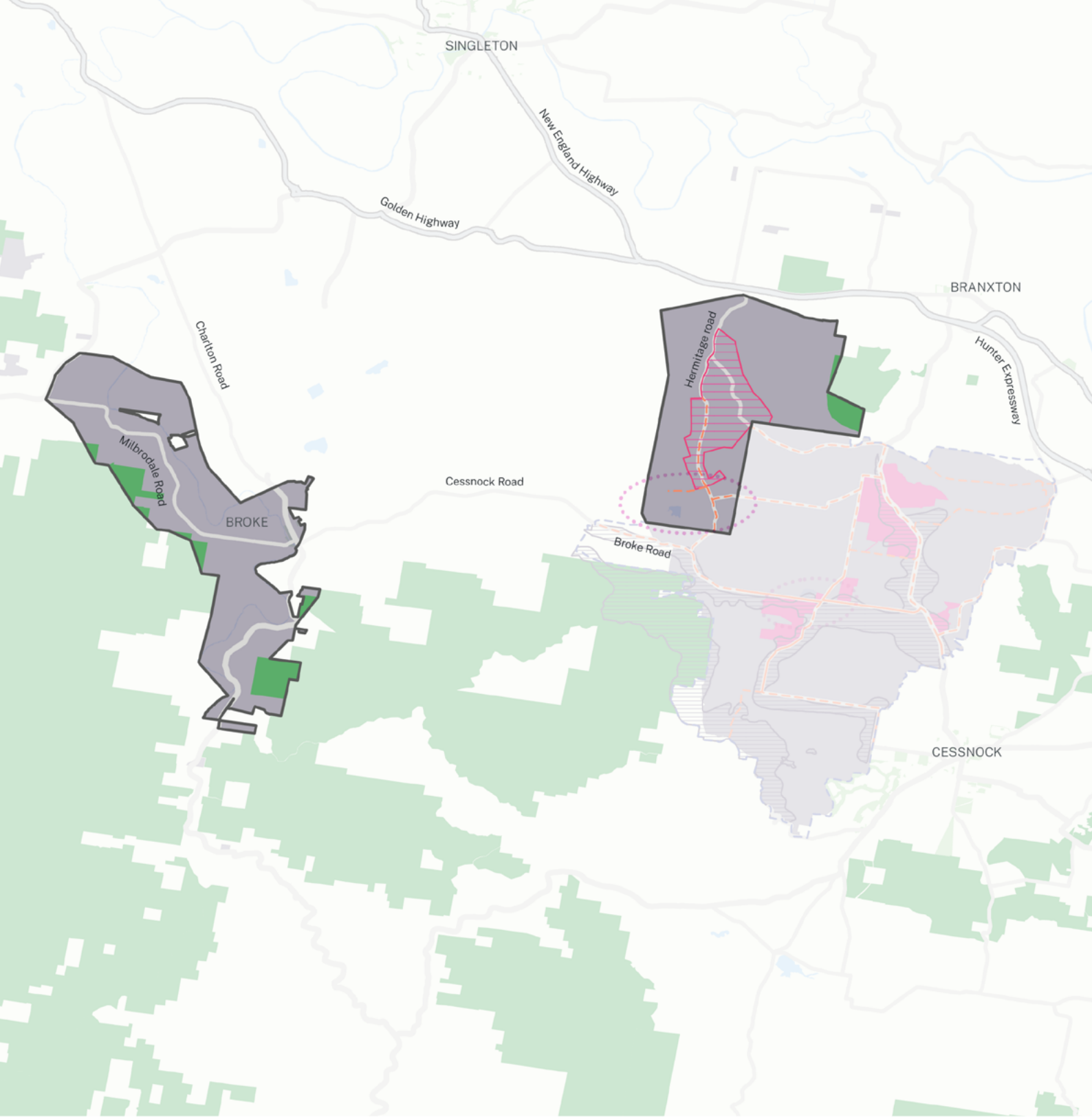


Figure 26: Broke–Fordwich regionally significant growth area



- | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| — Place Strategy boundary | Potential tourism node investigation area | ■ National park and state forest |
| --- Hunter Valley Vineyards | — Highway | ■ Open space |
| ■ Viticultural strategic agricultural land | — Road | ■ Water body |
| ▨ Visually significant areas | — Existing cycleway | |
| ▨ Boutique vineyards and tourism precinct | --- Proposed cycleway | |
| ■ Existing large scale tourism | | |

Broke–Fordwich and Hermitage Road

Place strategy planning for the Broke–Fordwich and Hermitage Road area will support winemaking and tourism while understanding landscape values and local character to preserve scenic amenity. The natural beauty of Broke–Fordwich creates a strong sense of place, while Hermitage Road benefits from its proximity to the established and growing vineyard and tourism cluster oriented around Pokolbin.

New active transport networks will engage visitors with the landscape and villages of the vineyards, enhancing the visitor experience. Opportunities to extend the Shiraz to Shore cycle trail should be explored.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Strategic agricultural land
 - Protect rural land that supports vineyards and other agricultural activities.
 - Ensure non-agricultural development does not conflict with agricultural uses.
 - Locate residential subdivision and other development incompatible with the vineyards' rural landscape and scenic amenity in villages and towns.
 - Ensure development is sympathetic to local character and landscape values, and reinforces the sense of place.
2. Boutique vineyards and tourism precinct
 - Plan for boutique tourist activities that leverage the attractive landscape.
 - Ensure development is sympathetic to the scenic value and built character of the surrounding area.
3. Tourism node investigation area
 - Identify a tourism node and consolidate larger scale tourism developments in this location.
 - Development is sympathetic to the rural amenity and the local character of the area.
 - Connect walking and cycling networks from the tourism node to tourism activities and landscape features.



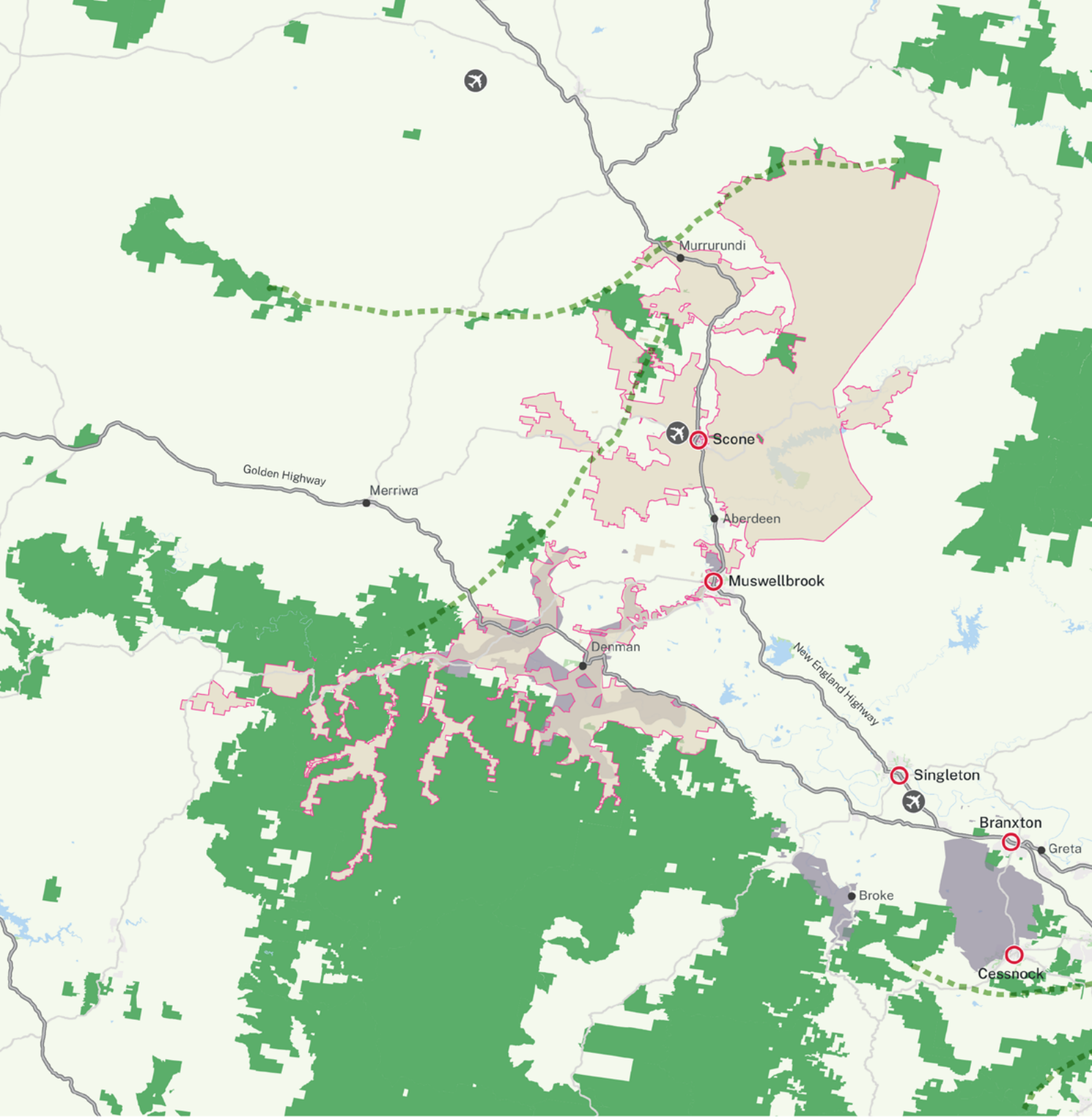


Figure 27: Scone Equine regionally significant growth area



- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Regional boundary | Equinal strategic agricultural land | Existing urban area |
| Scone and equine place area | Viticultural strategic agricultural land | National park and state forest |
| Strategic centre | Highway | Open space |
| Centre | Road | Water body |
| Biodiversity corridor | Airport | |

Scone and Equine regionally significant growth area

Scone is known as the Horse Capital of Australia and is the gateway to the second-largest concentration of stud farms in the world. It comprises world-renowned thoroughbred breeding establishments and associated facilities.

The town offers market and service-based activities associated with horse breeding and is home to the largest equine hospital in the southern hemisphere. Its airport is used by domestic and international jet operators that service for equine businesses. Equine-related events draw visitors each year, boosting the local economy.

Entrepreneurs and related businesses may migrate into the area if activities are clustered, creating a robust supply chain from specialised construction to fodder production. Research, training and educational facilities will stimulate innovation to support the health and competitiveness of the equine industry.

Horse breeders' activities need to be safeguarded to enable future growth and expansion. They work from attractive areas – the image of rolling hills set against the backdrop of the valley's ridges is a key part of the industry's international reputation. Development in these areas needs to recognise and be sympathetic to these values.

Access to reliable and quality water resources are critical, particularly as climate change affects rainfall. Any development needs to avoid impacts on water sources.

Place strategy planning will leverage the advantages of the equine industry. It will consider local character and landscape values, with initial mapping for the southern portion of the growth area to be expanded to include the lands further west and to the north.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Scone

- Revitalise public areas, celebrating local identity and the long connection with the racing industry.
- Enhance landscaping and building facades to support out-door dining.
- Leverage economic activity and investment to support urban renewal in the Scone revitalisation area.

- Protect the industrial land fronting the New England Highway and accessible to the heavy rail line.
- Realise employment opportunities on land adjoining the bypass.
- Maximise events and equine-tourism related activities in the town, and grow the night time economy.

2. Strategic agricultural land

- Ensure rural land supports equine and other agricultural activities.
- Avoid conflict between non-agricultural development and existing and future agricultural uses.
- Locate residential subdivision and other development incompatible with the equine industry's rural landscape and scenic amenity in nearby villages and towns.

3. Highly visible areas

- Implement planning controls to manage how built form is seen from or within highly visible areas.
- Subject new development proposed in or as seen from highly visible areas to a visual impact assessment.
- Maintain and enhance long distance views from public areas and scenic viewpoints through appropriate application of setbacks and landscape screening.

4. Scenic routes and viewpoints

- Implement planning controls to manage how built form is seen from or within these scenic routes and viewpoints.
- Plant large trees and use consistent signage on major roads and scenic routes to direct people to key features, cultural items and visitor destinations.
- Minimise visual impacts when upgrading regional freight routes and scenic routes.
- Develop well-located public visitor facilities in attractive and convenient locations.

