

Planning, Industry  
and Environment

# Draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041







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## Acknowledgment of Country

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

The *draft 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 travelling across lands and waterways for ceremony, religion, trading and seasonal migration.

Aboriginal people maintain a strong belief that if we care for Country, it will care for us. This 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 to be sustainably managed in the built environment.

Using comprehensive and respectful approaches, planning for the Hunter can build capacity and pathways for knowledge sharing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Stockton Sand Dunes  
Credit: Destination NSW

Illustration: Credit Nikita Ridgeway





Café at Bulahdelah



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Bennetts Beach, Hawks Nest  
Credit: Destination NSW

## Minister's foreword

The Hunter is the leading regional economy in NSW, with thriving communities and a biodiversity rich environment. The Hunter is continuing on its exciting trajectory towards a growing metropolitan area, diverse economic base and global gateways that link the region to the rest of the world.

Aligned state and local government strategic planning will underpin the region's ongoing prosperity and growth. This Hunter Regional Plan represents a strategic vision and direction for how we will plan for the region's future housing, jobs, infrastructure, and a healthy environment. It is premised on a place where people have easy access to green spaces and live in connected communities.

The past two years have shown us how our strategic planning must adapt to meet changing circumstances and needs. Planning evolves, places and circumstances change. This is why we must review and update regional plans every five years.

Since the first Hunter Regional Plan was released in October 2016, the NSW Government has worked closely with councils, other stakeholders and the community to deliver on key priority actions to improve the Hunter for residents and visitors and make it an attractive place for investors. Key priority actions achieved include the delivery of the Hunter Urban Development Program, the NSW Government's blueprint for managing land and housing supply and assisting infrastructure coordination in the Hunter Region to support new housing development.

The preparation and implementation of the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036* – the first metropolitan plan for a non-capital city of Australia is another key priority action delivered. The Plan harnesses the large investment in Newcastle's aviation, transport, education, health and tourism sectors to grow the city as the global gateway for northern NSW.

Together, we have achieved the original priorities and in reviewing the previous Regional Plan have identified new priorities for the next 5 years.

This Hunter Regional Plan resets priorities for the area and ensures continued progress and prosperity for the Hunter community for the next 20 years.

We've collaborated closely with local councils and consulted widely with the community and a broad array of stakeholders to develop the updated plan.

It's a Regional Plan that builds on our previous efforts for a more prosperous and resilient Hunter. This Regional Plan improves access to public spaces and local neighbourhoods, enhances biodiversity and recognises the diversity of landscapes throughout the region through a subregional planning approach.



**The Hon. Rob Stokes, MP**  
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces  
Minister for Transport and Roads





## Parliamentary Secretary's foreword

The Hunter Regional Plan is the 20-year planning blueprint to ensure the ongoing prosperity of the region's vibrant and connected local communities.

The Hunter Regional Plan 2036 provided the NSW Government's land-use vision for the Hunter. This refreshed and updated regional plan ensures the largest regional economy in Australia reaches its potential for all communities in the Hunter by guiding us to 2041 with a region connected to Country, homes, jobs, services and each other.

We have consulted widely with councils, stakeholders and peak bodies to develop a plan which responds to our time, promoting growth, stronger communities, and building resilience in a period of rapid change.

The draft plan enables greater diversification of employment, mining and energy generation lands to support innovation, economic growth and renewal. The plan also opens up opportunities for re-using these lands and their infrastructure for new land uses going forward.

The draft plan reimagines cities, towns, and suburbs across the Hunter, not as divided and separate areas for living, working, recreation and entertainment, but as mixed neighbourhoods where people can access their everyday needs within a 15-minute walk or cycle from where they live.

New pathways are created to promote economic self-determination and greater recognition and respect of traditional custodians, along with greater connection with Country and integrating Aboriginal cultural knowledge and practice into urban design and planning.

Minimising the environmental impact of our built environment is a focus for the draft plan and will guide planning decisions across the region. The plan promotes homes closer to everyday needs to reduce

reliance on car travel as well as people's energy use. It shifts development to urban centres and inner-city neighbourhoods to protect natural areas, promotes green building design and the circular economy, and seeks to expand green infrastructure and natural spaces.

Underpinning the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 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 plan sets a bold new direction for how we will plan for a prosperous Hunter and I encourage everyone committed to the Hunter to get involved, have your say and help build a plan that supports the region's success.



**The Hon. Taylor Martin MLC**  
*Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter  
and Cost of Living*



# A Regional Plan for the Hunter

## **We are operating in an era of rapid change and unprecedented uncertainty.**

This draft Hunter Regional Plan sets the strategic land use framework for continued economic transformation in one of Australia's most diverse and liveable regions.

Innovation and diversification are what makes this regional plan unique. It embraces new investments, housing choices and lifestyle opportunities to retain the Hunter's position as a leading regional economy in Australia.

The drought, floods, an unprecedented bushfire season and the COVID-19 pandemic of recent years will have lasting impacts on the economy, infrastructure, social systems, natural environment and wellbeing of people and communities.

This draft regional plan considers these impacts, while representing a review of earlier strategic planning. However, it takes a more ambitious and focused approach, drawing on the concepts of sequenced planning and infrastructure; creating great places; and enriching community character. It aims to unlock sustainable growth opportunities that can come from Greater Newcastle, Australia's seventh largest city.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will collaborate with councils, agencies and stakeholders on the regionally significant places across the Hunter. These places will help to meet the plan's vision and objectives in the shortest possible time. By working together, we can create a globally-focused, resilient and equitable Hunter that connects and cares for Country.

## **The draft regional plan is about setting up a future with the right components for success:**

- A long-term vision for the region.
- Objectives to pursue the vision.
- District and growth area approaches to meet the objectives.
- Commits state and local governments and key stakeholders to see it through.

- 1 Integrated approach**  
Integrating the regional plans for the Hunter and Central Coast to leverage both regions' respective strengths and identity.
- 2 Strategic vision**  
Providing a 20-year vision for the Hunter
- 3 Objectives**  
Setting strategic policy positions and identifying regional outcomes.
- 4 Districts**  
Outlining principles for each district that will build on and reinforce the planning priorities and actions in Local Strategic Planning Statements.
- 5 Regionally significant growth areas**  
Identifying regionally significant areas that require further investigation, a tailored planning response, activation or a specific management response.



The regional plan is a 20-year land use plan prepared in accordance with section 3.3 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and 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 prepared in accordance with section 3.9 of the EP&A Act. It acknowledges common interests without duplicating aspects of land use

planning. Rather than dictate additional actions for councils, the regional plan identifies the objectives and principles that councils should apply during local strategic planning or when considering development proposals.

The draft regional plan adopts the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals a cornerstones for planning. The regional plan aligns with and contributes to the realisation of the following Sustainable Development Goals:

**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 and 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.



## Reviewing the regional plan

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* provided the NSW Government's land use vision for the Hunter. Since its release in 2016, the NSW Government has worked with councils, other stakeholders and the community to deliver on key priority actions, which have informed this review.

These actions include:

- the release of the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036* and implementation of catalyst areas;
- agreement to a memorandum of understanding with the Hunter Joint Organisation on implementation of the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036*;
- exhibition of a draft Hunter Expressway Strategy; and
- establishment of the Greater Newcastle Urban Development Program.

Stroud

Regional plans are required to be reviewed every five years, or earlier if required. This review is underway for all regional plans in NSW. During this period, in addition to the above actions, we have also seen amendments to planning legislation to elevate the importance of strategic planning at a regional and local level in managing growth and change, and the release of local strategic planning statements and other local strategies.

A statutory planning audit also informed this review. The audit of the Hunter's 140 planning proposals planning between October 2016 and January 2021, recommends:

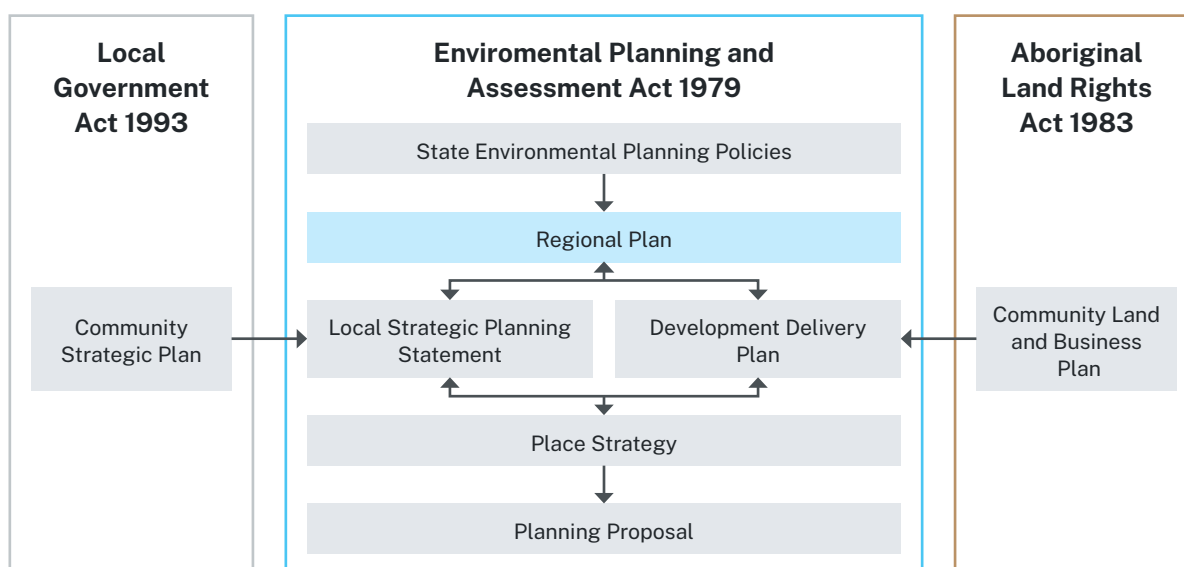
- place-based planning that integrates various planning directions;
- departmental involvement in regional, cross-jurisdictional, complex and contentious planning proposals;
- targeted and achievable actions with clear

responsibility and outcomes;

- more planning direction for hinterland areas; and
- avoid duplication with the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036*.

This draft regional plan has been prepared concurrently with Transport for NSW's draft *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, transport, water and land use planning set a coordinated 20-year vision to manage growth and change for the Hunter in the context of social, economic and environmental matters.






## What are the big ideas in the new draft regional plan?

- **Greater diversification** of employment, mining and energy generation lands to support economic renewal and innovation and open 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 will support the vision and bring even greater public value.
- New pathways to **promote economic self-determination and greater recognition and respect of traditional custodians**, along with greater connection with Country and integrating Aboriginal cultural knowledge and practice into urban design and planning.
- Establishment of **net zero emissions as a guiding principle** for all planning decisions.
- A focus on creating a region made up of **15-minute mixed-use neighbourhoods** in various contexts, as a response to the new ways people live and work in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the value people place on local, vibrant neighbourhoods where most needs can be met within a 15-minute walk, bike or drive if you are in a rural area.
- **Emphasis on infill approaches** to growth over greenfield, the achievement of optimum densities in various contexts to make public transport and neighbourhood mixes successful, and the establishment of flexible land uses in new and existing neighbourhoods to allow communities to evolve over time.
- **A renewed focus on green infrastructure, public spaces and nature**, by drawing from the opportunities of a rapidly growing region to plan for a better future, using planning decisions to reinforce, enhance and improve quality of life.
- **Prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport** in urban areas, towns and villages across the Hunter.
- **Reinforcing the importance of equity** so that people have greater choice in where and how they live, how they travel and where and how they work.



Ocean Pool Black Head





# Co-ordinated planning for Hunter and Central Coast

The Hunter and Central Coast are highly interconnected regions that form a northern economic powerhouse alongside Greater Sydney and Illawarra-Shoalhaven. We have drafted these separate Hunter and Central Coast regional plans from a single perspective to leverage each region's strengths and identity.

The 11 local government areas that make up the Hunter and Central Coast are high performing regional economies, together generating almost \$76.5 billion in gross regional product (GRP) or about 11.6% of the NSW economy<sup>1</sup>.

The two regions share a common past, similar land use planning, biodiversity and water security issues and are increasingly leveraging opportunities as interconnected economies and communities.

Both the Hunter and Central Coast benefit from regional dynamism. The effects of housing and job markets and their related multiplier effects extend far beyond regional boundaries. The emerging growth corridor between Morisset and Warnervale is an example of the increasing interconnection across the Hunter and Central Coast.

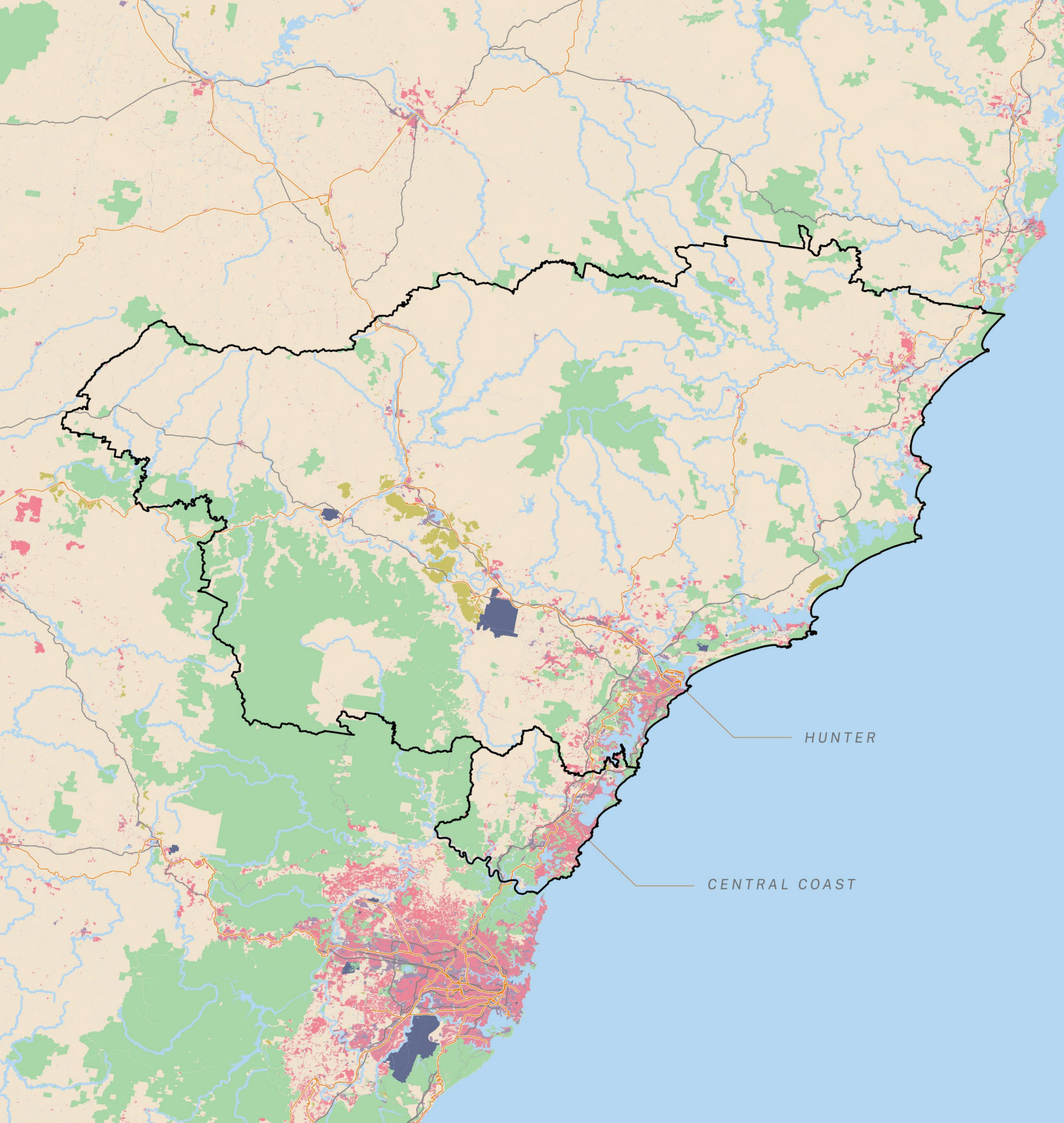
Greater Newcastle and Gosford are two vibrant cities at the heart of their respective regions. They are home to many of NSW's key health, education and research clusters, stadiums, employers and suppliers. They are cities that have an influence well beyond the Hunter and Central Coast.

Both cities are part of an extensive and complex network of centres of different sizes and functions that, as a networked and interconnected whole, comprise the second most productive area in NSW.

There are mutual benefits for councils, the NSW Government and the Australian Government to collectively tackle inter-regional matters of jobs, housing, commuters, population growth, water security, resilience and sustainability.

Better connectivity within and between Hunter, Greater Sydney and Central Coast will be essential to sustainable growth. These connections will underpin regional plans that are complementary rather than competitive – enabling us to leverage the advantages of each region to provide a broader, shared benefit.





**Figure 1: Central Coast and Hunter context**



- |                     |   |                                       |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| — Regional boundary | Residential   | Conservation and natural environments |
| — Road              | Mining  | Water body                            |
| — Railway           | Production  |                                       |
|                     | Defence   |                                       |
|                     | Manufacturing, industrial, utilities, transport and waste |                                       |



# Our Regional Vision for the Hunter

**The leading regional economy in Australia, connected to and caring for Country, with a vibrant metropolitan city and sustainable 15-minute neighbourhoods at its heart.**

The Hunter is the leading regional economy in Australia, where people enjoy an enviable quality of life within an exceptional natural environment. It is home to more than 860,000 people, with new residents attracted to a more diverse and affordable housing market, healthy, green and flexible lifestyle options, and wider range of employment opportunities.

The region features a green grid of public open space and recreational facilities—including rapidly growing walking and cycling networks—each with their own distinctive character and heritage that accommodates positive change.

Greater Newcastle is the capital and creative hub of the region, offering metropolitan-level health, education innovation and research, along with globally connecting infrastructure, vibrant communities and housing choices. The city hosts more residents, students, businesses, researchers, educators and entrepreneurs than ever before, while enhancing quality of life, resilience, health and sustainability as it grows.

Productive agricultural land and natural resources are the foundations of the region's economy with greater economic diversification through growth in the health, defence and aerospace, energy, tourism and transport sectors.

The broader Hunter provides world-class research into medical technologies, agricultural productivity, renewable energy and mining services. John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct's industry-leading facilities support communities across the Hunter and Northern NSW. A skilled science, technology and engineering workforce is engaged in advanced manufacturing, mining and digital technologies.

**All of us are**



The region is climate resilient and energy and resource efficient. Leadership in reaching net zero emissions represents a key guiding principle in all our decisions as a region.

The Hunter reaches the world's people and markets via the global gateways at the Port of Newcastle and Williamstown Special Activation Precinct (SAP), while a renewable energy zone and electricity distribution infrastructure continues to power the nation.

National and International visitors continue to seek out international quality wines and fresh food, walk along convict-built trails, trek through World Heritage-listed national parks and swim at pristine beaches.

Infrastructure investment supports freight, health and education services, and agribusiness and tourism, as well as building resilience to global economic cycles and climate change.

Vibrant neighbourhoods, centres, towns and villages, with beautiful heritage, connections with nature and a strong sense of community, embrace creative and constructive change while offering a regional lifestyle with metropolitan convenience and affordable living. Transport connectivity and faster digital technology are making it easier for residents and businesses to interact and do business in new ways.

Greater housing choice and more affordability is available in existing and new communities, close to jobs, shopping and services and supported by attractive public transport and walking and cycling options.

The natural environment enriches the experience of living in the region, sustains the region's water supply and protects biodiversity.



PART

1

Making it  
happen

Tomaree Head Summit Walk, Port Stephens  
Credit: Destination NSW





PART

1

# Making it happen

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

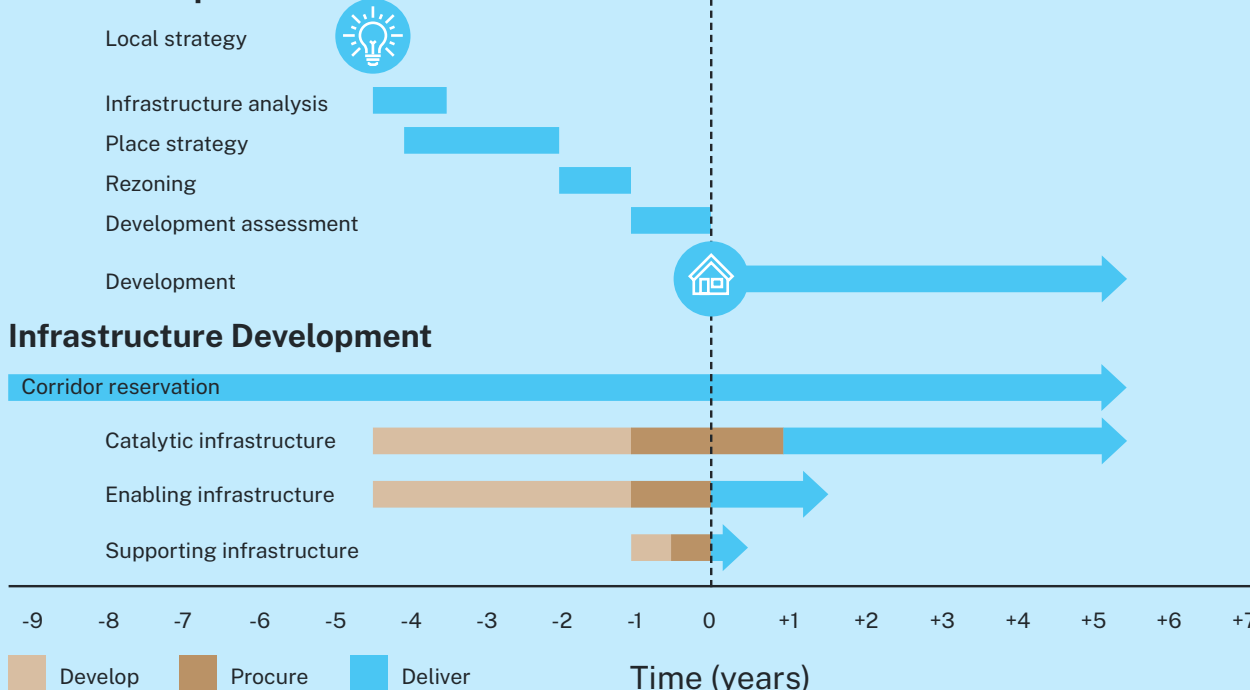
At present, strategic land use decisions, including those relating to state infrastructure contributions, often precede capital investment planning by infrastructure and service delivery authorities. Consequently, decisions on infrastructure investment often lag behind the identification and development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

Uncoordinated provision of services and infrastructure is not sustainable, efficient, cost effective or equitable.

While this draft 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, place-based approach to development planning requires infrastructure providers, the development industry and public authorities to take an integrated and coherent place-based approach to land use planning. This strategic and collaborative approach to infrastructure investment will achieve better outcomes for communities, industry and government.

## Land Development





# Urban development program

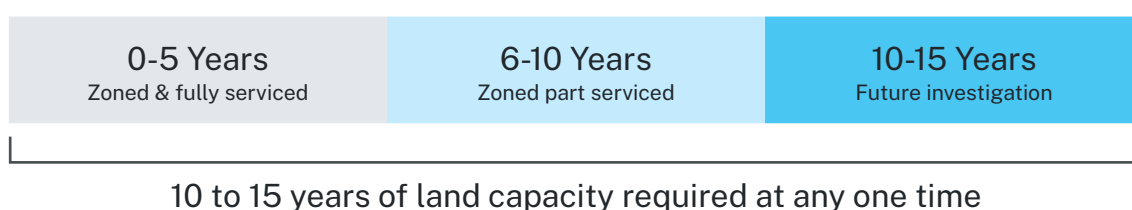
Better coordination begins with a strong evidence base. Regular monitoring of land supply, dwelling production and demand will enable better decisions on urban renewal priorities, release of land for development and the infrastructure and servicing required to enable delivery.

The urban development program is the NSW Government's program for managing land and housing supply and assisting infrastructure coordination in the Hunter. This program will be expanded to include all of the Hunter, using existing housing monitors as a basis for extension to all parts of the Hunter.

The urban development program will also be extended to incorporate the landholdings of Local Aboriginal Land Councils to integrate these sites more effectively into an overall program of urban development. This will help provide greater opportunities for self-determination.

The urban development program will publicly report data on approvals and completions, and audit greenfield and infill areas. It will ensure a pipeline of land is available from potential future growth areas, to investigation areas and zoned and serviced land ready for new homes and jobs.

## Urban Development Program benchmarks



### Hunter urban development program committee

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (Chair and Secretariat)

| Infrastructure & service providers  | Local government & authorities   | Industry & professional stakeholders   |
|---|--|--|
| AusGrid<br>Council's water and wastewater sections (if not covered by HWC)<br>Essential Energy<br>Health Infrastructure NSW<br>Hunter Water Corporation (HWC)<br>School Infrastructure NSW<br>Transport for NSW | Cessnock City Council<br>City of Newcastle Council<br>Department of Regional NSW<br>Dungog Shire Council<br>Lake Macquarie City Council<br>Land and Housing Corporation<br>Maitland City Council<br>MidCoast Council<br>Muswellbrook Shire Council<br>Port Stephens Council<br>Singleton Shire Council<br>Upper Hunter Shire Council | Housing Industry Association<br>Planning Institute of Australia<br>Property Council of Australia<br>Urban Development Institute of Australia |

The committee will:

- identify and remove barriers and disincentives for infill housing;
- oversee a pipeline of housing and employment land supply across the Hunter;
- track the supply of infill and greenfield land supply, completions, 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;
- provide annual updates on the implementation of the regional plan; and
- provide annual updates to a sequencing plan and delivery report.



# Infrastructure first and place-based framework

The department will establish planning pathways to align land use and infrastructure planning and provision. This will make efficient use of infrastructure, align state and local investment and lead to stronger place-based planning.



## 1. Plan for growth areas in the right ways through local strategies

Councils' local strategic planning statements and other local strategies are essential to the vision and objectives of the Hunter Regional Plan. They identify the growth areas where future urban development should occur and provide for the detailed place-based planning that requires collaboration between public authorities and infrastructure providers.

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 the objectives of the regional plan, LALC planning and local strategies<sup>ii</sup>.

## 2. Determine enabling infrastructure servicing and staging

An infrastructure assessment framework applied to investigation areas will help us to understand the servicing and likely staging of infrastructure. It will help to integrate land use and infrastructure planning and ensure coordination across various infrastructure sectors.

It will consider the ability of each place to be supported by existing or new infrastructure by considering:

- capacity for growth and potential take-up scenarios; and
- baseline assessment of extent, type and capacity of existing infrastructure.

The cost effectiveness of accommodating growth can then be evaluated based on the infrastructure required to service each place. Additional analysis will then consider the wider impacts and benefits resulting from the potential growth.

## 3. Establish sequence for prioritisation

A multi-criteria analysis to establish the sequence for undertaking place strategies will consider:

- infrastructure servicing and staging - capacity of existing infrastructure and the total infrastructure costs and costs to the community for upgrades;
- public benefits - number of additional homes, proportion of build to rent, social or affordable housing, delivery of public open spaces, green infrastructure, environmental benefits and quality design; and
- catalytic opportunities - link with the delivery, benefits from state or regional infrastructure investments.

A sequencing and delivery report will be prepared by the department for the urban development program committee to be publicly published alongside an annual urban development program report. The sequencing and delivery report will include:

- evaluation of investigation areas against the criteria;
- Hunter-wide sequencing priorities covering all place strategies;
- roles and responsibilities for place strategies; and
- resourcing, collaboration and funding agreements.





#### 4. Develop place strategies to align development and infrastructure

The department will support and collaborate with councils to prepare place strategies for regionally significant places and other large growth areas\* that will address the aspirations of the community and councils' vision for each location.

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.

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

For growth areas where new# greenfield residential subdivisions are proposed, place strategies can help to:

- facilitate a range of housing types and lot sizes;
- enable higher yields close to open space, retail, commercial, community, recreation facilities and public transport;
- provide for an effective and efficient road hierarchy and network; and
- ensure development is staged to provide access to community facilities and services commensurate with community need.

#### Changes to place strategies

Local strategic planning statements and other local strategies give communities an opportunity to assess the broader implications of proposed changes to urban and employment land. These are the preferred strategic planning approaches to considering changes to place strategies and are agreed between councils and the department before any rezoning can take place. This is a streamlined process for rezoning that considers all state and local planning requirements upfront within a comprehensive regional approach.

There may be a need to vary place strategies as new information becomes available or to correct anomalies. In determining the extent of any variation, consideration will be given to the efficient use of infrastructure and services, avoidance of significant environmental constraints and natural resources, and reinforcement of the Hunter Regional Plan strategies and district planning priorities.

\*Place strategies will be required for consolidation and expansion growth areas with 2,000 residential dwellings or more, other proposed urban or employment areas of more than 200 ha, or sites held by more than two landowners or across LGA boundaries. Sites under this benchmark are encouraged to prepare a place strategy.

#Future new subdivision means any site yet to receive a gateway determination. It does not apply to existing zoned land, although a place strategy is recommended for sites where it could help to resolve infrastructure requirements prior to the development application for subdivision.



| Purpose   | Urban activation and employment  | Region shaping gateways and industry precincts  | Unique industry opportunities  |
|---|--|---|--|
|   | Focus investment to enable vibrant place outcomes and local jobs   | Coordinated industry growth and secure freight capacity   | Promote growth leveraging its unique characteristics   |
| <b>Hunter Regional Plan Regionally Significant Growth Areas</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadmeadow</li> <li>• Morisset</li> <li>• Taree</li> <li>• Forster-Tuncurry</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Expressway</li> <li>• National Pinch Point (including Beresfield Black Hill)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Valley Viticulture Precincts</li> <li>• Liddell and Bayswater Power Stations</li> <li>• Scone Equine Precinct</li> </ul> |
| <b>Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Catalyst Areas</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North-West Lake Macquarie</li> <li>• Newcastle City Centre</li> <li>• Kotara</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Williamtown</li> <li>• Newcastle Port</li> <li>• Tomago</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Hunter Hospital and Innovation Precinct</li> <li>• Callaghan</li> <li>• East Maitland</li> </ul>                           |

Place strategies will be overseen by a **place delivery group** chaired by the department, and including relevant public authorities, infrastructure providers, LALCs and councils to address agency referral and place-making matters.

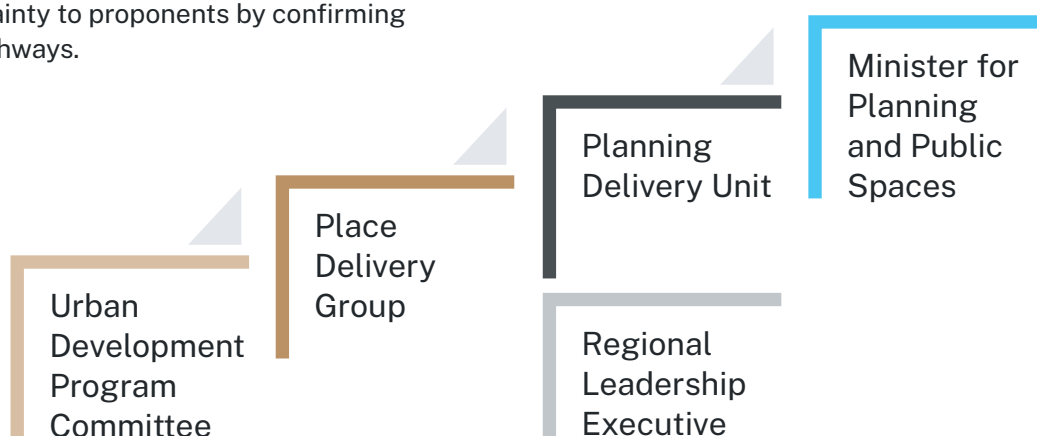
The place delivery group will:

- oversee and assist councils with the preparation of place strategies in accordance with sequencing determined by the urban development program committee;
- determine technical investigation requirements and remove subsequent public authority concurrences and referrals at rezoning;
- track the performance of place strategies and escalate to the department's Planning Delivery Unit where there are risks of not meeting objectives of the regional plan;
- endorse place strategies to remove subsequent gateway determination requirements when rezoning consistent with the endorsed place strategies; and
- provide certainty to proponents by confirming approval pathways.

The district and growth area section of this plan proposes the initial steps for the preparation of place strategies.

Place strategies will seek to result in upfront approvals, adding certainty and removing much of the risk for potential investors, while supporting planned development and investment in high quality places.

Proponents or landowners that instigate projects outside the sequence will have access to the same coordinated approach, yet they will need to fully fund the place strategies. This will enable flexibility and agility to continue realising the objectives and district planning as circumstances change.





PART

# 2

## Objectives



Taree Heritage walk, Taree  
Credit: Destination NSW



# Diversify the Hunter's mining, energy and industrial capacity

## What we need to accomplish

The mining, energy and industrial sectors all make the Hunter an economic powerhouse. They will remain important contributors to the regional economy into the future. However, they will be shaped by global economic and policy influences that open opportunities for the transition to net zero emissions.

Coal is likely to have a finite lifespan as an energy source. The world has begun to change cleaner forms of energy generation that will occur over the coming decades. The Government will work to support coal-dependent communities to diversify for the future. This will ensure these communities remain vibrant places to live with good employment opportunities.

Cumulatively, mines comprise a significant total land area, some of which may become available over time for sequential land uses as operating mines close in the future. Based on current approvals, many mine operators have committed to returning sites to their pre-mining state as either agricultural or biodiversity land.

Rather than returning land to its pre-mining state, there may be opportunities to utilise the features of some mines in a way that can leave an economic legacy for local communities.

Some mine sites may be suitable for future investors and entrepreneurs to develop once operators have satisfied their rehabilitation and closure obligations. There may be times and circumstances when land should be kept as agricultural or biodiversity lands to maintain the character of the local area.

The Hunter has the infrastructure assets and skilled workforce to support more renewable energy generation. The high voltage transmission lines and transport infrastructure mean the Hunter plays an important role in powering NSW. Rehabilitated mines and decommissioned power stations could become renewable energy and storage hubs that cover wind, solar, pumped hydro and batteries. These can then leverage other industries, such as green steel, hydrogen and ammonia and high value agriculture.

Managing industrial capacity and creating flexible planning and development controls will need to respond to new opportunities and technologies, including catalytic investments and transition to net zero emissions. This may mean a shift from traditional industrial and manufacturing into advanced and smart manufacturing, artificial intelligence and robotics, or more distributed manufacturing. E-commerce is increasing demand for warehouse and logistic properties to accommodate automated warehousing.





The changing nature of manufacturing means some locations or industrial sites may no longer be 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.