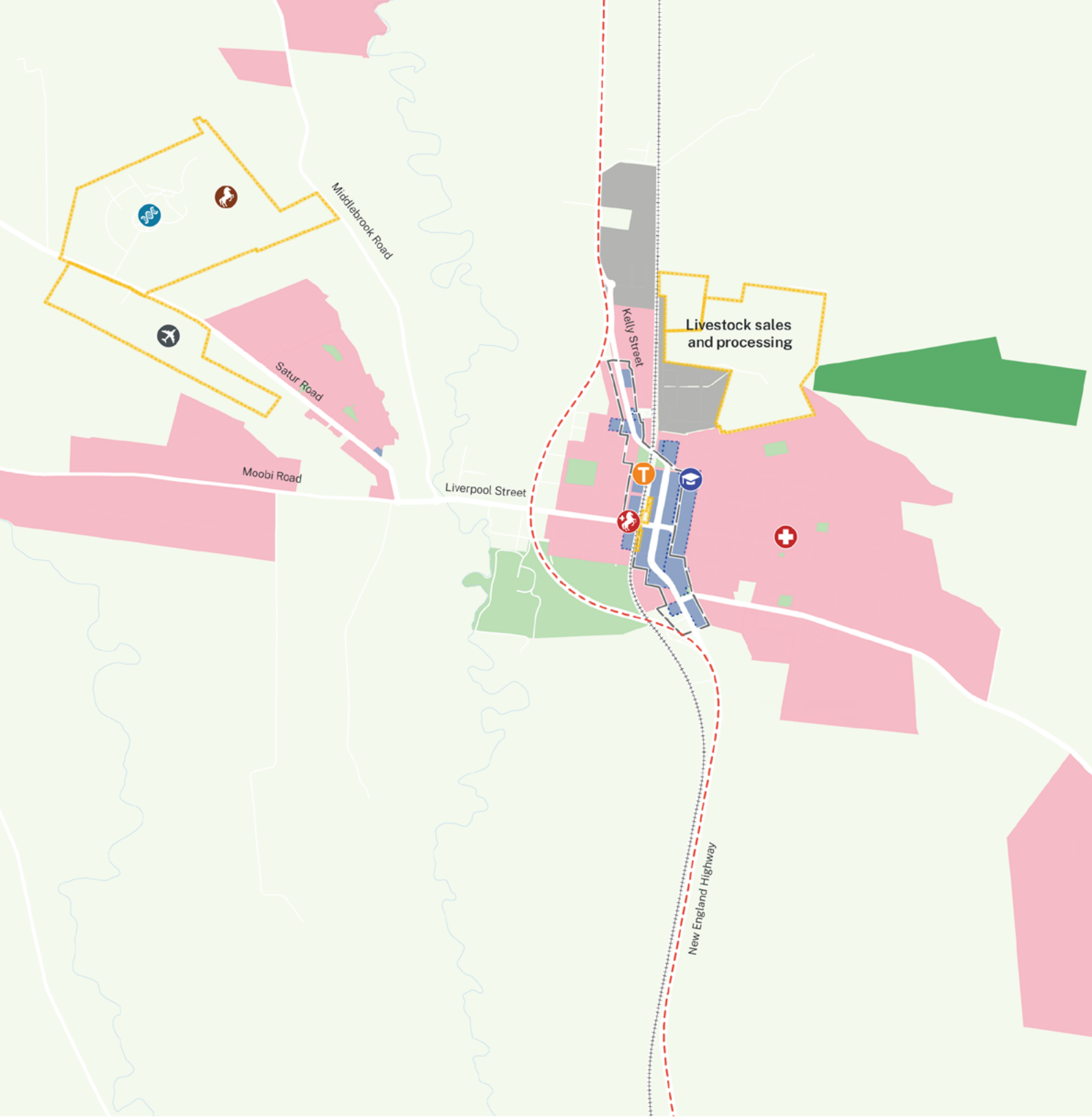


Figure 28: Scone inset

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --- Scone revitalisation area ▭ Special activities ▭ Business zoning ▭ Business land ▭ Industrial land ▭ Residential land | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --- Important freight connection ----- Railway ✈ Scone Memorial Airport T Train station ⊕ Scone Hospital ⊕ Scone Equine Hospital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎓 Education 🐎 Racecourse 🧬 Equine research centre 🌲 National park and state forest 🌿 Open space 💧 Water body |
|--|---|---|



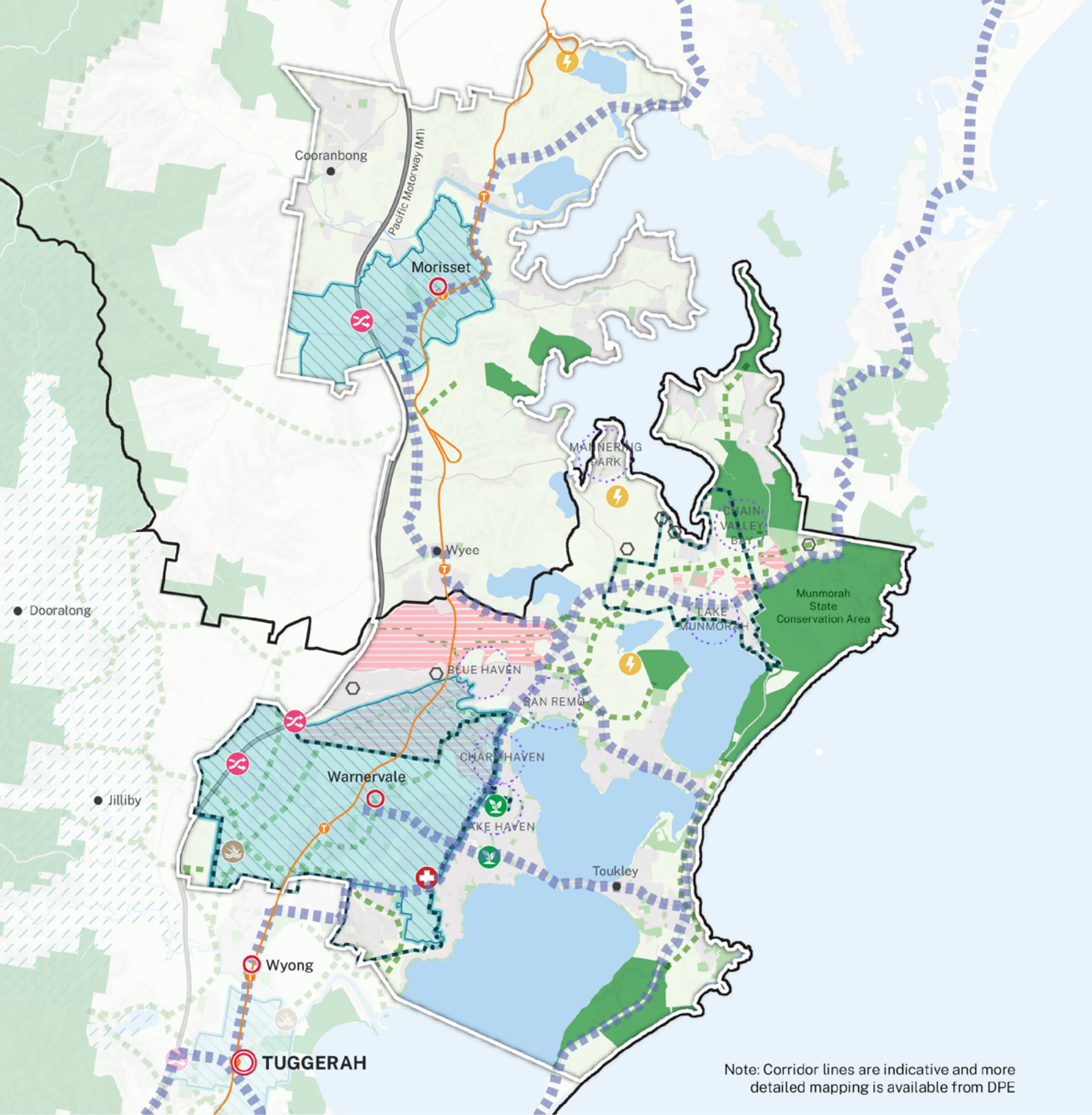


Figure 29: Central Lakes district

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| — Regional boundary | ⊗ Primary motorway interchange | ⋯ Key transit corridors | ▨ Regionally significant growth area |
| — District boundary | ⊕ Hospital | ⋯ Biodiversity corridors | ▨ Strategically located but constrained land |
| ⊙ Regional city | ⚡ Power Station subject to remediation plan and investigation | — Council-led strategy | ▨ Urban land |
| ⊙ Strategic centre | ⚡ Power Station subject to remediation plan and investigation | — Railway | ▨ National park and state forest |
| • Centre | 🌿 Wetland | — Motorway | ▨ Open space |
| ⋯ Retrofitting suburban areas | 🌿 Planting suburb | — Road | ▨ Water body |
| Ⓜ Train station | ⬡ Quarries and mines | ▨ Drinking water catchments | |



Central Lakes District

The Central Lakes district is emerging as the primary growth front between the Central Coast and Greater Newcastle. An inter-regional and coordinated approach will balance environmental outcomes with the development of well planned communities.

The closure of Lake Munmorah power station in 2012 will be followed by the closure of the Eraring and Vales Point power stations within the decade. These sites, in addition to employment areas in Warnervale, Wallarah and Bushells Ridge, can provide new jobs near where people live, connected to global gateways in the Hunter and Greater Sydney. There are also opportunities to promote circular economy initiatives.

Central Lakes district will be home to many more people in the future, in a mix of suburban and urban places and housing choices in and around Morisset, Wyee, Warnervale and Lake Munmorah. People will enjoy living near quality open spaces, wetlands, lakes and the wider natural landscape.

Conservation planning will protect biodiversity values and maintain the natural links between the mountains in the west and waterways in the east.

The Central Lakes district contains the Central Coast's major urban growth opportunities and will increasingly integrate with Greater Newcastle. This will be achieved by:

- accelerating the number of homes and jobs in identified precincts
- planning for alternative land uses at former power station sites
- retrofitting suburban areas to enhance quality of life
- enhancing the blue and green grid
- promoting sustainable use of mineral and energy resources
- planning for the Morisset and Warnervale regionally significant growth areas.

Beachcomber Hotel and Resort, Toukley
Credit: Destination NSW



PLANNING PRIORITY 1:**Accelerate housing and employment growth in identified precincts**

Existing local and regional planning includes the *North Wyong Shire Structure Plan*, the draft *Greater Warnervale Structure Plan* and *Greater Lake Munmorah Structure Plan*. The priority now is to translate these plans into new homes and workplaces, using a risk-based approach to planning proposals that are consistent with the relevant plans and staging.

Local strategic planning will coordinate infrastructure provision to support the timely and efficient release of land for development, including inter-regional infrastructure and service delivery in Warnervale, Bushells Ridge and Wyee.

Planning will promote industry-focused investment in the Wyong Employment Zone by resolving infrastructure contributions and biodiversity offsets, including biodiversity certification.

Planning proposals in Central Lakes district precincts that satisfy the following criteria will be given an accelerated assessment, with an intention for a gateway determination to be issued by the department in 5 working days for land:

- not categorised as flood planning area
- with a slope of less than 18 degrees
- that does not exceed the clearing threshold for any area of native vegetation
- greater than 500 m from any known mineral resource
- identified in future infrastructure delivery plans for the provision of water, sewer, transport and electricity.

In this regard, 'land' means the extent of land proposed to be used for residential or employment purposes. Planning proposals must consider all land within the precinct identified in the regional plan.

Strategically located, constrained sites subject to further investigation

Further investigation is required for land located with access to existing and proposed major roads and utilities infrastructure that will also contribute to the formation of the green corridor. Investigations into ecology and stormwater management are required to determine conservation and development potential.

Development of these sites must be balanced with biodiversity conservation, within the broader context of the green corridor. Detailed ecological investigations will focus on:

- the location, nature and conservation value of the vegetated land including any threatened species listed under state or Commonwealth legislation
- how this land, or parts of it, will complement the green corridor
- the location of local ecological corridors, including riparian areas, and links to planned corridors outside the district
- the extent of potential biodiversity losses from development and the need for, and extent of, offsets.



Housing development, Hamlyn Terrace
Credit: Salty Dingo

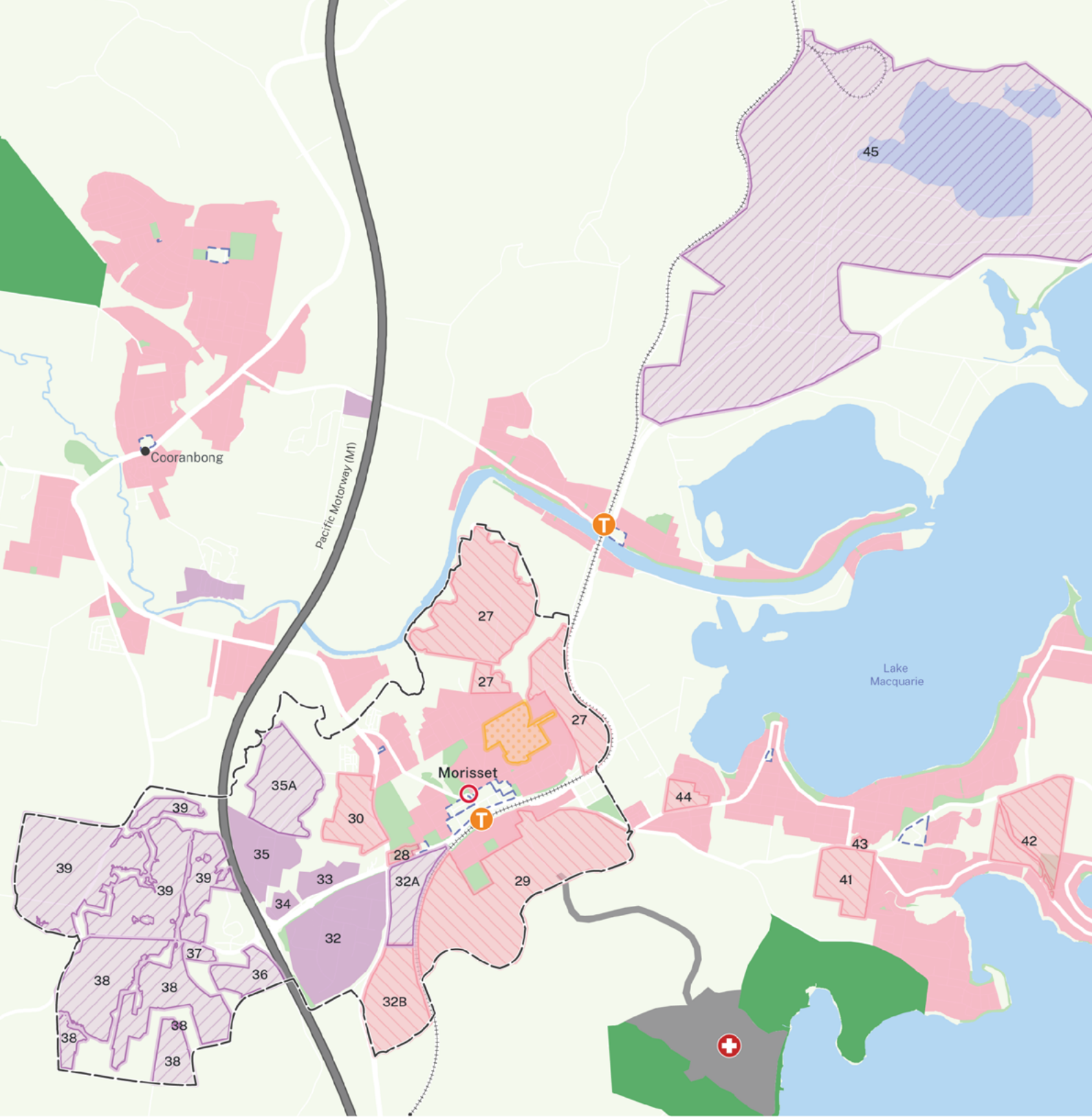


Figure 30: Morisset precincts for future jobs and homes



- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| District boundary | Employment investigation area | Train station |
| Morisset Structure Plan | Employment | Morisset Hospital |
| Strategic centre | Residential investigation area | Railway |
| Centre | Residential | Motorway |
| Proposed Morisset Community Hub and town centre activation project | Crown land | National park and state forest |
| | | Open space |
| | | Water body |