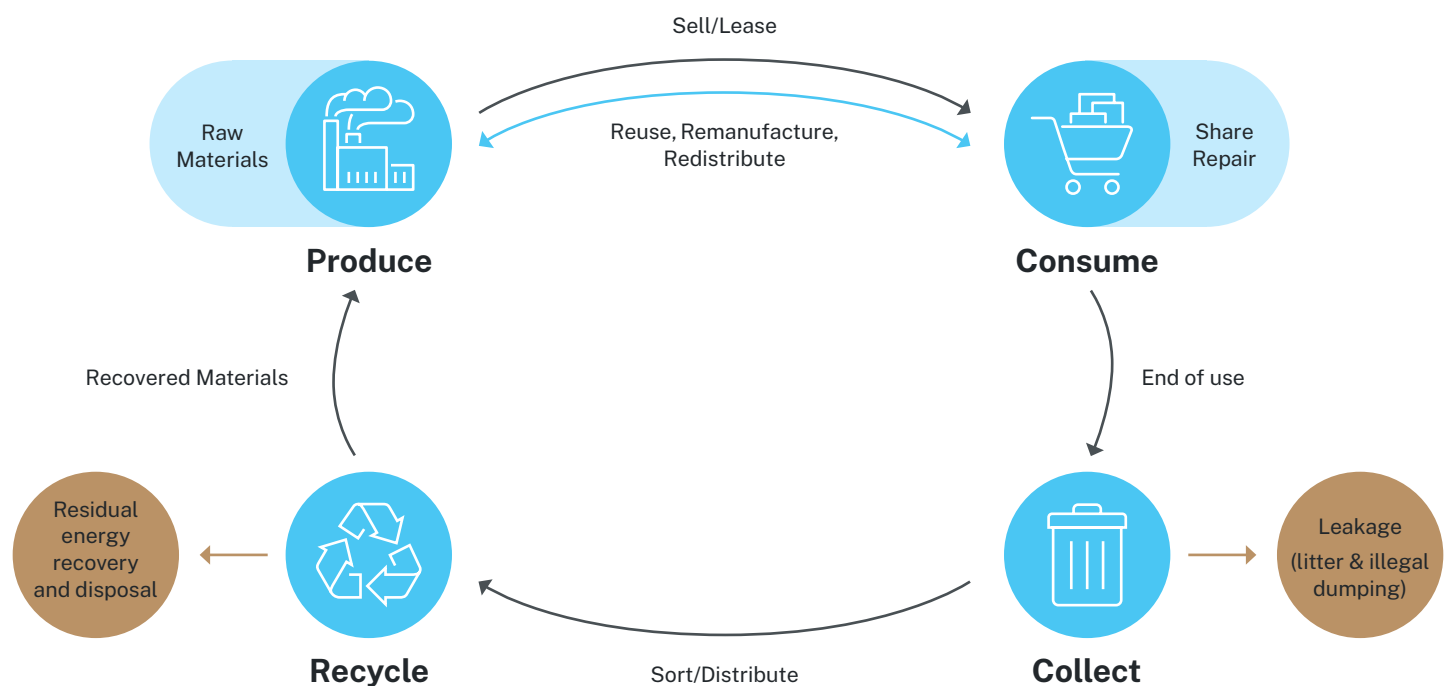
These changes to manufacturing will require development that ensures an efficient supply chain with new industrial capacity provided close to and integrated with, major population centres.

An agreement by the Council of Australian Governments in 2020 to ban the export of unprocessed plastic, paper, glass and tyres also signalled that Australia would take

greater responsibility for managing and processing the waste it generates. Joint investments in reprocessing infrastructure by the federal, state governments and industry will help us to bridge the gap in capacity to take the waste we used to export and remanufacture it locally.

In NSW, this has seen the resource recovery industry start to move towards more resilient business models, focused on value-adding and the production of high-quality, well-sorted recycled materials. As the prices for recycled material have declined but the cost of sorting and processing has increased, costs for councils, ratepayers and businesses are also under pressure.

## The Circular Economy





## The public interest in why we need to accomplish it

Mining is a significant source of direct and indirect jobs and underpins the Hunter's prosperity. Coal is the state's largest export commodity, and is a major source of revenue, which the NSW Government uses to help fund essential services and infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, roads and transport.

As we move towards to life after mining, not all land currently under mining title is the same. Different uses will be suitable for different parts of the site, and some uses may be able to occur on mine buffer lands, while a mine is still operational.

Existing rail loops and hard stand areas could be used for freight, industry, intensive agriculture and food processing activities, while mine voids and transmission infrastructure could support renewable energy generation. It makes sense to retain and optimise these assets where it would support ongoing employment choices to the local community.

Mine sites may also support the establishment of biodiversity corridors, particularly when considered in the context of neighbouring mine landholdings and vegetated areas. Where constraints limit their potential for employment generating land uses, these areas could enhance environmental, cultural or scenic values.

Whether a mine chooses to enable alternative land uses will depend on a range of factors and these will change over time. Regulatory settings, existing conditions of approval, landowner willingness, market demand and feasibility will be key influences. Similar considerations will affect what land uses may be developed on the site.

The NSW Government introduced new standard rehabilitation conditions on mining leases in July 2021 to ensure progressive rehabilitation occurs in a manner that achieves sustainable final land uses following the completion of mining. Further reforms and initiatives are being investigated to enable alternative employment generating final land uses to those currently permitted under mining approvals.

The regional plan recognises waste as an economic resource that supports creation of a net zero emissions Hunter. The circular economy is about avoiding materials being classified as waste through careful design and specification. This should be considered early in a development, from strategic planning to end of life.

A circular economy is also one where materials are retained in use at their highest value as long as possible and are then re-used, repurposed, remanufactured or recycled. The aim is to reduce the consumption of virgin and finite resources, and retain the value of materials with no residual waste to landfill. This requires transformational change in the way that buildings are designed, built, operated and deconstructed and ways to enable shared business models, low-carbon transport and material recycling infrastructure.

The Hunter Joint Organisation, with funding from the NSW Government, is rethinking waste and resource recovery in the Hunter and Central Coast, including a Circular Economy Ecosystem webpage<sup>iii</sup>. Lake Macquarie Council in collaboration with Hunter Joint Organisation and other councils undertook a regional circle scan (the first in Australia) that helps us understand the flow of materials that would support circular economy initiatives.

*Kooragang coal loaders*





## Strategies and actions to how we will accomplish it

### Post-mining land use principles

#### Strategy 1.1

When considering whether an alternative land use is suitable or to change the boundary of an area of interest, a development proposal should demonstrate consistency with the following land use principles:

- The land use maximises employment generation or will attract visitors to the region;
- Is in alignment with the Objectives of the Hunter Regional Plan;
- The land use makes use of site infrastructure such as rail loops, hard stand areas, power, water and road access, or adjoins existing industrial areas or settlement areas;
- The land use maintains or enhances corridors within the landscape such as biodiversity corridors or disused infrastructure corridors;
- The land use complements areas with special amenity value such as critical industry clusters, villages and residential areas;
- Where a site is on land identified as being in a critical industry cluster or is within the viewshed of critical industry cluster land, the land use complements landscape values;
- The land use avoids conflict with existing and likely future uses of adjoining land; and
- Potentially offensive or hazardous land uses are located away from areas where sensitive land uses are already located or are proposed in a council strategy.

#### Strategy 1.2

Early consideration of alternative land uses should occur at the design stage for a new or expanded mine, and when planning for rehabilitation and closure for existing mines. Adaptive rehabilitation over the life of the mine will enable the final landform and rehabilitation outcomes to respond to emerging opportunities and investments for continued employment beyond mining. Community involvement in these processes will ensure end-of-mine outcomes align with community values.

#### Action 1

The department will investigate site compatibility mechanisms to allow development applications to be lodged for non-permissible uses and associated subdivision for the areas of interest parts of mine sites consistent with the Hunter Regional Plan. This will also consider mechanisms to provide more flexibility in post mining land uses as part of the development consent process.

Timeframe: 2022-2023

*Open cut coal mine*





## Industrial capacity

### Strategy 1.3

New industrial areas shall be prioritised in locations that:

- are accessible to inter-regional networks and/or potential for the transport of goods by rail;
- provide capacity for logistics, circular economy, emerging industrial sectors or essential industrial-related services;
- provide capacity for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises; and
- support access to supply chains and local employment in industrial and related activities.

## Circular economy

### Strategy 1.4

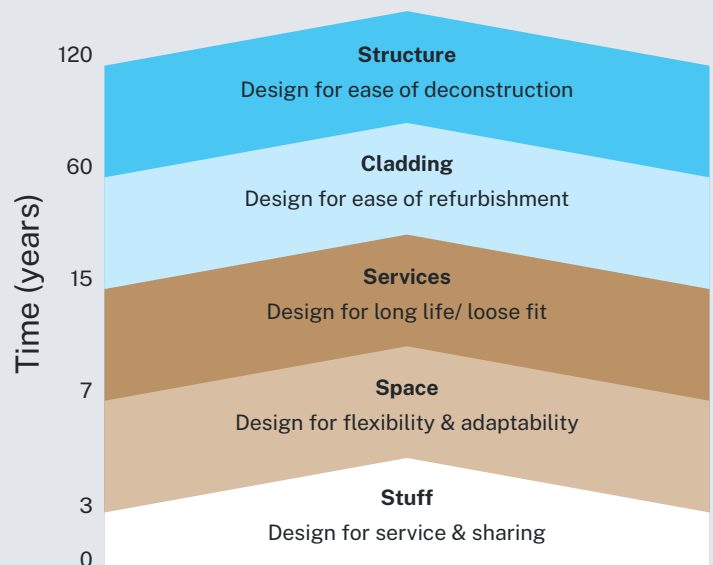
Significant amendments to planning controls should consider:

- strategies to facilitate the transition towards a circular built environment;
- approaches to support the use of low carbon materials and minimise carbon intensive materials;
- how much waste a development is expected to generate, and how and where the waste will be managed;
- how a proposal's design and construction will reduce material demands and support circular approaches, such as design for flexibility and design for disassembly; and
- removing planning and regulatory barriers to circular economy precincts where sharing of resource flows, such as energy, waste, heat, water, may cross organisational and ownership boundaries.

### Designing for longevity, adaptability or flexibility

A building will typically be designed to last for 100 years or more. However, 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.

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.





# Ensure economic self-determination for Aboriginal communities

## What we need to accomplish

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. Land rights generate economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits and costs for landowners, users and managers.

The prompt, equitable and efficient resolution of Aboriginal land claims and negotiations to return Crown Land to Aboriginal communities will benefit Aboriginal communities and pave the way for strategic and collaborative land use opportunities.

Land reclaimed by LALCs can be activated, utilised and managed as an economic resource for the Aboriginal community, laying the basis for a self-reliant and more secure economic future.

Being guided by LALCs, the department will continue to strive to remove or reduce the numerous challenges in accessing the opportunities generated from land rights. The time taken to process land claims or complete negotiation processes and the operation of the relevant regulatory frameworks fundamentally impacts the exercise of land rights. This creates flow-on impacts with social, cultural, environmental and economic consequences.

The underlying value of land reflects locational attributes, and the rights and obligations associated with ownership, use, development and conservation of land, as determined through the planning and assessment and other statutory frameworks.

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 development processes. This influences decision-

making about the future use of land. Similarly, state agencies and councils have varying levels of knowledge about the land ownership, development aspirations and roles and responsibilities of LALCs.

Strategic planning and local decision-making govern the development and use of land and inform the assessment and decision-making frameworks. The Hunter Regional Plan and local strategic planning statements are central to OCHRE and Our Place on Country. They also enable LALCs to achieve the objectives of their community land and business plans.

### Opportunity, choice, responsibility and empowerment (OCHRE)

OCHRE is the NSW Government's plan for Aboriginal affairs. OCHRE is symbolic of Aboriginal communities' deep connection with Country.

The department's Our Place on Country strategy outlines the roadmap to embed Aboriginal cultural knowledge within the department and the Department of Regional NSW. Together, both agencies will:

- empower Aboriginal voices within decision-making
- give Aboriginal people greater choice, access and control over land, water, housing and resources
- help to drive success in Aboriginal organisations and businesses.

*State Environmental Planning Policy (Aboriginal Land) 2019* (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 rezoning proposals. This includes development delivery plans for priority LALC land to be considered during the assessment of planning proposals and development applications.

## The public interest in why we need to accomplish it

The NSW Government is committed to improving the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities in NSW. The principles of self-determination and co-design can be implemented across the region so that Aboriginal people have greater choice, access and agency over land, water, housing and resources.

The NSW Government will work with Aboriginal communities 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.

Regional planning provides an opportunity to give Aboriginal communities a genuine voice in determining how their land is utilised and for what purpose. This provides the ability to translate potential values from returned land into real and tangible benefits.

## Strategies and actions to how we will accomplish it

### Culturally-informed strategic planning

#### Strategy 2.1

The Hunter Regional Plan and local strategic planning statements can be aligned to provide a framework to achieving self-determination by:

- facilitating the prompt, efficient and equitable return of land to Aboriginal communities;
- maximising the flow of economic, social and cultural benefits generated by land ownership to Aboriginal communities through culturally informed strategic led planning;
- improving the identification and conservation of environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage values;
- building delivery capacity for LALCs; and
- embedding cultural knowledge and values in land use planning decisions.

#### Strategy 2.2

Demonstrating the strategic merit of relevant sites will allow for a streamlined assessment processes. Further partnerships with Aboriginal communities will ensure Country is cared for appropriately and sensitive sites are protected so that Aboriginal people have access to their lands to continue cultural practices.

#### Strategy 2.3

The department is evolving how it shares knowledge with Aboriginal people to create more effective relationships between traditional owners, LALCs, state agencies and councils. This includes assisting with the strategic assessment of landholdings.





# Create a 15 minute region made up of mixed, multi-modal, inclusive and vibrant local communities

## What we need to accomplish

For many decades, growth in the Hunter, and indeed across Australia, has been based on an assumption that we would use our cars to meet most of our needs, often involving travelling long distances to do so. Even when we are travelling short distances locally, the assumption has been that the car would be the primary choice in getting around. This assumption has been a self-fulfilling prophecy, since the way we've designed growth, both in land use, urban design and transport infrastructure, has made personal vehicle use the most attractive choice, and indeed often the only realistic choice.

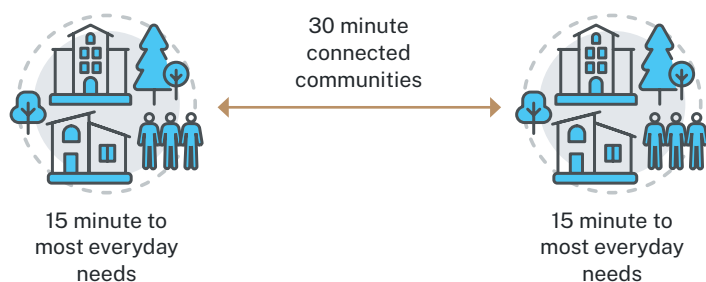
The idea of a 15-minute region represents a significant change in the way we plan and design growth. It is about supporting the choice to live and work locally, with the things we want and need are nearby and easy to access without a personal vehicle. The concept reimagines cities, towns, villages and communities across the Hunter not as divided and discrete zones for living, working, education, recreation and entertainment, but as mixed neighbourhoods where people can generally

access most typical everyday needs within a 15 minute walk or cycle from where they live. The idea is also often referred to as “complete communities.”

COVID-19 forced a shift in how we lived and worked, with more people working from home and using their local neighbourhood centres and shops. Although sparked by unprecedented challenging times, this had the effect of supporting healthier and more resilient local communities, with less pressure on transport networks, and where the role and function of local neighbourhood centres and places of work was strengthened. As life in the Hunter continues to evolve to a ‘new normal’, there exists a responsibility to address not only the learnings and challenges arising out of the pandemic, but also the many pre-existing challenges and needs that our region already faced, and will continue to face moving forward.

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





For a 15-minute region to function realistically beyond everyday needs, there are two scales of access that must be simultaneously considered. The first, is the local neighbourhood scale where most everyday needs are accessible within 15 minutes by walking or cycling. In rural contexts it is recognised that the reasonable, and yet still ambitious goal, is for some local needs to be accessible within short walks or bike-rides, but that the majority of such needs should be accessible within a 15-minute personal vehicle drive.

The second scale recognises that many more infrequent and specialised needs and goods would not typically be expected to be reachable by all residents in such a local way, but should still be accessible relatively easily without being dependent on a car. This second scale, the 30-minute connected community scale, 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.

## Reducing car dependency

To give all Hunter residents equitable access to jobs and services, it is not enough to upgrade urban infrastructure. 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, rather than by walking, cycling or public transport, those who can afford to drive will do so. Providing new 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.

Creating built environments that encourage people to walk, cycle, take part in physical activity, use public transport and interact with the community will contribute to lifelong health and wellbeing.

The Levee, Maitland  
Credit: Destination NSW





## The public interest in why we need to accomplish it

Most Hunter neighbourhoods that were developed from the mid-20th century onwards have been designed to significantly prioritise cars. Although this approach has been characterised in the past as supporting “freedom and choice,” we have become more and more aware of the many costs and consequences, both obvious and hidden, of car dependency and the resulting lack of choice that is created.

The combination of low density, separated land uses, and car-prioritising infrastructure decisions has significant implications for many public interests, including public infrastructure costs; public health costs of not undertaking activity in our daily lives; greenhouse gas emissions; air pollutants affecting health and liveability; challenges of social equity; and issues of economic competitiveness and fiscal/economic resiliency.

Driving less, and corresponding reduction in vehicle ownership, reduces household costs and improves affordability, improves personal and environmental health, and lowers carbon emissions and air pollution. An active and public transport network that integrates nature into neighbourhoods encourages people to enjoy the outdoors, provides corridors for wildlife movement, and helps manage and clean stormwater.

We can realise these public interests by implementing change in how we approach growth in new areas, as well as the retrofit of existing lower density residential areas to include uses traditionally associated with local centres, such as cafes and small business retail.

## Health, planning and the built environment

A range of factors influence a person's health. As well as individual characteristics such as age and gender, these factors include education, employment, housing, access to food and social infrastructure. The World Health Organization's ‘social determinants of health’ model shifts the focus from the health of the individual to the health of the community. It also encourages prevention and early intervention, which includes changing aspects of the environment that contribute to ill-health.

The following 15-minute neighbourhood elements can help increase physical activity among adults:

- the number of destinations such as transit stations, shops, community facilities and open space within walking or cycling distance;
- greater diversity in land use;
- shorter distance to transit stops; and
- neighbourhood walkability.

When considering the transport basis of the 15-minute region, planning must be educated by the recognition that driving less, and a corresponding reduction in vehicle ownership, reduces household costs and improves affordability, improves personal and environmental health, and lowers carbon emissions and air pollution.



*Black Head beach walk*

## Strategies and actions to how we will accomplish it

### Greater local access to most everyday needs

#### Strategy 3.1

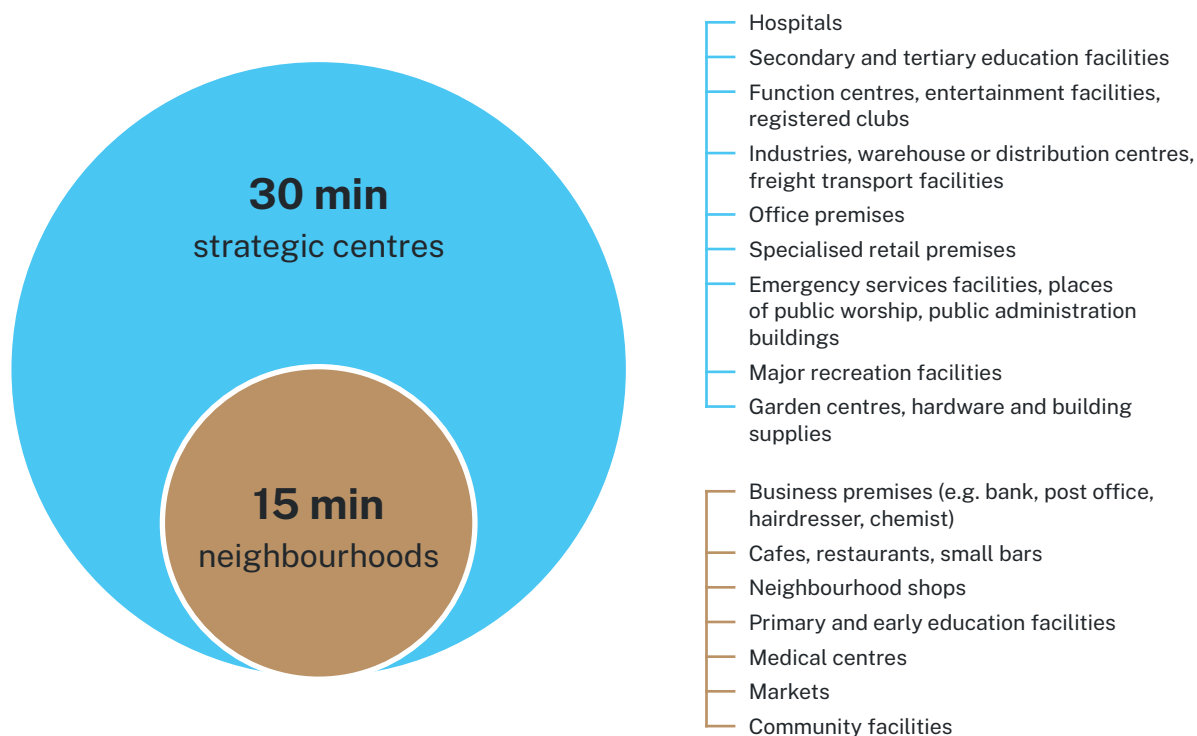
Development proposals will need to demonstrate how various employment, commercial, community, recreation and education services will be located within 15-minute walking (urban contexts) and cycling (suburban contexts) trips of housing in residential and mixed-use zones, with achieved densities that allow for such local uses to succeed and flourish. Local planning and development controls will permit a greater variety of land uses within neighbourhoods, streets and blocks, even if such uses are not initially proposed by developers within developments, so that neighbourhoods can continue to evolve unencumbered over time to achieve greater local mix. Various uses that will be considered and included where feasible are employment, recreation, education, commonly needed services, retail, fresh and healthy food outlets, all mixed and interwoven with easy and enjoyable walking, cycling, and public transport access.

#### Strategy 3.2

There will be significantly greater opportunities for personal services and small food service and retail businesses to be integrated within residential areas, not just within planned commercial centres, but also at a fine-grained level within blocks and across neighbourhoods. Any minor impacts such as noise, car parking or environmental disturbance can be appropriately managed but should not be considered a barrier.

#### Strategy 3.3

The location, size, design and management of school and child care infrastructure is a particularly important consideration for local community living. Schools and child care services at scales and locations that serve local communities and encourage walking and cycling to school are strategically important. The Department of Education runs Share Our Space and Community Use programs that open school playgrounds, ovals and sports courts to local communities in the school holidays. Councils may partner with School Infrastructure NSW on a school facility, such as a hall, library or sporting facility, for joint use. Not only does this offer more efficient use of land, it also provides access to higher quality assets for 15-minute neighbourhoods.



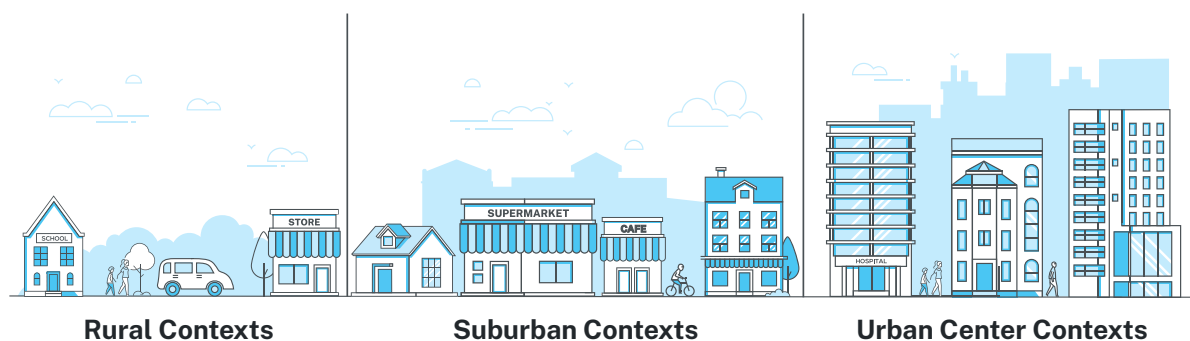


## 15 minute neighbourhoods from urban to rural communities

### Strategy 3.4

Across the Hunter, implementation of the 15-minute concept will vary across different contexts, including existing urban neighbourhoods within cities; on brownfield urban sites; within existing suburban neighbourhoods; within new suburban neighbourhoods; within existing towns and villages; and within rural areas. Although the viability of various elements of local neighbourhoods are expected to vary by context, the aspiration will be to achieve as much variety and mix of local supporting uses, within such contexts, supported by density and a variety of housing types. Rural towns and villages should aspire to represent 15-minute neighbourhoods, so that people nearby need only travel to one place for most of their everyday needs. In more rural areas outside villages and settlements, opportunities to link outer residential subdivisions to village centres and connecting groups of villages through walking and cycling networks should be explored and implemented where feasible, but the goal will be to access many or most needs through a 15-minute drive.

### Rural to Urban Transect



|                       | Rural Contexts | Suburban Contexts | Urban Center Contexts |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Time of travel</b> | 15 minutes     | 15 minutes        | 15 minutes            |
| <b>Mode of travel</b> | Drive          | Cycle             | Walk                  |

This draft regional plan focuses on the 15-minute region concept as applied in three primary contexts (urban, suburban and rural), the intent is to continue to develop the concept in partnership with community, councils and industry in order to create a “fine grained” approach to the concept that reflects the diversity of contexts across the region.

This will consider the three principle elements of a 15-minute region:

1. Time of travel;
2. Mode of travel; and
3. Types of services or uses that are accessible.

There may be up to seven contexts ultimately included with the following settings being considered further:

| Context settings          | Examples  |
|---------------------------|---|
| Very urban                | Newcastle City Centre, Charlestown  |
| General urban             | Lambton, Cardiff, Kotara, Belmont, Swansea, Warners Bay, Toronto, East Maitland   |
| Early suburban            | Aberglassyn, Thornton, Cliftleigh, Bellbird, Cooranbong, Cameron Park, Fletcher   |
| “Complete” towns/villages | Raymond Terrace, Nelson Bay, Maitland, Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Morisset, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Taree, Forster-Tuncurry, Gloucester, Scone |
| Incomplete towns/villages | Dungog, Clarence Town, Branxton, Medowie, Denman, Aberdeen, Karuah, Bulahdelah, Pacific Palms, Old Bar                                      |
| Rural residential areas   | Brandy Hill, Louth Park, Hallidays Point, Wattle Ponds, Sedgfield, Nulkaba,   |
| True rural areas          | Duns Creek, Lostock   |

## 30-minute connected communities

### Strategy 3.5

Development proposals will need to be considered in the context of the 30-minute connected communities context, including considering a mix of uses, distances between uses, directness and the experience in moving between uses, with public transport having a service level that strategically supports the type of mobility shift and easy accessibility to needs that is contemplated in Objective 3.

### Strategy 3.6

Where local or community-serving commercial centres and/or employment opportunities are required and proposed in development proposals, residential densities must be sufficient to successfully support such proposed uses, and planning authorities will employ mechanisms, including phasing controls, to ensure such centres and uses are constructed and delivered. This can be analysed through a commercial study or market analysis of supporting walkable and cycling communities, not based on private car use. Competing development types that are largely car-orientated may weaken the planned function of centres, meaning they do not support and may undermine the intentions of Objective 3, should be refused.

### Strategy 3.7

Councils and relevant public authorities through all applicable decisions, including development proposals, local infrastructure and street design approaches, public space design will seek the timely and successful achievement of safe, accessible and attractive streets for all modes of transportation, as well as trails, parks and public spaces that will encourage active living, community interaction and opportunities to integrate nature in neighbourhoods.

### Strategy 3.8

Development should enable direct connections for walking, cycling and public transport between precincts and into centres. Larger scale development should facilitate a network that provides seamless connectivity to transport network with multiple access points to walking, cycling, and public transport.

### Strategy 3.9

To support the 15-minute region, transport infrastructure decisions will reflect the following in various contexts:

- In existing urban and urbanising contexts; in existing towns and villages; in new brownfield redevelopment contexts; and in new development expected to reflect an urban condition, all transport decisions relating to infrastructure design, space allocation and budgeting will prioritise the ease, efficiency and quality of experience of walking, biking and public transport as attractive transport choices.
- In suburban contexts that are not expected to urbanise and are currently car dominated, planning decisions will seek to achieve a balance between active choices of transportation, viable and accessible public transport, and individual vehicle use, while ensuring that car dependency is replaced with appropriate and equitable choices in mobility and accessibility.
- In rural contexts outside and in between towns and villages, car usage will continue until scheduled and on demand services become available. Scheduled services should focus on providing daily connections to the nearest local centre.



# Plan for “Nimble Neighbourhoods”, diverse housing and sequenced development

## What we need to accomplish

Over the last few decades, and even over the last few years, housing needs and preferences have been changing rapidly. Trends towards smaller households are being seen as the population gets older and the number of people in each household gets smaller. Housing diversity, however, has not kept pace.

While the number of single and couple-only households is growing, most houses in the Hunter are three and four-bedroom detached homes. Smaller and different homes are often not available for people to downsize into, when they would like to do so. More studio apartments, one and two-bedroom dwellings will be needed, particularly near public transport and health and community services. A greater proportion of diverse and affordable housing will be needed.

Providing a diversity of housing, including more affordable housing, will allow people to stay in the place they know as they get older, to maintain social and familial connections. New housing choices will allow kids and grandkids to stay in the neighbourhood they grew up in as they seek their own housing, allowing them to stay close to their aging parents. Neighbourhoods will be more nimble and resilient, and can easily accommodate different demographics and support different relationships over time.

Dense and diverse new housing should be provided in attractive areas close and well connected to public transport, public open space and services, or within established towns and neighbourhoods. New development with housing mix and density can be designed to be generally compatible with, but need not be overly similar to, the existing lower density residential environments. It is recognised that in order to achieve the many public interest intentions of this plan, new development will have to be different.

Some parts of the community seek particular types of housing, including students, short-term visitors, and low income households. Better understanding the needs of these groups and how they differ across the Hunter will inform strategic planning and infrastructure planning.

Councils and the department will seek to introduce a greater diversity of housing and improve housing affordability. This includes the development of housing between two to four storeys within walking distance of town centres, public open space and rail stations and the promoting of a wider range of housing types and lot sizes in greenfield areas at densities that will strategically support successful public transport and a mix of uses.

## Focus for more housing density



Low rise housing includes dual occupancies, manor houses and terraces (up to two 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. This should be supplemented by mid-rise housing up to four storeys to promote density that maintains human-scale built form.

We have recognised a need for more multi-family housing, which could require new or expanded multi-family zoning, or new or expanded mixed use zoning in commercial areas, in multiple contexts.

Smaller-scale renewal for greater housing affordability can be achieved across lower density suburban areas through single-lot redevelopment and construction of secondary dwellings.

Increasing housing densities in established areas close to commercial, educational, recreational and employment uses, with easy access to open spaces, will help create 15-minute neighbourhoods in various contexts.

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

- supporting the role of 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; and
- providing opportunities for contemporary methods of construction.

### **Supported and specialised accommodation**

While the Hunter is a 'young region' compared with other regional areas, it is expected to experience substantial growth in its older population. Some districts, such as Coastal and Barrington, already have some of the most elderly populations in NSW, and housing design needs to meet the requirements of this ageing population.

The provision, retention and refurbishment of supported and specialised housing that meets an identified need should be supported.

Councils should work with providers to identify sites that may be suitable for supported and specialist accommodation taking account of:

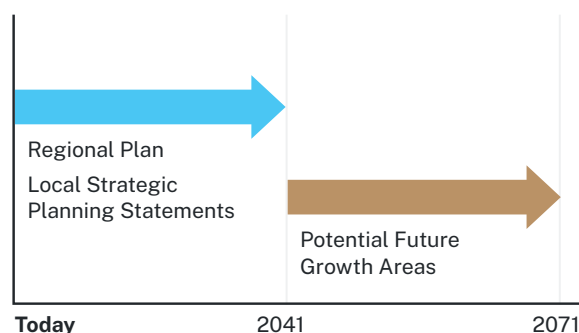
- local housing needs information;
- sites with access to relevant facilities, social infrastructure and health care, and public transport; and
- the increasing need for accommodation suitable for people with health conditions.

### **Potential future growth areas**

Sustainably accommodating growth over the next 20 years will require decisions about how and when population growth will be accommodated in the Hunter beyond this period. It is likely the Hunter will still require new urban growth fronts towards the end of the 21st century.

The identified potential future growth areas that may be needed to accommodate long-term urban growth are not required to accommodate urban development benchmarks or employment planning baselines. The intent is to protect the future potential of this land, rather than promote or support investigation for urban purposes over the next five years, unless:

- the urban development program indicates inadequate land supply; and/or
- benchmarks cannot be accommodated in existing urban areas and growth areas.



### **Rural towns and villages**

Rural towns and villages provide a unique lifestyle choice. While these areas are not intended to accommodate significant growth, councils may undertake planning to ensure they can grow sustainably, be resilient, and respond to change.

The maximum scale of any growth, relative to the existing scale of the townships, would need to 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.



## The public interest in why we need to accomplish it

Smart and strategic new housing construction is fundamental to the Hunter's economic, social and environmental success. The right house-building contributes to the region's economy, generates employment, and provides the kind of homes that can sustain and enhance 15-minute neighbourhoods, and the many other objectives of this plan. But to do this, housing cannot be considered just a mathematical exercise. It must be considered both a qualitative and a quantitative consideration. In short, how much housing we do, and how we do housing, both matter.

The best way to consider housing success is not by considering housing as individual 'units' to be counted, but rather by considering the critical role that housing plays in the creation and strengthening of successful neighbourhoods and communities.

Decisions about both where and how to accommodate more people in the Hunter will influence quality of life, the natural environment, net zero carbon emissions, public infrastructure costs and corresponding taxes, public health costs and outcomes, social equity, and economic competitiveness.

Strategic planning must be used to match locations for new housing with a more sustainable urban form, encouraging efficient use of land and housing diversity. This will help achieve many public interest outcomes including supporting changing lifestyles and demographics and supporting "aging-in-place"; reducing the need for significant and costly new infrastructure; and responding to market changes and local conditions by monitoring when different types of development may become feasible.

Housing development in the Hunter will need to:

- be more diverse, affordable and accessible;
- maximise access to jobs and services;
- support the viability of public transport, walking and cycling and avoid car dependency;
- help lower individual and household carbon footprints;
- maximise the utilisation of and investment in infrastructure networks;
- avoid further expansion into areas of natural hazard;
- protect national, state or local environmental and cultural values;
- avoid encroachment on economic resources like agricultural land, water or extractive resources to protect and provide certainty for primary industries and those investing in the rural economy; and
- maintain scenic and recreational values of natural, rural and coastal landscapes.

## Strategies and actions to how we will accomplish it

### Optimum density

#### Strategy 4.1

We will plan for and realise urban densities in new and existing neighbourhoods that represent an optimum, not a minimum, net density necessary for the following outcomes:

- increase housing choice and affordability;
- successfully achieve and support the level of local mix of uses and services being sought;
- achieve and support attractive walking, cycling and public transport;
- achieve and support the highly efficient use of land and infrastructure that are necessary to achieve a 15-minute region;
- assist the region in achieving net zero; and
- improve the health and wellbeing of Hunter residents, workers, and visitors.

For public transport specifically, optimum urban densities will be achieved that are needed to support public transport type/technology, and level of service/frequency that is actually being planned for in various contexts in the region and that is necessary in order to successfully achieve the mode shift from individual car use to public transport use that is envisioned to achieve the objectives of the draft plan.

This optimum urban density will vary by context and planned intention of different places in the Hunter and will be determined by neighbourhood and site-based analysis in development proposals. But, at a minimum development proposals will reflect an urban density of 50-75 dwellings per hectare of developable land, which is a density range considered to be the minimum necessary for there to be reasonable public transport and to support a local mix of land uses. Justification would be required to support development proposals less than this range that still achieve the outcomes listed above. More density than this range, if supported by contextual analysis and access to public open space, should be supported.

### Urban density

This draft regional plan focuses on optimal densities as represented by the number of dwellings per hectare. The intent is to continue to develop this concept in partnership with community, councils and industry in order to create a more 'fine-grained' approach that reflects the 15-minute region.

One option is to consider urban density as a better benchmark.

Urban density is calculated using the combined number of residents and workers within an area. Compared to dwelling density it provides a better measurement of activity throughout the day, and supports the establishment of vibrant mixed-use communities.

This would need to include the number of dwellings and gross floor area that can set a clearer benchmark.

### Small scale renewal

#### Strategy 4.2

Councils should proactively support well-designed new homes in small-scale renewal through both planning decisions and plan-making. New housing release areas should include a mix of lot sizes that shall not limit small-scale residential dwellings on 200m<sup>2</sup> lots.

#### Strategy 4.3

Support community driven innovative housing solutions, such as prefabricated and manufactured housing, 3-D printed housing, and tiny houses.



## Regional housing benchmarks

### Strategy 4.4

One of the most critical policies in this plan for the Hunter involves the direction on how much growth will result from infill development in existing developed areas (infill), and how much will result from new outward growth (greenfield). It is recognised the greater the percent of growth by infill, the greater the savings in public infrastructure spending; the more population support there will be for walking, cycling and public transport; and the lower per-capita greenhouse gas emissions. Local strategic planning provides the basis for determining the locations for new communities. These local strategies will need to be in line with the benchmarks below<sup>iv</sup>.

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

## Potential future growth area

### Strategy 4.5

The identification of potential future growth areas is not a development commitment, nor does it imply that all, or any, part of these areas will be made available for urban development in the future. To remove any doubt, the department will not support premature planning, investigation or promotion of these areas; we will investigate their future role in the next review of the Hunter Regional Plan.



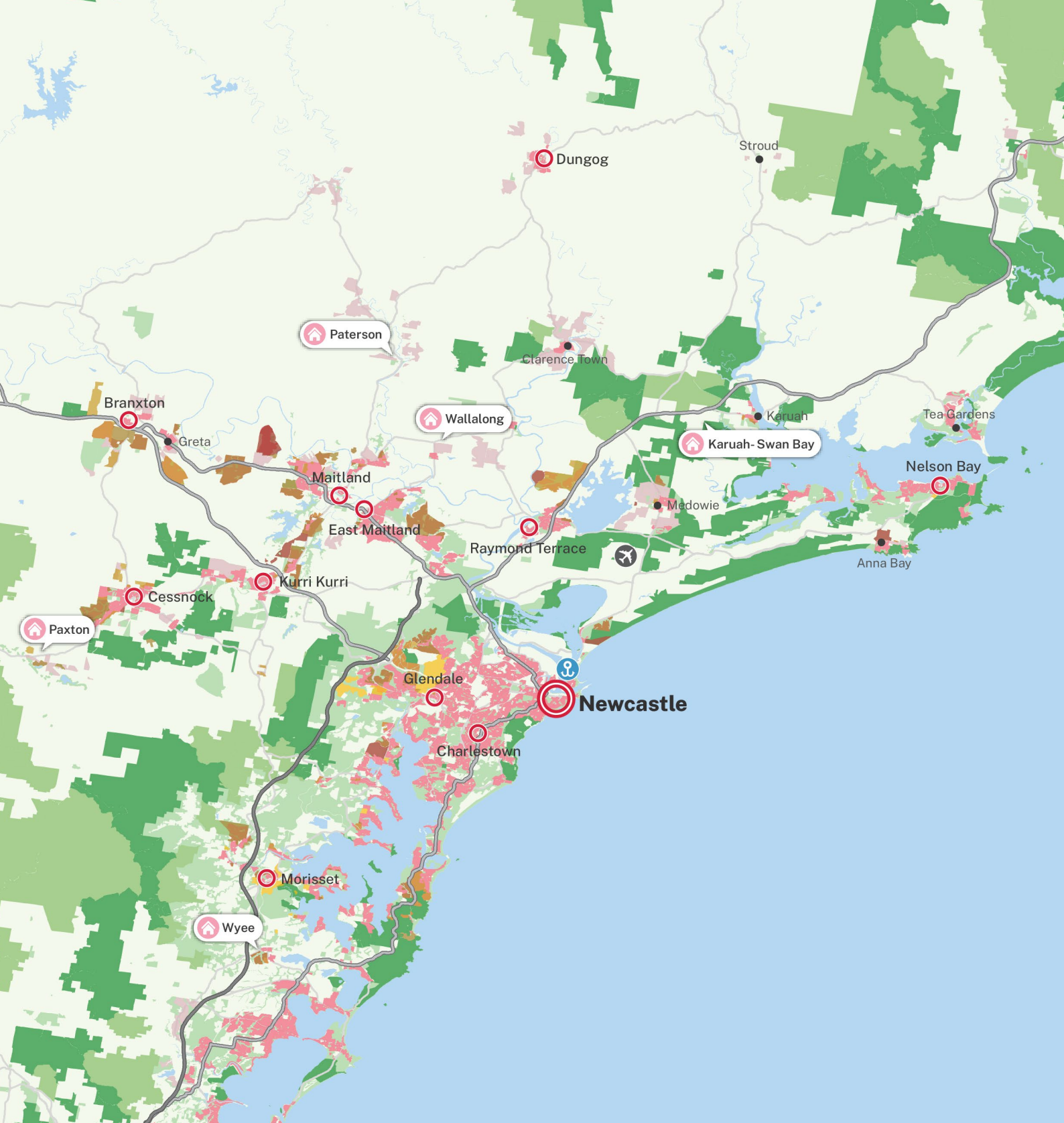
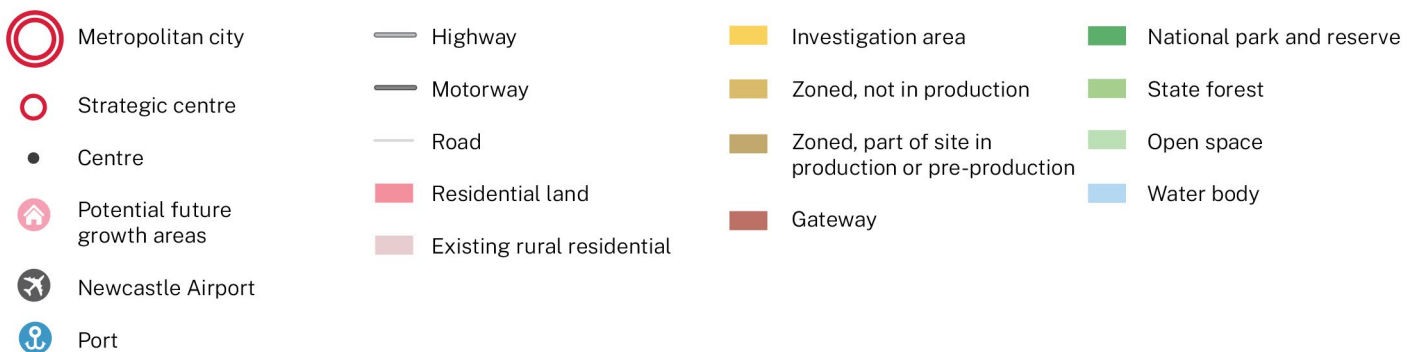
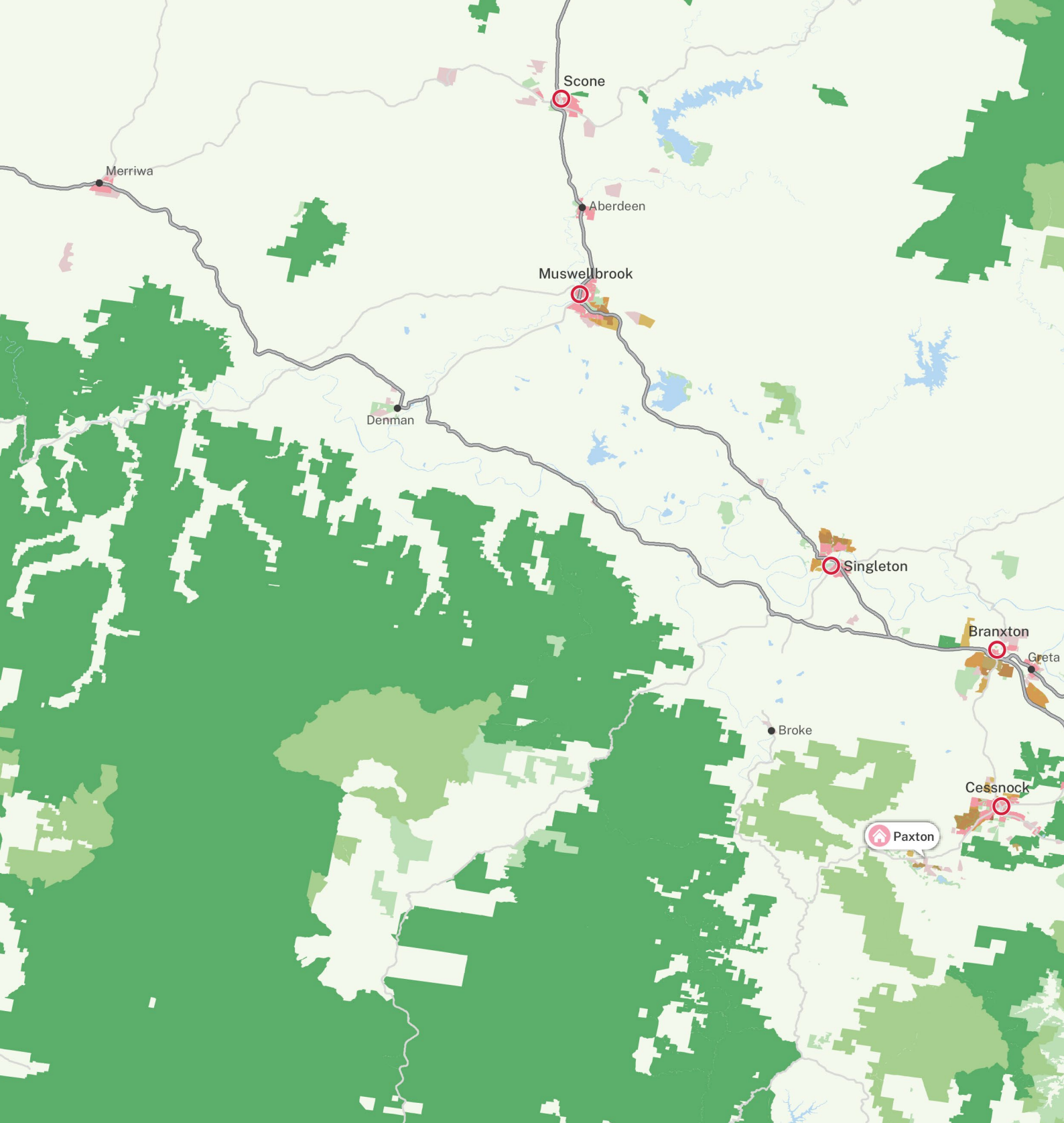


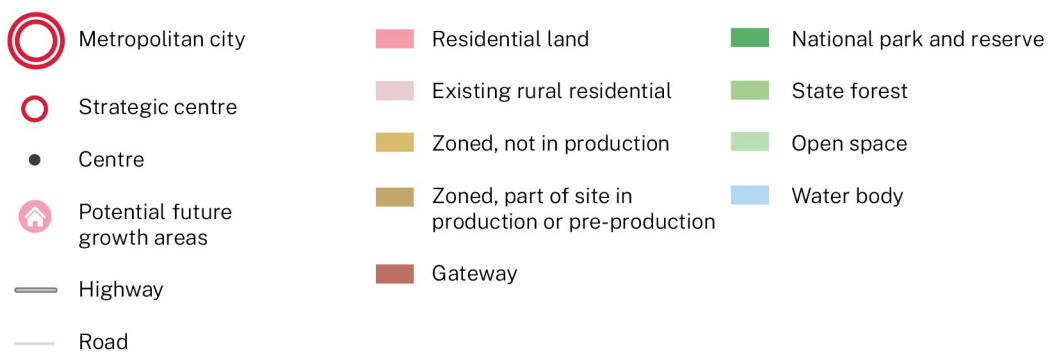
Figure 2: Housing

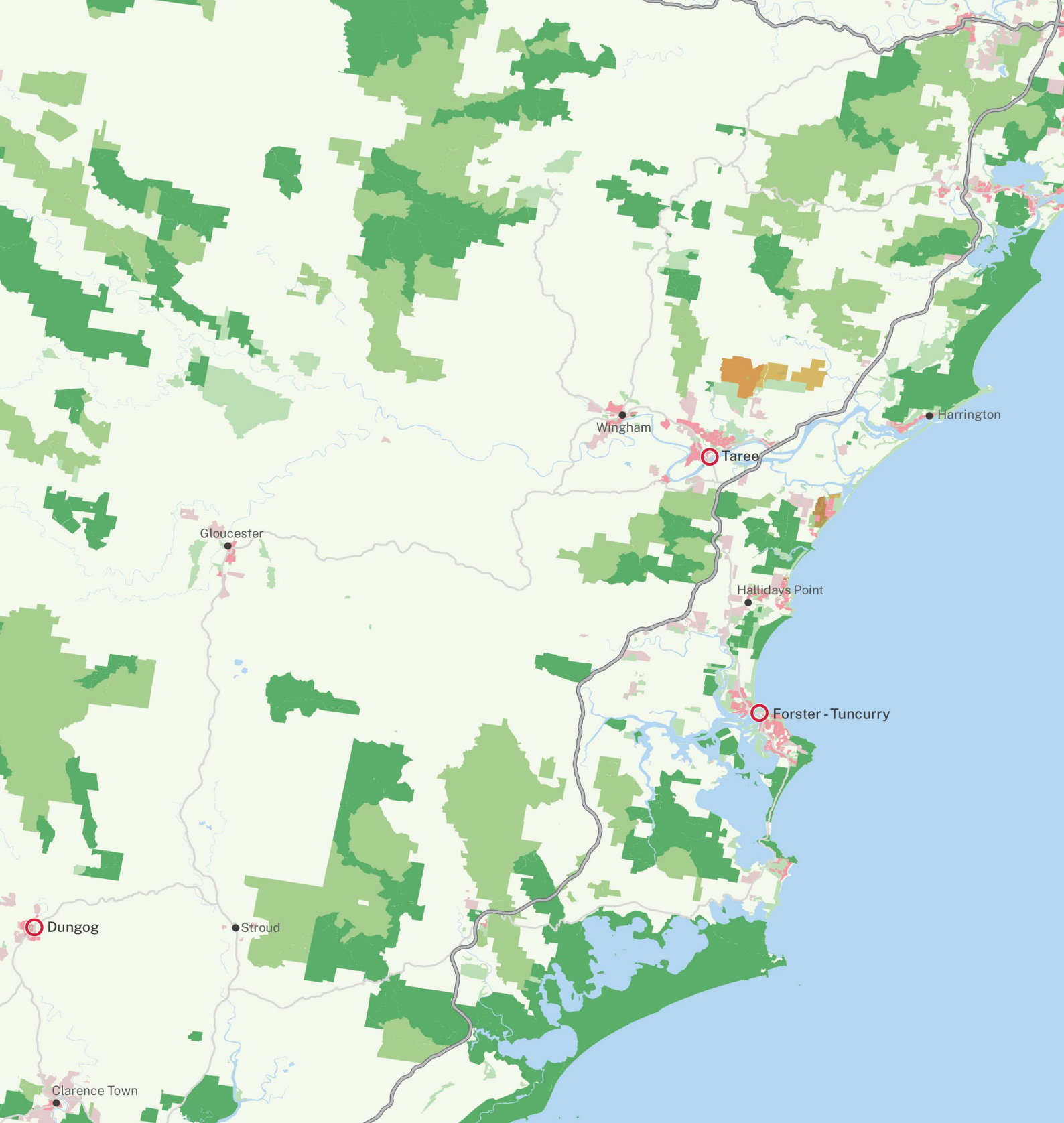






**Figure 3: Housing**





**Figure 4: Housing**



- |  |                   |  |   |  |                           |
|--|-------------------|--|---|--|---------------------------|
|  | Metropolitan city |  | Residential land                                    |  | National park and reserve |
|  | Strategic centre  |  | Existing rural residential                          |  | State forest              |
|  | Centre            |  | Zoned, not in production                            |  | Open space                |
|  | Highway           |  | Zoned, part of site in production or pre-production |  | Water body                |
|  | Road              |  |   |  |                           |



## Housing for tourism, agriculture and an ageing population

### Strategy 4.6

Planning for residential housing should be done while also considering demand for hotels, motels and short-term rental accommodation. The visitor economy requires affordable housing for the workforce. Residential housing can be taken up by short-term rental accommodation if demand for tourist accommodation is not considered.

### Strategy 4.7

Lifestyle villages and communities are a popular housing choice across the Hunter, where residents share communal recreation and other facilities. This housing is convenient, attractive, and potentially a more affordable option. Lifestyle villages and communities should be promoted in locations within a 15-minute walk of services if in an urban setting or 15-minute bike ride if in a suburban setting.

### Strategy 4.8

Prioritise and support independent living services, including respite care, nursing and personal care, food access and delivery, and transport services, that enable people with disabilities to live independently in the community.

### Strategy 4.9

Dwellings on rural lands that are not a primary residence or associated with agriculture should be limited to avoid conflicts with agricultural activities.



# Increase green infrastructure and quality public spaces and improve the natural environment

## What we need to accomplish

A connection to nature is at the centre of this draft regional plan. With climate change, urbanisation and the COVID pandemic it is increasingly important to provide access to nature and green infrastructure in every community. All locals should be able to move easily between urbanised and more natural areas.

At the landscape scale, biodiversity corridors support ecological processes for plants and wildlife movement. They can improve the ability of species to adapt to changes in habitat and climate, providing refugia where species can retreat to and persist in when environmental conditions change.

Large areas of remnant vegetation in the Hunter could be connected include national parks, state forests, council reserves, floodplains, foreshores and riparian vegetation.

While protecting high value environmental features and functions is critical to preserving the Hunter's ecological heritage, there is also much that can be done by weaving nature into neighbourhoods, towns and centres. Integrating elements and aspects of nature will foster a healthy environment to sustain people, ecology and wildlife.

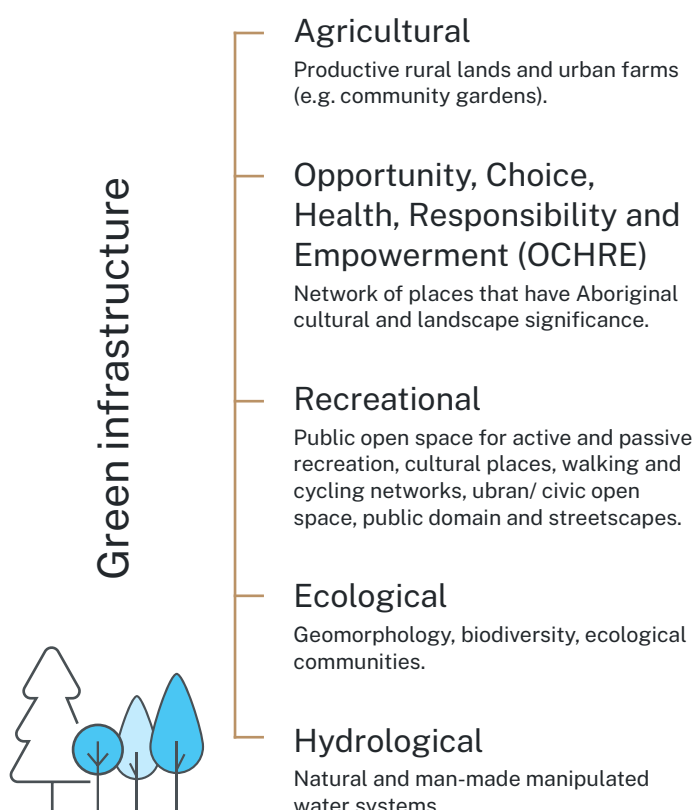
The trees along streets, in parks and other public spaces, and on privately owned land such as backyards form part of an urban forest. Canopy coverage over paved surfaces is a cost-effective means of mitigating urban heat islands, reducing emissions of hydrocarbons involved in ozone depletion, controlling stormwater runoff, and increasing pavement longevity.

In turn individual developments that embed nature in their design will improve water quality, address heat island effects, reduce stresses on stormwater and help to clean the air.

Rivers and riparian corridors also link wider landscapes into neighbourhoods, towns and cities. Many of the region's settlements are established alongside rivers and watercourses. Main streets evolved as reliance on road transport increased, meaning many river towns turn their backs on waterways.

Stronger relationships between towns and the water can leverage heritage character and increase the attractiveness of areas along the waterways, potentially with new public space and areas for recreation. This should occur alongside a focus on improving riparian zones and river channels across the Hunter.

The connection between water and settlements is also being felt in the towns and villages within drinking water catchments, such as Clarence Town and Paterson. These places are increasingly desirable to settle and important locations for the tourism and agricultural sectors. However, new development or land uses within drinking water catchments could cause a decline in water quality, increasing the costs of treating water.





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.

The connection to water also extends to the coastline that helps define the Hunter's global image. Inland and coastal lakes enhance quality of life and support the visitor economy. They are places where communities and visitors go to celebrate the outdoors and experience the rich terrestrial and marine diversity on offer. From bushwalking to fishing and water sports, these areas provide a wealth of active and passive recreation activities.

## The public interest in why we need to accomplish it

The Hunter's waterways, national parks, protected areas and World Heritage wilderness areas all contribute to healthy lifestyles, liveability and economic prosperity.

These areas need to be made more resilient to climate change, bushfire, urban edge effects and weed and pest infestation. They need to be reconnected to allow plant and animal species to move among communities and migrate in response to changing climatic conditions. Investing in conservation (including biodiversity offsets) that protects, and where possible, enhances habitat connections will benefit the environment and the community.

Public spaces, particularly those planned, designed and managed as green infrastructure, provide a range of social, physical and mental health, and environmental benefits and are vital to the Hunter's character.

Some studies have linked living far from usable green areas or waterfront in urban areas to overweight and obesity<sup>vi</sup>.

The street network is one of the largest public spaces. When designed for people, streets contribute considerably to public life and connect people to places. For decades, the Hunter's streets have been designed for cars, rather than people, and a new focus on transforming streets and accommodating more uses will require clear and consistently applied urban design principles and coordinated effort across governments, community and industry.

Planning for more trees in urban areas encourages people to walk and cycle, makes a place more comfortable and attractive, diminishes traffic noise, screens unwanted views and can have positive economic impacts. Tree canopy also influences the climate by transpiring water, changing wind speeds, shading surfaces, and modifying the heat absorbed by urban surfaces. To maintain these benefits, tree canopy and urban forests need stronger protections and more effective restoration.

Development can affect and contribute to the public realm. The way private buildings and their spaces are designed impacts the success of our public realm significantly, particularly the success of our streets. For decades, development has prioritised vehicular access over strengthening street edges for people. In order to truly transform our streets, we must also ensure development employs good urban design and architectural principles where connection and contribution to the life of our streets is prioritised.

Well-designed shade, effectively planned and correctly positioned, can also alleviate concerns about needing to remove or modify trees to address engineering, wiring or maintenance issues. It uses a combination of natural and built shade to provide protection from UV radiation where it is needed, at the right time of day and at the right time of year.





## Strategies and actions to how we will accomplish it

### The public space and urban greening

#### Strategy 5.1

Councils develop strategies for public spaces and recreation areas, drawing from what is known about future growth, community requirements and connectivity. Further, an integrated water management approach should be applied, using recycled water and stormwater to irrigate public spaces. Completing public space strategies is a key requirement for establishing a successful greenspace funding program, if the NSW Government were to extend the funding program to include the Hunter.

#### Strategy 5.2

Incorporating quality public spaces into growth areas is essential. The *Greener Places Design Guide* will inform a green grid for new growth areas. New development in urban areas should be within a 15 minute walk of open space, with new suburban development within a 15 minute bike ride.

#### Strategy 5.3

Any extensions to growth areas should be designed to connect to the established open space network or planned in a place strategy including extensions to walking and cycling routes.

#### Strategy 5.4

Councils should seek to incorporate goals to increase the urban forest when preparing place strategies or other place-based planning so that targets will be met in local neighbourhoods. This will also help address urban heat risks reduce the impact of increasing heat waves.

#### Strategy 5.5

Development proposals should incorporate well-designed shade, both natural and built, in all public infrastructure, from large developments, such as major recreation facilities, public buildings and town centre upgrades, to minor public domain improvements, such as bus shelters.



## Biodiversity values

### Strategy 5.6

Strategic land use planning should identify and take account of the location and extent of areas of high environmental value, including areas of potential serious and irreversible impact species, threatened species, biodiversity corridors and koala habitat. Areas of high environmental value cover both public and privately owned lands. Development should promote enterprises, housing and other land uses that complement the biodiversity, scenic, and water quality outcomes of biodiversity corridors, particularly where it can help the safeguarding and care of natural areas on privately owned lands.

### Strategy 5.7

Responding to biodiversity values in new development areas should occur at the early stages of the planning process, leading to better biodiversity and development outcomes. This will also protect urban bushland sites alongside urban release areas, giving residents a direct link from new housing developments to surrounding natural landscapes.

### Strategy 5.8

The 'avoid, minimise and offset' hierarchy will be applied to the development process. This requires development proposals to demonstrate how impacts on areas with high environmental value will be avoided and the appropriate offsets or other mitigation measures that will be in place where there are unavoidable impacts.

### Strategy 5.9

Development proposals should aim to strengthen biodiversity corridors as places for priority biodiversity offsets.

### Action 2

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will continue to progress the Central Coast strategic conservation planning program and consider opportunities to undertake further strategic conservation planning in Morisset.

Timeframe: 2022/23



# Sustaining regional habitat connectivity

## Jilliby to Wallarah Peninsula Link and Inter-regional Landscape Break

This link encompasses major new land release areas that accommodate urban and employment uses in the Hunter and Central Coast regions. The aim of conservation planning in this area will be to identify and create habitat corridors and stepping stones to maintain connections between Jilliby State Conservation Area, Wallarah National Park and the Munmorah State Conservation Area. This work will be important for the planning and delivery of new release areas in southern Lake Macquarie and Central Coast and creating an inter-regional landscape break between the two regions.

## Watagans to Stockton Link

This link is intended to accommodate national transport infrastructure to enhance north-south connectivity, and the delivery of new release areas in Greater Newcastle and the western and northern parts of its hinterland.

The aim of conservation planning in this area will be to conserve existing remnant vegetation and invest in the rehabilitation of land to strengthen the regionally significant corridor between Watagans National Park and Port Stephens.

Investment may be needed to rehabilitate land, either within the current corridor boundary or by extending the corridor boundary, to realise national and regional ambitions for this link. Further assessments will be necessary to identify the viability of securing and rehabilitating land in these areas. Viability will be influenced by the existing ecological capability as well as current and future land use demands.

## Upper Hunter Valley Link

This link contains important valley floor forest and woodland remnants and covers the only viable north-south corridor across the Upper Hunter. The aim of conservation planning will be to connect, protect and enhance the large patches of existing vegetation between Wollemi National Park, Manobalai Nature Reserve and the Liverpool Range. It will be achieved through private land incentive programs and other mechanisms such as biodiversity offsetting.

## Liverpool Ranges Link

The aim of conservation planning will be to use ridgelines and the higher slopes to maintain and enhance the connections between Coolah Tops and Towarri national parks and further east within the region. It will be achieved through 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. The aim of conservation planning will be to protect landscape-scale connections. It will be achieved 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 Talawahl Nature Reserve. The aim of conservation planning will be to protect and enhance landscape-scale connectivity. This will be achieved through private land incentive programs and other mechanisms such as land use planning and biodiversity offsetting.



## Waterways and drinking water catchments

### Strategy 5.10

A risk-based approach will be applied to land use change in water catchments considering mitigation and infrastructure measures to manage water quality and supplies for the Hunter. This will include applying neutral or beneficial water quality objectives to land use planning in surface and groundwater drinking water catchment areas to minimise the effects of development on waterways, including watercourses, wetlands, groundwater dependent ecosystems, riparian lands, estuaries, lakes, beaches and marine waters. The risk-based approach will include early consideration of water infrastructure needs for growth and development of communities in water catchments.

### Strategy 5.11

Development proposals should support the sustainable growth of recreation and tourist facilities in inland and coastal lakes.

## Coastal management

### Strategy 5.12

The NSW coastal management framework guides the management of the Hunter's sensitive coastal lakes and estuaries that are susceptible to the impacts of land use development. It acknowledges that coastal hazards are expected to be exacerbated by climate change while recognising the contemporary risks and challenges. Development proposals will need to be consistent with the coastal management framework, which comprises the *Coastal Management Act 2016*, the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018* and NSW Coastal Management Manual.



Glenbawn Dam

# Reach net zero and increase resilience and sustainable infrastructure

## What we need to accomplish

The frequency and intensity of natural hazards is being altered by climate change, affecting vulnerability to natural hazards and changing exposure patterns. Resilience planning can assist places and communities to avoid, prepare for, respond to and recover from shocks and stresses.

Natural hazards can disrupt road and rail networks and interrupt access to essential services including water, sewerage, power, telecommunications and digital connectivity. Since the release of the previous regional plan in 2016 the Hunter has experienced major flooding and bushfire events, particularly bushfires in MidCoast in 2019-20, that impacted on the environment and community.

Residents, tourists, towns and communities can become isolated for extended periods, which can negatively impact social networks and tourists who may not be aware of the dangers and emergency procedures.

*Future Transport 2056* sets out potential cost-effective pathways to support net zero emissions by 2050, including a shift from private car use to public transport, active transport choices, low-emissions vehicles and a cost-effective, low-emission energy supply. The *NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy*<sup>9</sup> also aims to make electric vehicles affordable to run and buy in NSW. The electrification of light vehicles is a key pathway for decarbonising the transport sector. 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.

Finally, the evolving micro-mobility transport sector, including electric bikes, electric scooters and shared e-bike services, offer potential alternatives for first and last kilometre travel between homes and destinations such as public transport hubs. Micro-mobility could have a positive impact in areas where topography, distance or climate makes walking and cycling challenging.

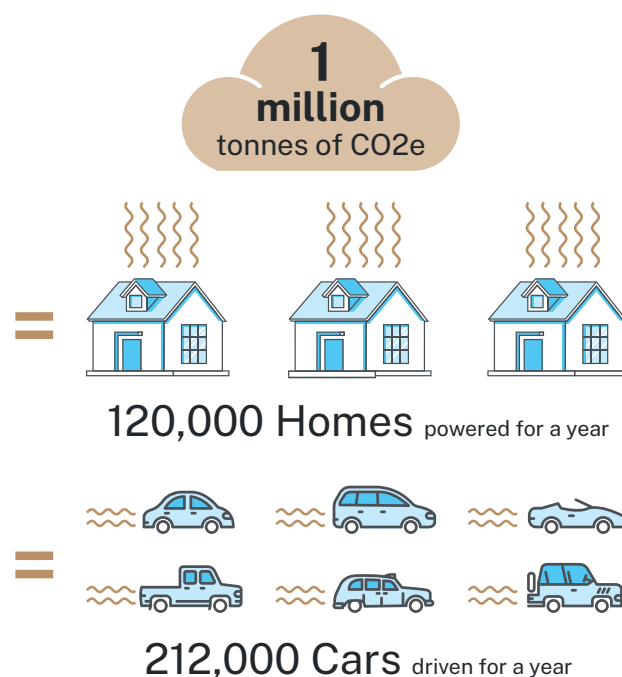
### Hunter climate change snapshot

Based on long-term (1910-2011) observations, temperatures in the Hunter have been increasing since about 1960, with higher temperatures experienced in recent decades. The Hunter is projected to continue warming by, on average, about 0.7 degrees by 2039 and about 2 degrees by 2079.

The Hunter experiences considerable rainfall variability in terms of locations, seasons and year-to-year. However, most models agree that autumn rainfall will increase.

New modelling methods and datasets show water supplies may be less secure than previously understood. There have been droughts far longer and more severe than those observed during the last 120 years.

Increases in severe fire weather are projected in summer and spring, which are during prescribed burning periods and the peak fire risk, reducing the ability for preventative works.





## The public interest in why we need to accomplish it

A resilient Hunter is one that is better placed to resist, absorb, accommodate and bounce back, from shocks and stresses, being able to move forward and become stronger, more resilient and sustainable over time. The more successful we are in mitigating the worst implications of climate change, the less pressure there will be to successfully adapt to those consequences.

A holistic approach to understanding social, economic and environmental impacts of climate change means that communities can do more than simply survive but gain the understanding and capacity to adapt and thrive.



## Hunter's net zero emissions spatial plan

The *NSW Climate Change Policy Framework* commits NSW to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. To successfully achieve this goal, the state's objective is to deliver a 50 per cent cut in emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. This will help ensure significant progress is continual and achievable.

To progress rapidly and successfully towards a net zero emissions Hunter, the regional plan seeks to make climate change a guiding principle for all planning decisions. Our aim includes the intention to help stimulate the green economy by facilitating innovation, greener design and place-based solutions.

Key opportunities include:

- 15-minute neighbourhoods to achieve more dense and mixed use communities, with homes together with everyday needs to significantly reduce the need for car travel as well as per-capita energy use. This would support the transformation of new and existing neighbourhoods;
- more compact cities and towns, shifting development from urban fringe to redevelopment of urban centres and inner-city neighbourhoods and protecting natural areas;
- development in town centres and main streets to help transition away from car-dependent commercial developments towards those that enable viable and attractive walking, cycling and public transport;
- promotion of green building design and district renewable approaches;
- renewable energy developments, using materials with low embodied emissions and the circular economy;
- expanding green infrastructure and natural spaces; and
- embedding place-based planning approaches that holistically considers ecologically sustainable development instead of piecemeal development.

## Strategies and actions to how we will accomplish it

### Community resilience to natural hazards

#### Strategy 6.1

Councils should engage the community to understand place-based risks (shocks and stresses), vulnerabilities and capabilities and provide information to develop resilience and adaptation plans. To assist councils in natural hazard management and risk mitigation the NSW Government has prepared *Planning for Bushfire Protection Guideline 2019*, *NSW Coastal Management Framework*, *Floodplain Risk Management Program* and a draft *Planning for a more resilient NSW*. These policies and guidelines ensure sensitive land uses and infrastructure such as homes, hospitals and schools are appropriately located, so communities are not placed at high risk, and people can safely evacuate if there is an emergency.

#### Strategy 6.2

Development proposals shall use these disaster risk management planning and adoption frameworks and avoid areas of high-risk to minimise the Hunter's vulnerability to development constraints and natural hazards.

#### Strategy 6.3

Hunter Water and other water providers, will meet the community's water supply needs under all climatic conditions, including minimum supply requirements during a long and severe drought. This will require a transition to rainfall-independent water sources as part of the *Lower Hunter Water Security Plan* and drought management plans in other areas.

## 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.

## Air quality and transport emissions

#### Strategy 6.4

Large growth areas and developments have a significant opportunity to improve local air quality through the design process. Planning authorities and proponents should apply a standard of improving air quality to the development of place strategies and other place planning frameworks.

#### Strategy 6.5

Place strategies, master plans and other area plans should locate the areas where people are expected to spend time outdoors, or at work or play, where there are already low pollutant concentrations, or where the development will create the conditions for low pollutant concentrations. Green infrastructure may also be used to improve air quality.

#### Strategy 6.6

Reviewing minimum car parking provisions and establishing maximum parking limits in neighbourhoods and centres well served by walking, cycling and public transport will further encourage people to catch public transport or walk and cycle to their destination. Exploring opportunities for park and ride, car pooling and car sharing services will further encourage the shift to public transport and reductions in car ownership and use.



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

## What we need to accomplish

The diversity and vitality of the Hunter's towns and centres will need to respond to economic trends, technological advances, consumer behaviours and the development of the 24-hour economy.