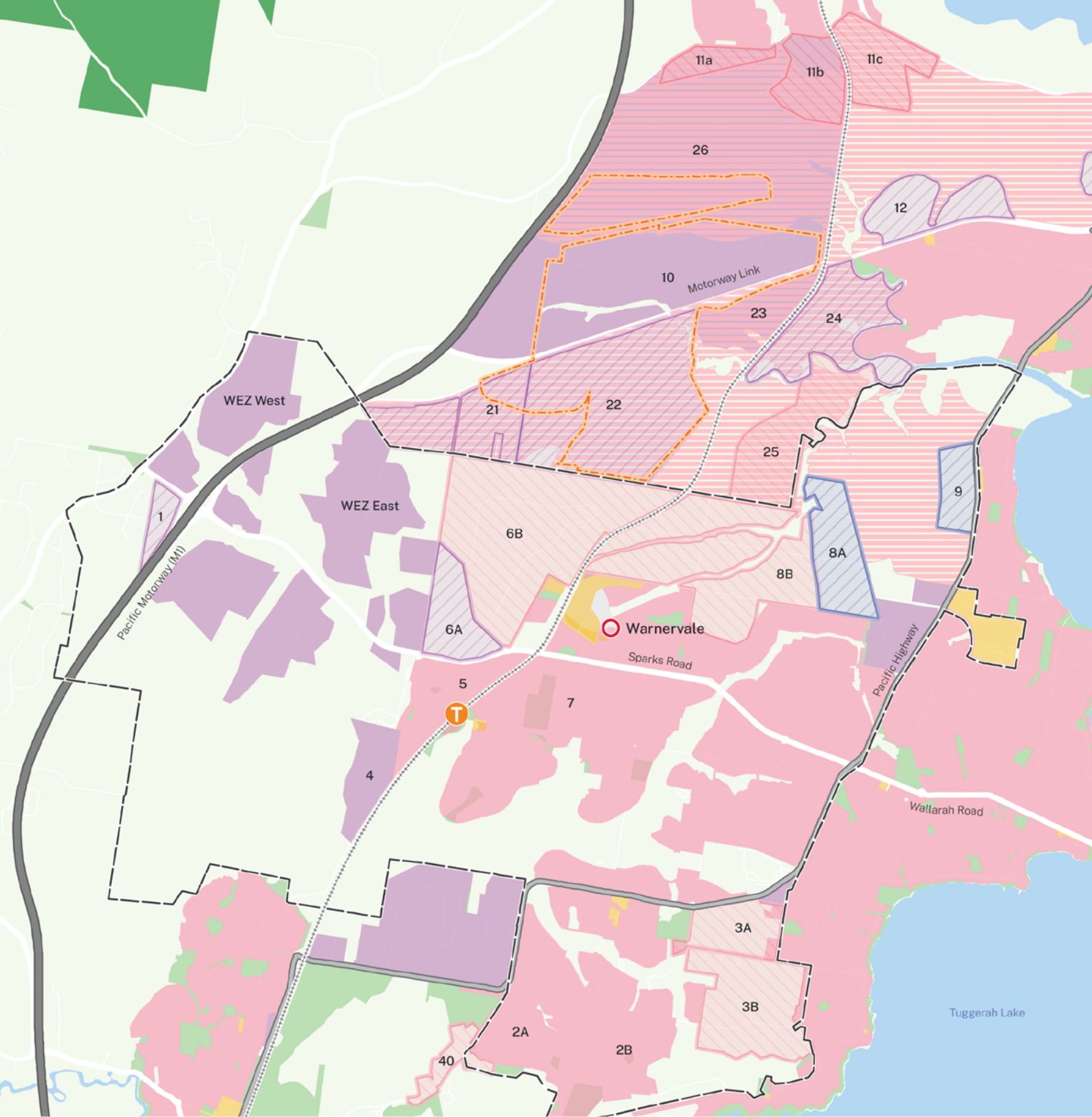


Figure 31: Greater Warnervale precincts for future jobs and homes



- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| --- Greater Warnervale Structure Plan | Strategically located but constrained land | +++++ Railway |
| ○ Strategic centre | Employment | — Motorway |
| ▭ Mixed-use investigation area | Residential | — Highway |
| ▭ Employment investigation area | Commercial | ■ National park and state forest |
| ▭ Residential investigation area | Extractive resource areas (clay and gravel) | ■ Open space |
| | Ⓣ Train station | ■ Water body |

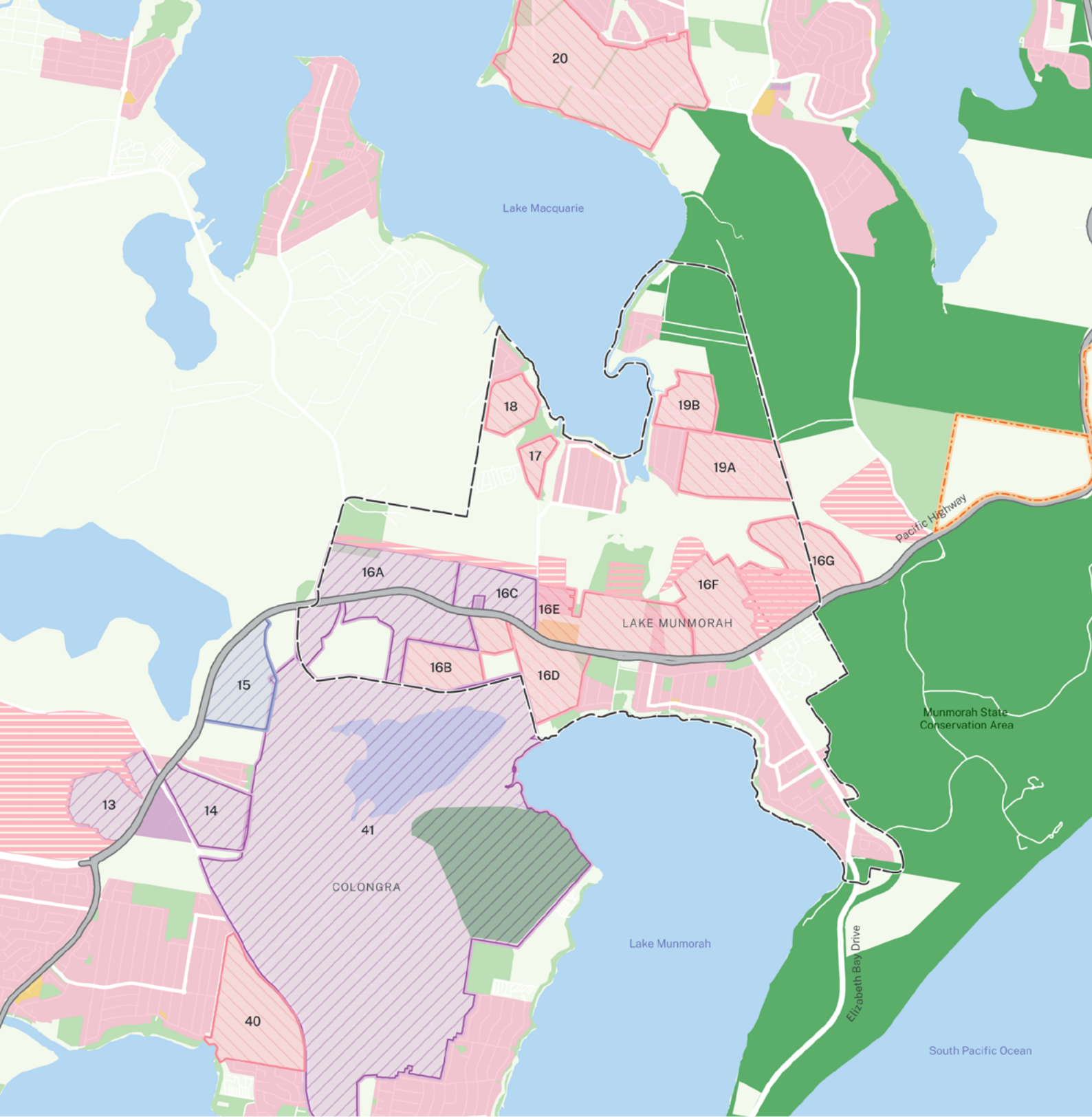


Figure 32: Greater Lake Munmorah precincts for future jobs and homes

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|--------------------------------|
| --- | Greater Lake Munmorah Structure Plan | | Strategically located but constrained land | | Urban land |
| | Mixed-use investigation area | | Residential | | National park and state forest |
| | Employment investigation area | | Extractive resource areas (clay and gravel) | | Open space |
| | Employment | | Commercial | | Water body |
| | Residential investigation area | | Highway | | |

PLANNING PRIORITY 2:

Plan for alternative land uses for former power stations and mining sites

When large power station sites or mines close or cease operation, we can consider how the land could be repurposed. These sites have substantial infrastructure and vegetated areas near urban areas, making them potentially suitable for various new land uses.

The Central Lakes district is home to the former Lake Munmorah Power station, Eraring Power Station and Vales Point Power Station, as well as several mines that could be re-used over the 20-year period of this plan. Existing hard stand areas, vehicular access and transmission lines could support renewable energy and batteries. Freight and logistics and industrial uses, including heavy industry where a site benefits from existing vegetation buffers to residential areas, could be explored.

The unique ecological attributes of the sites and access to adjoining waterbodies provide an opportunity for biodiversity or recreation uses by leveraging site areas already utilised for conservation and recreation. Residential uses may be suitable in some areas, and low impact and passive recreation activities could be connected with surrounding urban areas.

Place strategy planning will consider alternative land uses opportunities. Appropriate remediation of contaminated lands and ash repositories (including possible re-use options) must be progressed prior to any development.

PLANNING PRIORITY 3:

Retrofit suburban areas to enhance quality of life

Infill development will reduce the use of cars for most everyday trips, even in existing suburbs. Diverse and mixed use neighbourhoods will lead to more complete communities where people can access their daily needs by walking and cycling.

San Remo, Lake Munmorah, Blue Haven (west), Lake Haven, Charmhaven, Mannering Park and Chain Valley Bay could all be retrofitted to transform them into 15-minute neighbourhoods.

These will be influenced by building typologies, pedestrian and bicycle connections and functional open space and, from a regional perspective, the opportunities of 30-minute connected community development models.

Local strategic planning will provide for diverse housing, lot types and sizes, including small-lot housing in infill and greenfield housing locations.

PLANNING PRIORITY 4:

Enhance the blue and green grid

The Central Lakes district blue and green grid links urban parks, bushland, farms, drinking water catchments, lakes and beaches. Considering each asset that collectively makes up the blue and green grid will provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles, protection of water catchments and habitat for wildlife.

Lake Macquarie and the Tuggerah Lakes are essential waterways; however, water quality is declining and stormwater and management of flows need to be improved. The lack of land to treat urban stormwater before it enters the lake system is a major constraint.

Innovative planning and design can reduce the impact of development, such as water capture and re-use; at-source stormwater treatment and infiltrations; end-of-pipe stormwater treatment and re-use; bank stabilisation and riparian rehabilitation; and increased infiltration throughout the water catchment.

Expanding the Central Coast's Coastal Open Space System into the Central Lakes district will secure biodiversity corridors and high environmental value areas to maintain viability.

Any development in new growth areas will need to maintain the integrity of the biodiversity corridors and not compromise the movement of wildlife between the mountains and the ocean. This will reinforce the landscape and visual setting for urban development.

Residential development will result in long travel distances between people's homes and goods and services. A regional cycleway and shared path network with shading, water views and access to the regional biodiversity corridor can entice those who wish to ride a bike in their neighbourhood and beyond. Key anchor points include Warnervale town centre, San Remo and Lake Munmorah. Shared networks should connect residential areas with schools and other education facilities.

PLANNING PRIORITY 5:**Promote sustainable use of mineral and energy resources**

Mineral and energy resources need to be managed and protected from incompatible development or encroachment that could lead to mineral resource sterilisation. This could lead to higher management costs or a reduced potential to sustain or grow rural and resource industries.

The district contains regionally significant construction, mineral and energy resources such as sand, gravel, hard rock, sandstone (dimension stone), clay and coal deposits. Extraction of these resources supports major infrastructure projects, industries and agricultural businesses.

Development proposals for aggregate extraction will be promoted if they are in accordance with the district planning principles and local strategic planning. They should balance economic benefits with the protection of the environment and local communities.

Both clay and gravel resource areas are identified in state planning policy and directions to ensure they are considered in local planning. Both resources could continue to be extracted over the long term.

Clay resources in the district have state significance due to their quality, the local roof tile manufacturing plant and proximity to Greater Sydney and major transport infrastructure.

Planning for these areas and the surrounding areas must ensure:

- mining and quarrying remain a permissible use, with development consent, in the resource areas
- appropriate land use buffers are provided between these areas and future development
- these areas contribute to the longer term formation of a green corridor, both during extraction (e.g. by maintaining existing vegetation links and/or restoration on areas not being quarried or mined) and on completion of resource extraction.



Watagans National Park,
Lake Macquarie
Credit: Destination NSW

Morisset regionally significant growth area

Morisset and the supporting local centres of Cooranbong and Wyee represent the largest future growth area in the Central Coast and Hunter and will be a major point of connection between Greater Newcastle and Central Coast communities. Its future growth is important to both the Hunter and Central Coast.

Morisset will emerge as a regionally significant mixed use centre supporting diverse businesses and services, as well as opportunities for more intensive multi-storey commercial, mixed use and residential development. Land release will be staged to optimise infrastructure delivery.

Easy connections will be maintained with the emerging centres of Warnervale and Lake Munmorah. Coordinated planning will benefit the district's communities and businesses, with road network improvements and partnerships between government, industry and the Biraban and Darkinjung LALCs.

With the closure of mines and major power stations, Morisset's economy will cater for renewable energy and circular economy developments, a growing lifestyle and tourism market, health services, goods distribution and urban food production.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Morisset Central Precinct

- Create a vibrant social heart with inviting main streets, active street fronts and mixed use development with a central community hub and civic space.
- Plan for a mix of housing and a diverse offering of business services, retail and dining, and health and social services.
- Create a main shopping strip close to transport infrastructure.
- Plan for mixed use opportunities adjacent to the city centre to provide a 15-minute neighbourhood.