Newcastle City Centre, and the strategic centres of Charlestown, Morisset and Maitland, create an interconnected metropolitan area and will need to adapt and diversify to take advantage of current and planned services and transport. These and other strategic centres identified in Appendix A are the largest centres of activity and employment in the Hunter.

Retailing is evolving to become a mix of physical stores, 'click and collect' distributors, direct delivery to homes and workplaces and showrooms for digital businesses. Centres will need to adapt to the new innovative forms of retailing, accommodate new spaces where there is identified demand, and manage the transition of surplus retail floorspace to more intensive forms of mixed-use development that include a residential component.

Scone, Gloucester and Dungog are examples of towns that provide a range of rural community services, cultural activities and shopping. The main streets of these towns are increasingly facing pressures from competition from the larger centres. It will be important to position these main streets for continued success and evolution by recognising their specific roles and uses may change over time, but their ability to continue to support the objectives of the draft plan, and positively contribute to and support their local communities should be protected and strengthened.

With the rigidity of a typical working day being relaxed across sectors in response to COVID-19, the need to rethink how towns and main streets function over 24 hours has become more important. The night-time economy can help play a major role in helping centres, such as promoting more dining out, entertainment and hospitality. Industries like transport and logistics, cleaning, education, manufacturing, retail and health care also employ workers that work through the night.

It is increasingly an expectation of international visitors and migrants that cities and town centres will have a safe and flourishing economy and community life from late afternoon to early morning.



### Expanding the 24-hour economy

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; and
- working with NSW Police and councils to ensure safe night-time environments.

Supporting small business and night-time activities will attract visitors and grow the tourism economy. Tourism has a strong connection to the region's unique and productive natural environment, including its coastline and wine regions. Increasing the appeal of the vineyards and cellar doors will support a range of complementary tourism activities. Maintaining the scenic rural landscapes of the Pokolbin and Broke Fordwich wine-growing areas will encourage growth in tourism and agricultural production.

The Hunter also has potential to be recognised as a world-class location for sustainable and nature-based and cultural tourism. Existing infrastructure, access, proximity to global gateways combined with the environmental and cultural values, including Aboriginal heritage, can be significant drawcards for domestic and international visitors.

## The public interest in why we need to accomplish it

Centres and main streets are central to the lives of people living in the Hunter. They provide a focus for the community, both geographically and in relation to the sense of identity and broad mix of uses they provide. The 15-minute region supports and is dependent on small and medium sized businesses that are part of the community.

The success of the region, particularly Greater Newcastle, depends on the ability to develop, diversify and connect strategic centres, including a successful city centre. This includes the ability for people to easily and positively get to regionally significant centres and transport nodes within 30 minutes by walk, bike or public transport.

Access to health care services are integral to the Hunter's towns and centres and improving quality of life. With a growing and ageing population, with an increase in complex and long-term health conditions that need an integrated approach, a range of planning responses are required. This draft regional plan seeks to support preventative health measures and contribute to a healthy lifestyle. This needs to be supported by strategies to promote greater access to health care.

Access to affordable, accessible and quality child care can influence a child's development and school-readiness, future educational attainment, economic participation and health. As well as the positive benefit for children, it also helps to enable parents to go back to work.



Civic Theatre, Newcastle  
Credit: Destination NSW



## Strategies and actions to how we will accomplish it

### Centres and main streets

#### Strategy 7.1

The vitality and viability of the Hunter's varied centres, towns and main streets shall be promoted and enhanced by:

- 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;
- focussing commercial and retail activity in existing commercial centres, unless there is no other suitable site, a demonstrated need, or a positive social and economic benefit to locate activity elsewhere. In such cases, it must be established that such proposals will not weaken or undermine centres and their ability to function as intended by this plan;
- identifying locations for strategic mixed use and/or housing-led intensification in and around centres and main streets that strengthens and supports existing uses while also complementing local character and heritage assets;
- providing attractive walking, cycling and public transport access to a range of services and activities, and ensuring streets are welcoming to all ways of getting around as well as to street strengthening uses, such as restaurant/café seating;
- strengthening the role of centres and main streets as part of the Hunter's sense of place and identity;
- ensuring centres are the primary locations for commercial activity and contributors to the local as well as district-wide economy, and protecting these areas from developments that would weaken or undermine their planned function in the region;
- achieving sustainable, healthy and walkable neighbourhoods embedded in the development and management of centres and main streets;
- managing parking to encourage active streets and public spaces and reinforce compact centres;
- enabling a diverse range of tourism accommodation and attractions in centres, particularly main streets; and
- removing barriers to local place-making initiatives including outdoor dining, bicycle parking, community managed gardens and events.

#### Strategy 7.2

Major employment generating activities should be accommodated in centres and main streets to leverage economic assets and infrastructure. Tourism infrastructure, attractions and hotels in centres, particularly main streets, should be enhanced and promoted.

### Night-time economy

#### Strategy 7.3

The night-time economy can be better managed through a focus on integrated planning and licensing, out-of-hours servicing and deliveries, safety and security. However, all 24-hour activities, even late night activities, are not suitable for every part of the Hunter, and councils should balance the needs of residents with economic benefits. To support a 24-hour economy, where appropriate, development proposals shall:

- promote the night-time economy, particularly in strategic centres and town centres where night-time public transport options are available;
- improve access, inclusion and safety, and make public areas welcoming for consumers and workers;
- diversify the range of night-time activities, including extending opening hours for shops, cafes, libraries, galleries and museums;
- address the cumulative impact of high concentrations of licensed premises to diversify and manage these areas; and
- foster the relationships between the creative industries, live performance and the night-time economy as a place of cultural work and production.





## Health care and education services

### Strategy 7.4

Development proposals shall aim to co-locate complementary activities with major tertiary education and health facilities, creating a core of high-level health, education, research, or similar facilities. Quality healthcare facilities should be able to adapt to meet new models of care.

### Strategy 7.5

To make it easier for child care providers and developers to deliver new early childhood education and care facilities, the NSW Government has:

- simplified and streamlined the planning approval process by allowing certain centre-based child care facilities to be assessed as exempt or complying developments;
- allowed centre-based child care facilities to be temporarily relocated (through an exempt development process) in the event of an emergency;
- permitted centre-based child care in all R2 Low Density Residential zones, allowing facilities in more locations near where people live; and
- introduced a common assessment framework through the Child Care Planning Guideline and non-discretionary development standards, setting out key national requirements and planning and design guidance that will generally prevail over development control plans.





Figure 5: Hunter inter-regional transport connections



# Build an inter-connected and globally focused Hunter

## What we need to accomplish

The Hunter has strong links to the surrounding regions of the New England North West, North Coast, Central West and Orana, and Central Coast, with people and freight moving between these regions every day.

Key infrastructure proposals, including the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor, M1 Extension and faster rail could strengthen these inter-regional links. These projects build on significant upgrades to the M1 Pacific Motorway/Highway and Hunter Expressway.

Additionally, the NSW Fast Rail Network Strategy will be a blueprint for how the rail network linking the Hunter with Greater Sydney could look so that future investment decisions on fast rail are well considered.

Fast rail stations will open opportunities to stimulate development and business investment, with businesses able to access an expanded workforce and markets, both at the station precinct and wider community. As fast rail work progresses, development proposals at future station locations should consider the residential and accessibility benefits beyond the immediate station location.

Fast rail infrastructure will also bring opportunities for coordinated placemaking in centres and along the corridor.

Global connectivity competitively positions the Hunter to help meet Australia's strategic defence interests, while leveraging the increased defence spending in global markets, particularly the Asia Pacific.

The Australian Defence Force and associated service industries is an integral part of the Hunter's regional economy and identity. 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.

## The public interest in why we need to accomplish it

The Hunter has different communities, assets and features, that while individually unique, effectively function as a connected and collective whole that together underpin our identity and lifestyles. Connectivity plays an important role in linking this diversity together and opening up opportunities to leverage a global economy and visitor market.

In particular, an efficient freight network is necessary to support the function of many economy sectors across the Hunter. Sustainable freight movements reduce the impact on road congestion and air quality 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.





## Strategies and actions to how we will accomplish it

### Global gateways

#### Strategy 8.1

Any aviation and port related development proposals should:

- align with the growth of defence, aeronautics and aerospace-related industries at Williamstown
- increase capacity to manage freight through the Port of Newcastle.

### Inter-regional linkages

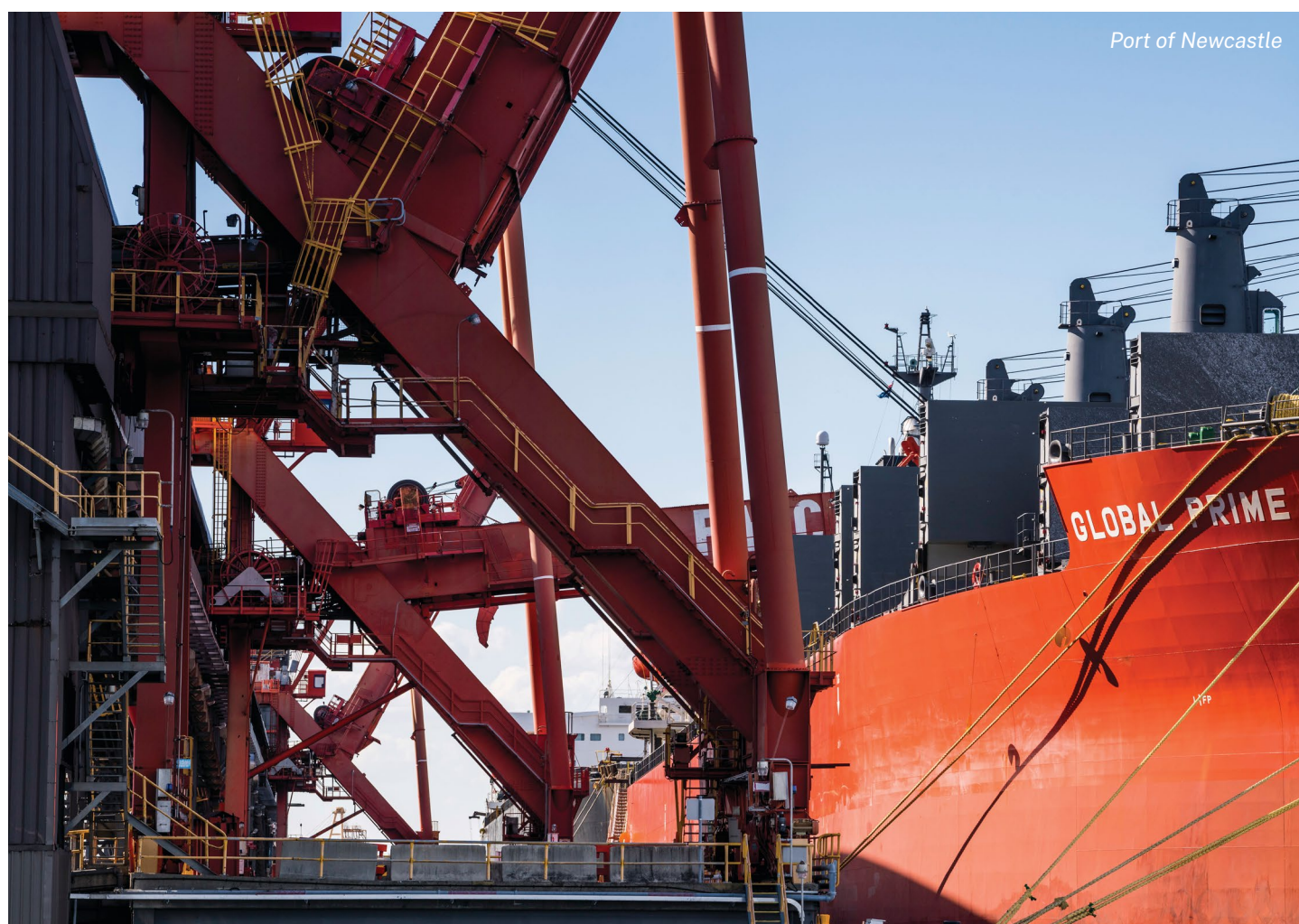
#### Strategy 8.2

Development proposals for new consolidation and distribution facilities must not cause unacceptable impacts on the long-term capacity of strategic inter-regional connections to meet future freight and logistics movements.

### Defence industries

#### Strategy 8.3

Development proposals must protect the long-term growth of defence assets, key strategic links and training areas from incompatible land uses that could affect their operations.





PART

# 3

## District planning and growth areas









**Figure 6: Hunter districts**

- Regional boundary
- Highway
- Motorway
- Road
- Water body
- ⊙ Metropolitan city
- Strategic centre
- Centre

**DISTRICTS:**

- Greater Newcastle
- Central Lakes
- Hinterland
- Central Hunter
- Upper Hunter
- Barrington
- Coastal







PART

# 3

## District planning and growth areas

The Hunter is a large region with diverse urban, rural and natural landscapes and characteristics. The regional plan divides the Hunter into six districts that each share similar characteristics, such as economy 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; and
- 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 response, activation and or specific infrastructure investments to meet the plan's vision and objectives. 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 *Public Spaces Charter*.

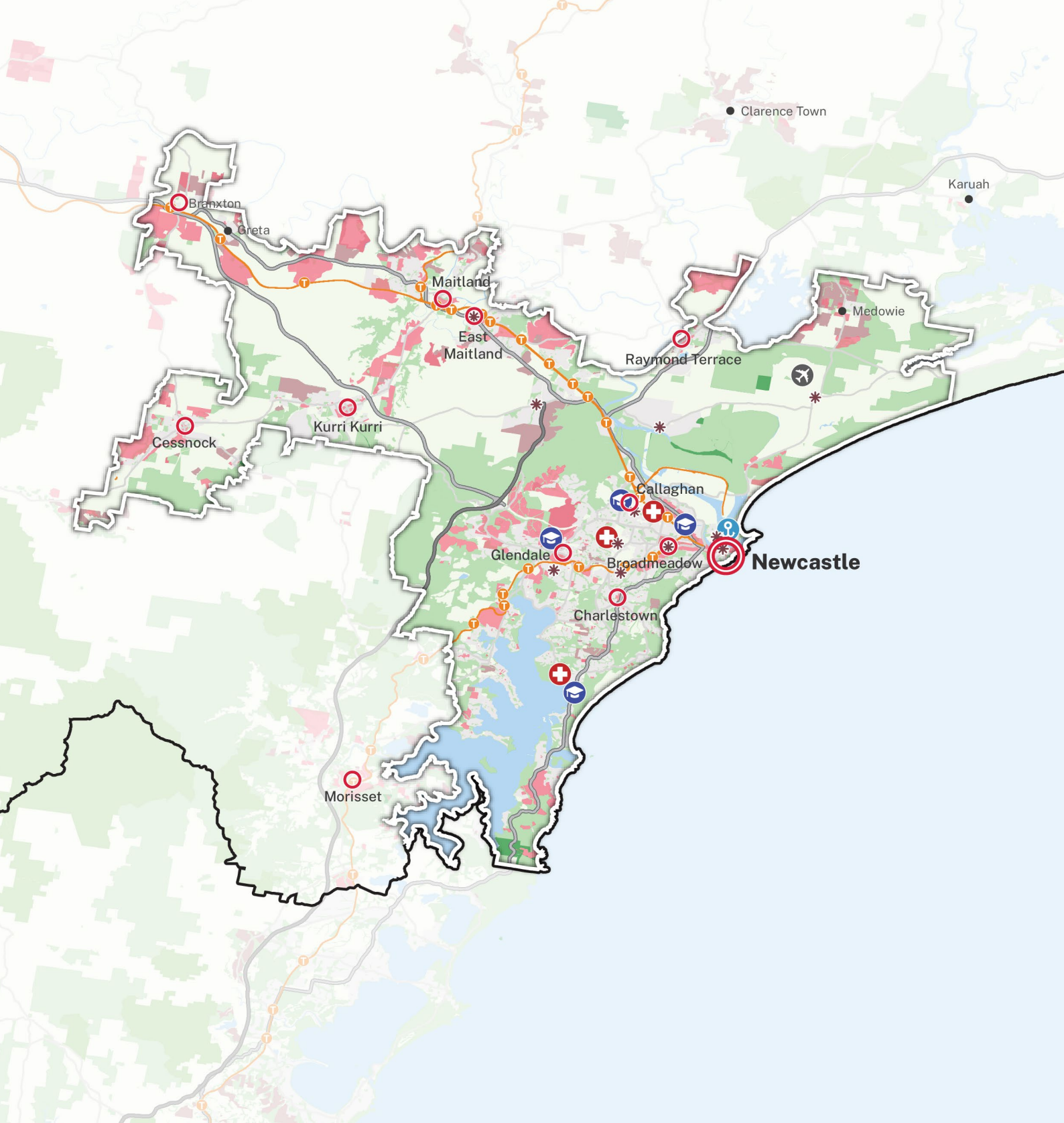
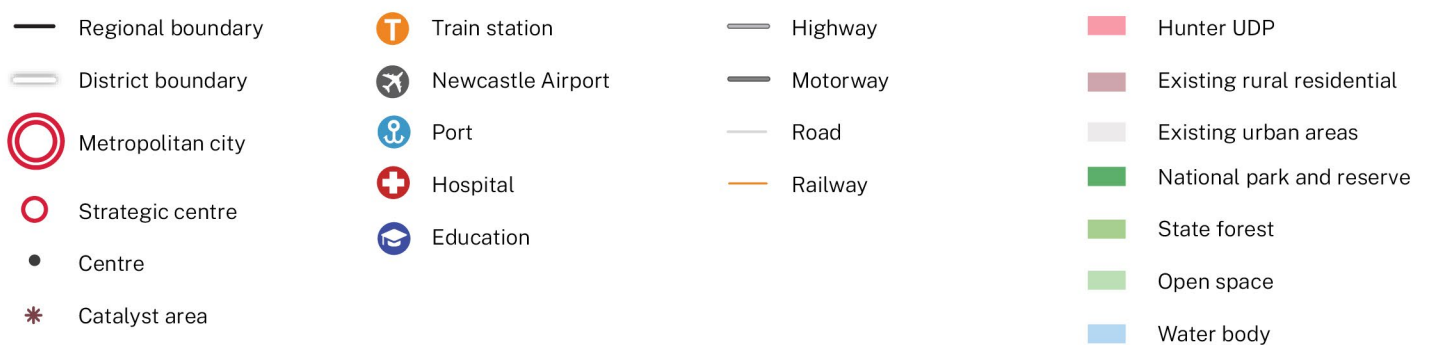


Figure 7: Greater Newcastle district





**Greater Newcastle’s diversified and resilient economy will expand on strengths in health, education, defence, tourism and the creative sectors of the new economy.**

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

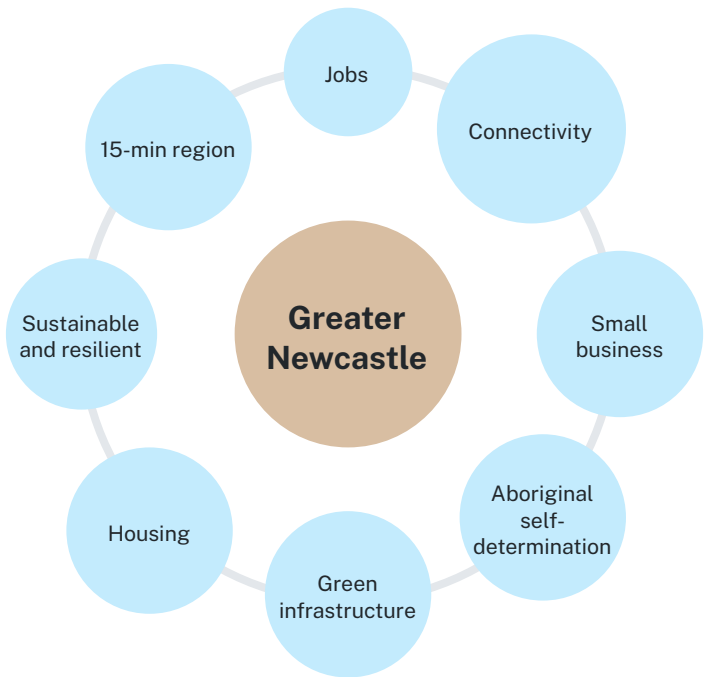
At the heart of Greater Newcastle is the Newcastle City Centre, the capital of the Hunter. The revitalisation of the City Centre has been transformational, featuring iconic buildings of the University of Newcastle NUspace campus and the new Newcastle law courts, Newcastle Interchange at Wickham, vibrant public spaces and a soon to be fully activated waterfront.

The University of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport and Port and the John Hunter Hospital are key metropolitan assets providing opportunities to further grow the service economy and support ongoing transition.

Approximately 50% of Greater Newcastle’s new housing is being accommodated in existing urban areas. To create optimal density in locations with established services and infrastructure, further renewal opportunities within centres and infill sites need to be investigated. The redevelopment potential of larger infill sites should be maximised to efficiently use available land. Strategic centres such as Charlestown also have potential for new jobs and housing if development feasibility can be increased.

To ensure adequate supply in the medium to longer term, significant new release areas at North West Lake Macquarie are under investigation, in addition to significant housing proposals at Wallsend and 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 to deliver catalyst areas. The metropolitan plan will be reviewed in 2023 as part of a 5-year review and will incorporate the following planning principles.



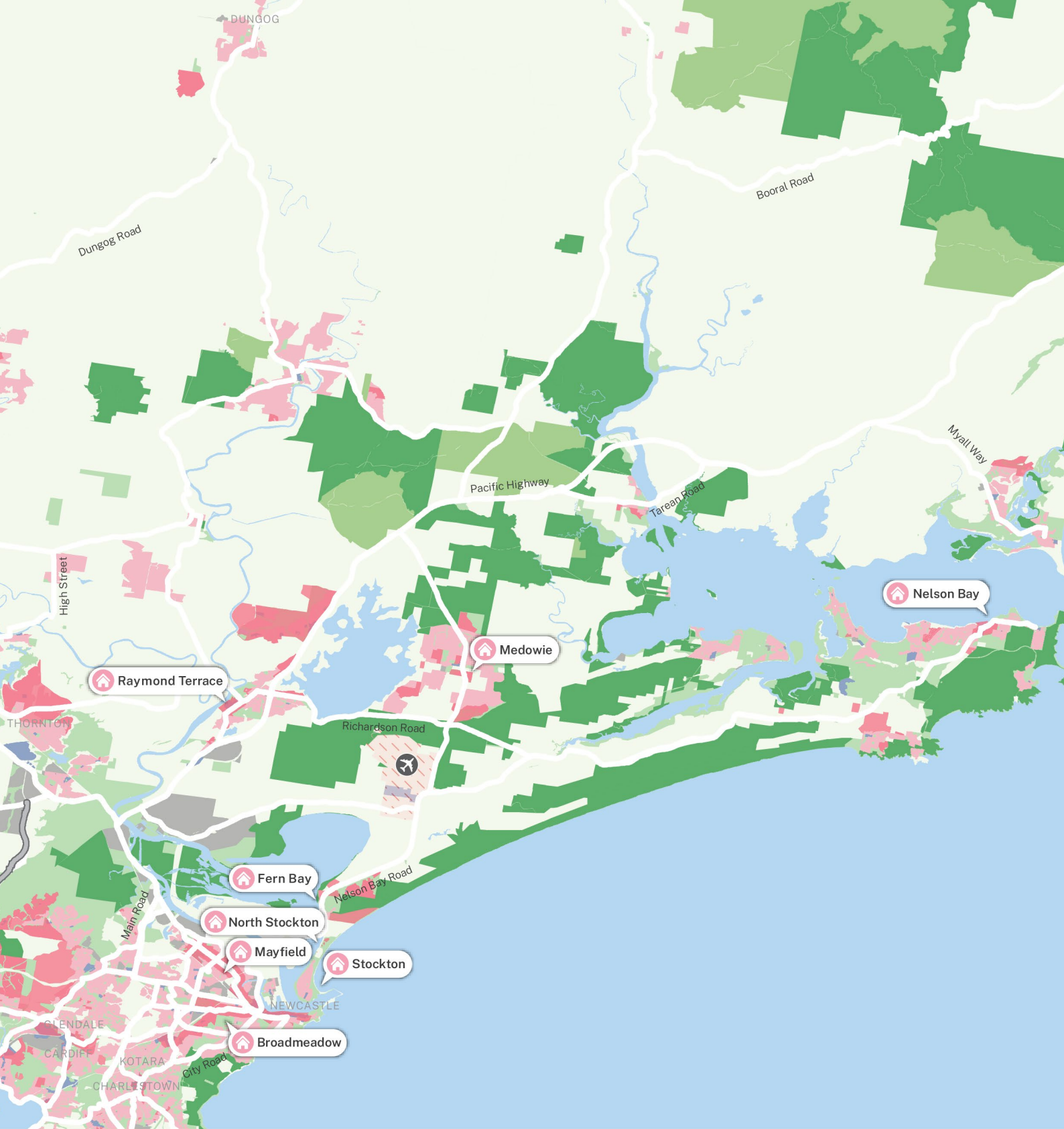
**Newcastle Mines Grouting Fund**

The NSW Government established the \$17 million Newcastle Mines Grouting Fund to assist the urban renewal of Newcastle CBD. The Fund complemented Government’s \$650 million investment in transforming the city centre and catalysing investment.

The Fund unlocks CBD redevelopment, by addressing a market failure caused by the investment uncertainty of mine grouting. The Fund caps the cost of grouting which provides greater investor certainty and confidence.









Developers are required to pay the full cost of grouting up to a capped cost. If the actual cost of grouting exceeds the cap, the Fund will reimburse extra approved costs, after the works have been completed and validated by Subsidence Advisory New South Wales.

Government intends to conduct a review of the Fund in 2022.



**Figure 8: Williamstown regionally significant growth area**



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Hunter UDP             |  Priority locations for future housing |
|  Business land          |  Airport                               |
|  Industrial land        |  National park and reserve             |
|  Residential land       |  State forest                          |
|  Catalyst area boundary |  Open space                            |
|  Highway                |  Water body                            |





Newcastle Memorial Walk, Newcastle  
Credit: Destination NSW

## District Planning Priorities

### Housing within 30 minutes of the Williamstown Special Activation Precinct

Williamstown Special Activation Precinct (SAP) builds on the Hunter's history of supporting Australia's defence industry and emerging aerospace industry. It is located around the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base and Newcastle Airport close to Newcastle City Centre and national and international transport connectivity.

The Federal Government has committed \$66 million towards Newcastle Airport's runway upgrade as part of the 2020-2021 Federal Budget announcement. The upgrades to the runway to an international standard (Code E) will allow long-range and wide-bodied aircraft.

Investment in the area highlights a more diversified global role for the Hunter. The SAP will support existing businesses and attract new industries and investment to establish the region as Australia's leading defence, research and development and aerospace industry hub. The SAP will also include associated social infrastructure required to service the growing workforce and community, including, opportunities to interact with nature and indigenous culture.

Housing needs to be available to match growing employment opportunities. There is significant delivery of housing already occurring within 30 minutes of Williamstown including at Thornton and Newcastle City Centre. However, there will be a need for additional housing as the number of jobs increase.

Any housing growth will need to be outside the Aircraft Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) area and include efforts to improve public transport from these centres to SAP.

#### Priority locations for future housing

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| • Broadmeadow     | • Nelson Bay     |
| • Mayfield        | • Fern Bay       |
| • Raymond Terrace | • North Stockton |
| • Medowie         | • Stockton       |

New town centres should be complementary in their catchments and have capacity to serve the daily needs of the current and future community. They need to be located in areas that promote accessible and walkable neighbourhoods.

## Newcastle City Centre

Investment in commercial office space and residential apartments over the last 10 years has enabled sustained growth of the city centre. This assisted in meeting increased demand for housing in areas close to public transport, night-time economic activity and improved public spaces.

The protection and sensitive re-use of heritage buildings and places in the eastern end of Newcastle City Centre are creating significant renewal opportunities. Commercial floor space is shifting towards Newcastle West as sites in the eastern end of the City Centre are transformed for housing and other uses.

Development controls should support future growth of regionally significant commercial floor space, particularly near Newcastle Interchange. Retention of light industrial zones in the nearby suburbs of Carrington, Islington, Tighes Hill and Maryville will ensure accessibility to urban services that support the functioning of the City Centre is maintained, especially as the residential population continues to increase.

Newcastle Interchange is halfway between Newcastle East and Broadmeadow, with Newcastle Light Rail connecting Wickham to Newcastle Beach. Consideration of planning controls and transformation of the Tudor Street renewal corridor that justifies future transport investment between Wickham and Broadmeadow is required.

## Maitland's Strategic Centres

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

Strong population growth creates pressure for additional residential land and a shortfall in infrastructure provision. There are challenges to servicing this number of development fronts and increasing dwelling density near centres, transport nodes and in areas of high amenity. The NSW

Government and councils need to coordinate services and infrastructure to these emerging and growing communities before identifying new urban release areas.

Central Maitland will continue to service the surrounding areas and meet the needs of the growing population. Its rich heritage creates significant renewal opportunities. Development proposals should expand the civic, educational, commercial and retail function of Central Maitland. Additional residential development and urban renewal will need 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 facilitate modern healthcare facilities and deliver innovation, and high-quality healthcare for decades to come. Greenhills precinct will continue to provide modern retail, dining and entertainment, together with diverse housing options.

### The Levee in Maitland

The Levee project leverages the amenity of and access to waterways. The redevelopment involved the upgrade of High Street Mall and its connection to The Levee, a transformed CBD and Maitland's lifestyle precinct. The Riverlink connects main street shopping to the Riverside Walk.

This project crystallises the community's wish for space to exercise, socialise and celebrate the landscape they live in.

The Riverlink provides a blueprint for other riverside towns to reinvigorate and broaden the role of a town centre beyond commerce; a place where people meet and relax and enjoy the waterside open space.

The buildings identified for renewal create a landmark which can be seen from surrounding scenic vantage points.



Civic Park, Newcastle  
Credit: Destination NSW





Cams Wharf, Lake Macquarie  
Credit: Destination NSW

### North West Lake Macquarie

North West Lake Macquarie will continue to grow as a housing and employment hub, offering intensive mixed use development; public and active transport; retail; advanced manufacturing and urban services; and office and services employment. The precinct will deliver compact walkable and sociable 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 existing urban area has potential to grow by 10,000 people, with more than 4,000 new dwellings and the creation of 6,000 jobs. Strategic planning initiatives will support this growth, such as optimising infill development opportunities, enabling flexibility for employment land uses to transition industries into the future, enhancing open space and vibrancy of centres, and investing in critical state and local infrastructure.

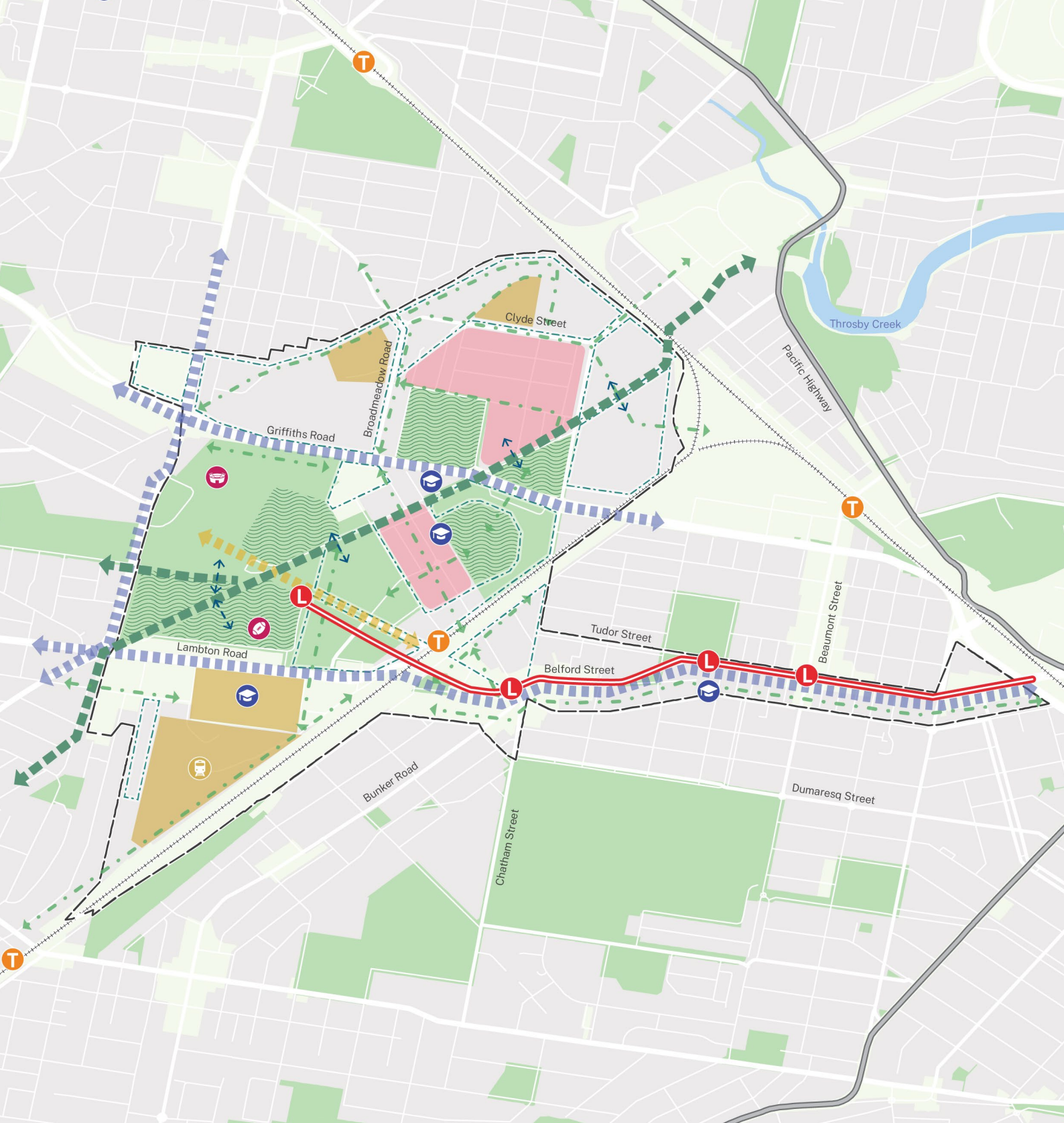
There is potential for land to the west of the rail line to be a significant brownfield land release and a test bed for innovative re-use of mining lands that supports economic diversification.

More detailed planning on North West Lake Macquarie will be included in the review of the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036*.

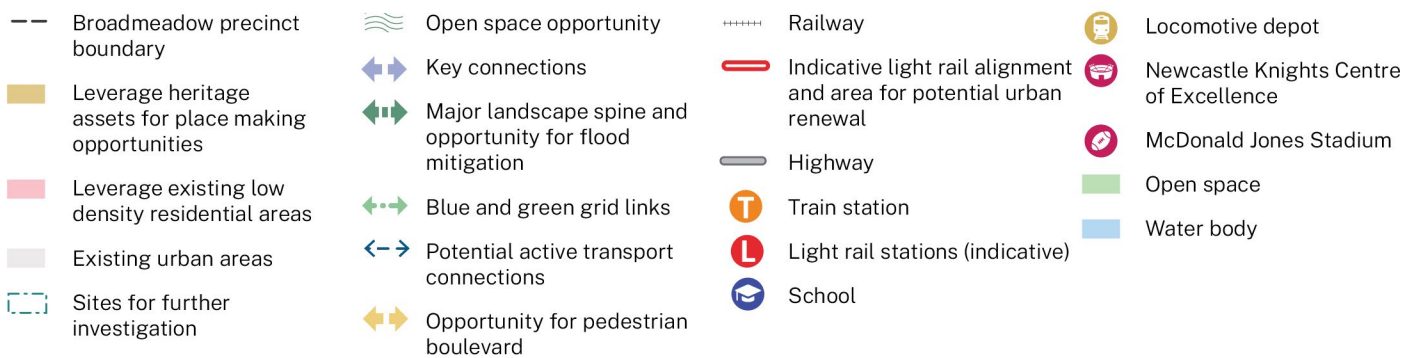
### John Hunter Hospital and Innovation District

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

The department is assessing a state Significant Development Application by NSW Health Infrastructure seeking approval for the construction and operation of a new multi-storey acute services building and refurbishment of parts of the existing John Hunter Hospital buildings.