2. Morisset M1 Interchange Gateway Corridor

- Encourage intensive agriculture, including precision farming and greenhouses, for ongoing food security and to make use of strategic connections to wholesale distribution centres.
- Incorporate private recreation facilities with other uses, such as manufactured home estates and seniors living.
- Expand industrial, business and specialised retail employment uses.

- Leverage proximity to the M1 Pacific Motorway to support employment in Mandalong Road West, including freight, warehousing and logistics, that complements nearby centres.

3. Conservation area

- Revegetate previous cleared areas to promote corridor linkages north of Mandalong Road.
- Retain the east-west biodiversity corridor connecting the shores of Lake Macquarie with the Watagans National Park.
- Retain and enhance areas of high environmental and biodiversity value and incorporate these into a network of habitat corridors and conservation areas.

4. Urban expansion areas

- Increase to higher residential housing densities adjacent to Morisset rail station.
- Improve connectivity with Morisset Central Precinct and gateway to the southern Lake Macquarie State Conservation Area and adjacent conservation land.
- North Morisset: Plan for housing anchored by a central neighbourhood common and quality pedestrian and cycle connections to surrounding precincts.
- Morisset East: Transition Marconi Road small lot production to accommodate low rise residential uses, sensitive to the operation of Morisset wastewater treatment plant. Connect walking and cycling links to Morisset Central precinct, Bonnells Bay and open space foreshore areas.
- West Morisset: Develop residential land to accommodate the growing population. Build pedestrian and cycle connections to surrounding precincts. Identify Morisset Hospital as a sub-precinct for revitalisation and improved foreshore access.

5. Urban support

- Transition Moira Park Road investigation land to accommodate expansion of urban services as required.

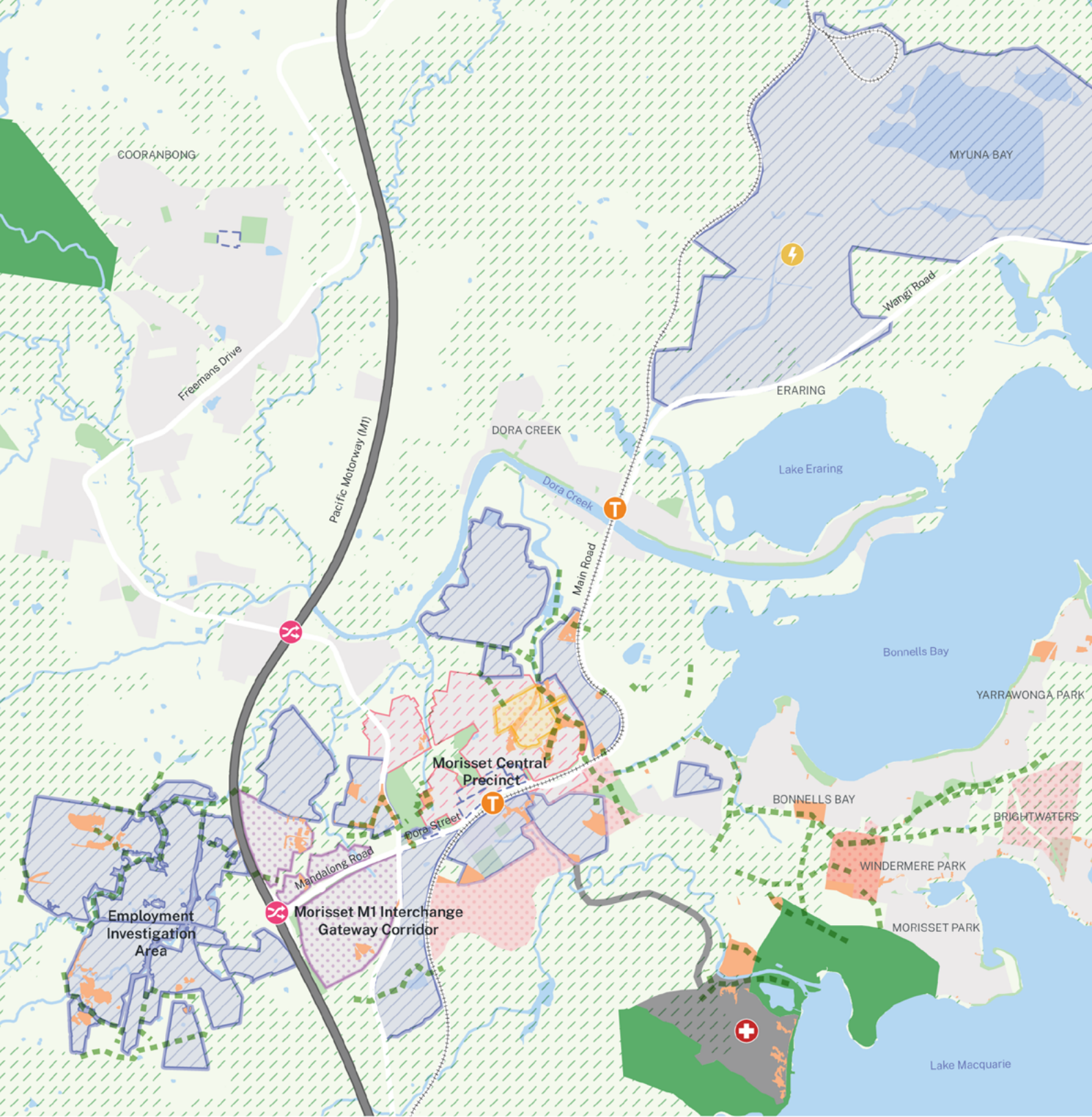


Figure 33: Morisset regionally significant growth area



Warnervale regionally significant growth area

Unlocking the potential of Warnervale will help transform the economic potential of the northern Central Coast. The area can accommodate industrial, manufacturing (engineering and food manufacturing), logistics and warehouse land uses and there are also opportunities to progress circular economy and sustainable materials industries.

The proposal for a new Warnervale town centre goes back to 1977. While residential development has occurred since then, the commercial development associated with a new rail station is no longer proposed. A rethink of a new town centre is needed so it can service the wider Warnervale area as it grows.

The Wyong Employment Zone, incorporating the Sparks Road and Pacific Highway corridors, requires a coordinated review to prioritise delivery, infrastructure and biodiversity offset actions. This will consider recent development proposals and future transport services between the town centre and surrounding homes.

Dozens of aviation trainers and students use the Central Coast Airport every day, as well as medical evacuations and bushfire emergency responses. This is an important asset for the district.

Table 10: Warnervale town centre urban design principles

Warnervale town centre urban design principles	
Principle 1	Embrace the natural features of the site and embellish the public domain and open space network with additional greenery.
Principle 2	Prioritise walking and cycling by considering site grade, desire lines and through site links to create a connected community that exemplifies the 15-minute neighbourhood.
Principle 3	Create an accessible, active and vibrant town centre that appeals to residents, visitors and investors by promoting fine grain built form and prioritising the pedestrian experience.
Principle 4	Promote active and public transport options to decrease the dependence on private vehicles within and around the community for a safer and more activated precinct.
Principle 5	Orient activity towards the street to help create safe and vibrant public areas. Provide a visual exchange between commercial, social and residential uses and the street.
Principle 6	Provide more mid rise living adjacent the town centre and open spaces for vibrancy and convenience, while also focusing development along key pedestrian routes.
Principle 7	Supply a mix of housing typologies including affordable housing for a diverse and well-rounded community.
Principle 8	Establish a robust structure plan which can adapt to market demand and investor interest through typology mix or density.
Principle 9	Provide a staged approach to development that aims to reach the site's maximum yield potential.



Place strategy outcomes

1. Employment Zone North Precinct

- Ensure there are large industrial lots to support regionally significant employment uses.
- Sequence reticulated water and sewer infrastructure to employment land.
- Include specialised precincts, such as for automotive related uses, off Mountain Road.
- Use Sparks Road as a landscaped corridor with limited direct vehicle access.

2. Employment Zone South Precinct

- Plan for land uses that complement businesses operating in Warnervale Business Park including the Woolworths Distribution Centre.
- Align the Central Coast Airport master plan and plan of management to satisfy the recommendations from the review of the *Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Act 1996* and the requirements of the repeal of the Act.
- Expand aviation activities at Central Coast Airport including freight and logistics, joy flights and parachute jumps, training and education, maintenance and servicing.
- Protect Porters Creek Wetland.

3. Town Centre Precinct

- Create a traditional main street with busy street fronts, rear-loaded car parking areas and connections to Hill Top Park.
- Prioritise walking, cycling or public transport use.
- Create a shared path network from the town centre to the Wyong Employment Zone, Lake Haven and Wadalba.
- Achieve a minimum density of 50 dwellings per hectare to increase the viability of non-residential uses and transport services.

4. Station Precinct

- Redevelop land surrounding Warnervale rail station allowing for a transition from single detached dwellings in adjoining growth areas to duplexes and townhouses within a 10-minute walk of the station.
- Expand recreation and cultural heritage experiences.
- Create a link road between Wyong and Warnervale.



Morisset Lake Picnic Area

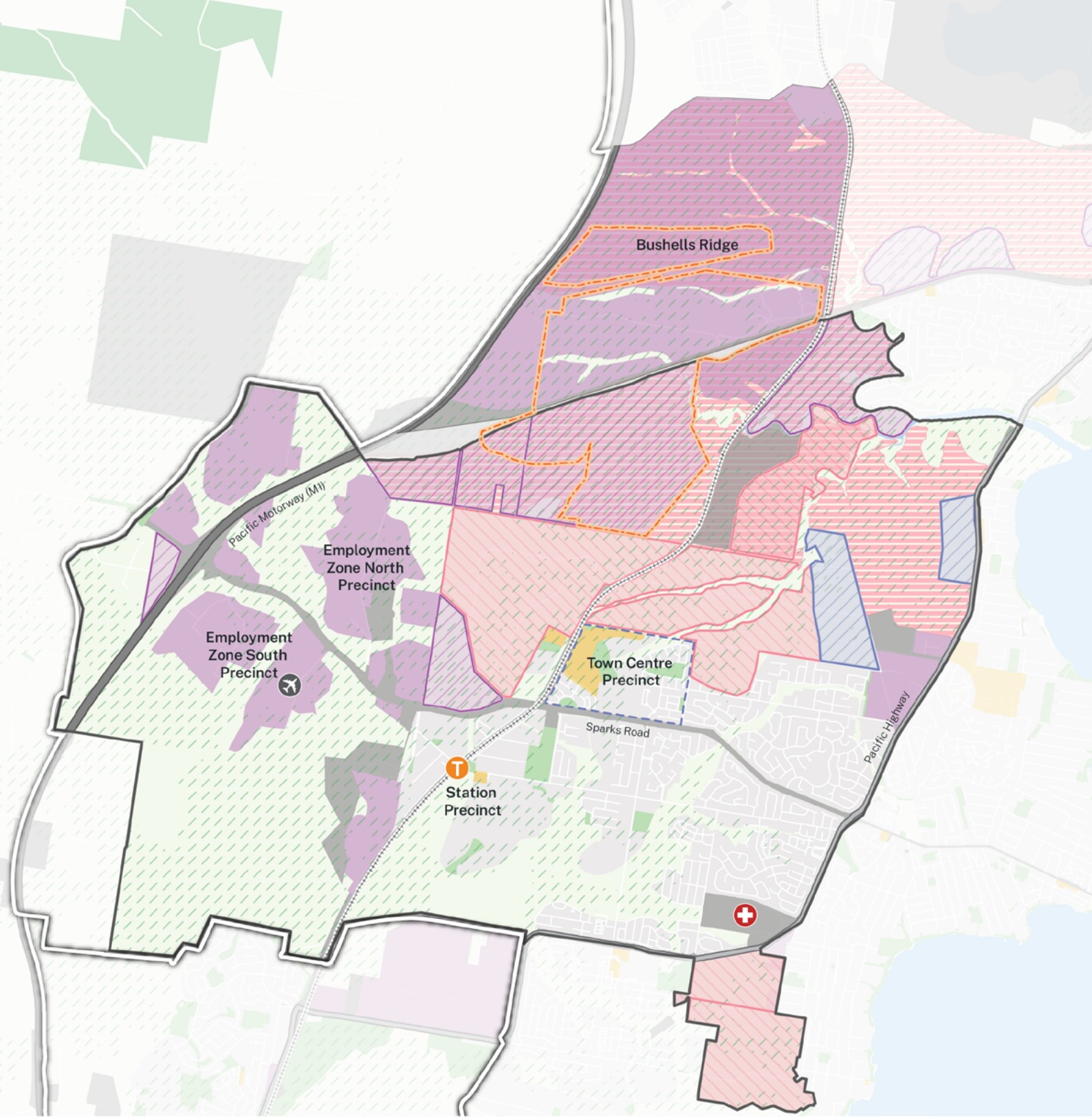


Figure 34: Warnervale regionally significant growth area



- | | | | |
|---|--|---------------|---------------------------|
| District boundary | Strategically located but constrained land | Railway | Urban land |
| Regionally significant growth area | Employment investigation area | Motorway | National park and reserve |
| Warnervale town centre | Employment | Highway | Open space |
| Green corridor network | Residential investigation area | Airport | Water body |
| Mixed-use investigation area | Commercial | Train station | |
| Extractive resource areas (clay and gravel) | Infrastructure | Hospital | |

Hinterland District

Audrey Wilkinson, Pokolbin
Credit: Destination NSW



The Hinterland district connects the rural landscapes integrated with Greater Newcastle and World Heritage-listed natural areas. The district's communities are connected to the land and enjoy relaxed, casual, outdoor lifestyles, and secluded living environments.

Working farms co-exist with complementary enterprises and outdoor recreation. Agricultural and nature-based tourism give visitors the chance to experience and appreciate the natural attractions of the hinterland and its rural towns and villages.

The district's rural areas and non-urban character are defined by:

- rural enterprises, rural residential, tourism, environmental and outdoor recreation land uses
- limited, dispersed buildings and structures that are integrated with the natural landscape.