**Figure 9: Broadmeadow regionally significant growth area**





## Regionally significant growth areas

### Broadmeadow growth area

Broadmeadow will become a community-led, nationally significant sport and entertainment precinct for Greater Newcastle and the Hunter. Development will respect the existing local character of its area and celebrate its diverse past.

Broadmeadow can become an employment and residential centre that capitalises on public investment in transport, potential future light rail connections, Hunter Park and advanced manufacturing and supporting sports medicine businesses and creative industries in the area.



### Planning for Hunter Park and Broadmeadow

The NSW Government is committed to working with the Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation and other state agencies to progress the business case for Hunter Park to be the first choice for sporting, leisure and entertainment. 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.

Planning for the land surrounding Hunter Park is led by City of Newcastle. The department will continue to collaborate with Council and other stakeholders to achieve the vision for Broadmeadow Catalyst Area.

### 1. Blue and green heart of Newcastle

- Create vibrant community spaces through quality public spaces and plazas.
- Ensure well connected green and natural space networks along Styx Creek.
- Ensure greater ecological restoration and urban greening.
- Cool places by retaining water and expansive tree-canopy in the landscape.

### 2. Active and public transport

- Improve pedestrian and active transport connections across Styx Creek, the rail line, and Griffiths, Lambton and Turton roads.
- Establish a clear hierarchy of open spaces for legibility and wayfinding.
- Improve public transport, including potential future light rail connections, and active transport connections.
- Increase housing choice within walking distance of transport networks.
- Create accessible spaces for all members of the community.

### 3. Heritage assets

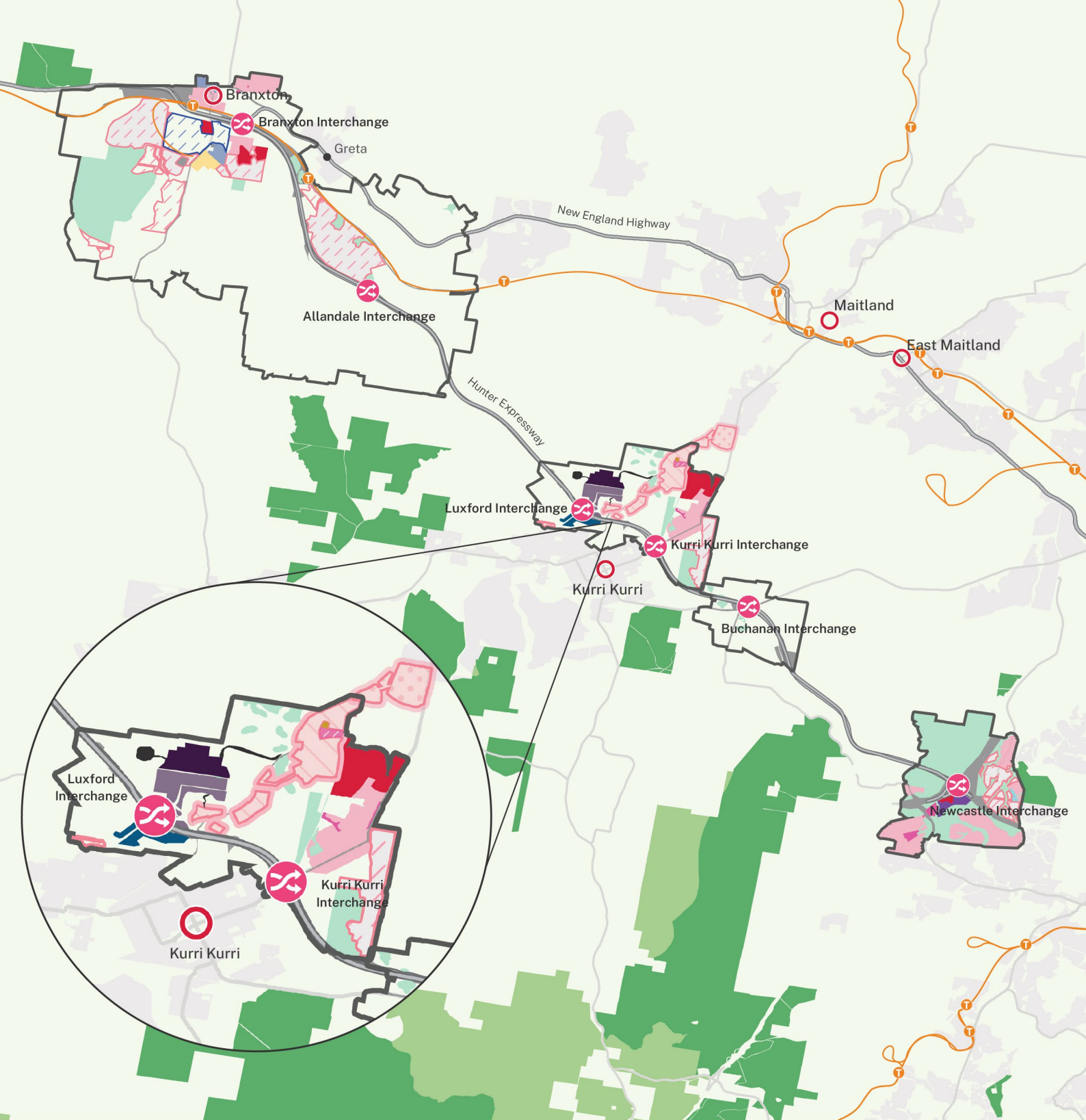
- Re-use heritage sites and significant buildings.
- Integrate significant landscape sites into the fabric of Broadmeadow.
- Engage and celebrate Aboriginal and European heritage.

### Nationally significant entertainment precinct

- Leverage upgrades and improvements to the Hunter Park to create a world-class sport and entertainment complex.
- Make Broadmeadow as a destination of choice for entertainment, recreation and discovery.

### Urban renewal and climate change adaptation

- Focus opportunities to achieve sustainable built form and public space outcomes.
- Encourage affordable housing choices that respects local character.
- Manage flooding/water cycle from Styx Creek and its tributaries as part of the green infrastructure of the city.
- Provide opportunities for land uses to transition and adapt in a changing landscape.



**Figure 10: HEX Corridor**





## Hunter Expressway Corridor Growth Area

The prime location of the interchanges on the Expressway are expected to concentrate new development that benefits from the freight network and proximity to growth corridors. Land use and infrastructure should be carefully planned to deliver maximum benefits while protecting the operation of the Expressway and capacity of its interchanges.

The Interchange Growth Areas map shows the six areas where careful management of land use change is required.

Significant land use change is already planned for and underway in Minmi Urban Release Area at the Newcastle interchange, the Hydro planning proposal at Loxford Interchange, Greta Migrant Camp at Allandale interchange, and West Wallsend the Huntlee at the Branxton interchange. As such, there may not be an immediate need to review land uses in the short term for many of the Interchange Growth Areas.

The Kurri Kurri and Loxford interchanges have the potential to operate as one 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 Hunter Expressway Corridor Growth Area.

### Hunter Expressway Principles

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

As at 2020, the Hunter had 49,000 potential lots in zoned and undeveloped residential land and 1,507 ha undeveloped employment land. There is an additional 6,600 potential lots with a gateway determination to proceed. Undeveloped zoned residential and employment land may face other barriers to development including infrastructure and biodiversity.

Location is also important for many businesses and is understood that some larger areas of zoned employment land elsewhere in the region away from transport corridors may not be well located to respond to the changing nature of employment and freight. However, land near Interchange Growth Areas offer the greatest accessibility.

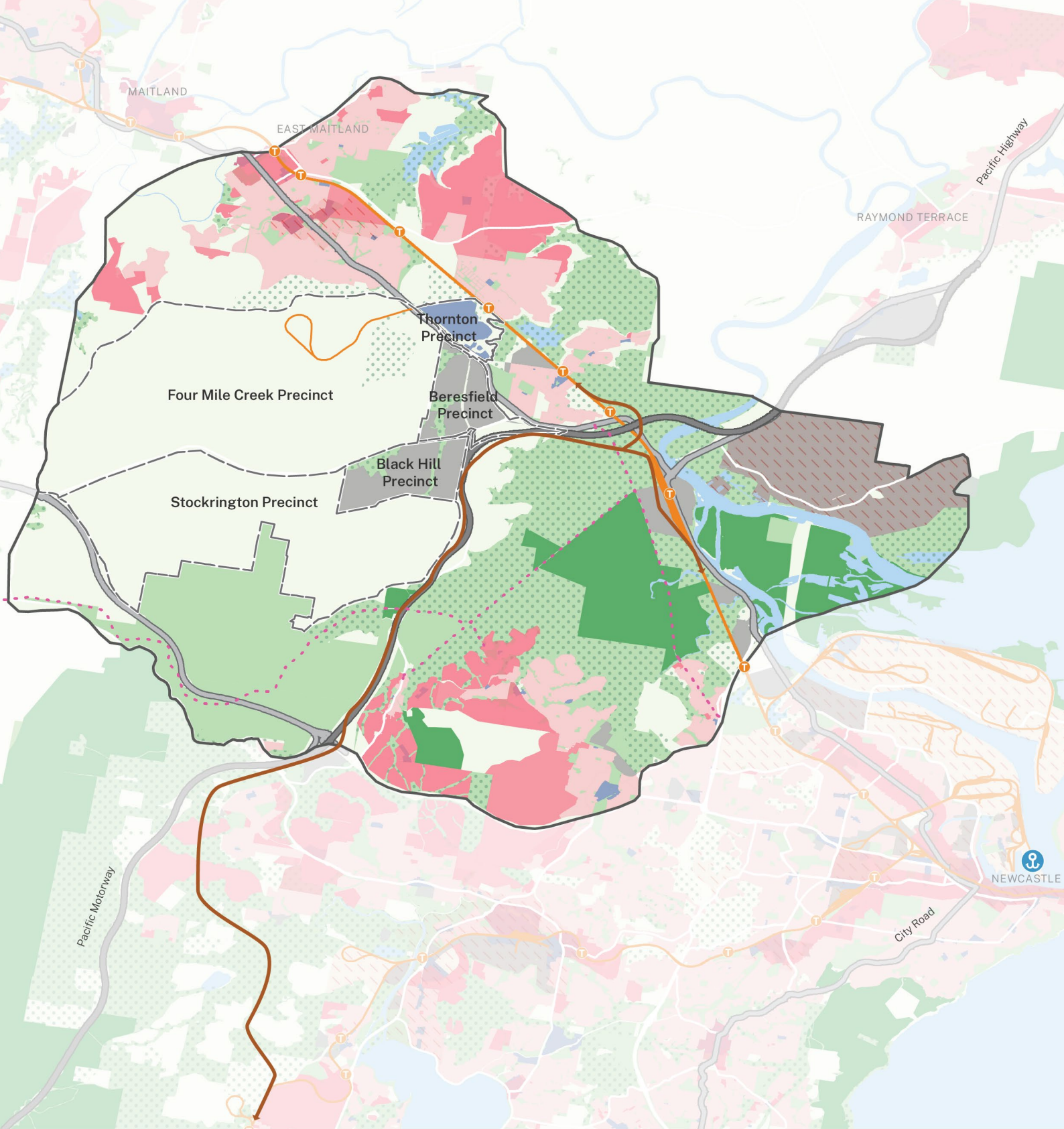
The accessibility of the Expressway may also attract retail and businesses uses. The development of bulky goods, 'big box' superstores and factory outlet style retailing are to be located outside of the Interchange Growth Areas unless subject to an existing planning proposal.

### 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 future endorsed local strategy.

### 2. Planning for employment

- Focus new housing to nearby existing towns and centres to ensure the interchanges are primarily used for employment land uses.
- Consider opportunities for the development of 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 not restricting these opportunities in the interchange growth areas to make the best use of existing and future improvements to the road and rail network.
- The NSW Government and councils will manage growth of new land releases at the interchanges by directing residential and rural residential development to locations outside the mapped interchange growth areas.



**Figure 11: National Pinchpoint**



- |   |                    |                                 |                             |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| — National pinchpoint place area            | ■ Hunter UDP       | — Highway                       | 🚂 Train station             |
| - - Local precinct boundary                 | ■ Business land    | — Motorway                      | 🚢 Port                      |
| 🌿 Environmental management and conservation | ■ Industrial land  | — Railway                       | 🌳 National park and reserve |
| 🔴 Catalyst area boundary                    | ■ Residential land | — Richmond Vale Rail Trail      | 🌲 State forest              |
|   |                    | ↔ Lower Hunter freight corridor | 🌱 Open space                |
|   |                    |                                 | 💧 Water body                |



## National Pinch Point Growth Area

The National Pinch Point is the convergence of national road and rail routes located 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 the Hunter.

Governments have proposed initiatives to improve the operational efficiency of transport links and connectivity, including the M1 Pacific Motorway Extension to Raymond Terrace and Lower Hunter Freight Corridor.

The Richmond Vale Rail Trail presents one of the most unique opportunities for the region, linking urban areas with a natural break between metropolitan Newcastle and the Central Hunter. Planned upgrades will help to promote walking, cycling, heritage, and biodiversity conversation along its route.

Planning for transport corridors will consider the need to conserve and restore biodiversity, and particularly strengthening 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 have experienced rapid growth over the last decade. Thornton North, Minmi, Hydro and Wallsend will continue to grow and provide housing. Transport infrastructure that enables functioning of regional and state road networks 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 provide greater separation of freight and passenger movements on the rail network and improve the rail service reliability.

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 5. Stockrington

- Conserve high environmental value lands.
- Promote rural lifestyles and the growth of rural enterprises.
- Enable ongoing resource extraction.

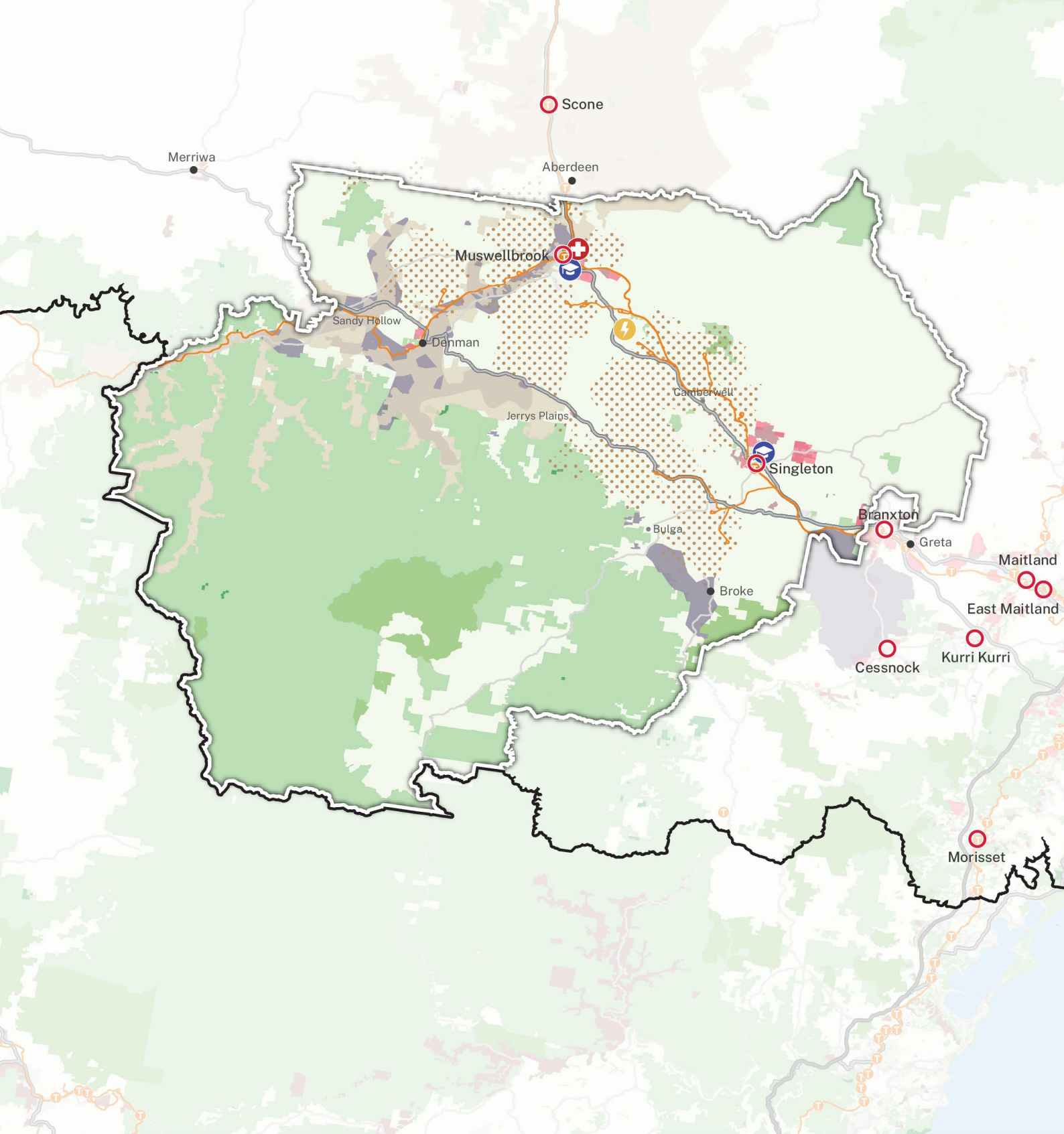


Figure 12: Central Hunter district



|                      |  |  |                           |
|----------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| — Regional boundary  | Hospital                                     | Hunter UDP                               | Existing urban areas      |
| — District boundary  | TAFE, University of Newcastle (Muswellbrook) | Existing rural residential               | National park and reserve |
| Strategic centre     | — Highway                                    | Mining land                              | State forest              |
| • Centre             | — Motorway                                   | Equine strategic agricultural land       | Open space                |
| • Village            | — Road                                       | Viticultural strategic agricultural land | Water body                |
| Train station        | — Railway                                    |  |                           |
| Liddel Power Station |  |  |                           |



**The Central Hunter is the industry and innovation centre of the Hunter. It has globally acknowledged mining, equine and viticulture sectors and offers a rural lifestyle connected to metropolitan cities.**

The district is anchored by the bustling towns of Muswellbrook and Singleton which support an array of villages and rural residential areas. These settlements are nestled amongst a diverse landscape which 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 Parks.

A thriving network of horse studs are established along Denman Road and on the foothills of the Wollemi National Park near Jerrys Plains, Baerami and Widden. Vineyards at Broke Fordwich and Denman stretch across gently undulating hills set against the backdrop of the valley's rugged walls.

The district has a wealth of electricity transmission, water storage and transport infrastructure assets. When coupled with good access to producers in the Central West and New England and markets in Greater Newcastle and Sydney, this infrastructure provides a solid foundation for Central Hunter to continue to diversify its economy.



Lostock Dam

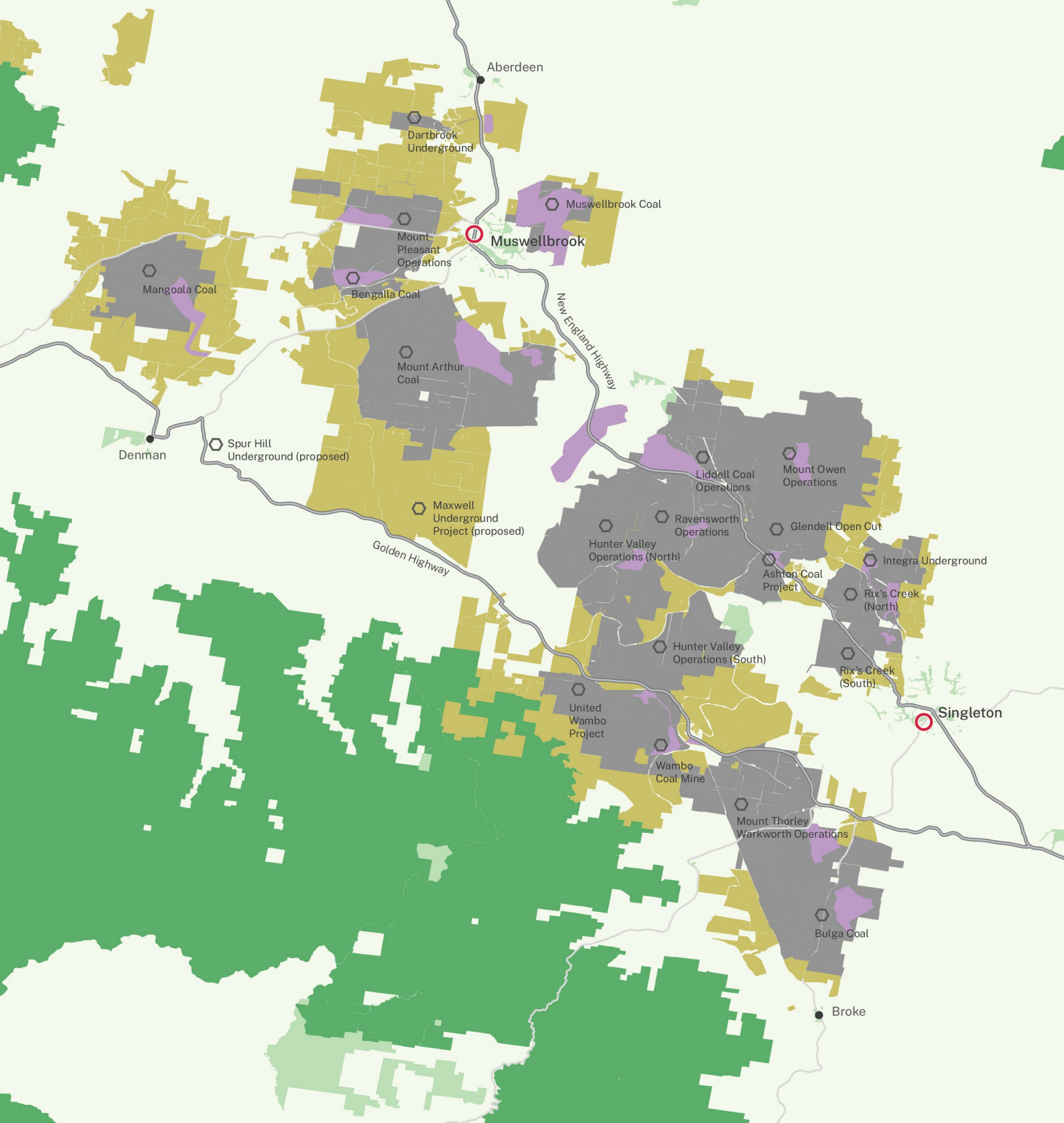


Figure 13: Post mining land use





## District Planning Priorities

### Alternative post-mining land uses

Several mines in the Central Hunter district are scheduled to cease mining and commence closure shortly, while others are considering expansion. Both scenarios present opportunities to enable alternative post-mining land uses.

#### Definitions

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

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

Areas of interest provide opportunities for re-use for intensive employment generating purposes, potentially leveraging access to mine infrastructure. These areas are disturbed often screened, and function as infrastructure hubs. Planning controls should be amended to enable development proposals for the alternative post-mining land uses identified for these areas of interest.

Areas of interest can be expanded to include other operational land, such as void areas, depending on technical feasibility and consideration of the post-mining land use principles.

Operational lands may provide opportunities for less intensive employment generating land uses. These areas could be considered for land uses that support existing rural industries, such as food and fibre production. They could also support the establishment of biodiversity corridors across the valley floor, particularly when considered in the context of neighbouring mine landholdings and vegetated areas. Where constraints limit their potential for employment generating land uses, these areas could enhance environmental, cultural or scenic values.

Non-operational lands provide both concurrent and post mining employment opportunities. Land holdings could be consolidated to increase attractiveness to large scale rural enterprises. Areas with alluvial soils are well suited to intensive agricultural land uses. Non-operational land could also serve as a buffer or screening function for alternative land uses located elsewhere on a mine site.

Residential development may be suitable on some non-operational lands if the land can be adequately serviced and is consistent with a local strategy prepared by council and endorsed by the department.



*Open cut coal mine*

**Table 1: 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  |
| Drayton                             | 92        | Intensive agriculture, food and fibre processing                     |
| 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)          |
| 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  |



## Tourism in the vineyards

As the tourism industry continues to expand, the rural landscape will come under more development pressure. If left uncoordinated, this development may risk the scenic amenity and production value of the Broke Fordwich and Denman vineyard areas. Development proposals should ensure tourism growth is sustainable over the long term.

Larger scale tourism developments should be concentrated in towns, villages and defined nodes in the vineyards area where these activities already occur. Similarly, residential uses and other development incompatible with the vineyards rural landscape and scenic amenity should be directed towards centres outside the vineyards.

Development proposals should ensure areas proposed for non-agricultural uses have suitable infrastructure and can be accommodated within the landscape setting. The appropriate siting, scale and design requirements for non-agricultural development should be established so development is set into the landscape and is sympathetic to its local character.

Development proposals on lands adjoining scenic areas outside the vineyards region should consider how they may affect the landscape values of the vineyard region and be adapted accordingly.

Considering visual amenity more generally, the landscape values of lands adjoining major road approaches to Singleton, Muswellbrook and surrounding villages will be managed to provide a rural experience, potential wildlife corridors and a barrier to movement of airborne particulate matter.

## Housing diversity and sequenced development

The intent to deliver new and more complete communities that are well-planned and serviced will be achieved in areas including:

- Branxton
- Huntlee
- Singleton Heights
- Huntview – Wattle Ponds
- Gowrie
- Muswellbrook Candidate Area B

Additional rural residential and residential urban release areas should only be considered where existing supply cannot be met.

Medium density development should be encouraged close to Muswellbrook and Singleton town centres, and village centres of Denman that are close to open space and neighbourhood shops.

While the provision of aged care facilities is generally reasonable, retirement living and opportunities to downsize are limited and should be promoted.

## Globally connected Central Hunter

The intent to be a district of interconnected communities will be facilitated by planned upgrade of the New England Highway to dual carriageway between the Hunter Expressway at Belford and the intersection with the Golden Highway will improve connections and create opportunities for growth of industry and business. Development of the Whittingham Industrial Estate capitalises on the improvements in connectivity.

The bypass of Muswellbrook and Singleton will be transformative and will generate opportunities from highway service centres and improved traffic conditions in the town centres.

The role and function of the National Land Transport Network is protected from inappropriate development by focusing residential growth in towns.

## Health care precincts

Demand for health care in the Central Hunter will increase, with projected growth in the percentage of the population considered aged or elderly. Clustering of complementary land uses around Muswellbrook and Singleton Hospitals will leverage the benefits of having associated services nearby, creating a one-stop-shop for healthcare.

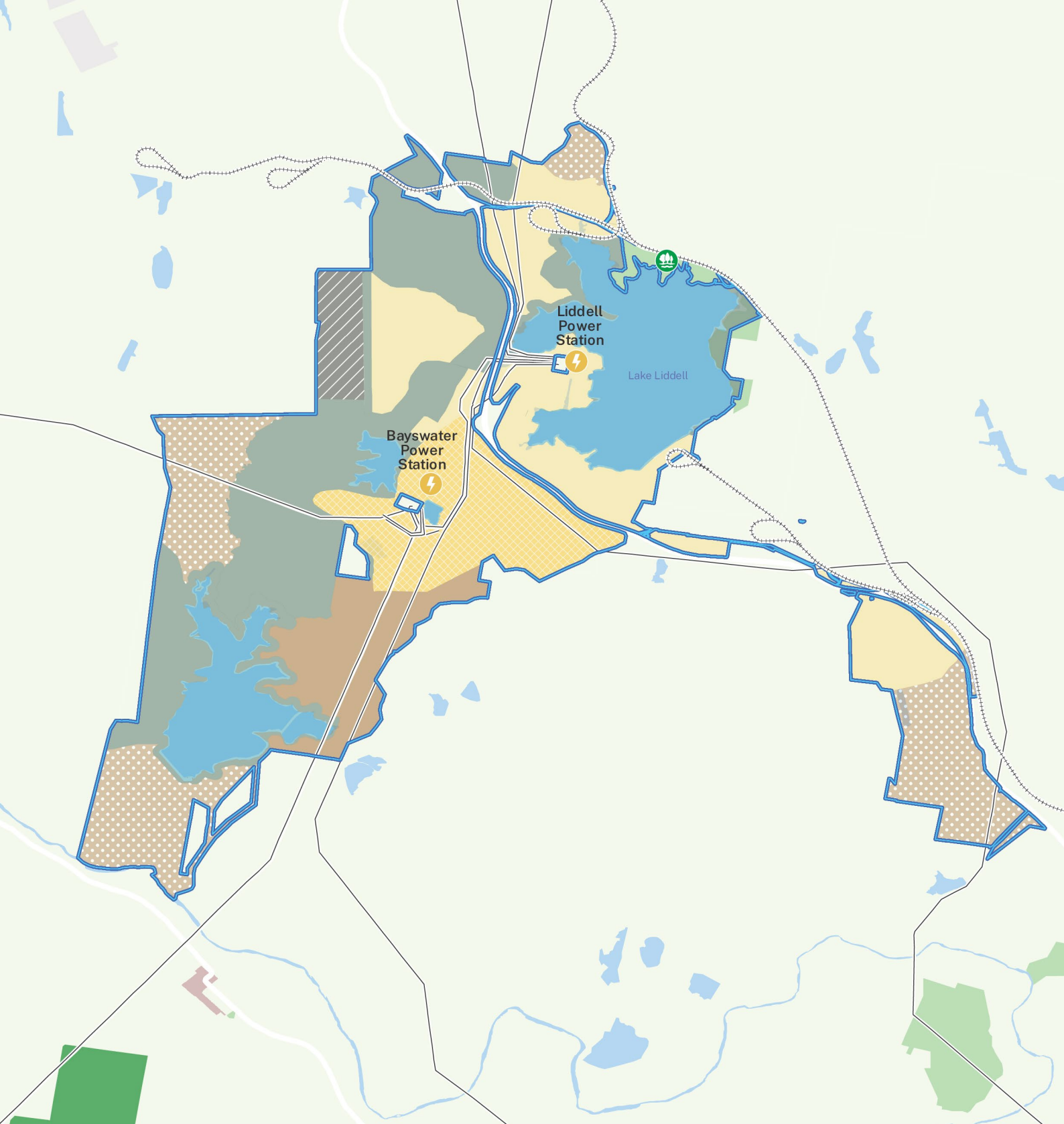
## Green infrastructure and improve the natural environment

The vegetation within riparian corridors performs a range of important functions including bank stabilisation, filtering sediment and contaminants from land-based activities, and temperature control of water, habitat and corridors for movement of wildlife.

Changes to the integrity and quality of natural watercourses and riparian corridors can have adverse impacts on water flows, water quality and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

At the same time, the more valuable agricultural land adjoins the Hunter River, Goulburn River and numerous waterways that reach into the Wollemi National Park.

The restoration of vegetation along waterways in rural locations will improve amenity. While this is the location of the more productive agricultural activities, combining both can improve agricultural productivity and contribute to amenity.



**Figure 14: Liddell regionally significant growth area**



- |  |   |                              |                           |
|--|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| AGL owned land                                 | Existing water storages investigation precinct                    | Railway                      | Existing urban area       |
| Existing rural residential                     | Integrated industrial energy hub investigation precinct - stage 1 | TransGrid Electrical lines   | National park and reserve |
| Intensive agriculture investigation precinct   | Integrated industrial energy hub investigation precinct - stage 2 | Lake Liddell recreation area | Open space                |
| Passive agriculture investigation precinct     | Land leased for mining investigation precinct                     | Power station                | Water body                |
| Environmental corridors investigation precinct |   |                              |                           |



## Regionally Significant Growth Areas

### Liddell and Bayswater Power Station Growth Area

The Central Hunter is well positioned to benefit from changes in the energy generation landscape. Its existing power transmission lines are an advantage for attracting new investment as they allow ready access to the grid for current and future energy projects.

The planned closure of the Liddell power station in 2023 and Bayswater in 2035 provides an opportunity to develop the region's first renewable energy hub. Plans announced for the site include solar and thermal storage systems, grid-scale batteries and energy from waste facility.

Opportunities to co-locate other employment generating activities on the Liddell site are being explored. The site is in single ownership, has both rail and highway access, as well as significant land, water and infrastructure assets. This makes it well suited to facilitate investment in jobs, particularly in the manufacturing, waste, freight, hydrogen, data and agribusiness sectors.

The site can also deliver other long-term benefits for the Central Hunter. Water availability has long been a challenge in this part of the Hunter and the planned closure of the power stations provides an opportunity to consider how those water assets should be used. Its substantial vegetated lands could support biodiversity corridors, re-greening the valley floor in response to historic losses from land clearing.



*Solar Farm*



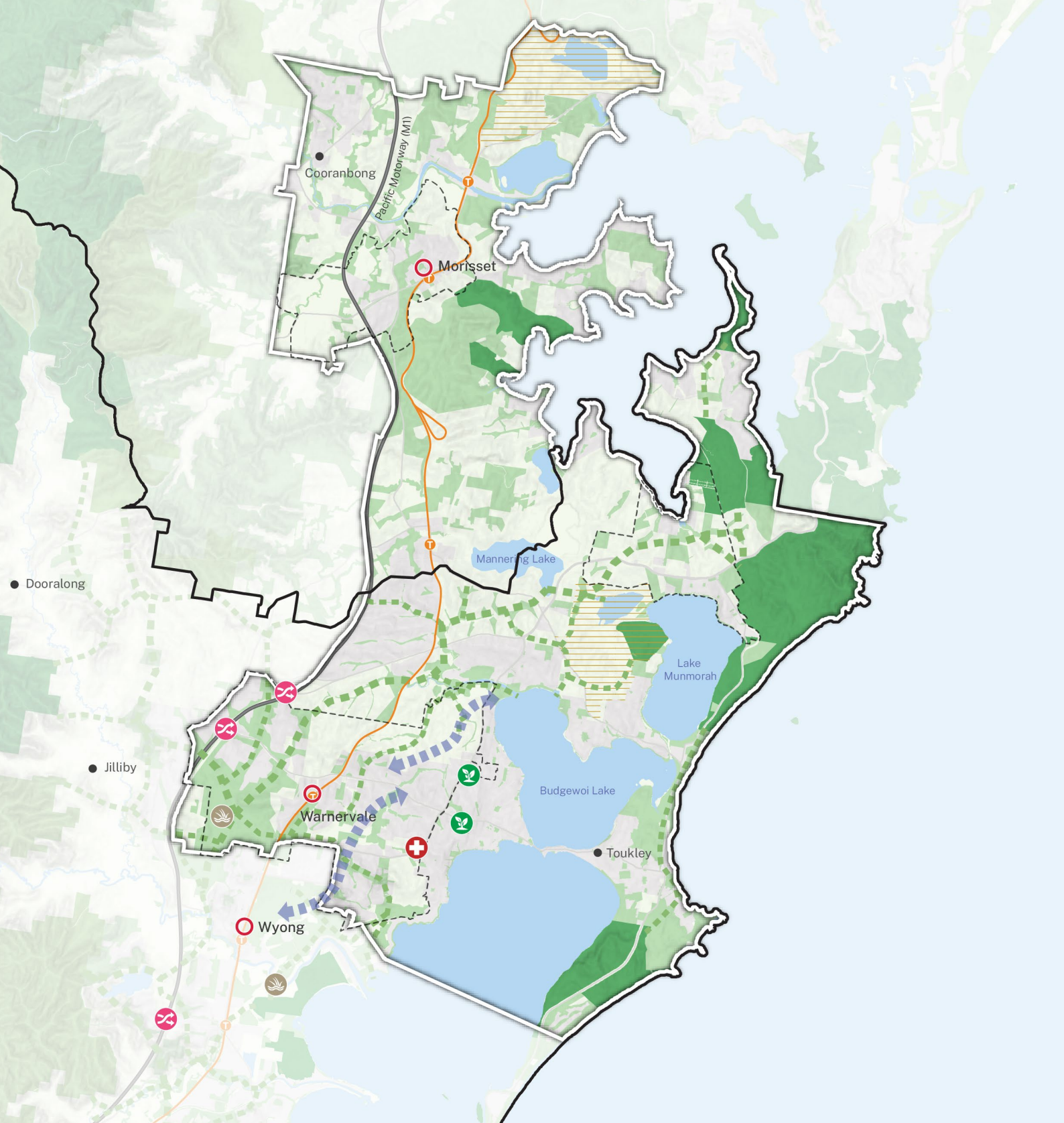
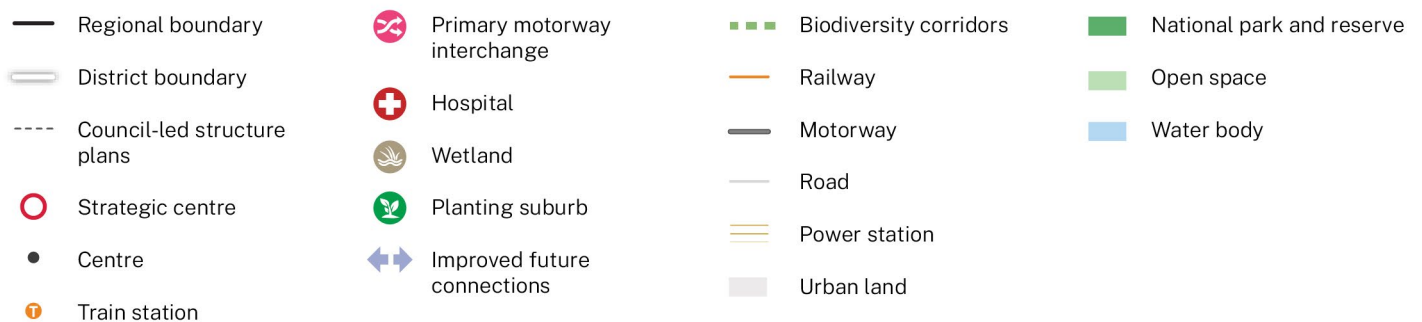


Figure 15: Central Lakes district





## **The Central Lakes district contains the Central Coast's major urban growth opportunities. It will increasingly integrate with the metropolitan areas of Greater Newcastle.**

The district is emerging as a regional employment hub leveraging opportunities of connectivity and proximity to the global gateways of Hunter and Greater Sydney.

An inter-regional and coordinated approach across the Central Coast and Hunter is required to balance environmental outcomes and well-planned communities as the district grows.

It will be home to many more people into the future, with a mix of suburban lifestyles and town centre housing choices. All supported by access to quality open spaces, wetlands, lakes and the wider natural landscape.

Growth around Morisset will be managed to ensure it emerges as a regionally significant mixed-use city centre of employment and services for surrounding communities experiencing significant growth and transition.

A range of employment opportunities will be promoted through the development of the Wyong Employment Zone, Wallarah and Bushells Ridge.

The district is an area in transition, with Eraring and Vales Point power stations planned to close within the decade, following the closure of Lake Munmorah power station in 2012 and commissioning of Colongra gas-fired power station in 2009. There is opportunity for more jobs close to home for these growing communities through adaptive reuse of these sites. There are also opportunities to promote circular economy outcomes.

A strategic approach to conservation planning will protect regional biodiversity values. There is opportunity to create a green break around Morisset and Cooranbong. Similarly, a regional biodiversity corridor has been identified linking the coast at Lake Munmorah to the mountains via a corridor between Morisset and Wyee.



Lake Munmorah

## District Planning Priorities

### Precincts for future jobs and homes

The district has been subject to extensive local and regional planning, including North Wyong Shire Structure Plan, the draft Greater Warnervale Structure Plan and draft Greater Lake Munmorah Structure Plan.

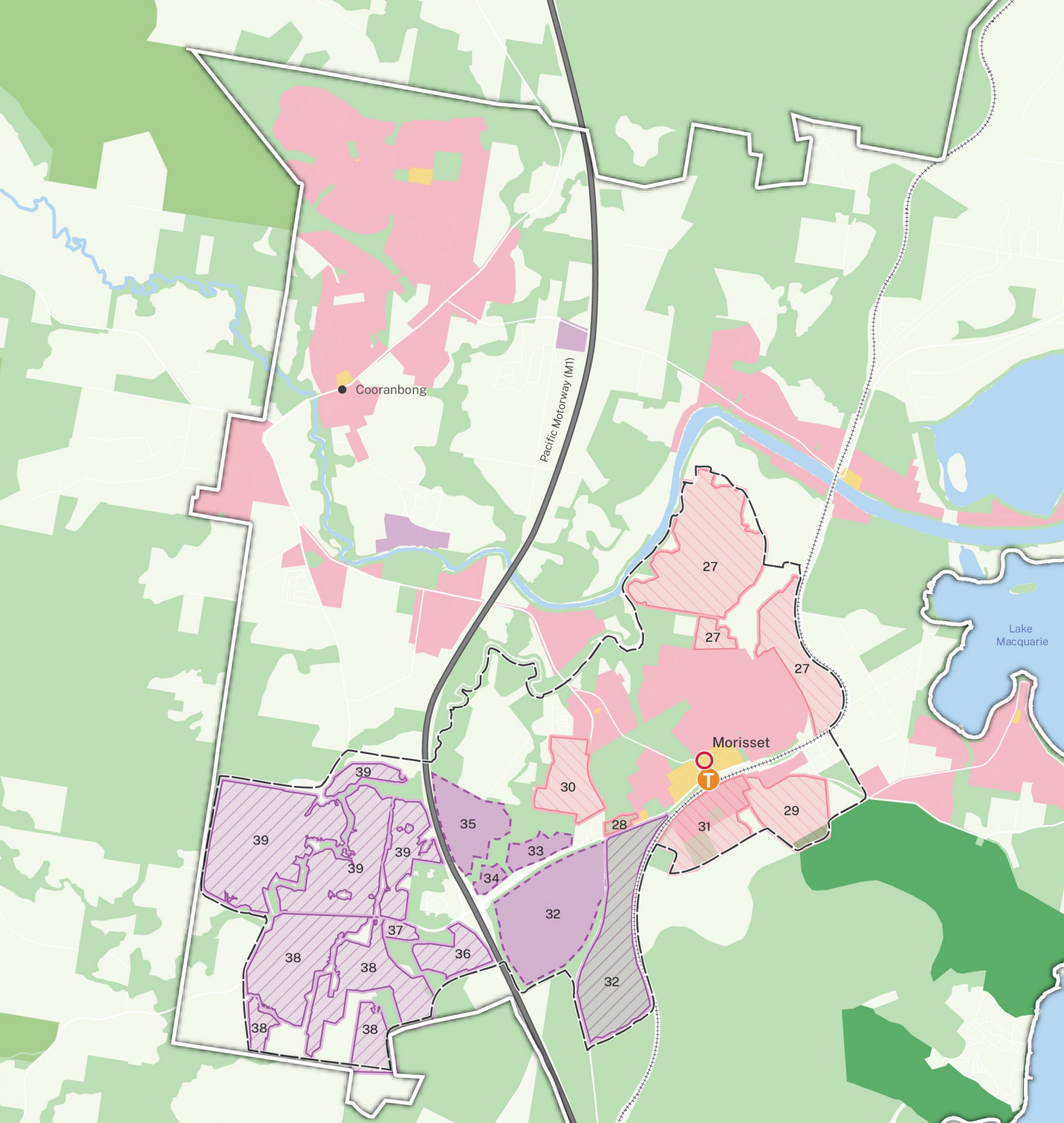
The time and resources invested in detailed planning for these growth areas needs to be translated into outcomes. A risk-based approach to rezoning proposals that are consistent with the relevant plans and staging are accelerated and help materialise the plans in the shortest possible time.

### District preliminary sequencing plan

Detailed investigations will still be required to determine boundaries for development

| Short term<br>(serviced by 2026)   | Medium term<br>(serviced between 2027 to 2036)  | Long term<br>(serviced after 2037)  |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential precinct 2A</li> <li>• Residential precinct 2B</li> <li>• Residential precinct 3A (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 5</li> <li>• Residential precinct 7</li> <li>• Employment precinct 10</li> <li>• Employment precinct 16A (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 16B (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 16D (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 16E (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 16F (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 16G (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 28 (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 19A (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 32 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 33 (investigation)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wyong Employment Zone West of M1</li> <li>• Employment precinct 1 (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 3B (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 4</li> <li>• Residential precinct 9 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 11</li> <li>• Residential precinct 15 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 23</li> <li>• Employment precinct 24 (investigation)</li> <li>• Rural residential precinct 25 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 26</li> <li>• Residential precinct 27 (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 29 (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 30 (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 31 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 34 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 35 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 36 (investigation)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wyong Employment Zone East of M1</li> <li>• Employment precinct 6A (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 6B (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 8A (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 8B (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 12 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 13 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 14 (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 16C (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 17 (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 18 (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 19B (investigation)</li> <li>• Residential precinct 20 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 21 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 22 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 37 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 38 (investigation)</li> <li>• Employment precinct 39 (investigation)</li> </ul> |





**Figure 16: Morisset precincts for future jobs and homes**



- |   |  |                           |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| — Regional boundary                             | Residential                                    | Motorway                  |
| — District boundary                             | Employment precinct (subject to investigation) | Train station             |
| --- Morisset Structure Plan                     | Employment precinct                            | National park and reserve |
| ○ Strategic centre                              | Employment                                     | Open space                |
| ● Centre  | Commercial                                     | Water body                |
| Residential precinct (subject to investigation) | Railway  |                           |



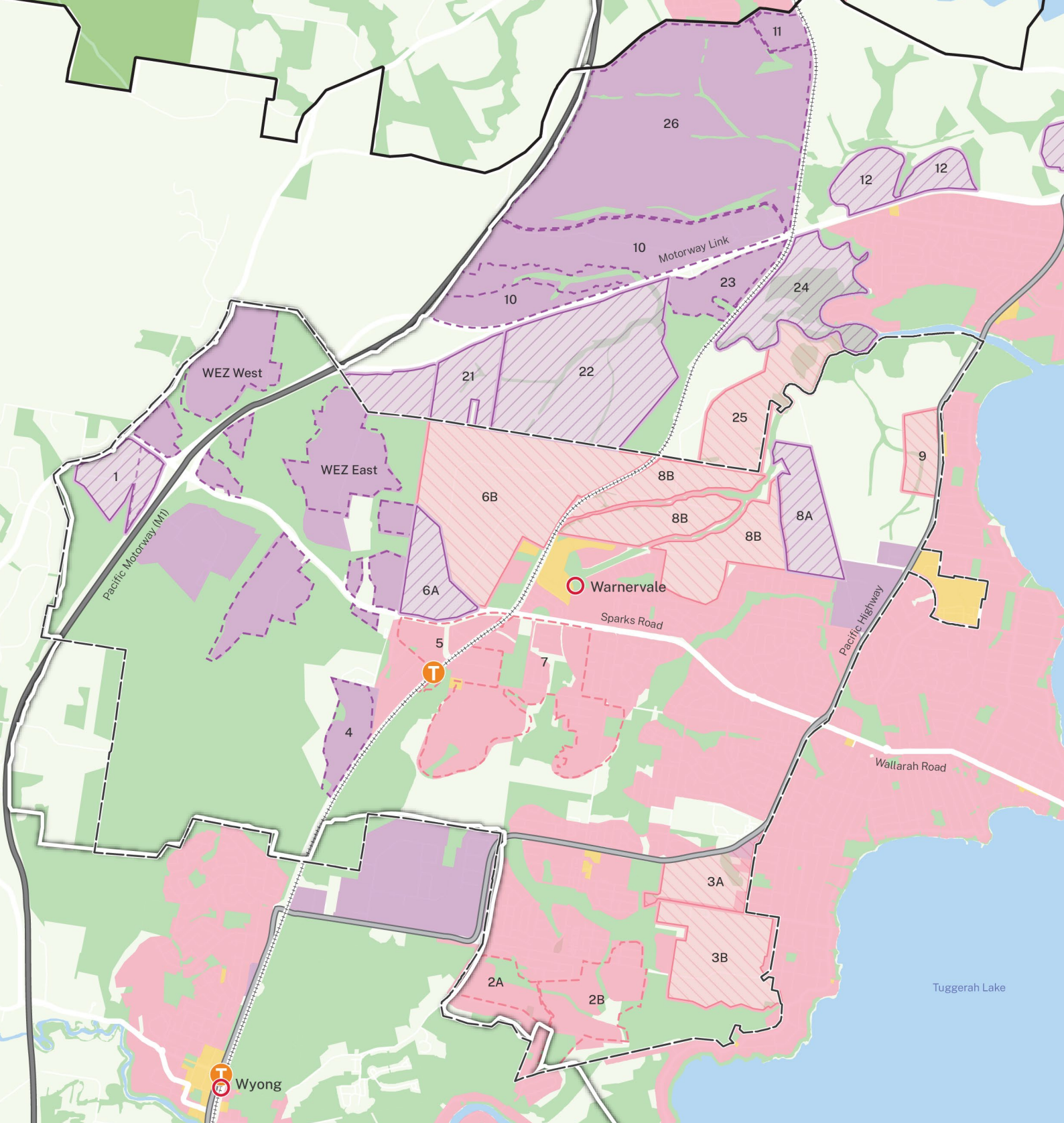
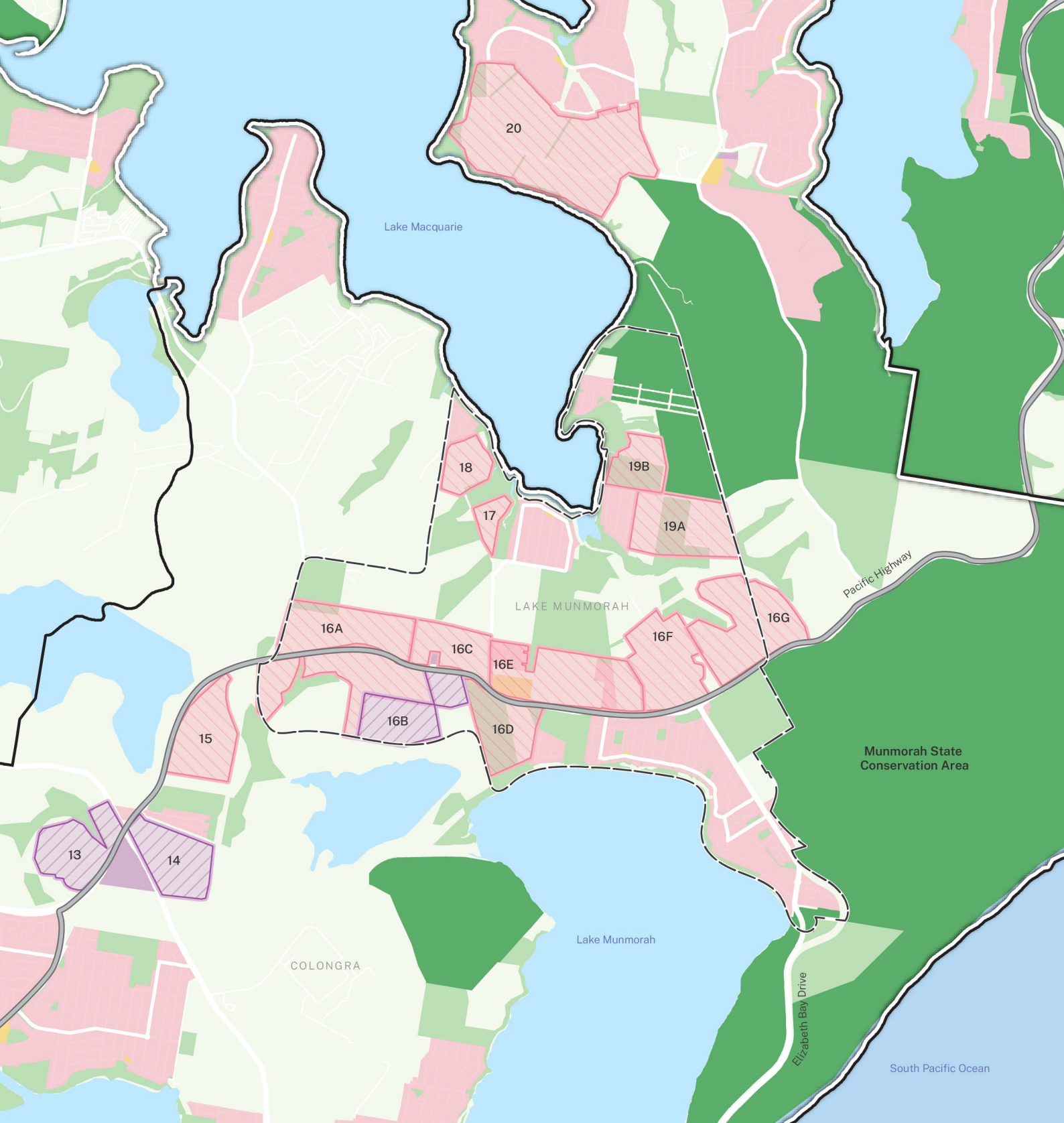


Figure 17: Greater Warnervale precincts for future jobs and homes

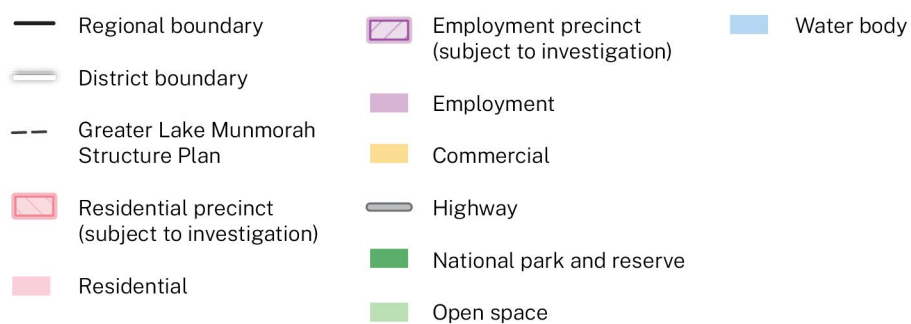


|   |  |               |            |
|---|--|---------------|------------|
| Regional boundary                               | Residential                                    | Train station | Water body |
| District boundary                               | Residential precinct                           | Railway       |            |
| Greater Warnervale Structure Plan               | Employment precinct (subject to investigation) | Motorway      |            |
| Strategic centre                                | Employment                                     | Highway       |            |
| Residential precinct (subject to investigation) | Employment precinct                            | State forest  |            |
|   | Commercial                                     | Open space    |            |





**Figure 18: Greater Lake Munmorah precincts for future jobs and homes**



### Gateway determination commitment

Planning proposals in 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;
- not identified as containing high environmental value;
- not exceed the clearing threshold for any area of native vegetation;
- greater than 500 m from any known mineral resource; and
- identified in future infrastructure delivery plans for the provision of water, sewer, transport and electricity.

*\*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.*

### Transition of Lake Munmorah Power Station

The redevelopment of land surrounding the former Lake Munmorah Power Station presents a unique opportunity to redevelop portions of the site (following remediation) for a range of light industrial, heavy industrial and possibly renewable energy generating uses.

Future industrial uses can utilise existing infrastructure including transmission lines and established vehicular access to and within the site, and benefit from existing vegetation buffers to surrounding residential areas. Appropriate remediation of contaminated lands will need to be undertaken prior to future development.

The unique ecological attributes of the site and access to adjoining waterbodies provides an opportunity to achieve the biodiversity and recreation aspirations of the regional plan. This can leverage existing areas of the site already utilised for conservation and recreation, including the Koala Park, Colongra Sports Complex and the San Remo Boat Launching Ramp.

Development proposals should seek to revegetate previously cleared areas to strengthen the regional biodiversity corridor and habitat network. Proposed green corridors and drainage corridors will need to address environmental stormwater matters.

Low impact and passive recreation activities should be promoted to connect with the regional shared path network linking surrounding urban areas to the Lake Munmorah foreshore. The Crown land lakefront reserve will need to be retained.

### Retrofitting suburban areas as part of the 15-minute region

Infill development opportunities within the district will challenge the assumption that we will continue to use our personal motor vehicles to meet most of our needs, even within existing suburbs. San Remo, Lake Munmorah, Blue Haven (west), Lake Haven, Charmhaven, Mannering Park and Chain Valley Bay all provide opportunities to retrofit the existing urban fabric, and will require a different approach to transform them into 15-minute neighbourhoods.

Diverse and mixed use neighbourhoods can be achieved in existing suburbs by retrofitting into more complete communities where most everyday needs are accessible by walking and cycling.

At the local level there will need to be a focus on building typology, pedestrian and bicycle connection and functional open space. At the regional scale, these communities will provide connection opportunities via the 30-minute connected community development model.



## Tuggerah Lakes

Tuggerah Lakes water quality is declining and there needs to be improved treatment of stormwater and management of flows into the lakes. The lack of available area to treat urban stormwater before it enters the lake system is a major constraint for improved stormwater management.

Innovative water quality solutions through smart planning and design will be needed to reduce the impact from development proposals. For example: water capture and reuse; at source stormwater treatment and infiltrations; end of pipe stormwater treatment and reuse; bank stabilisation and riparian rehabilitation; and increased infiltration throughout the water catchment.

Consideration will be given if standard development control plan provisions of 80% total suspended solids (compared to a do-nothing approach) is sufficient, or if a neutral impact should instead be specified.

Development proposals will need to demonstrate that future development will be supported by planning controls that ensure a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality.

## Biodiversity corridor

Strategic conservation planning will protect high environmental value areas within and adjoining growth areas and link new housing sites to the surrounding natural landscape. It seeks to establish and connect a regional biodiversity corridor to enable the movement of wildlife between the mountains and the ocean. Any development in new growth areas will need to maintain the integrity of the biodiversity corridor.

## Green infrastructure and quality public space

A regional cycleway and shared path network will enable accessible, safe and cohesive movement within and between growth areas in the district.

Growth in the district is likely to be defined by predominantly residential development resulting in large travel distances between home and goods and services. A regional cycleway and shared path network with shading, water views and access to the regional biodiversity corridor can entice people who are interested, but concerned to ride a bike in their neighbourhood and beyond.

Key anchor points of the network should include Warnervale town centre, San Remo and Lake Munmorah centres. It is also important shared path networks connect homes with schools and other education facilities.

## Resource lands

Mineral and energy resources need to be managed and protected from incompatible development or encroachment that could prevent their ability to operate leading to mineral resource sterilisation. Conflict may occur if new housing encroaches into resource areas, potentially leading to higher management costs or a reduced potential to sustain or grow rural and resource industries.

## Region's mineral and energy resources

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

Development proposals for aggregate extraction should be promoted where 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.



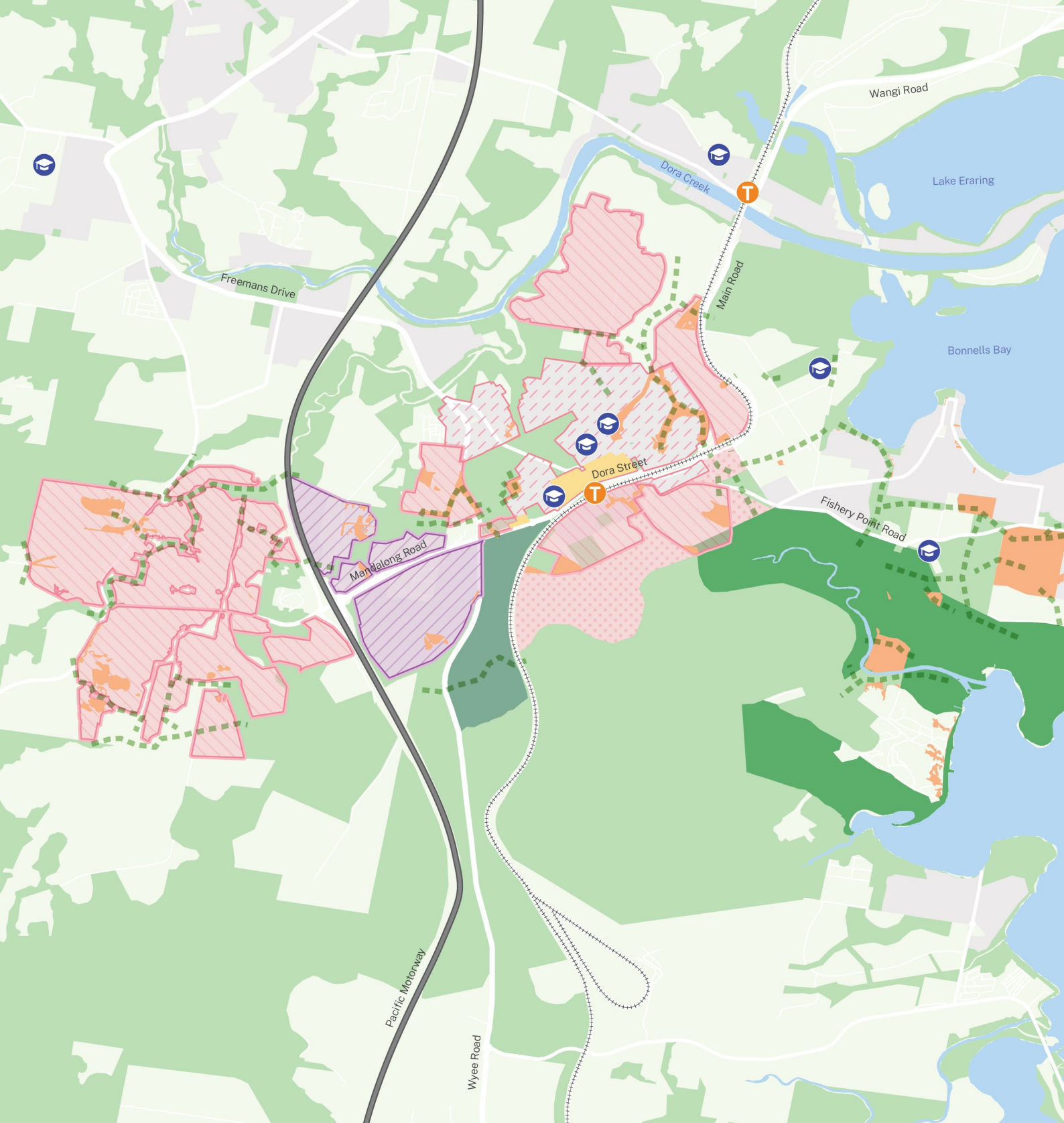


Figure 19: Morisset regionally significant growth area



- |   |  |                           |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| Town centre                                     | Endangered ecological communities                | Biodiversity corridors    |
| Employment opportunity                          | Investigation (subject to ecological assessment) | Train station             |
| Infill  | Urban footprint                                  | Education                 |
| Investigation area (residential and employment) | Railway  | National park and reserve |
| Private recreation                              | Pacific Motorway (M1)                            | Open space                |
|   |  | Water body                |



## Regionally Significant Growth Areas

### Morrisset Growth Area

Morrisset and its supporting local centres of Cooranbong and Wyee represent the largest future growth area in the Hunter and will underpin the economic diversification of the region. Currently home to around 25,000 people, the area has the potential to accommodate an additional 12,000 to 36,000 people over the next 20 years.

Morrisset has the assets for significant growth, including transport connections and proximity to other parts of the Hunter, Central Coast and Sydney. Growth will support diverse businesses, creative enterprises, government and community services, as well as providing opportunities for more intensive multi-storey commercial, mixed use and residential development.

Improvements to rail passenger services and Morrisset's position on the M1 Pacific Motorway will provide local jobs and cater to emerging hybrid remote working models. Morrisset is also the gateway to important natural areas including the Watagans National Park and Lake Macquarie.

With several mines and two major power stations, including the 930-hectare site of Eraring Australia's largest coal-fired power station, the economy is expected to further diversify and cater to demand for renewable energy and circular economy developments, a growing lifestyle and tourism market, health services, goods distribution and urban food production. Supporting these activities is accessibility to tertiary education institutions including Avondale University and the University of Newcastle.

Realising the growth potential of Morrisset and surrounds will require improvements to road network infrastructure and partnerships between government, the development sector and Biraban LALC. Staging of land releases will be determined by the delivery of infrastructure to support the increased demand.

#### 1. Morrisset M1 Interchange Food Production Precinct

- Encourage intensive agriculture, including precision farming and greenhouses, for ongoing food security and to make use of strategic connections to wholesale distribution centres.

#### 2. Morrisset M1 Interchange Employment Precinct

- Expand industrial, business, and specialised retail employment uses.
- Leverage proximity to the M1 Pacific Motorway to support employment uses in Mandalong Road West, including freight, warehousing and logistics, and that complement 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.

### 4. Morrisset 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 housing and commercial development with a diverse offering of business services, retail and dining, supported by health and social services.
- Create a main shopping strip close to transport infrastructure.

### 5. Morrisset Urban Area

- Plan for mixed use opportunities adjacent to the city centre to provide a 15-minute neighbourhood.

### 6. Urban Expansion Areas

#### *Koompahtoo*

- Transition residential housing density adjacent to Morrisset rail station.
- Improve connectivity with Morrisset Central precinct and gateway to the southern Lake Macquarie State Conservation Area and adjacent conservation land.

#### *North Morrisset*

- Plan for housing anchored by a central neighbourhood common and quality pedestrian and cycle connections to surrounding precincts.

#### *Morrisset East*

- Transition Marconi Road small lot production to accommodate low density residential uses, sensitive to the continued operation of Morrisset wastewater treatment plant.
- Connect walking and cycling links to Morrisset Central precinct, Bonnells Bay and open space foreshore areas.

#### *West Morrisset*

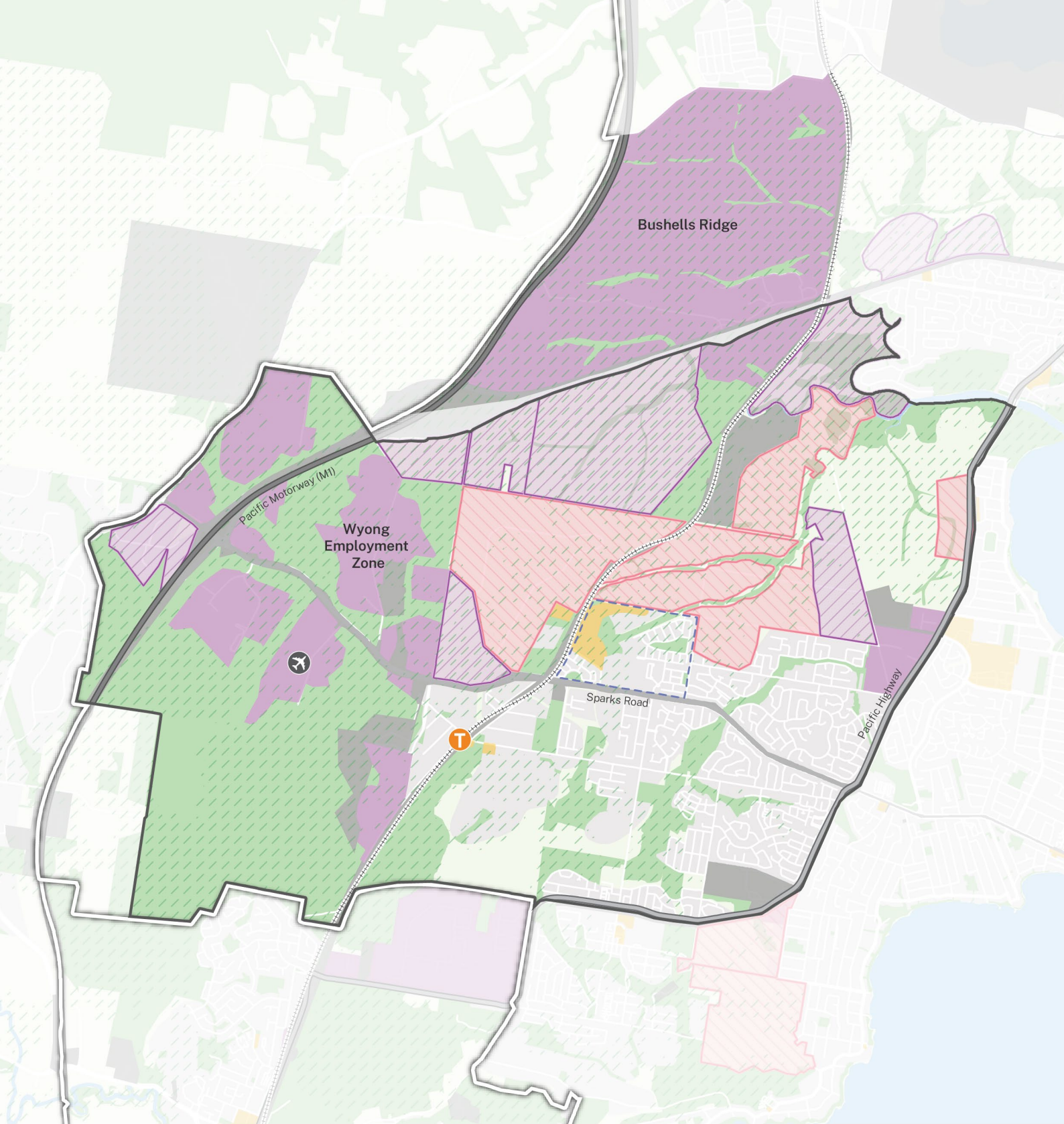
- Develop residential land to accommodate increased population.
- Build pedestrian and cycle connections to surrounding precincts.

### 7. Morrisset Golf Club

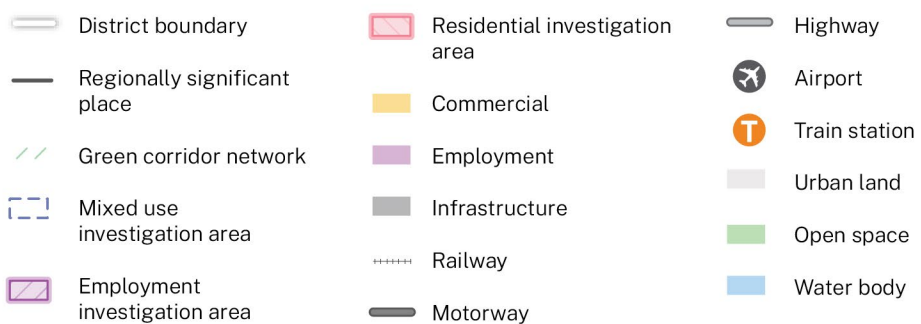
- Incorporate private recreation facilities with other uses, such as manufactured home estates and seniors living.

### 8. Urban Support

- Transition Moira Park Road investigation land to accommodate expansion of urban services as required.



**Figure 20: Warnervale regionally significant growth area**





## Warnervale Growth Area

Unlocking the potential of Warnervale will support the economy and create jobs. 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. Over this time there has been residential construction undertaken, but the commercial development associated with a new train station has not eventuated. A new town centre is important to servicing the wider Warnervale area which is continuing to grow.