The Hinterland district could be the leading wine and tourism area in Australia, connecting the rural landscapes to Greater Newcastle and World Heritage-listed natural areas. This will be achieved by:

- creating housing diversity in rural villages
- promoting rural enterprises and diversification
- supporting the *NSW Koala Strategy*
- providing blue-green infrastructure and quality public spaces
- protecting drinking water catchments
- planning for the regionally significant viticulture growth area.

PLANNING PRIORITY 1:

Plan for housing diversity in towns and villages

Hinterland towns and villages of Tanilba Bay, Lemon Tree Passage, Karuah, Millfield, Paxton, Ellalong, Mulbring, Hinton, Seaham and Martinsville will face demand for residential development due to their scenic settings and proximity to Greater Newcastle.

Residential growth that expands the existing settlement boundaries will be supported if flooding, bushfire, infrastructure services, agricultural land and scenic amenity can be managed. For Tanilba Bay and Lemon Tree Passage secondary dwellings and low rise housing like dual occupancies and townhouses are suitable. Local strategic planning should incorporate the views of local communities.

The Hinterland towns and villages can be destinations for tourism, leisure and recreation. They provide connections to Port Stephens, rivers and natural areas. Strategic planning will ensure that development is sympathetic to local amenity and scenic values.

PLANNING PRIORITY 2:

Promote rural enterprises and diversification

Agricultural enterprises range from significant viticulture agriculture to pastoral industries. These benefit from access to supporting industries, transport and logistics networks, water supply and ideal climactic conditions.

Rural enterprises will grow and diversify so that people can continue to work in rural areas and stay connected to their communities. Welcoming new people and business activities will maintain the Hinterland's vitality.

Agriculture will continue to contribute to the district's rural character. Opportunities to intensify and diversify on-farm agricultural activities including farm stays, camping or farm gate trails, along with larger visitor economy activities and events, are encouraged. There is also a focus on improving 15-minute neighbourhoods in these rural landscapes.

Local strategic planning will consider emerging trends in rural enterprises to create new opportunities. This will support the profitability and sustainability of rural enterprises and build on the strategic advantages of the Hinterland communities.

PLANNING PRIORITY 3:

Support the *NSW Koala Strategy*

The NSW Koala Strategy sets an ambitious target to double koala numbers in NSW by 2050. Local strategic planning that identifies koala habitat, avoids clearing and fragmentation of koala habitat, and aims to increase and restore connectivity of koala habitat is required to achieve this goal.

The Hinterland district supports part of the Lower Hunter and Barrington koala populations. These populations have been prioritised in the NSW Koala Strategy to fill knowledge gaps and deliver local actions.

Many of NSW's coastal koala populations, particularly those that are east of the Pacific Highway are in long term severe and on-going decline. Without significant action, these populations may be extinct within the next 30-50 years. Coordinated and strategic conservation efforts are required at all levels of government to ensure intervention efforts are successful.

Both the Lower Hunter and Barrington koala populations in the Hinterlands district are under increasing pressure from competing land uses for urban development such as new housing. Habitat loss is one of the key threats to koala populations. Local strategic planning like housing and local place strategies needs to avoid or mitigate impacts on koala habitat, so it is not fragmented or lost. Habitat loss increases the risk of vehicle strike incidents, domestic dog attacks, populations becoming isolated, and greater rates of disease.

The NSW Koala Strategy supports councils undertaking ecological assessment and community engagement to develop koala habitat maps. The maps will guide local strategic planning and ensure councils can strategically conserve habitat and connections in their local area using measures like directing growth to urban areas. Through effective planning, direct and indirect impacts to the koala can be avoided.

PLANNING PRIORITY 4: Support blue-green infrastructure and quality public spaces

Paterson, Williams and Hunter Rivers are defining features of the northern part of the Hinterland, as are Wollombi Brook and Wallis Creek in the southern Hinterland. Valuable agricultural land adjoins many of the natural waterways that also support an array of wildlife and aquatic species. They are also focal points for the villages nestled on their banks and contribute to their sense of place.

Local strategic planning will consider ways to sustain good water quality. Avoiding water polluting activities is vital to both the natural environment and agriculture that relies on the flow of local rivers for supplying water to the livestock. It should also identify opportunities to reinforce the connection between the village and the rivers by improving access and supporting public space.

The district's floodplains are an important part of the district, and shape how future development in the district, both on and adjoining these floodplains. Care must be given to resilience of communities connected to floodplains.

PLANNING PRIORITY 5: Protect drinking water catchments

As communities grow water catchments must be protected. Local strategic planning will apply the neutral or beneficial water quality objectives when considering development impacts on surface and groundwater drinking water catchment areas.



Wollombi Main Street
Credit: Cessnock City Council

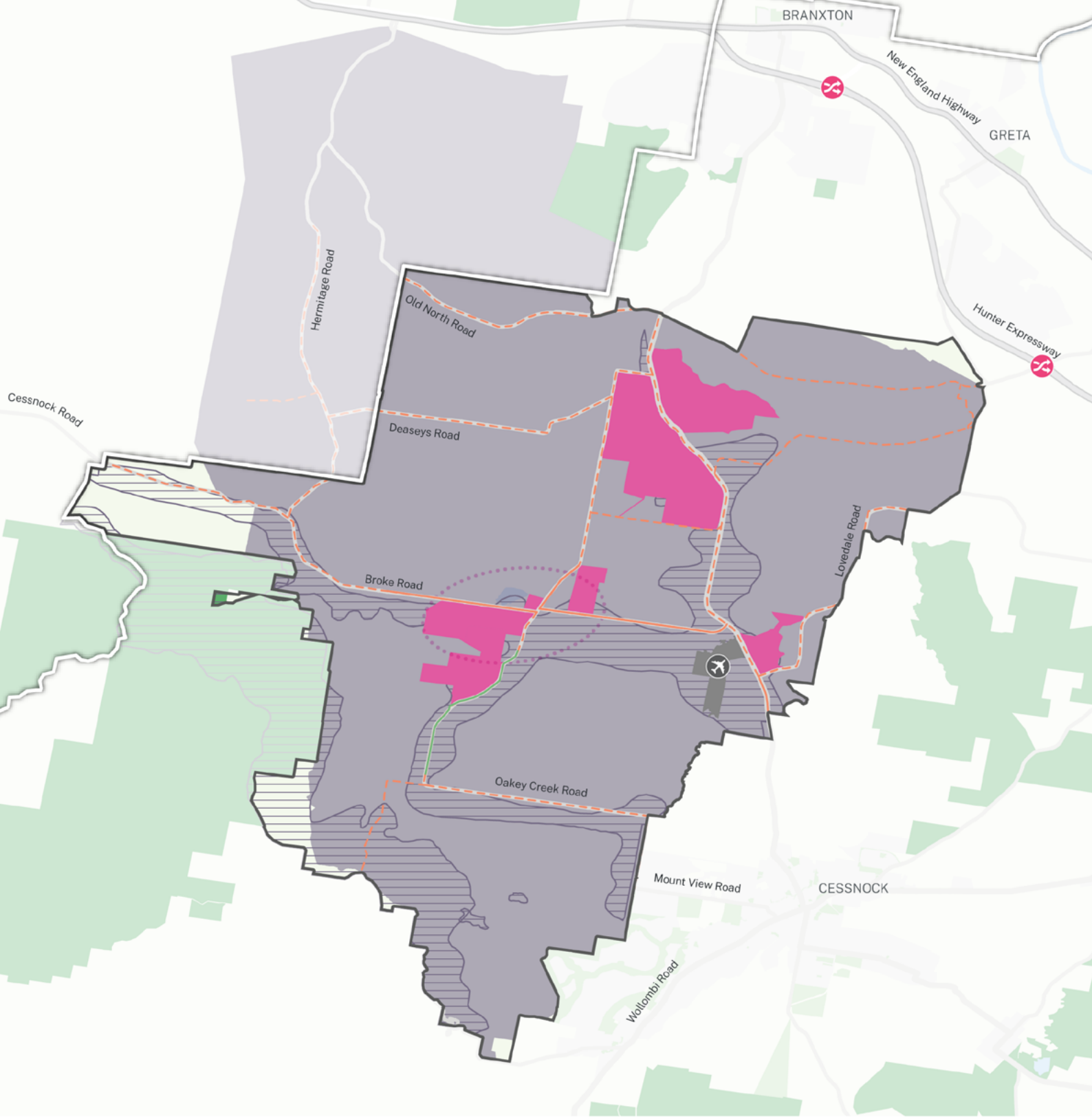


Figure 36: Cessnock Vineyards regionally significant growth area



Cessnock viticulture regionally significant growth area

The Cessnock viticulture area's expansive views of vineyards across undulating hills and rugged valley walls attracts visitors. As the tourism industry expands, the rural landscape will come under more pressure.

Development should not risk the scenic amenity and grape growing elements of the vineyards to ensure tourism can be sustained in the future. Place strategy planning will refine visually significant land mapping and agricultural values, and update land use and development controls.

Biodiversity ranges from large areas of native vegetation to riparian corridors and tree-lined roads. Place strategy planning will identify walking and cycling networks to help visitors to engage with the landscape. Connections to the district like the Shiraz to Shore cycle trail will be explored.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Strategic agricultural land
 - Ensure non-agricultural development avoids land use conflict with existing and future agricultural uses.
 - Locate residential subdivision and other development incompatible with the vineyards' rural landscape and scenic amenity in centres.
2. Tourism node investigation area
 - Identify a tourism node and consolidate larger scale tourism developments in this location.
 - Development is sympathetic to the rural amenity and the local character of the area.
 - Connect walking and cycling networks from the tourism node to tourism activities and landscape features.
3. Visually significant areas
 - Support non-agricultural development with suitable infrastructure and accommodate it in the landscape setting.
 - Ensure the siting, bulk, scale and built form of non-agricultural development is suitable for the setting.
 - Ensure development on land adjoining scenic areas is sympathetic to landscape values and view corridors from the vineyards.



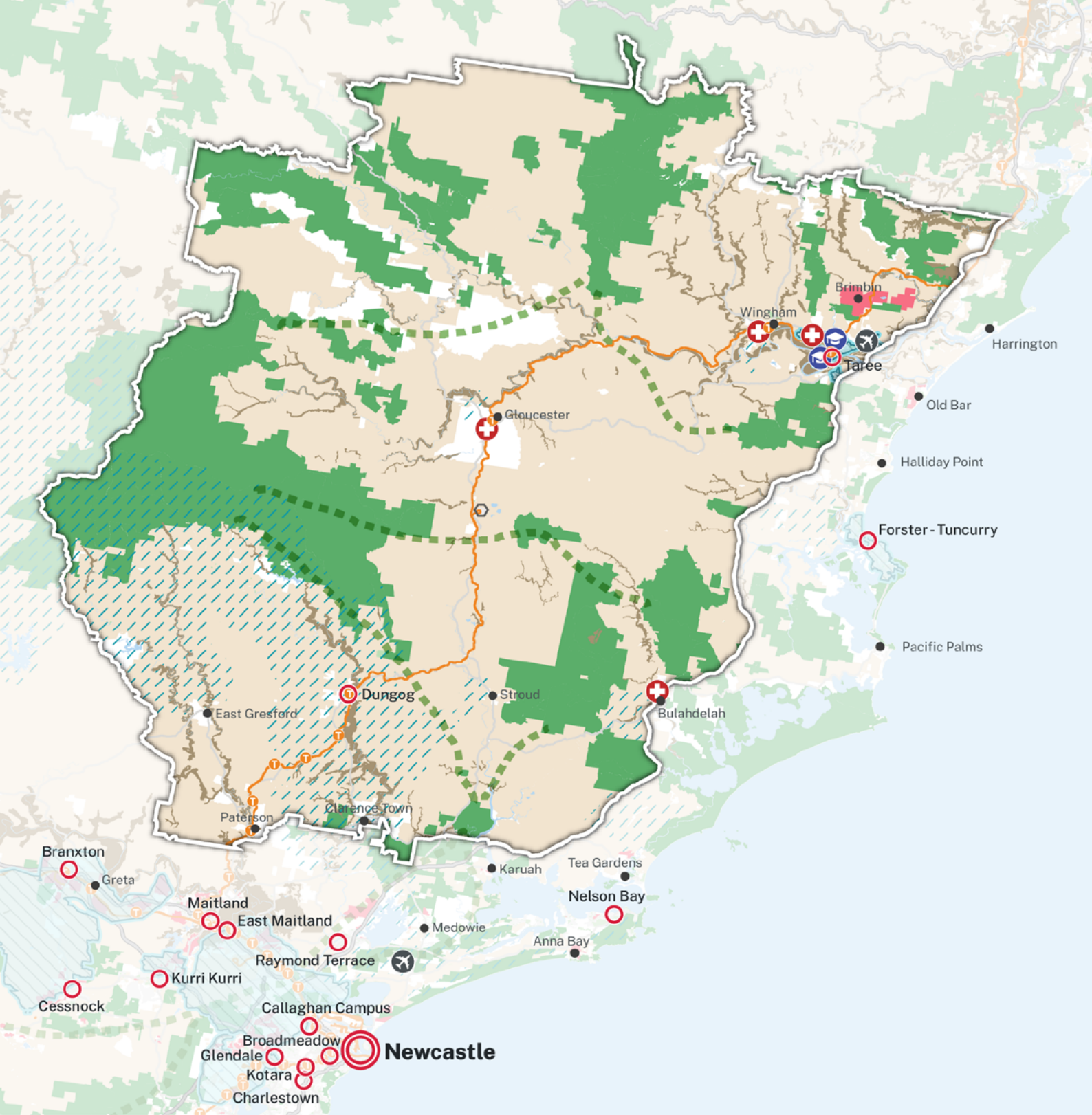
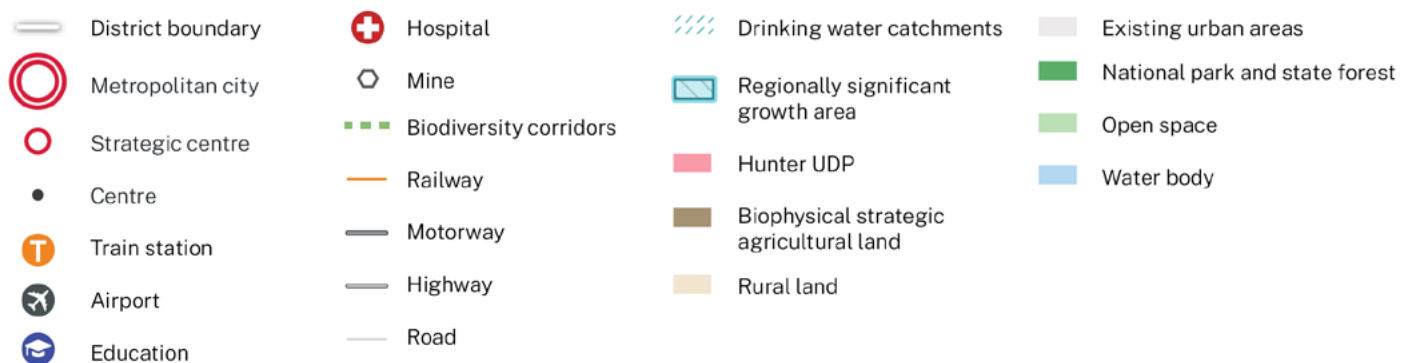


Figure 37: Barrington district



Barrington District

Gloucester in the Barrington District



The Barrington district is defined by the World Heritage-listed Barrington Tops National Park to the west, and features agricultural and water catchment areas, pristine waterways, an extensive network of national parks and wilderness areas. Barrington district's ecological corridors contribute to the Hunter's overall biodiversity values.

The district is a popular destination for residents and visitors. Stronger tourist connections could connect people to the inland attractions of Barrington Tops and Ellenborough Falls from the coastal areas of Myall Lakes National Park.

Historically known for its dairying and timber, there has been some growth in poultry industries as they relocate from the expanding edges of larger cities.

Improvements to the M1 Pacific Motorway have increased opportunities for industries with access to markets in Greater Newcastle and Sydney. Improvements to other key road infrastructure such as The Bucketts Way and Thunderbolts Way would further support agricultural and industrial enterprise.

The district is anchored by the strategic centres of Dungog and Taree. Dungog is a smaller administrative centre servicing residents, business and tourism across the southern portion of the district, while Taree is a larger centre, providing a broader range of services, facilities and employment for the central and northern parts of the district and nearby coastal areas.

Communities of the Barrington district love the rural, quiet and relaxed nature of the area and its proximity to work, cities, family and services. This will be retained by:

- planning for housing diversity and sequenced development
- creating the new community of Brimbin
- supporting rural enterprises and the agricultural sector
- enhancing tourism and protecting scenic landscapes
- enhancing the character of rural towns and villages
- protecting drinking water catchments
- supporting the *NSW Koala Strategy*
- planning for alternative land uses for former mining sites
- planning for the Taree regionally significant growth area.

PLANNING PRIORITY 1:**Provide for housing diversity and sequenced development**

Housing diversity can be achieved in Taree, Dungog, Wingham and Gloucester with a combination of infill development, greenfield and rural-residential housing. This can support the changing needs of residents and attract new residents.

Local strategic planning will determine the locations for new residential communities by understanding environmental constraints like bushfire, ecology and flooding, and the feasibility of infrastructure provision. The urban development program will assist councils by understanding infrastructure constraints so that development can be sequenced, and new housing sites considered where provision is cost effective.

Low-rise housing in these areas will leverage access to main streets and town centres. Dual occupancies, townhouses and secondary dwellings will be the initial focus.

Other forms of development in Taree, such as manor homes, terraces and residential flat buildings, will be suitable in the town centre and in areas near the river foreshore.

With an older population, the district will need retirement living and a diversity of housing so that people can downsize.

PLANNING PRIORITY 2:**Plan for the new community of Brimbin**

Brimbin is north-east of Taree. Once developed, it will become a new town, providing housing, employment, recreation and services for around 22,000 people.

Brimbin will evolve over the life of this plan and beyond. Local strategic planning will focus on efficient staging and timely infrastructure provision. A master plan will be developed to shape the new community into the future.

PLANNING PRIORITY 3:**Support rural enterprises and the agricultural sector**

Gloucester, Wingham, Bulahdelah and Dungog are rural service centre towns. Support industries include the beef abattoir in Wingham (export licensed), seafood processing, sale yards and saw milling facilities. Growth in rural enterprises will support the rural economy and allow communities to adapt.

The identification and protection of important agricultural lands and of intensive agriculture clusters in local plans will avoid land use conflicts.

Minimum subdivision standards for rural zones can enhance the viability of the agricultural sector, maximise production efficiencies and support the delivery of local fresh foods by limiting land fragmentation.

Planning proposals should build on strategic advantages and support existing and emerging rural enterprises and activities. The intensification and diversification of on-farm agricultural activities like farm stays, camping or farm gate trails should be encouraged, along with larger visitor facilities and events that complement rural activities and landscapes.

PLANNING PRIORITY 4:**Enhance tourism and protect scenic and environmental landscapes**

The Barrington Tops National Parks is part of the World Heritage-listed Gondwana Rainforests. Gloucester, Stroud and Dungog support and benefit from tourism in the Barrington Tops, just as Wingham does from Ellenborough Falls and Bulahdelah from Myall Lakes. Each of these towns attract visitors due to their unique landscape setting, high amenity and heritage buildings.

The district's towns sit in a landscape rich in natural treasures, from the peaks of the Great Dividing Range to vegetated landscapes including unique and diverse plants and wildlife, and pristine lakes and estuaries. The natural environment provides recreation locations for tourists and residents and a rich biodiversity.

Local strategic planning needs to support events and activities which benefit from these assets in a way that is sympathetic to environmental and scenic values.

PLANNING PRIORITY 5:

Enhance the character of rural towns and villages

There are opportunities to expand rural towns and villages especially in areas where there is limited agricultural activity or other constraints. Sewer capacity will inform the capacity to expand and type of expansion possible.

Cooperook, Nabiac, Bulahdelah, Tinonee and Stroud are connected to sewer, making low density residential expansion possible. Other villages not connected to sewer could be expanded, but this will be limited to large lot residential development due to the need for on-site wastewater disposal. Large lot residential expansion will only be considered if there is demonstrated need, the location is strategically suitable, and constraints addressed.

The rich heritage and charm of rural communities can increase tourism and attract new residents. Clarence Town and Paterson experience demand for rural residential housing which may result in village renewal. New development needs to be sympathetic to local character.

Dungog Council is structure planning Clarence Town and considering the appropriateness of R5 Large Lot Residential zoned land in relation to flood risk and environmental values. The structure plan will consider development pressure against the remaining capacity of Clarence Town Wastewater Treatment works, impacts on the Williams River drinking water catchment, rationalisation of the business zone, the limits of the urban area and internal connectivity to key destinations.

PLANNING PRIORITY 6:

Protect drinking water catchments

The Williams River drinking water catchment is primarily within the Dungog LGA. Due to the significance of this catchment on Greater Newcastle's water supply development must not impact water quality.

The largest water supply system in the MidCoast LGA is the Manning scheme, which provides water for residents from Harrington in the north to Pacific Palms in the south, servicing approximately 90% of water customers in MidCoast.

Priority drinking water catchments should be identified and zoned appropriately to protect the quality and quantity of the water supply from the impacts of land uses.

Local strategic planning will apply the neutral or beneficial water quality objectives when considering development impacts on surface and groundwater drinking water catchment areas.

PLANNING PRIORITY 7:

Support the *NSW Koala Strategy*

The Barrington district supports the Bulahdelah, Barrington, South Taree and part of the Comboyne koala populations. The Comboyne population has been identified in the NSW Koala Strategy as a priority for immediate investment, with Bulahdelah, Barrington and South Taree populations have been prioritised to fill knowledge gaps and deliver local actions.

Many of NSW's coastal and hinterland koala populations are under threat from urban development as well as land clearing for agricultural purposes. Significant parts of these koala populations occur on private land and require targeted management and conservation strategies.

Habitat loss is one of the key threats to koala populations. Local strategic planning like housing and local place strategies needs to avoid or mitigate impacts on koala habitat, so it is not fragmented or lost.

The NSW Koala Strategy supports councils undertaking ecological assessment and community engagement to develop koala habitat maps. The maps will guide local strategic planning and ensure councils can strategically conserve habitat and connections.

PLANNING PRIORITY 8:

Plan for alternative land uses for former power stations and mining sites

When mine sites are rehabilitated or closed, land could potentially be repurposed to take advantage of substantial infrastructure and landholdings which may make them suitable for new land uses.

The Stratford and Duralie mines near Gloucester provide potential re-use opportunities over the 20-year period of this plan. Existing hard stand areas, vehicular access and transmission lines could support renewable energy and batteries. Other uses like recreation, industrial or intensive agriculture uses could also be suitable.

Place strategy planning will consider alternative land uses, and take into account scenic amenity impacts and opportunities to support biodiversity outcomes.

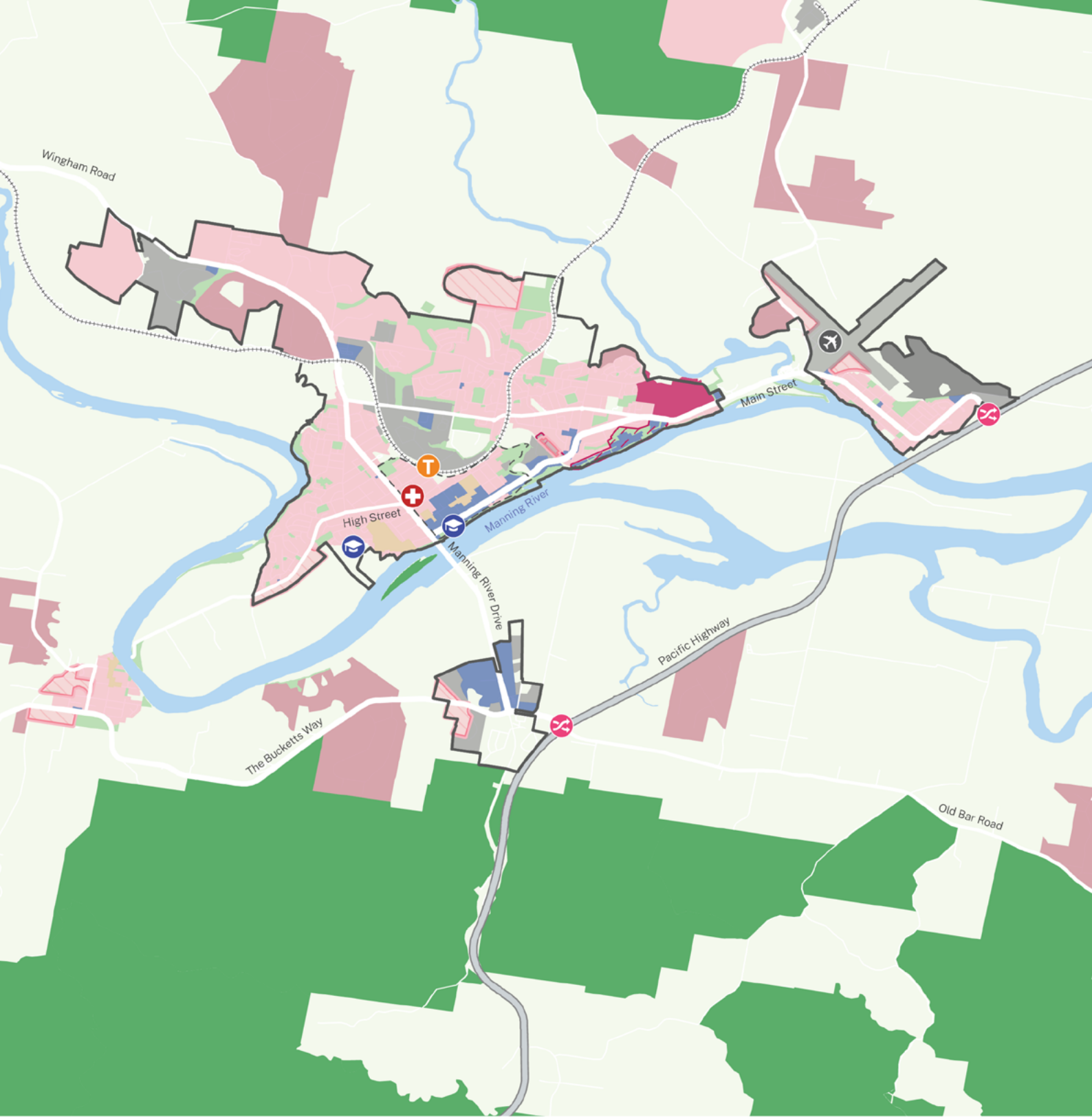


Figure 38: Taree regionally significant growth area



- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| — Taree urban footprint | Employment precinct | Railway | ■ National park and state forest |
| - - - Manning Health/Taree CBD precinct | Heritage conservation area (EPI) | — Highway | ■ Open space |
| ■ Business land | Urban release area | Ⓣ Train station | ■ Water body |
| ■ Industrial land | Redevelopment site | ✈ Taree Regional Airport | |
| ■ Residential land | Taree regional recreation centre | 🎓 Education | |
| ■ Existing rural residential | Northern Gateway Transport Hub | ⓧ Highway interchange | |
| | | ⛔ Taree Hospital | |

Taree regionally significant growth area

Taree services large parts of the Barrington and Coastal districts. This coupled with the amenity of the Manning River, will support growth.

Clustering of allied health around a redeveloped Manning Base Hospital will support a growing and aging population.

Taree has a strong cultural history associated with the Manning River and boasts impressive heritage character areas and buildings. A mix of housing densities in and around the CBD, will alleviate pressure on housing supply and support 15-minute neighbourhoods.

M1 Pacific Motorway upgrades have increased access to Newcastle and Sydney. The Northern Gateway will be a place for employment and economic opportunities. Clustering economic activities that leverage access to the Pacific Highway and Taree Regional Airport will support the prosperity of the city. An economic assessment will provide direction for how this will be achieved.