The Wyong Employment Zone, incorporating the Sparks Road and Pacific Highway corridors, is essential. A coordinated review will prioritise delivery, infrastructure and biodiversity offset actions for it and Warnervale town centre. This will include consideration of recent development proposals and future transport services to enhance connections between the town centre and surrounding homes.

### Warnervale town centre urban design principles

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Principle 1</b> | Embrace the natural features of the site and embellish the public domain and open space network with additional greenery.   |
| <b>Principle 2</b> | 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.           |
| <b>Principle 3</b> | 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. |
| <b>Principle 4</b> | 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.                   |
| <b>Principle 5</b> | Orient activity towards the street for a safe and vibrant public domain. Provide a visual exchange between commercial, social and residential uses and the street.                    |
| <b>Principle 6</b> | Provide higher density living adjacent the town centre and open spaces for vibrancy and convenience, while also focusing development along key pedestrian routes.                     |
| <b>Principle 7</b> | Supply a mix of housing typologies including affordable housing for a diverse and well-rounded community.   |
| <b>Principle 8</b> | Establish a robust structure plan which can adapt to market demand and investor interest through typology mix or density developed.   |
| <b>Principle 9</b> | Provide a staged approach to development that aims to reach the site's maximum yield potential.   |

**1. Employment Zone North Precinct**

- Plan for large industrial lots to support regionally significant employment uses and resolve enabling infrastructure (water and sewer) in accordance with a sequencing strategy.
- Enable specialist precincts, such as for automotive related uses, off Mountain Road.
- Prohibit additional direct vehicle access from Sparks Road and use landscaping to enhance visual amenity along the road corridor.

**2. Employment Zone South Precinct**

- Attract land uses to complement the businesses operating within Warnervale Business Park and anchored by the Woolworths Distribution Centre.
- Council to prepare a master plan for Central Coast Airport and consider opportunities for expanded aviation activities including freight and logistics, joy flights and parachute jumps, training and education, maintenance and servicing.
- Ensure any ongoing or future uses associated with the Central Coast Airport consider the protection of the Porters Creek Wetland.

**3. Town Centre Precinct**

- Provide a complete main street that prioritises pedestrians, slows traffic and links a new retail centre to Hill Top Park, with new buildings bringing activity to streets and car parking located to the rear of sites.
- Connect the town centre to surrounding growth areas via a regional shared path network to other key locations in the district, including Wyong Employment Zone, Lake Haven and Wadalba, all within a 15-minute bicycle ride.
- Achieve a minimum density of 70 dwellings/ha to increase the viability of non-residential uses and transport services.
- Align land use and transport planning to account for the needs of all users including pedestrians, cyclists, deliveries, private vehicles and public transport, as well as people spending time in the town centre.

**4. Station Precinct**

- Promote redevelopment of 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.
- Enhance the existing recreation and cultural heritage experiences at Warnie's Café.
- Investigate the feasibility of a link road between Wyong and Warnervale.



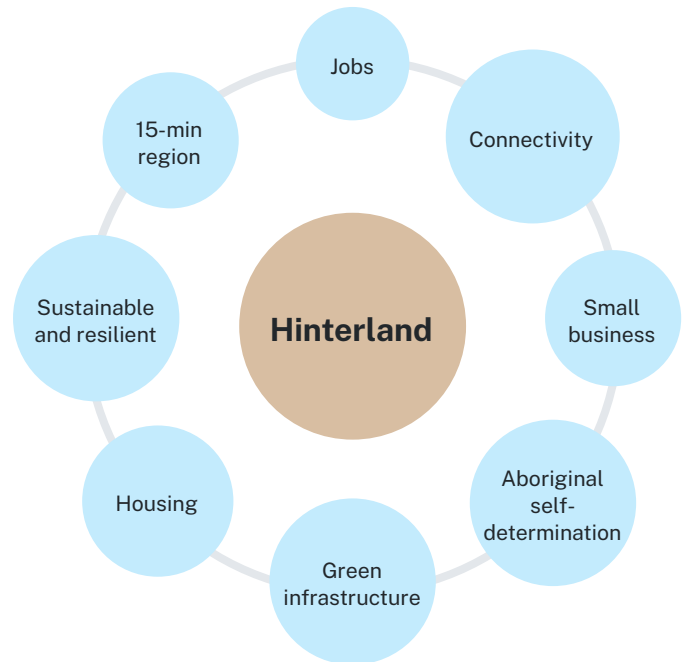
## The hinterland district is the rural landscapes connected to metropolitan Greater Newcastle and the World Heritage listed natural areas.

The district's communities hold close connections to the land and enjoy relaxed casual outdoor lifestyles, privacy and secluded living environments.

Working farms co-exist with complementary enterprises and outdoor recreation. Nature-based tourism offers visitors the chance to experience and appreciate the natural attractions of the Hinterland and its relaxed lifestyle, as well as the many attractions of the rural towns and villages, such as Wollombi, Paterson and Clarence Town.

The district's rural areas and non-urban character are defined by:

- rural enterprises, rural residential, tourism, environmental and outdoor recreation uses;
- the predominance of natural landscape over buildings and structures; and
- limited, dispersed buildings and structures that are integrated with the natural landscape.





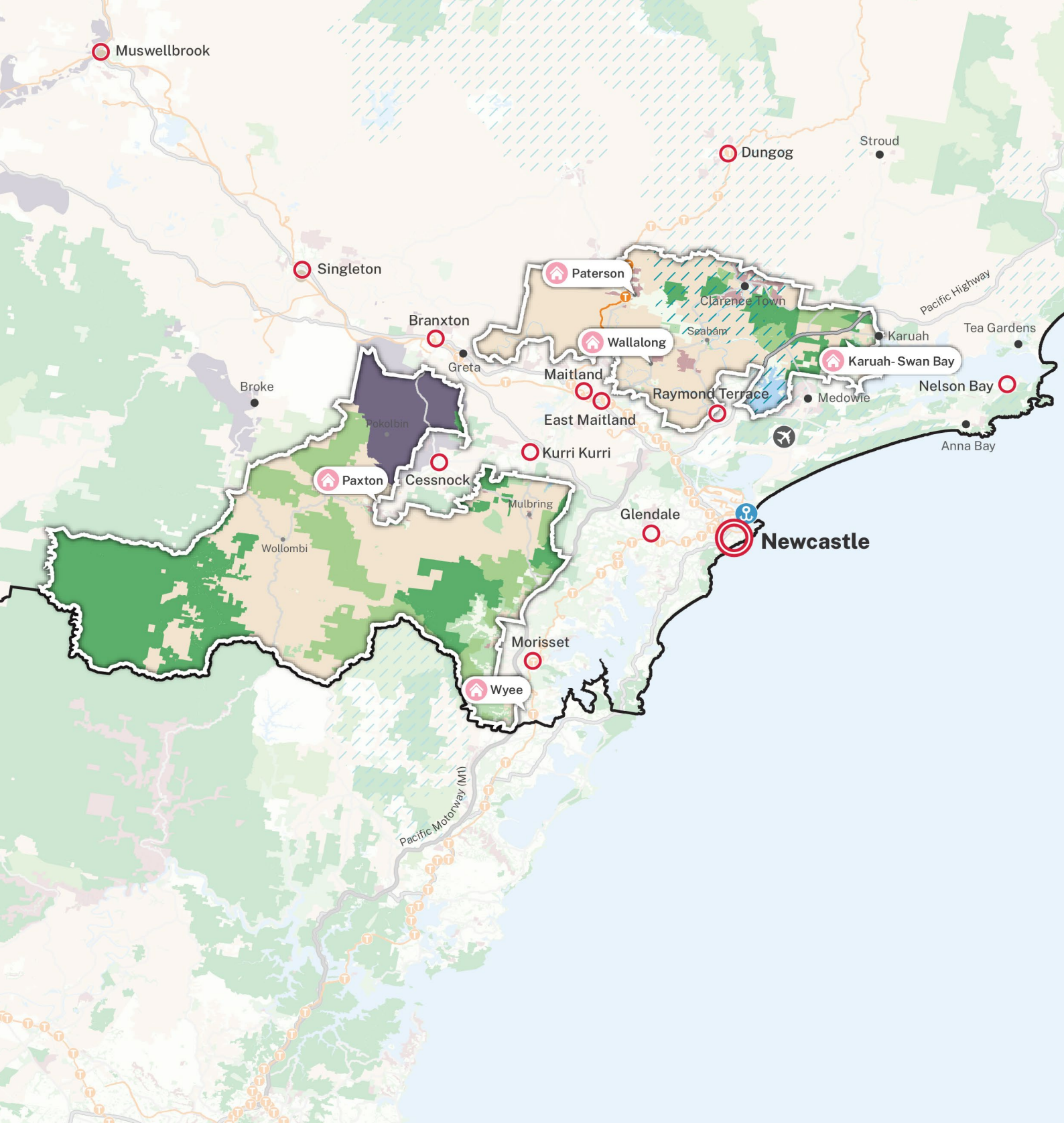


Figure 21: Hinterland district



- |                               |                   |  |                           |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--|---------------------------|
| — Regional boundary           | Train station     | Viticultural strategic agricultural land | National park and reserve |
| — District boundary           | Newcastle Airport | Drinking water catchments                | State forest              |
| Metropolitan city             | Port              | Existing rural residential               | Open space                |
| Strategic centre              | — Highway         | Rural land                               | Water body                |
| • Centre                      | — Motorway        |  |                           |
| • Village                     | — Road            |  |                           |
| Potential future growth areas | — Railway         |  |                           |



## District Planning Priorities

### Rural villages and housing diversity

The rural villages of Millfield, Paxton, Ellalong, Hinton, Seaham, Paterson, Clarence Town and Martinsville will face increased pressures for residential development due to their scenic rural settings and proximity to Greater Newcastle. Incremental residential growth will be supported where constraints including infrastructure capacity, flooding, bushfire, flood access, infrastructure, important agricultural land and environmental can be managed.

Clarence Town and Paterson are rich in history and experience demand for rural residential housing associated with each town's proximity to metropolitan areas. They offer existing land zoned for lifestyle choices to those wishing to live on larger, acreage style lots in a semi-rural setting. Dungog Council is currently undertaking structure planning for Clarence Town that will consider the appropriateness of currently zoned R5 Large Lot Residential land in relation to flood prone land and environmental values. The structure plan will also consider current development pressure against the remaining capacity of Clarence Town Wastewater Treatment works, rationalisation of the business zone, the limits of the urban area and internal connectivity to key destinations.

These rural villages can be suitable for renewal where it is sympathetic to local character and supports local enterprise and employment opportunities.

Rural villages can be a key destination for tourism, leisure and recreation activities and support the development of an integrated network of green and blue grids, while ensuring that high value assets and amenities are protected and enhanced.

### Rural enterprises and diversification

The Hinterland could be a place for innovation, sustainability and opportunities for value-adding to primary industries. Rural diversification - the establishment of new enterprises in rural locations – could see existing businesses entering into new areas of activity or the creation of entirely new rural enterprises.

Successful diversification means supporting existing businesses and traditional activities while embracing innovation, new activities and new business ideas. Affording people the opportunity to continue to work in rural areas helps them stay connected with their communities. Welcoming new people to the Hinterland helps maintain its vitality.

As this occurs, the intrinsic rural character should be protected. Traditional sectors, such as agriculture and forestry, are essential in retaining the rural character.

Diversification and growth of smart specialisation of local economies will focus on clustering, including sustainable farming and food production, tourism, bioeconomy and circular economy to realise the benefits of green technologies.

A range of locations for increasing rural enterprises should have existing or easily available infrastructure, be sensitive to the rural landscape and natural environment and allow businesses to build on existing clusters and networks. There are circumstances where, in relation to a business, new housing may be acceptable as a complementary part of a development. However, preference should be given to new housing to existing towns and villages. Working from home is also becoming more and more common and should be encouraged.

Development proposals should support rural communities to adapt and build on their 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 including rural value-adding of farm stays, camping or farm gate trails, along with larger visitor economy and events that complement the rural landscapes.

## Sequenced development and potential future growth areas

Major areas in the district that may be suitable for future urban growth include Wallalong and Swan Bay. The intent for these areas is set out in Objective 4.

Wallalong can become isolated in flood events and there is currently limited access to infrastructure, especially reticulated sewer and distances to retail, health and community services and facilities. There are no current plans for government to fund and/or deliver the necessary infrastructure required for Wallalong to be an urban area.

The Swan Bay – Twelve Mile Creek area has been identified as a potential future growth area. Further understanding of infrastructure costs and funding mechanisms for the proposal for the realignment of The Bucketts Way and Medowie Road with a grade separated interchange, upgrades at the existing interchange to the south-west of Karuah, additional roads to enable development, along with the feasibility of extending water and wastewater to the area need to be understood prior to consideration of this a potential growth area in the longer term. There are no current plans for government to fund and/or deliver the necessary infrastructure required for Swan Bay – Twelve Mile Creek to be an urban area.

## 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 water ways which also support an array of wildlife and aquatic species. Sustaining good water quality is vital to both the natural environment and agriculture that relies on the flow of local rivers for supplying water to the livestock.

Both Clarence Town and Paterson were established around the river for transportation, which is now enjoyed by residents for recreation.



*Williams River, Clarence Town*



## Regionally Significant Growth Areas

### Viticulture Growth Area

The viticulture growth area's unique landscape is a major appeal, with visitors enjoying expansive views of vineyards stretching across gently undulating hills set against the rugged backdrop of the valley's walls. It is this scenic amenity and rural character which has created a growing tourism industry and employment opportunities.

As the tourism industry continues to expand, the rural landscape will come under more pressure. This development may risk the scenic amenity and grape growing elements of the vineyards which underpin its success. Development proposals should support the amenity and production value of the landscape so tourism growth is sustainable over the long term.

The viticulture growth area supports a range of biodiversity from large areas of native vegetation to riparian corridors and tree-lined streets. Enhancing and connecting these areas will improve ecosystems, sustain wildlife habitat and contribute to local amenity.

Opportunities to expand active transport networks should be explored. Reducing private vehicle usage in the vineyards region will enhance the rural amenity and allow visitors to better engage with the landscape.

### 1. Strategic agricultural land

- Ensure non-agricultural development proposals consider potential for land use conflict with existing and future agricultural uses of land in the vicinity of the site.
- Direct residential subdivision and other development incompatible with the vineyards' rural landscape and scenic amenity towards centres outside the vineyards.

### 2. Tourism node investigation area

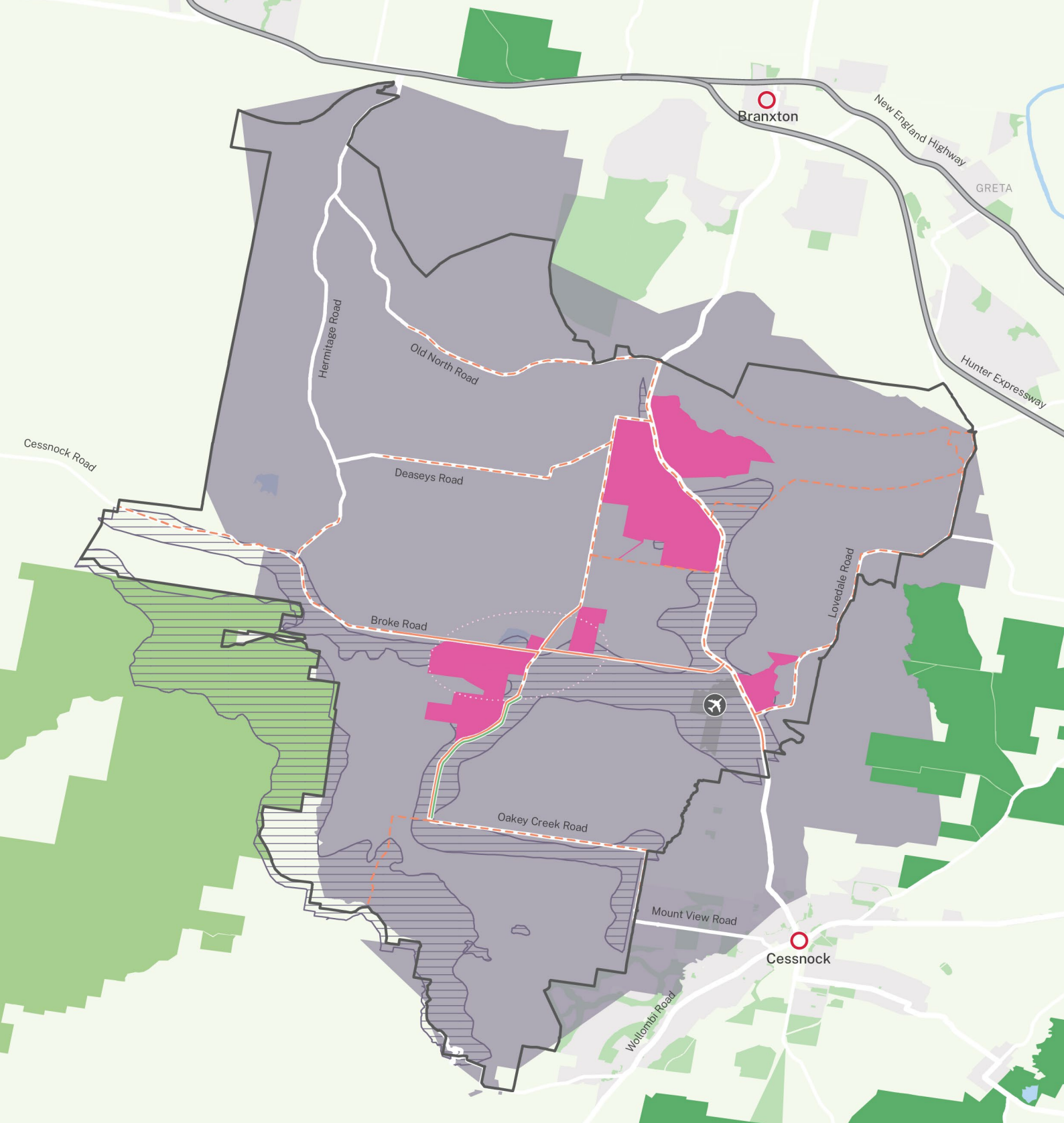
- Investigate a tourism node to be the location for larger scale tourism developments.
- Ensure development proposals are sympathetic to the rural amenity and the local character of the area.
- Create active transport networks to connect the tourism node to tourism activities and landscape features.

### 3. Visually significant areas

- Review visually significant areas mapping to ensure it reflects landscape values.
- Ensure non-agricultural development has suitable infrastructure and can be accommodated in the landscape setting.
- Ensure design requirements set out siting, bulk, scale and built form suitable for the setting.
- Ensure development proposals on land adjoining scenic areas consider how they may affect the landscape values of the vineyards and be adapted accordingly.

Audrey Wilkinson, Pokolbin  
Credit: Destination NSW





**Figure 22: Hunter Valley Vineyards regionally significant growth area**



- |  |   |                             |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| — Hunter Valley Vineyards boundary         | □ Potential tourism node investigation area | --- Proposed cycleways      |
| ○ Strategic centre                         | □ Existing urban areas                      | ✈ Cessnock Airport          |
| ● Centre                                   | ■ Existing large scale tourism              | ■ National park and reserve |
| ■ Viticultural strategic agricultural land | — Highway                                   | ■ State forest              |
| □ Vineyard significant views               | — Walking trails                            | ■ Open space                |
|  | — Existing cycleways                        | ■ Water body                |



**The Barrington district’s community love the rural, quiet and relaxed nature of the area and its proximity to work, cities, family and services.**

The 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 benefits from important ecological corridors, contributing to biodiversity values of the community.

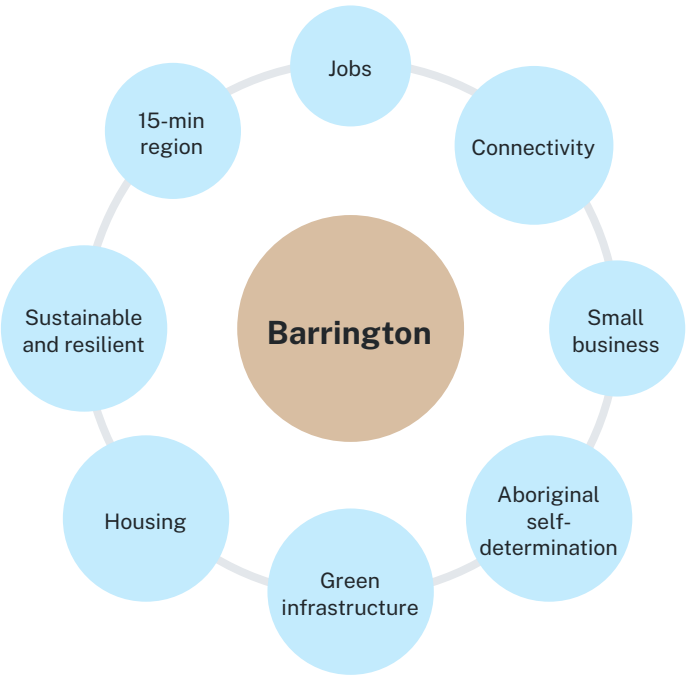
It is an increasingly popular destination for residents and visitors. There are opportunities to strengthen tourist connections to the inland attractions of Barrington Tops and Ellenborough Falls with coastal areas of Myall Lakes National Park.

Rural landscapes support dairy, beef, timber and poultry farming. 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.

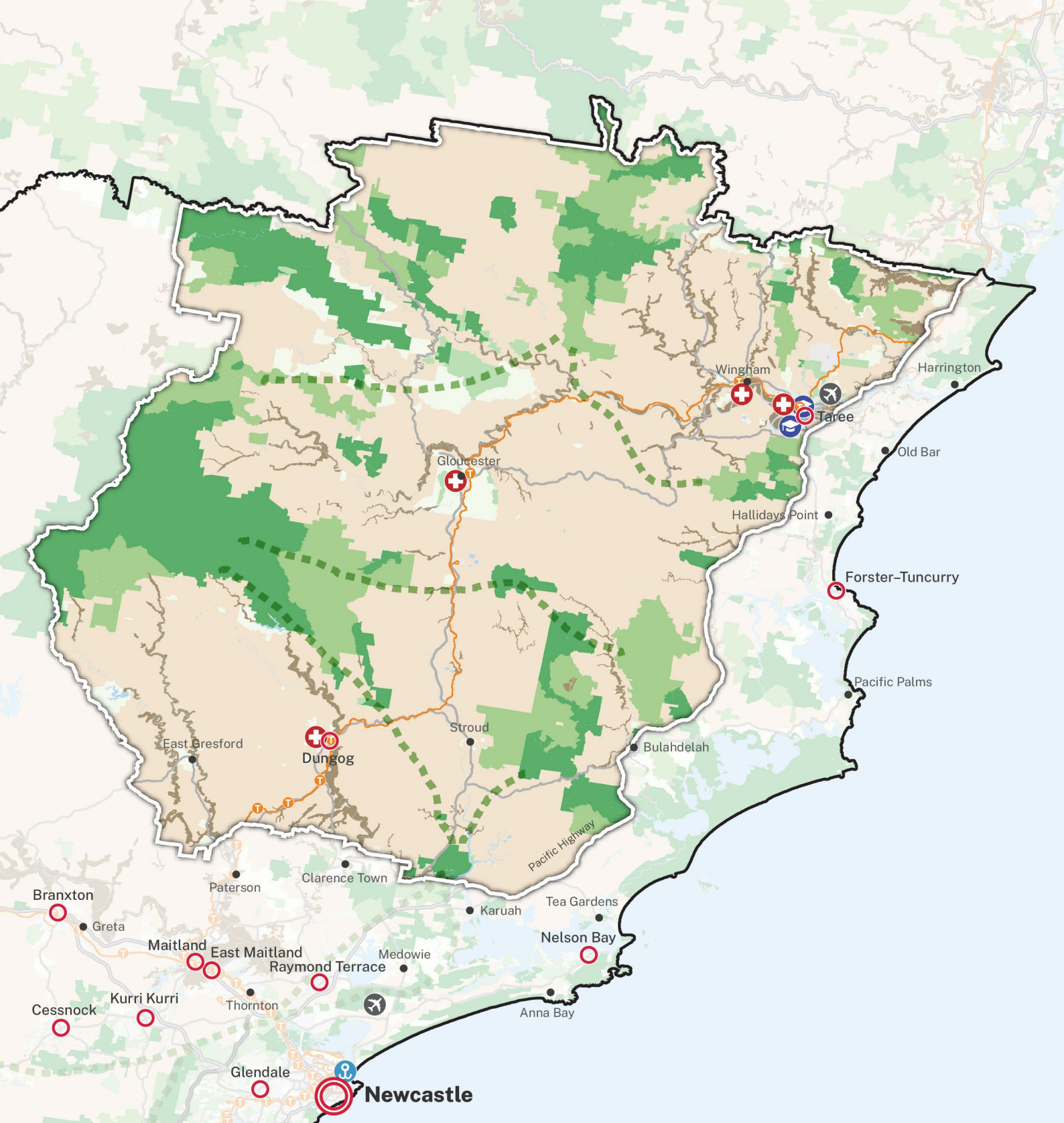
Improvements to the M1 Pacific Motorway have increased growth opportunities for industries with access to key markets in Newcastle and Sydney. Improvements to other key road infrastructure such as the Bucketts Way and Thunderbolts Way would further support agricultural enterprise in the district.

The Northern Gateway Transport Hub at Taree offers employment and economic opportunities. Clustering of economic activities will be promoted to leverage access to the M1 Pacific Motorway and Taree Regional Airport that support Taree as a regional city.

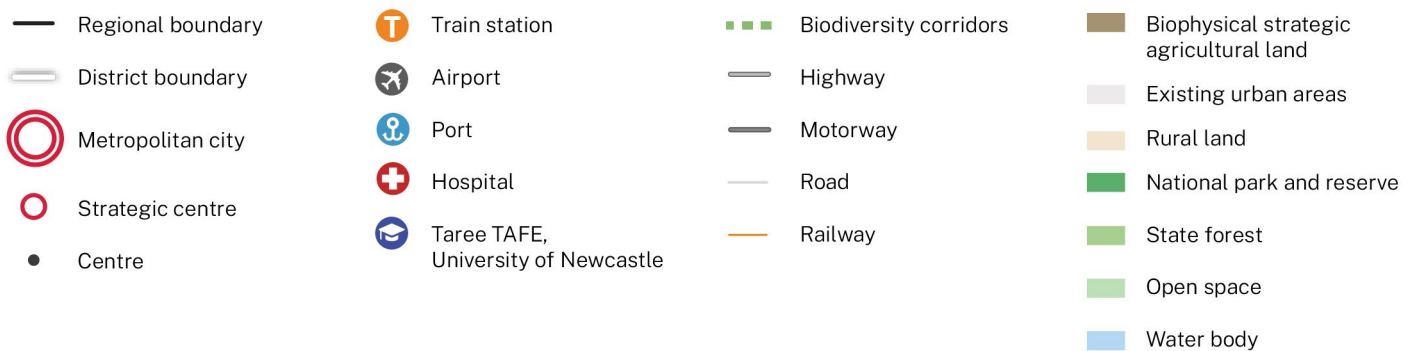
Dungog comprises areas of commercial, industrial and residential lands with an extensive range of services available for the local and wider community.







**Figure 23: Barrington district**





## District Planning Priorities

### Housing diversity and sequenced development

The intent to deliver new and more complete communities that are well-planned and serviced will be achieved in areas including:

- Taree
- Wingham
- Dungog
- Bulahdelah
- Tinonee
- Gloucester

Medium density development should be encouraged close to Taree town centre, and the above towns where opportunities exist.

Facilities that respond to the ageing population including retirement living and opportunities to downsize are limited and should be promoted.

### 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, saw milling facilities and mining infrastructure. These rural enterprises must be able to develop in locations that support the rural economy.

The identification and protection of important agricultural lands and of intensive agriculture clusters in local plans should avoid land use conflicts, particularly with residential and rural residential expansion.

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. Limiting dwellings in rural zones will also help to avoid potential land use conflicts with agricultural activities.

Development proposals should support rural communities to adapt and build on their 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 including rural value-adding activities of farm stays, camping or farm gate trails, along with larger visitor economy and events that complement the rural landscapes.

### Tourism gateways and scenic landscapes

The Barrington Tops National Parks is part of the World Heritage Gondwana Rainforests. Careful management and infrastructure can retain this area as a great place to visit. Gloucester, Stroud and Dungog are tourism gateways to the Barrington Tops, Wingham serves as a gateway to Ellenborough Falls and Bulahdelah to the

Myall Lakes, a series of fresh-water lakes protected under the Ramsar Convention including The Moors and upstream of the Bombah Broadwater. Each of these towns are destinations for visitors due to their rural setting, high amenity and heritage buildings.

Development proposals should promote existing events and encourage new ones, and encourage more overnight stays with a variety of accommodation options and various activities. This should include ways to increase tourism choices in urban, rural and environmental areas.

Dungog Council is facilitating the development of Dungog Common as a destination for mountain bikers, showing how these towns can develop a visitor economy. MidCoast Council has identified developing a visitor economy for Wingham, based around its showground for music festivals and rodeos and Gloucester for its mountain activities.

However, additional visitors can place pressure on infrastructure in smaller communities. Sustainable approaches need to be applied to growing tourism especially in areas associated with the sharing economy, such as farm stays and rural camping.

### Rural towns and villages

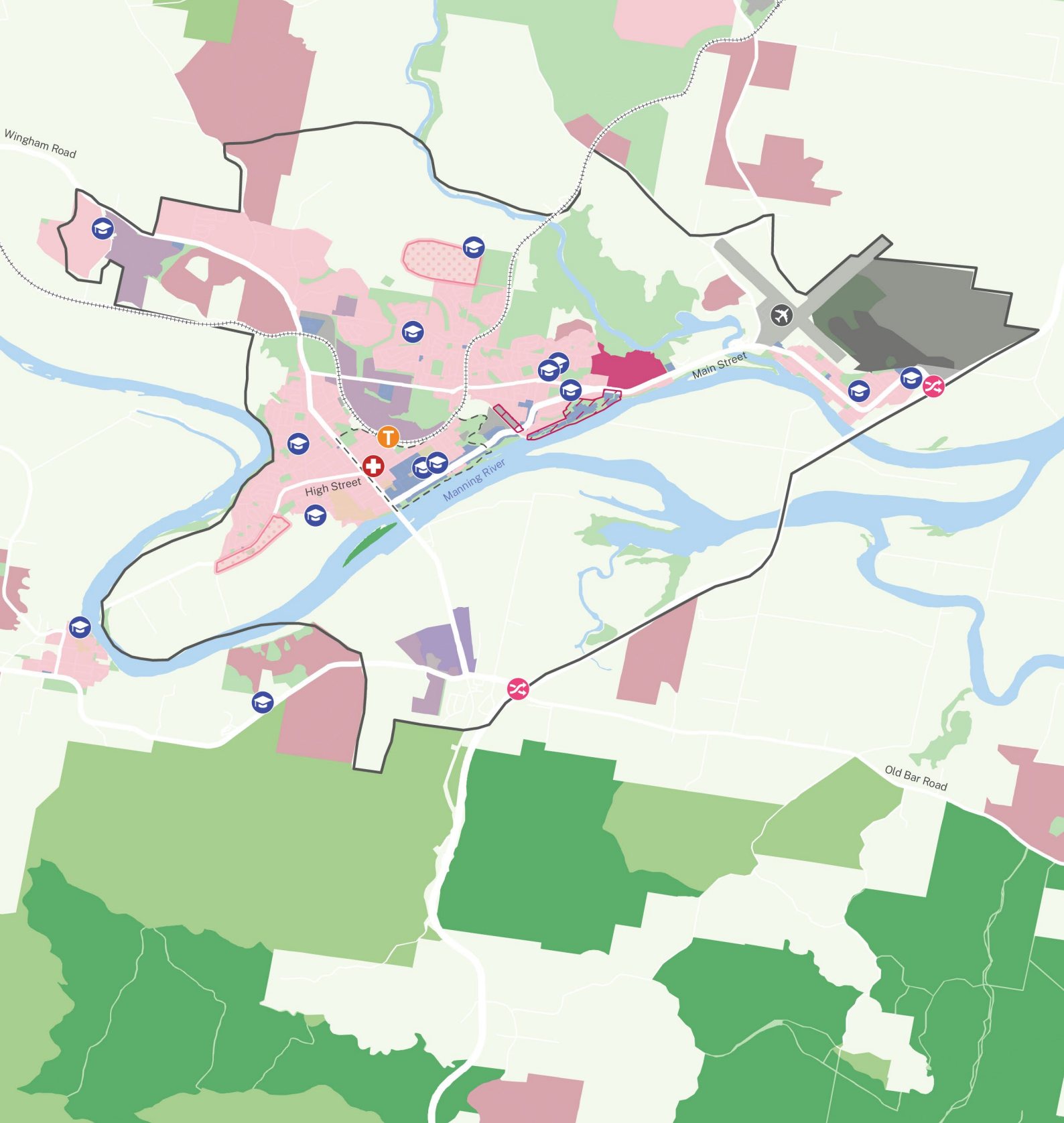
There are opportunities to expand rural towns and villages especially in areas where there is limited agricultural activity or other constraints.

Some villages connected to sewer are identified for potential expansion. These include Coopernook, Nahiack, Bulahdelah and Stroud, Clarence Town. Other villages not connected to sewer also seek expansion opportunities. Given the need for onsite waste disposal, only large lot residential development could be considered where there is a demonstrated need, the location is strategically suitable and constraints are addressed.

Rural communities need to maintain their rich heritage and historic charm, while developing their accommodation and service capacities. Around the headwaters of the Manning River, two new locations have been identified as villages at Bundook and Mt George.

### Health care precincts

Health care is the largest provider of jobs in the Barrington district and this sector is expected to grow with the forecast increases in the ageing population. Developing a health precinct around the Manning Base Hospital, as outlined in the Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan, is important to ensure that the co-location benefits of health industries are realised. Clustering of allied health around other health facilities at Gloucester and Wingham will support the ageing population.



**Figure 24: Taree regionally significant growth area**



|   |                                  |                        |                           |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| — Taree place area boundary             | Employment precinct              | +++++ Railway          | National park and reserve |
| - - - Manning Health/Taree CBD precinct | Heritage conservation area (EPI) | T Train station        | Open space                |
| Business land                           | Investigation area               | Taree Regional Airport | Water body                |
| Industrial land                         | Redevelopment site               | Educational facility   |                           |
| Residential land                        | Taree regional recreation centre | Highway interchange    |                           |
| Existing rural residential              | Northern Gateway Transport Hub   | Taree Hospital         |                           |



## Regionally Significant Growth Areas

### Taree Growth Area

Taree provides economic, recreational, educational, administrative, cultural and civic services for MidCoast. It is the regional city for the Barrington district.

Health care is expected to grow as the population gets older. Clustering of allied health around the Manning Base Hospital at Taree as proposed in the Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan will support continuing economic and population growth. The NSW Government is working on the redevelopment of the Manning Base Hospital to help support improved health care outcomes.

Taree has a strong cultural history associated with the Manning River and boasts impressive heritage character areas and buildings, such Fotheringhams Park, the Beehive building and Taree Railway Station that provide town centre anchors.

It is well recognised the relationship of the town to the river foreshore is poor, and remains a key opportunity into the future. Encouraging housing density, particularly in and around the CBD will alleviate current pressure on housing in Taree, particularly on the rental market which has limited supply of units available.

M1 Pacific Highway upgrades have increased access to markets in Newcastle and Sydney. The Northern Gateway could be a place for employment and economic opportunities. Clustering appropriate economic activities that leverages access to M1 and Taree Regional Airport will support the ongoing commercial and retail role of Taree CBD, and Taree as a regional city.