Place strategy planning will initially build on the Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan by identifying public domain improvements and development controls to catalyse renewal. Focus will also be on how the river foreshore can be activated and better connected to the CBD.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct
 - Locate health-related services and facilities between the hospital and the CBD.
 - Locate retail and commercial uses in the city centre and ensure the community can access services.
 - Promote 15-minute neighbourhoods with diverse housing choices accessible to everyday needs.
 - Activate streets and provide connections between the CBD and the Manning River.
 - Activate the Manning River foreshore with development and new activities facing the river.
 - Protect heritage and local character.
2. Northern Gateway Transport Hub
 - Locate transport-related employment activities close to the Pacific Highway.
 - Link Taree Regional Airport and the rail line to increase the economic capacity of the site and strengthen inter-regional connections.
3. Taree Regional Airport
 - Allow new businesses and facilities to capitalise on the economic activity generated from the Northern Gateway Transport Hub.
 - Connect inter-regional passengers to the airport through Taree rail station and road links, supporting new travel destinations for residents and businesses.
 - Create a residential air park to co-locate private hangars with housing.
4. Urban release areas
 - Locate urban growth in the Taree Estate and North Taree urban release areas.
 - Investigate airport-related employment opportunities in the Cundletown urban release areas.
 - Leverage the proximity of the Pacific Highway to Taree South to expand the precinct.
5. Redevelopment sites
 - Revitalise the historic Figtrees on Manning waterfront with residential and commercial development and a pedestrian/cycle link between the Taree CBD and regional recreation centre.
 - Redevelop the historic Peters factory site for residential and commercial development, preserving important historical elements of the site.
6. Environmental corridors
 - Plan for the Manning River, Dawson River and Browns Creek to provide ecological corridors to urban bushland and pedestrian and cycle connections within Taree and to Wingham and Brimbin.
7. Regional recreation centre
 - Make quality regional sporting fields and recreational facilities available to support community use and sports tourism events.
 - Develop walking and cycling links with the neighbouring Manning Entertainment Centre.

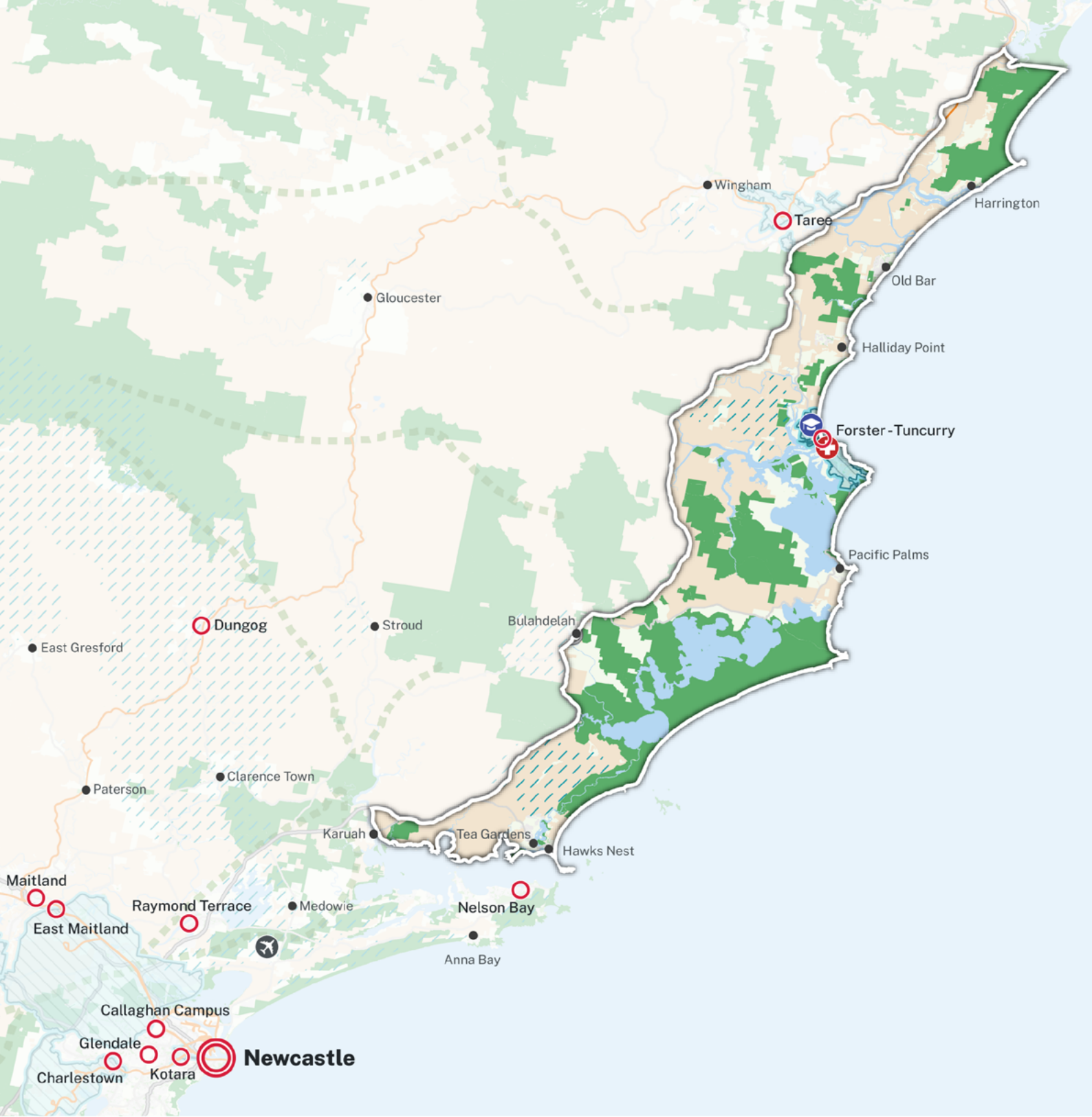


Figure 39: Coastal district



- | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| | District boundary | | Biodiversity corridors | | Regionally significant growth area |
| | Metropolitan city | | Railway | | Rural land |
| | Strategic centre | | Motorway | | Existing urban areas |
| | Centre | | Highway | | National park and state forest |
| | Airport | | Road | | Open space |
| | Education | | Drinking water catchments | | Water body |
| | Hospital | | | | |

Coastal District



Blueys Beach, Blueys Beach
Credit: Destination NSW

The coastal experience attracts visitors who, over the summer months, enjoy the district's pristine coastline and beaches, coastal lakes, lagoons and other attractions. The road network provides tourism connections along the Pacific Highway, The Bucketts Way, Thunderbolts Way and The Lakes Way. These authentic coastal experiences and enviable lifestyle are within easy connection to the growing metropolitan area.

Being a holiday destination, some coastal villages experience high vacancy rates, reflecting the high portion of holiday homes. Tourism accommodation is also changing, with more people making their homes available to visitors through online booking services. Opportunities for formal tourist accommodation hotels and motels can alleviate the pressure for short-term rental accommodation for local residents.

The district is defined by its diverse and sensitive landscapes, including wetlands, floodplains, coastal lakes (including the Myall Lakes which are protected under the Ramsar Convention), beaches, small rural holdings and natural bushland. Like other districts of the Hunter, the Coastal district is subject to flooding, bushfire, coastal erosion and sea level rise in areas.

The district comprises the ecologically diverse coastal landscapes, towns and villages east of the Pacific Highway and includes the strategic centre of Forster-Tuncurry, as well as Harrington, Old Bar, Hallidays Point, Pacific Palms, Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens. Future planning will focus on:

- prioritising growth in existing urban areas and supporting sustainable communities
- offering more diverse housing choices
- establishing coastal walks between communities
- enhancing coastal environments
- supporting the *NSW Koala Strategy*
- considering historical paper subdivisions
- planning for the Forster-Tuncurry regionally significant growth area.

PLANNING PRIORITY 1:**Prioritise housing growth in existing urban areas and support sustainable communities**

The Coastal district's towns and villages are set amongst the pristine natural landscapes of the Myall, Smith and Wallis lakes. Their scenic amenity and recreation value attract residents and tourists to the coastal lifestyle. This can create development pressure. Focusing new housing in existing urban areas will help to maintain the coastal lifestyle.

Growth in towns and villages should occur within their existing urban settlement boundaries with expansion areas limited to those identified through local strategic planning endorsed by the department. This will maintain the distinct character of individual communities, avoid constraints and natural hazards, protect environmental and landscape values, and enable the efficient delivery of infrastructure and services.

To safeguard the sensitive coastal environment and landscape, rural residential development will be limited to existing rural residential zoned areas. This will strengthen the growth of the Barrington district, relieving pressure on sensitive coastal environments. New rural residential areas in the Coastal district should only occur where local strategic planning has identified a site as providing a net community benefit through either infrastructure provision or a conservation outcome, and this has been endorsed by the department.

When planning for expansion areas and rural residential development, effective inter-urban breaks between coastal settlements should be provided with managed, conservation green spaces used to limit settlement expansion. Bushfire risk also needs to be a strong focus. Compliance with *Planning for Bushfire Protection* should be demonstrated and high risk areas avoided. Safe evacuation, emergency access and adequate water supply all need to be considered.

As towns and villages grow, local strategic planning will look to expand and diversify the employment base and provide land for new business and industry. This will promote 15-minute neighbourhoods and reduces the need for residents to commute to major centres for work.

PLANNING PRIORITY 2:**Offer more diverse housing choices**

Planning needs to balance the different needs of visitors and residents, including managing short-term holiday rentals and residential population growth.

Local strategic planning will respond to demographic trends and affordability issues. As the number of older residents increase, housing should be adaptable so that residents are able stay in their house or their local area as they age. Allowing smaller homes on smaller lots will support first home buyers, single households and people looking to downsize, making the Coastal district an affordable place to live.

Local strategic planning will consider housing types and development controls to enable growth that complements the desired local character and natural setting of an area, particularly in coastal towns and villages where sensitive environmental areas mean outward expansion is not an option.

Adapting the type and scale of housing to suit the scenic amenity and access to the coastline will bring higher densities. While high density residential flat buildings may be suitable in parts of Forster-Tuncurry, other areas may suit smaller scale density like secondary dwellings, dual occupancies, townhouses or smaller lots. The type of housing and its scale will be designed to the local context.

PLANNING PRIORITY 3:**Establish coastal walks between communities**

Walking and cycling like the tracks through Khappinghat, Booti Booti and Myall Lakes national parks attract tourists and locals to the unique natural environment, with many staying overnight and connecting to coastal towns for supplies and services.

New walks and cycle paths to connect towns will be identified early so that any proposed routes are incorporated into new development proposals. These connections will highlight attractions with historical narratives, and should link into open space, beaches and nature reserves. Early support from landowners is integral to initial planning and long-term success. Local Aboriginal Land Councils will be consulted regarding sites appropriate for walkers to visit.

PLANNING PRIORITY 4:**Enhance coastal environments**

Beaches, headlands, littoral rainforests, dunes, creeks and estuaries form an integral part of a community's sense of place and identity. Regionally significant wetlands are protected under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018*. Local strategic planning will consider waterway health and prioritise sensitive coastal lakes and waterways.

Waterway health affects aquatic ecosystems and this can affect industries like oyster farming. Wallis Lake, for example, accounts for 24.5% of production of Sydney Rock Oysters in NSW. Local strategic planning will consider the *NSW Risk-based Framework for Considering Waterway Health Outcomes in Strategic Land-use Planning Decisions* to ensure development within sensitive water catchments is appropriately managed.

Storms, waves and large tides have caused erosion and the loss of land, while wave over-wash can inundate assets. The frequency and intensity of coastal hazards will increase. The NSW Government identified 16 coastal 'significant open coast locations' where the impact of coastal hazards and the risk to assets is high. Two of these hotspots are located at Jimmys Beach near Hawks Nest and at Old Bar/ Manning Point.

Under the NSW Coastal Management Framework, MidCoast Council is preparing coastal management programs in consultation with the community. Each plan may be incorporated into LEPs and DCPs and may result in amendments to the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018*.

PLANNING PRIORITY 5:**Support the NSW Koala Strategy**

The NSW Koala Strategy sets an ambitious target to double koala numbers in NSW by 2050. Local strategic planning that identifies koala habitat, avoids clearing and fragmentation of koala habitat, and aims to increase and restore connectivity of koala habitat is required to achieve this goal.

The Coastal district supports the Forster, Myall Lakes, East Taree, Hawks Nest and part of the Bulahdelah koala populations. The Forster population has been identified in the NSW Koala Strategy as a priority for immediate investment, and the Myall Lakes, East Taree, Hawks Nest and Bulahdelah populations prioritised for filling knowledge gaps and delivering local actions.

Many of NSW's coastal koala populations are under threat from urban development as well as land clearing and forestry. Without significant action, these populations may be extinct within the next 30-50 years. Coordinated and strategic conservation efforts are required at all levels of government to ensure intervention efforts are successful.

Habitat loss is one of the key threats to koala populations. Local strategic planning like housing and local place strategies needs to avoid or mitigate impacts on koala habitat, so it is not fragmented or lost. Habitat loss increases the risk of vehicle strike incidents, domestic dog attacks, populations becoming isolated, and greater rates of disease.

The NSW Koala Strategy supports councils undertaking ecological assessment and community engagement to develop koala habitat maps. The maps will guide local strategic planning and ensure councils can strategically conserve habitat and connections in their local area. Through effective planning, direct and indirect impacts to the koala can be avoided.

PLANNING PRIORITY 6:**Consider historical paper subdivisions**

Various sites are the legacy of early 20th century land development intentions that precede the modern planning system. These sites involve a range of different sized landholdings, numerous landowners and have limited, if any, infrastructure enabling their development. They are known as paper subdivisions.

Planning legislation contains provisions for developing these areas. The provisions require a majority of landholders by number and land area to agree to any development concepts for their land, and the sharing of development costs between landowners. Under the legislation, Council could lead this work.

Local strategic planning by MidCoast Council has examined the constraints to development within paper subdivisions at North Arm Cove, Pindimar, Bundabah and Carrington, and made recommendations for future use. Preliminary analysis indicates that in many of these sites, infrastructure provision for urban development is prohibitively expensive and environmental constraints are significant.

Further investigation will identify whether options exist that could enable cost effective development.

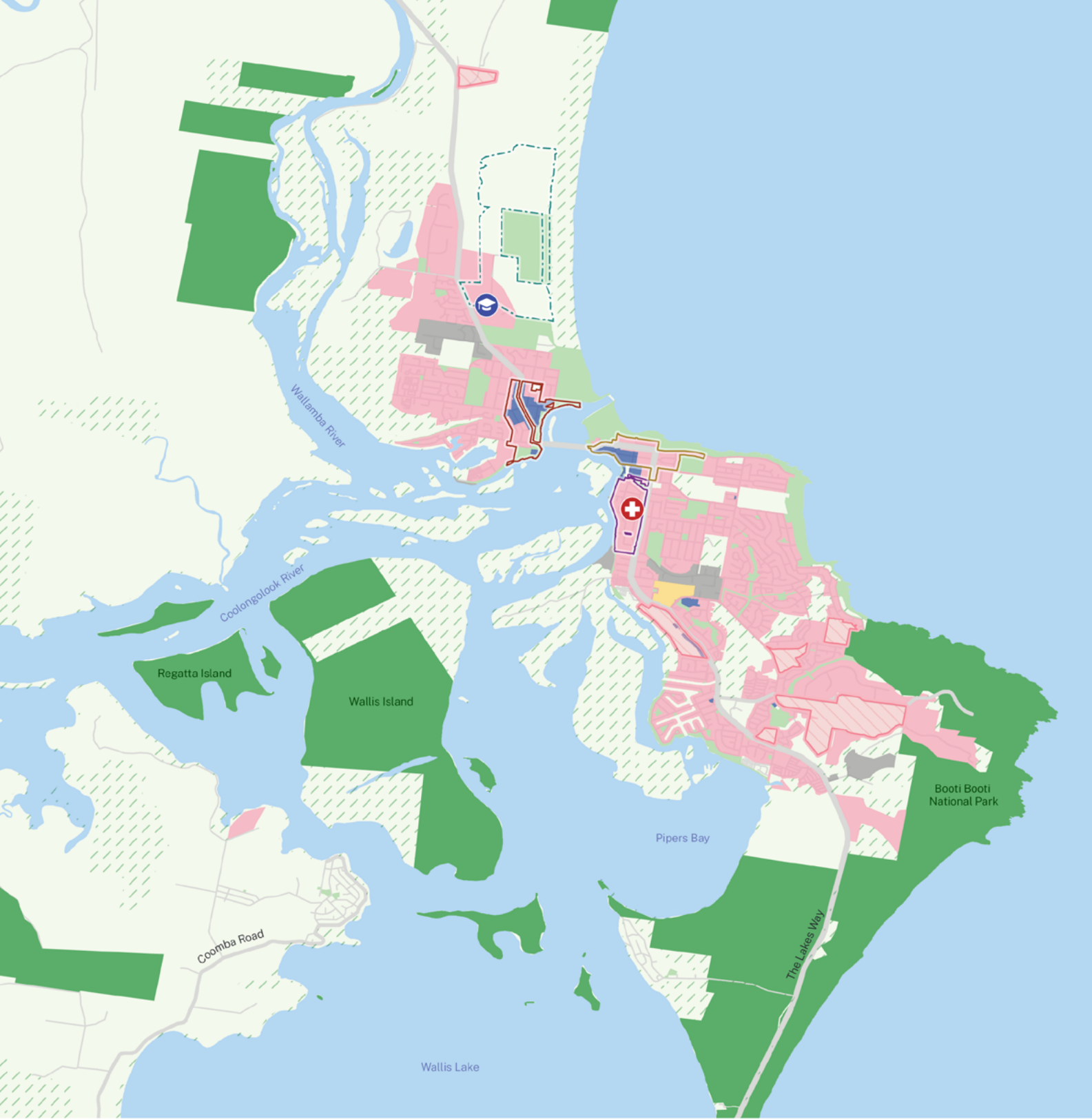


Figure 40: Forster regionally significant growth area



- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Business land | North Tuncurry urban release area | Education |
| Industrial land | Forster town centre and Main Beach | Hospital |
| Residential land | Tuncurry town centre and lake foreshore | National park and state forest |
| Forster Shopping Village | Lakeside residential | Open space |
| Urban release area | Road | Water body |
| Conservation zone | | |

Forster–Tuncurry regionally significant growth area

Forster–Tuncurry is located between the coast and lakes, with tourism and retirement living driving the economy and leading to extensive shopping, entertainment, recreation and service facilities.

As a vibrant and desirable growth area, it needs greater densities and walkable town centres, more 15-minute neighbourhoods, with housing that is suitable for the long-term needs of the community.

Forster–Tuncurry bridge reaches capacity during peak holiday seasons. Closure of the bridge due to accidents can bring the towns to a standstill. Transport for NSW is preparing an integrated transport plan to consider options for managing traffic volumes on the bridge.

Place strategy planning for Forster–Tuncurry will focus on master planning the CBDs to improve amenity and connection to the waterfront. Urban renewal will generate tourism, entertainment, business and residential activity.

An economic assessment will examine opportunities for tourism, industry clusters and smart businesses to support employment growth.

Place strategy outcomes

1. Forster town centre and Main Beach
 - Connect with Forster Harbour and Main Beach and extend dining and business hours in the main street.
 - Orient businesses along Memorial Drive to Wallis Lake, activating the waterfront.
 - Ensure taller buildings exhibit design excellence in a coastal town character.
 - Interface retail and service industries with coastal recreation activities.
 - Enhance public areas to encourage residents and visitors to spend more time in the area in the off-season, including connected lakefront shared paths to the Civic Precinct.
2. Tuncurry town centre and lake foreshore
 - Enhance Tuncurry main street as the commercial spine and the primary vehicle connection between the Forster and Tuncurry communities.
 - Connect retail and service offerings to the wharf and foreshore area, leveraging the amenity of Forster Harbour and views over the waterway.
 - Align infill development in business zones with 15-minute and nimble neighbourhood objectives.
3. Lakeside residential
 - Ensure walking and cycling reinforce the town centre, providing connections to services, the waterfront, open space creating areas of high resident and visitor activity.
4. Urban release areas
 - Plan for 15-minute neighbourhoods with quality residential density near the Wallis Lake shoreline, with walking distance of Forster Civic Precinct, and around the proposed private hospital and aged care facility.
5. Environmental lands and national parks
 - Integrate diverse housing types with commercial and recreational activities as part of 15-minute neighbourhoods.
 - Integrate housing with the sensitive environmental setting and the broader Tuncurry and Forster community, supporting services, and infrastructure such as health and transportation networks.
6. Wallis Lake
 - Provide a green backdrop to the regionally significant growth area and define its character.
 - Ensure Booti Booti, Wallis Island and Minimbah national parks, and lake islands retain habitat for important ecological communities.
7. Shopping and employment precinct
 - Expand retail and service functions with residential and tourist growth as part of 15-minute neighbourhoods.
 - Plan for employment lands to support the centre and provide for a mix of business, commercial and service industry activities, with clear links between areas.
8. North Tuncurry Urban Release Area
 - Ensure the area contributes to the future housing needs of the Forster–Tuncurry community.
 - Provide a new local centre, improved access to Nine Mile Beach, employment land, recreation activities and protection for conservation land.

APPENDIX A:

Centres hierarchy

The Newcastle City Centre is the Metropolitan capital and is economically significant to NSW. It is undergoing significant transformation through infrastructure investment, new housing and jobs.

Strategic centres that are the heart of the surrounding district, such as Cessnock, Charlestown, Dungog, Maitland, Morisset, Muswellbrook, Raymond Terrace, Singleton, Scone and Taree provide a range of civic, retail, commercial and recreational services. The potential for increased housing and employment in these areas will be determined by councils. Other strategic centres such as John Hunter and Callaghan are critical in supporting transformative change.

Local centres provide services such as shopping, dining, health and personal services to meet the daily and weekly needs of the local community. They are smaller than the metropolitan, regional, and strategic centres, but no less important to their communities. Local centres will continue to be identified by councils in consultation with their communities as part of their local strategic planning.

Table 11: Regionally significant centres

Typology	Centre
Metropolitan capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcastle City Centre
Strategic centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadmeadow Belmont East Maitland Glendale Kotara John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct Callaghan Campus Charlestown Maitland Morisset Taree Singleton Muswellbrook Forster-Tuncurry Cessnock Raymond Terrace Kurri Kurri Nelson Bay Scone Dungog Branxton (emerging)
Global Gateways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcastle Port Newcastle Airport
Significant Employment land clusters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tomago Heatherbrae Cardiff Industrial Estate Thornton Black Hill Rutherford Mount Thorley Industrial Area Mayfield West Beresfield Tarro

APPENDIX B:

Repealed plans and strategies

The following plans and strategies will be repealed by the Hunter Regional Plan 2041:

- Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006-31
- Mid North Coast Regional Strategy 2006-31 (for the MidCoast LGA)
- Strategic Regional Land Use Plan for the Upper Hunter, 2012
- Review of industrial employment lands in the Throsby Area, September 2010
- Newcastle – Lake Macquarie Western Corridor Planning Strategy, July 2010
- Draft Hunter Expressway Strategy, 2020
- Hunter Regional Plan 2036

Glossary

BASIX

BASIX, or building sustainability index, is a Government planning measure to reduce household electricity and water use by setting minimum sustainability targets for new and renovated homes. BASIX identifies design features that will affect the likely level of thermal comfort and water and energy use per household

Catalyst areas

Catalyst areas are identified in the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036* and are places of metropolitan significance where a planned approach will drive the transformation of the Greater Newcastle district as a metropolitan city.

Circular economy

An economic system aimed at minimising waste and promoting the continual reuse of resources. The circular economy aims to keep products, equipment and infrastructure in use for longer, thus improving the productivity of these resources. Waste materials and energy should become input for other processes: either a component or recovered resource for another industrial process or as regenerative resources for nature (e.g. compost). This regenerative approach contrasts with the traditional linear economy, which has a 'take, make, dispose' model of production.

Development control plans

Development control plans (DCPs) provide detailed planning and design guidelines to support the planning controls in the Local Environmental Plans developed by councils.

Employment land

Land that is zoned for industrial or similar purposes in planning instruments. These uses include manufacturing; transport and warehousing; service and repair trades and industries; integrated enterprises with a mix of administration, production, warehousing, research and development; and urban services and utilities.

Enabling infrastructure

Essential services that are required for a development to occur, such as water supply, energy supply, waste water systems, stormwater drainage and vehicular access.

Equinal strategic agricultural land

Includes a highly integrated concentration of horse breeding facilities and related infrastructure covering thoroughbred and stock horse breeding centres and numerous other equine developments and support services.

Green infrastructure

The network of green spaces, natural systems and seminatural systems that supports sustainable communities and includes waterways; bushland; tree canopy and green ground cover; parks, and open spaces that includes parks; and open spaces that are strategically planned, designed and managed to support a good quality of life in the urban environment.

Growth area

Places of regional or metropolitan significance where a collaborative approach is required to deliver residential, employment or other land use change. Growth areas include land identified in plan as regionally significant and other areas where a planning proposal is greater than 2,000 homes for residential land.

Important agricultural land

Important agricultural land is defined as Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land, Land and Soil Capability Classes 1-3, irrigated land, and Critical Industry Clusters.

Local environmental plans

Local environmental plans (LEPs) guide planning decisions for local government areas through zoning and development controls.

They provide a legal framework for the way land can be developed and used. LEPs are the main planning tool to shape the future of communities by ensuring local development is carried out appropriately.

Local strategic planning

Includes the preparation of local strategic planning statements, local housing strategies, employment land or retail studies, place strategies and other activities undertaken to support the development of local and regional plans by all levels of government.

Local strategic planning statements

Local strategic planning statements (LSPS) are prepared by councils and set out the planning priorities which meet their community's needs and deliver key State and regional planning objectives. The council's LSPS sets out a 20-year vision for land use in the local area, the shared community values to be maintained and enhanced, how future growth and change will be managed the special characteristics which contribute to local identity.

Mixed use investigation area

Land that is capable of supporting a mix of contributing housing and employment uses, rather than any one dominant type of land use. Resulting development enables activities consistent with the regionally significant growth area.

Place strategy

Place-based strategy that provides coordination and delivery of planning, infrastructure and government services. It does not rezone land but provides a spatial representation of key planning factors for that place. This may include areas of biodiversity value, key transport links, areas where development is anticipated and where key supporting infrastructure will be provided to service growth (e.g. schools, sewer, water, roads). A place strategy may include a vision, directions, structure plan and an infrastructure delivery framework.

Planning proposal

A planning proposal describes the outcome and justification for a LEP and is the key part of the LEP making process as set out under Division 3.4 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979*.

Public space

Publicly owned places accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without profit or motive. Public space includes open space such as playgrounds, beaches and other waterfronts, playing fields and bushland, libraries, museums and other public buildings, streets lanes and cycleways.

Regional Hunter

Comprises the local government areas of Dungog, MidCoast, Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter.

Resilience

Resilience refers to the potential for individuals, communities, businesses and systems to prevent, absorb, accommodate, and recover from a range of shocks and stresses, including but not limited to bushfires, flooding, extreme heat and coastal hazards.

Rural enterprises

Ancillary land uses, such as tourism, located on rural land that are consistent with the local character and add economic value to the area without creating land use conflict.

Special activation precinct (SAP)

A Special Activation Precinct is a dedicated area in a regional location identified by the NSW Government to become a thriving business hub. Precincts will create jobs, attract businesses and investors, support local industries and fuel economic development.

Viticultural strategic agricultural land

Includes a highly integrated concentration of vineyards and associated wineries and tourism infrastructure in a rural landscape. The land unique terrain and climate, its heritage vines and diversity of soil types all contribute to the specific quality and characteristics of grapes produced in the area.

References

- ¹ Stanley, John & Stanley, Janet & Hensher, David (2012). "Mobility, Social Capital and Sense of Community: What Value?," *Urban Studies*, Urban Studies Journal Limited, vol. 49(16): 3595-3609.
- ² Dill, Jennifer and McNeil, Nathan (2013). "Four Types of Cyclists?: Examination of Typology for Better Understanding of Bicycling Behavior and Potential." *Transportation Research Record* 2387, no. 1 (January 2013): 129–38.
- ³ Department of Planning and Environment 2022 NSW population and household projections
- ⁴ Doerr, V., Doerr, E., & Davies, M. (2010). Does structural connectivity facilitate dispersal of native species in Australia's fragmented terrestrial landscapes. *CEE Rev*, 8, 70.
- ⁵ Biodiversity offsets shown in Figure 23 are a compilation of private land conservation agreements in NSW executed under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and preceding legislation.



Planning and Environment

dpie.nsw.gov.au

Postal Address:
Department of Planning
and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Street Address:
Level 4,
6 Stewart Avenue
Newcastle West
NSW 2302