#### 1. Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct

- Locate health-related services and facilities between the hospital and the CBD.
- Build on the retail and commercial uses in the city centre and provide the community with access to services.
- Offer diverse housing choice to encourage people to live within walking distance of jobs, services, facilities and experiences.
- Use pedestrian movement/safety and experiences to activate streets and connect to the Manning River.
- Activate Manning River foreshore by encouraging development to face the river, new activities and improve connections to Taree CBD and along the Manning River.
- Protect important heritage and character locations.

#### 2. Northern Gateway Transport Hub

- Boost economic investment and local jobs, by encouraging transport-related activities in proximity to the M1 Pacific Highway.
- Link to the Taree Regional Airport and rail station to provide opportunities to increase the economic capacity of the site and strengthen inter-regional connections.

#### 3. Taree Regional Airport

- Encourage new businesses to capitalise on the increased economic activity generated from the Northern Gateway Transport Hub.
- Encourage inter-regional passenger connections to cater for the residents and businesses.

#### 4. Urban Release Areas

- Focus future urban growth to the Taree Estate and north Taree Urban Release Areas.

#### 5. Redevelopment sites

- Revitalise the historic waterfront site for residential and commercial development and a pedestrian/cycle link between the Taree CBD and regional recreation centre.
- Investigate development opportunities for the historic former Peters factory site.

#### 6. Employment precincts

- Encourage development of the Kolodong, Bushland, Muldoon Street and Taree South employment precincts for new business opportunities.
- Leverage the proximity of the M1 Pacific Highway to Taree South to expand the precinct.

#### 7. Regional recreation centre

- Plan for high quality recreational services for the community, in the form of sporting fields and facilities and the Manning Aquatic and Leisure Centre.
- Develop links with the neighbouring Manning Entertainment Centre.

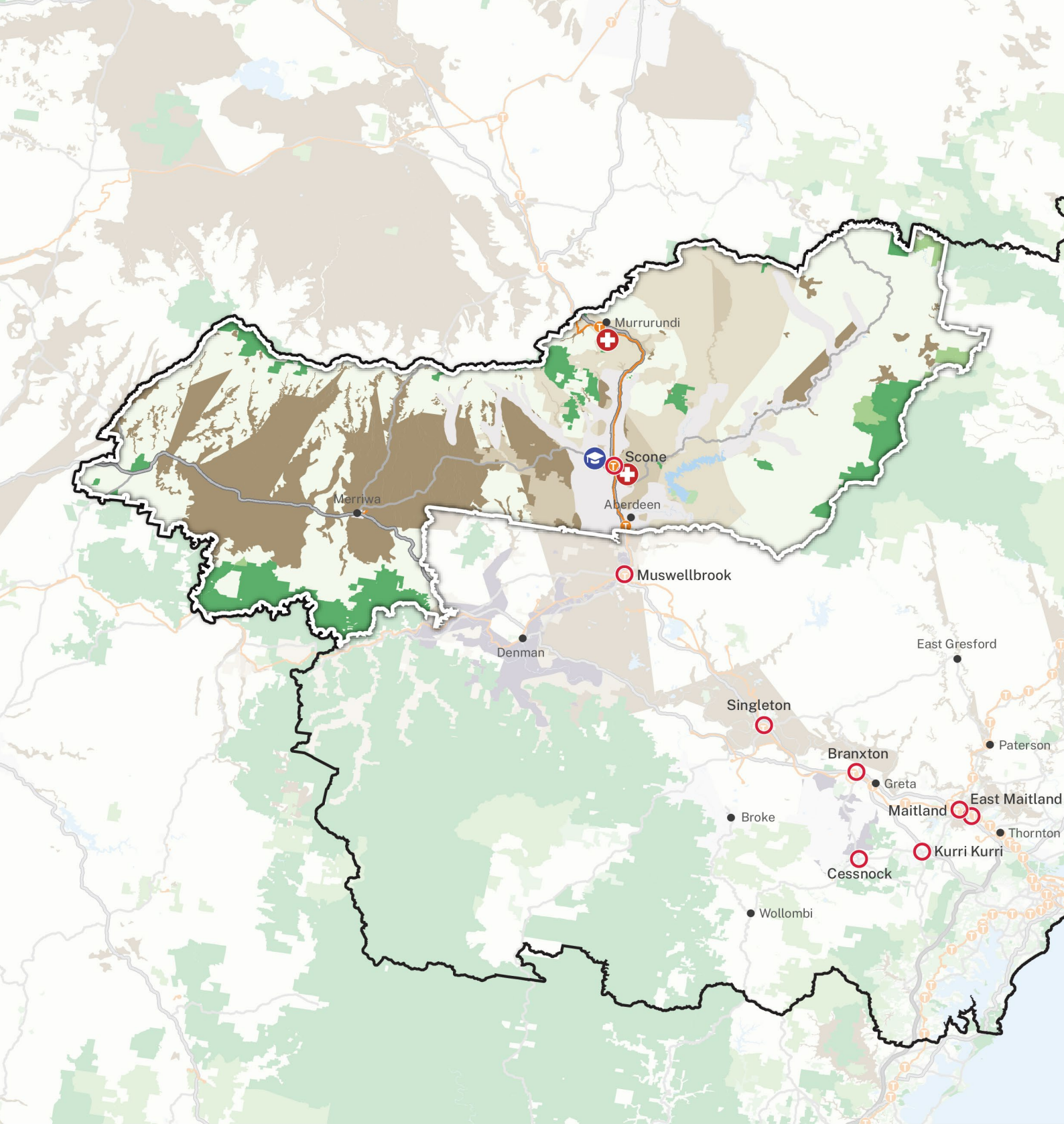
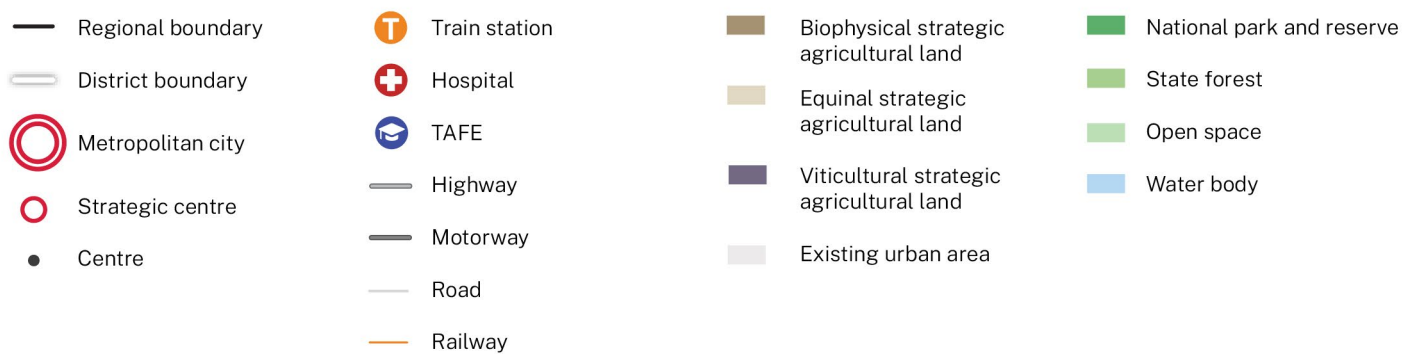


Figure 25: Upper Hunter district





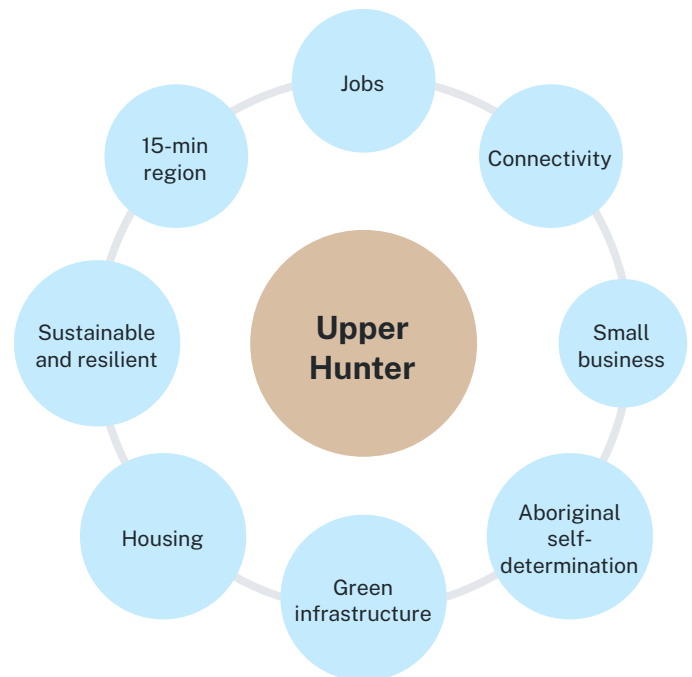
## The Upper Hunter district is distinguished by a quality rural lifestyle in a vibrant, caring and sustainable community.

Rural industries represent the predominant land uses and help drive the Upper Hunter's economic performance. Key sectors include primary production (beef cattle), horse farming (equine), mining, meat processing and local government administration.

The main forms of tourism are tours of thoroughbred studs, art galleries, historic villages, museums, national parks, hiking, water activities at Lake Glenbawn and the Scone Horse Festival and Warbirds over Scone.

There are strong links to the Central West, New England and North Coast. It is important the Upper Hunter connects to the wider Hunter to make the most of the region's population size, infrastructure, transport and services, as well as its access to markets, research and development and industry – all requirements for future prosperity in the Upper Hunter.

The Upper Hunter is dissected by rivers and streams running from west to east. They originate predominantly in the Liverpool and Mount Royal ranges and flow through the escarpments along well defined drainage lines. Water quality is important to the Upper Hunter as many of its urban areas rely on drawn groundwater and majority towns on flowing waterways. Continuous assurance of ecosystem health in Barrington Tops recharge zone will ensure catchment water quality.



## District Planning Priorities

### Productive agricultural land for rural prosperity

The Upper Hunter is recognised for its agricultural diversity and there is growing demand for its beef and other agricultural products, including dairying and cropping. These industries will continue to 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 has advantages of access to markets and processing facilities and fewer development pressures which may enable the area to capitalise on new and emerging opportunities in both the domestic and international markets.

Rural land should principally facilitate agriculture, given its importance to the regional economy. Development proposals in rural lands should consider the potential for land use conflict, including the need for buffers around productive agricultural lands. Sensitive land uses should be excluded from rural areas where a significant impact on agriculture would result.

Development proposals should support rural communities to adapt and build on their 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 including rural value-adding activities such as farm stays, camping or farm gate trails, along with larger visitor economy and events that complement the rural landscapes.

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

### Scenic landscapes for tourism

Scenic rural and natural landscapes are important assets and a drawcard for the Hunter. Increased tourism and enhanced visitor experiences will enable more people to enjoy and explore these landscapes.

The proposed Upper Hunter Rail Trail between Merriwa to Denman would offer locals and visitors a safe and relatively flat cycleway through rural countryside. There are also possibilities to enhance access to rural landscapes by using stock routes for activities, such as horse riding. These stock routes extend into the Central West and could form a part of an inter-regional network of trails. Greater connections from tourist gateways from Denman to the viticulture areas will also enhance visitor experiences.

There is a need to retain rural landscape character of the district. New development proposals for large tourism, industry and residential uses in rural lands should include a character impact assessment.

### Town centre amenity from highway bypasses

The New England Highway town bypasses provide opportunities and challenges. Scone has recently been bypassed and planning needs to facilitate the transition of town centres from car-oriented places to streetscapes that are focal points for the community.

Upper Hunter Council has set out its vision for activating these places. Implementation of the plans over the coming years with a focus on celebrating local identity, pedestrian movement and enhanced public amenity will drive urban renewal.

New commercial or retail development must be concentrated in the town centres, rather than spread along the New England Highway bypasses. This reinforces these uses in town centres, where they can best serve the population of the towns.

Development proposals for food, vehicle service and rest needs along the New England Highway needs to be for the use of travellers and consider the impact the development has on safety and efficiency.





## Regionally Significant Growth Areas

### Scone and Equine Growth Area

The equine growth area comprises world-renowned thoroughbred breeding establishments and associated facilities across the Upper and Central Hunter. It also provides direct employment for over 1,000 people and accounts for around 80 percent of the value of Australian stud horse exports. Ensuring the long-term growth of this industry will secure local jobs in this part of the Hunter.

Scone is known as the ‘Horse Capital of Australia’ and is the gateway to the second-largest concentration of stud farms in the world. The town provides an important focus for market and service-based activities associated horse breeding and is home to the largest equine hospital in the southern hemisphere. Its airport is used by domestic and international jet operators which provide services for equine activities. Equine related events, draw visitors each year, boosting the local economy.

Horse breeders are an important part of the identity and success of the Hunter. Their activities need to be safeguarded to enable future growth and expansion. The rural lands they occupy have high scenic landscape and amenity values, with the image of rolling hills set against the backdrop of the valley’s ridges being a key part of the industry’s international reputation. Development in these areas needs to recognise and respond to these values.

Access to reliable and quality water resources are critical to the longevity of the equine industry, particularly as climate change affects rainfall. Any development in the area needs to avoid impacts on water sources.

Development proposal should:

- promote opportunities to expand equine-related activities in Scone and the equine area and recognise areas of high scenic landscape value.
- orientate residential uses and other development incompatible with scenic landscape values to other locations.
- Ensure the scale and design of non-agricultural developments is sympathetic to their surrounds, set into the landscape, and respond to local character.
- consider how they may affect the landscape values of the equine region and be adapted accordingly.

#### 1. Scone town centre

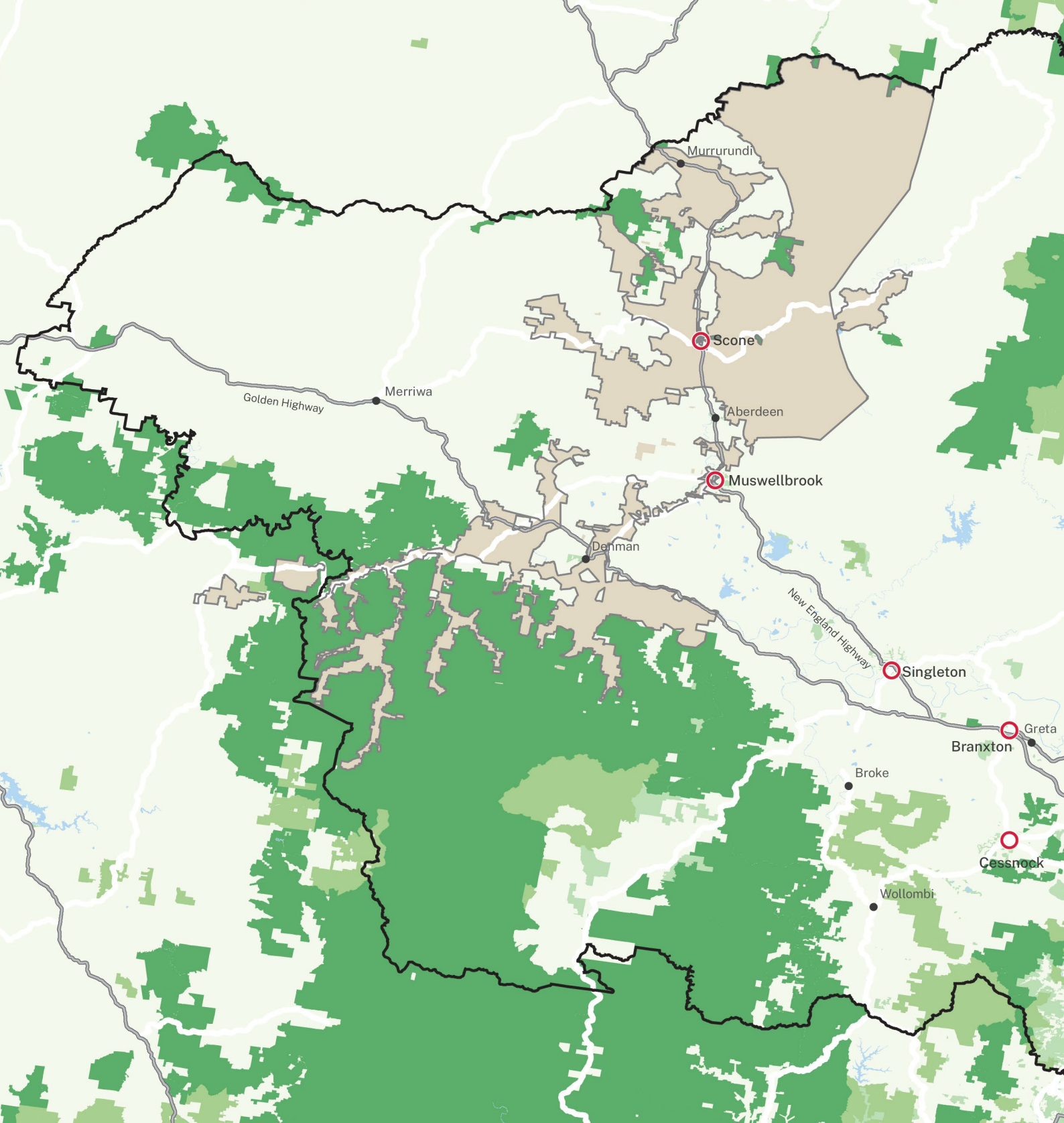
- Revitalised public realm, along with economic activity and investment to support and enhance the viability of the precinct.
- Small scale medium density, such as dual occupancies multi-dwelling development, in residential areas surrounding the town centre.

#### 2. Scone Industrial Area

- Industrial-related uses on lands fronting the New England Highway and accessible to the heavy rail line.
- Explore expansion of the industrial area to the north to respond to opportunities created by the Scone bypass.

#### 3. Scone Specialised Area

- Commercial development in vicinity of Scone Regional Airport that doesn’t prevent current or future operational requirements.

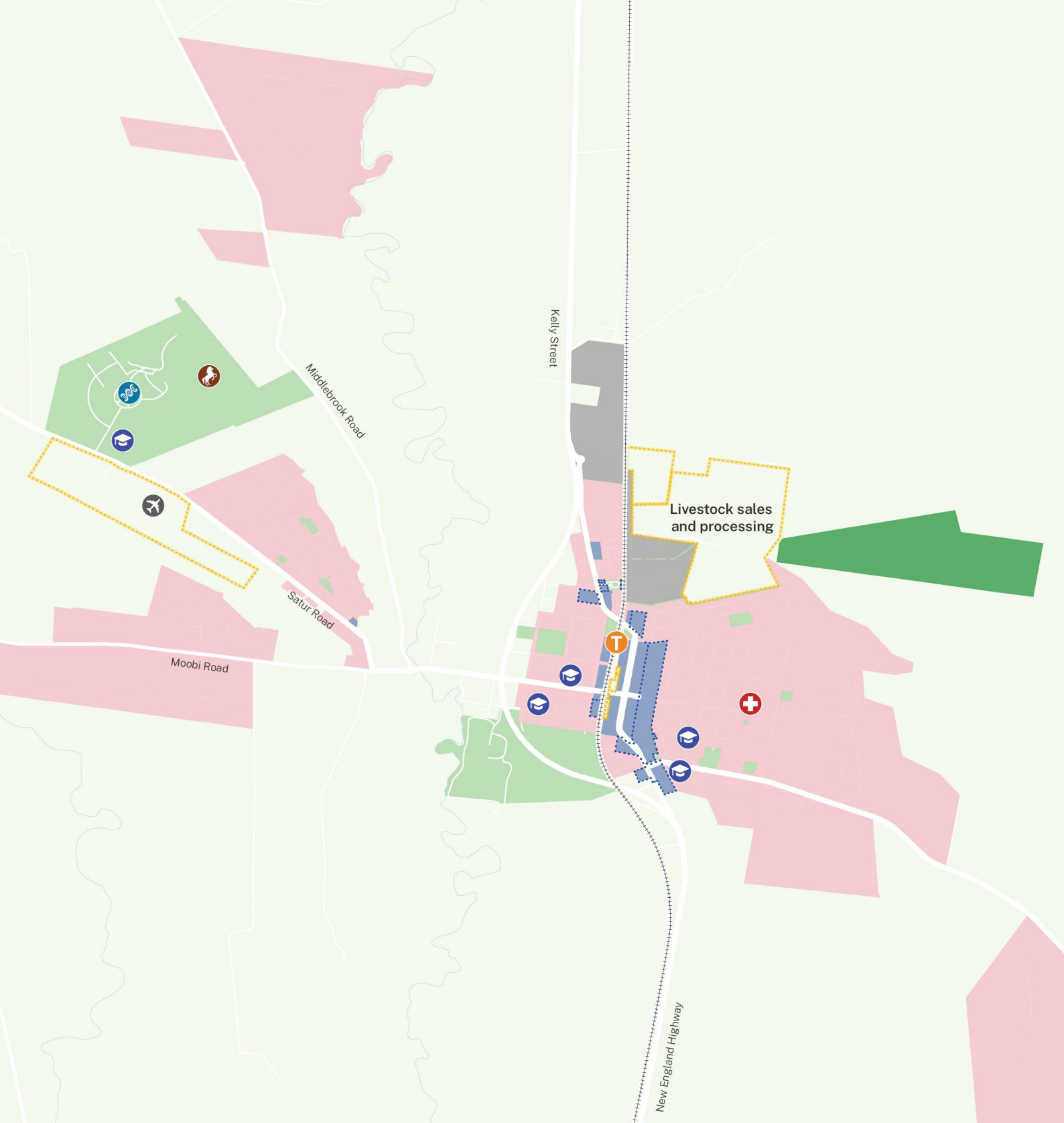


**Figure 26: Scone and Equine regionally significant growth area**

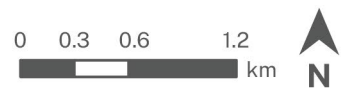


- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| — Regional boundary               | — Equinal strategic agricultural land |
| — Scone and equine place boundary | — Existing urban area                 |
| ○ Strategic centre                | — National park and reserve           |
| ● Centre                          | — State forest                        |
| — Highway                         | — Open space                          |
|                                   | — Water body                          |

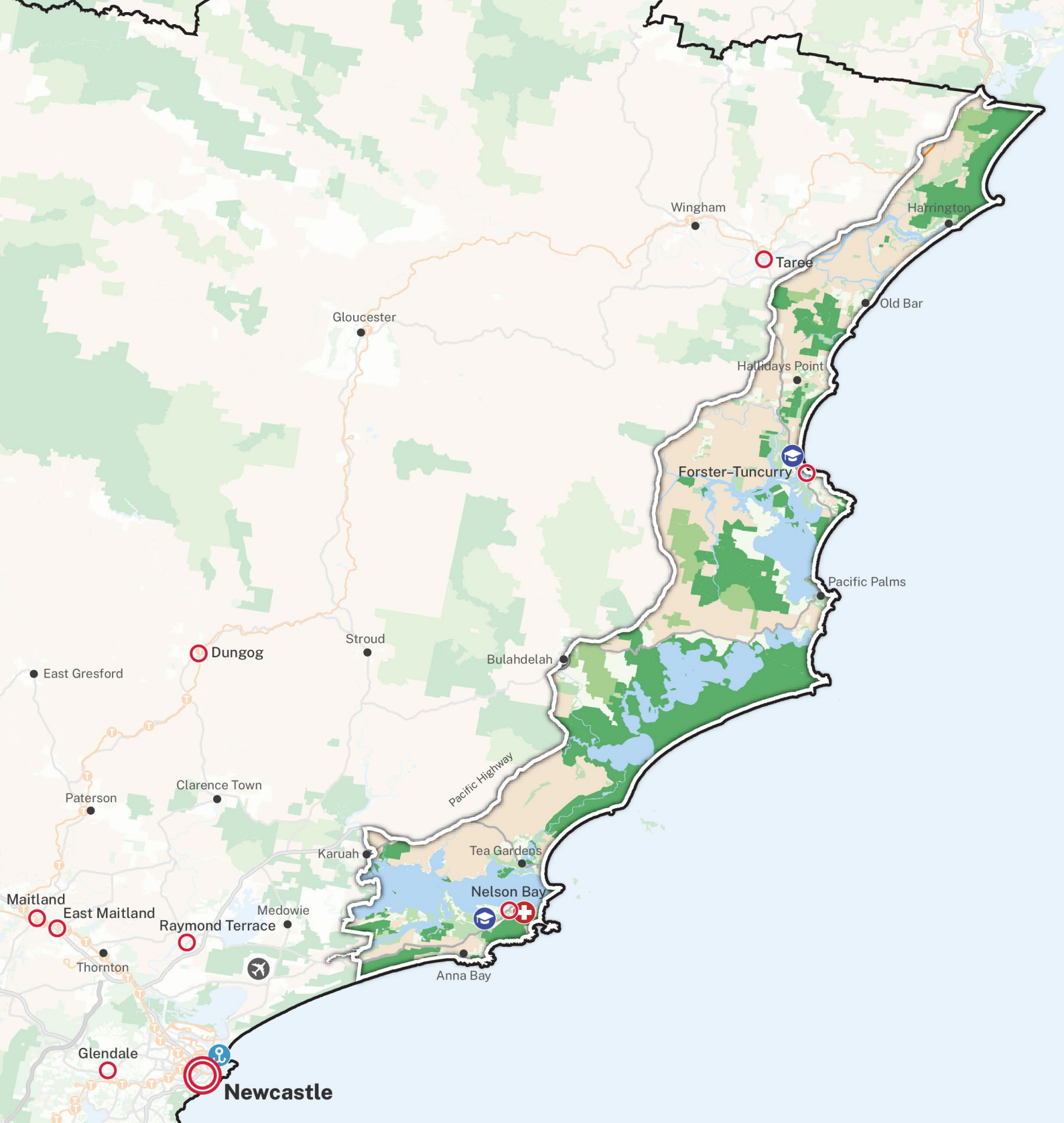




**Figure 27: Scone inset**



- |                    |                        |                           |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Special activities | Train station          | National park and reserve |
| Business zoning    | Scone Airport          | Open space                |
| Business land      | Scone Hospital         | Water body                |
| Industrial land    | Education              |                           |
| Residential land   | Racecourse             |                           |
| Railway            | Equine research centre |                           |



**Figure 28: Coastal district**



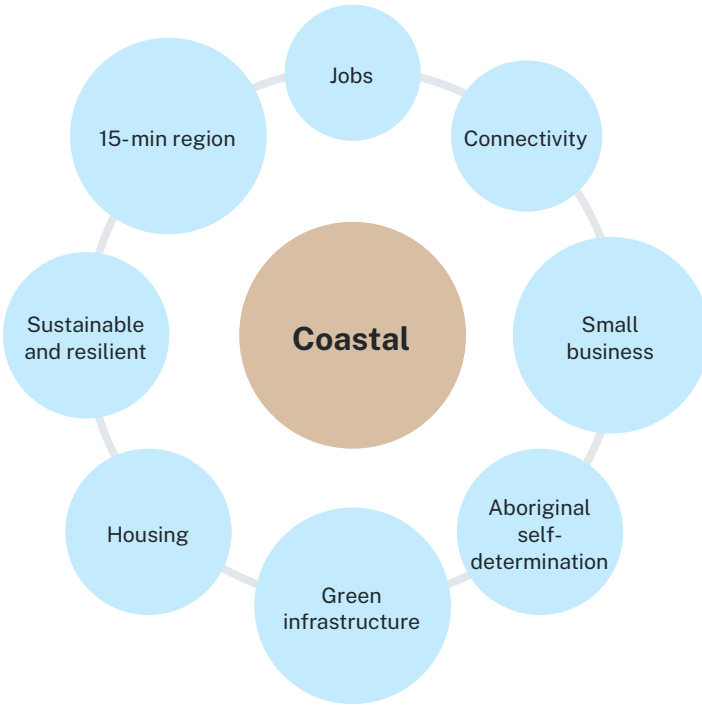


**The district comprises the ecologically diverse coastal landscapes, towns and villages east of the Pacific Highway and includes the centres of Forster-Tuncurry and Nelson Bay, as well as Crowdy Head, Harrington, Old Bar, Diamond Beach, Hallidays Point, Pacific Palms, Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens.**

The coastal experience attracts significant visitors over the summer months when the population swells with tourists coming to enjoy the district’s pristine coastline and beaches, coastal lakes, lagoons and other attractions. Extensive road network provides important tourism connections along the Pacific Highway, The Bucketts Way, Thunderbolts Way and The Lakes Way. There are opportunities for authentic coastal experiences and a lifestyle of envy 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 experiencing change, with more people choosing to make their homes available to visitors, through on-line booking services.

The district is defined by its range of diverse and sensitive landscapes, including wetlands, floodplains, coastal lakes including the Myall Lakes which protected under the Ramsar Convention, beaches, small rural holdings, and natural bushland. Much of this land is also subject to natural hazards, including flooding, coastal inundation, erosion and bushfire.



Bennetts Beach, Hawks Nest  
Credit: Destination NSW

## District Planning Priorities

### Future growth in existing urban areas

The coastal towns and villages set amongst this pristine natural landscape feature high scenic values along the shores of Myall, Smith and Wallis lakes, which draws new residents and tourists that can create development pressure. Urban development will need to be consolidated and confined to existing urban areas. This will maintain the distinct character of individual communities; avoid biophysical constraints and natural hazards; protect environmental values and landscape features; protect natural resources and quality farming land; and plan for the effective and efficient delivery of infrastructure and services.

To safeguard the sensitive coastal environment, rural residential development will be limited to existing rural residential zoned areas, and only minor and contiguous extensions to existing urban areas will be considered.

This will distribute housing across the Hunter and strengthen the growth of Barrington and hinterland districts, where there is more capacity for additional rural and urban housing. It will also avoid pressure on the sensitive coastal environment.

To ensure longer term sustainable and resilient economic growth, it is desirable to broaden the economic structure of the local economy through industry diversification. Development proposals should seek to grow 'smart' industry sectors that offer high economic value and low environmental impact. This will require flexible accommodation and work arrangements focused on digital infrastructure and multi use work spaces of various sizes and price points. It will also require suitably located and zoned employment lands to encourage growth of these sectors.

### Diverse housing choices

The coastal district's natural assets attract many visitors especially during peak seasons. There is a need to balance the different needs of tourists and residents, including managing short term holiday rentals and residential population growth.

Development proposals should also respond to demographic trends and affordability. As the number of older residents increase, housing should be adaptable so that residents are able to age in place. Allowing smaller homes on smaller lots will support first home buyers, single households, and people looking to downsize.

Housing types and development controls should enable growth in a way that complements the desired local character and natural setting of an area. This is particularly important for the district's coastal centres and villages where their unique sense of place attracts residents and tourists alike.

There are opportunities to increase densities throughout the centres, while maintaining the scenic amenity and access to the coastline. Additional smaller dwellings on traditional house sites and small dwelling units in centres should be provided so that the housing mix and choice better reflect community needs.

### Coastal walks between communities

Walking is popular activity that attracts tourists and local community. There are existing walking tracks through Knappinghat, Booti Booti and Myall Lakes National Parks. The economic and tourism benefits will be seen through people accessing camp sites and overnight stays, but also through connecting to coastal towns for supplies and services.

National Parks and Wildlife Service is developing the 20km Tomaree Coastal Walk connecting Tomaree Headland at Shoal Bay to Birubi Point Anna Bay. There are opportunities to create new walks between other coastal communities. Identification of new walks and cycle paths can ensure that any proposed routes are incorporated into new development proposals.

Consideration of how these walks can connect into open space, beaches, and nature reserves should be considered. Early support from landowners is integral to initial planning stages and its long-term success. There is a need to consult with Local Aboriginal Land Councils about sites appropriate for walkers to visit.

Highlighting attractions along the way by drawing on the historic narrative of the area and appreciation of the natural landscape 'in our own back yard'.



Blueys Beach, Blueys Beach  
Credit: Destination NSW



## Bushfire risk

The 2019-20 bushfire season was the worst NSW has recorded. The changing climate conditions, including increased temperatures and low moisture levels, will fuel the severity of fires in the future. Many coastal communities have experienced the intensity of bushfires with impacts felt throughout communities.

Development proposals for growth in the coastal district will need to avoid high risk areas, ensure that zoning is appropriate to allow for adequate emergency access, egress, and water supplies, and to ensure that future compliance with Planning for Bushfire Protection is achievable.

Consideration will also need to be given to the capacity of evacuation routes to meet the proposed growth.

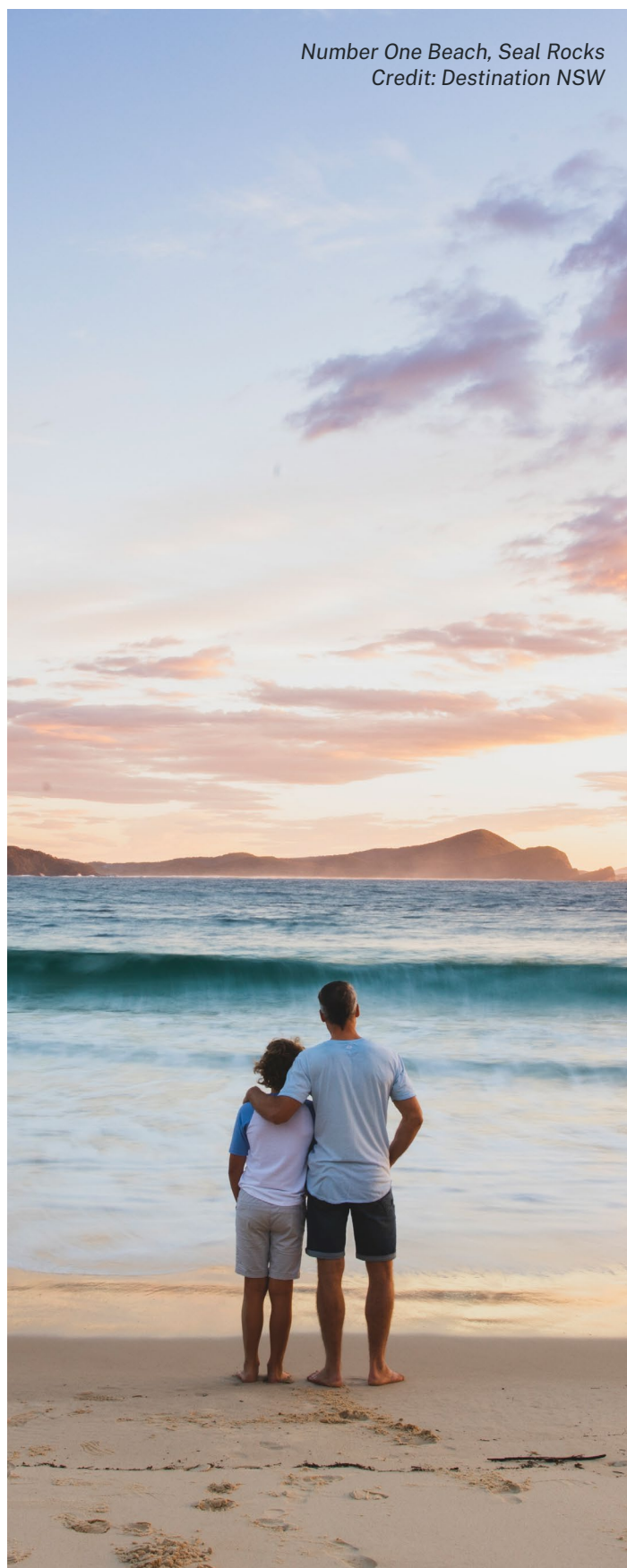
## Coastal environments

Beaches, headlands, littoral rainforests, dunes, creeks and estuaries are all key assets for our community. 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 these coastal hazards are expected to increase in the future, increasing our exposure to coastal risk.

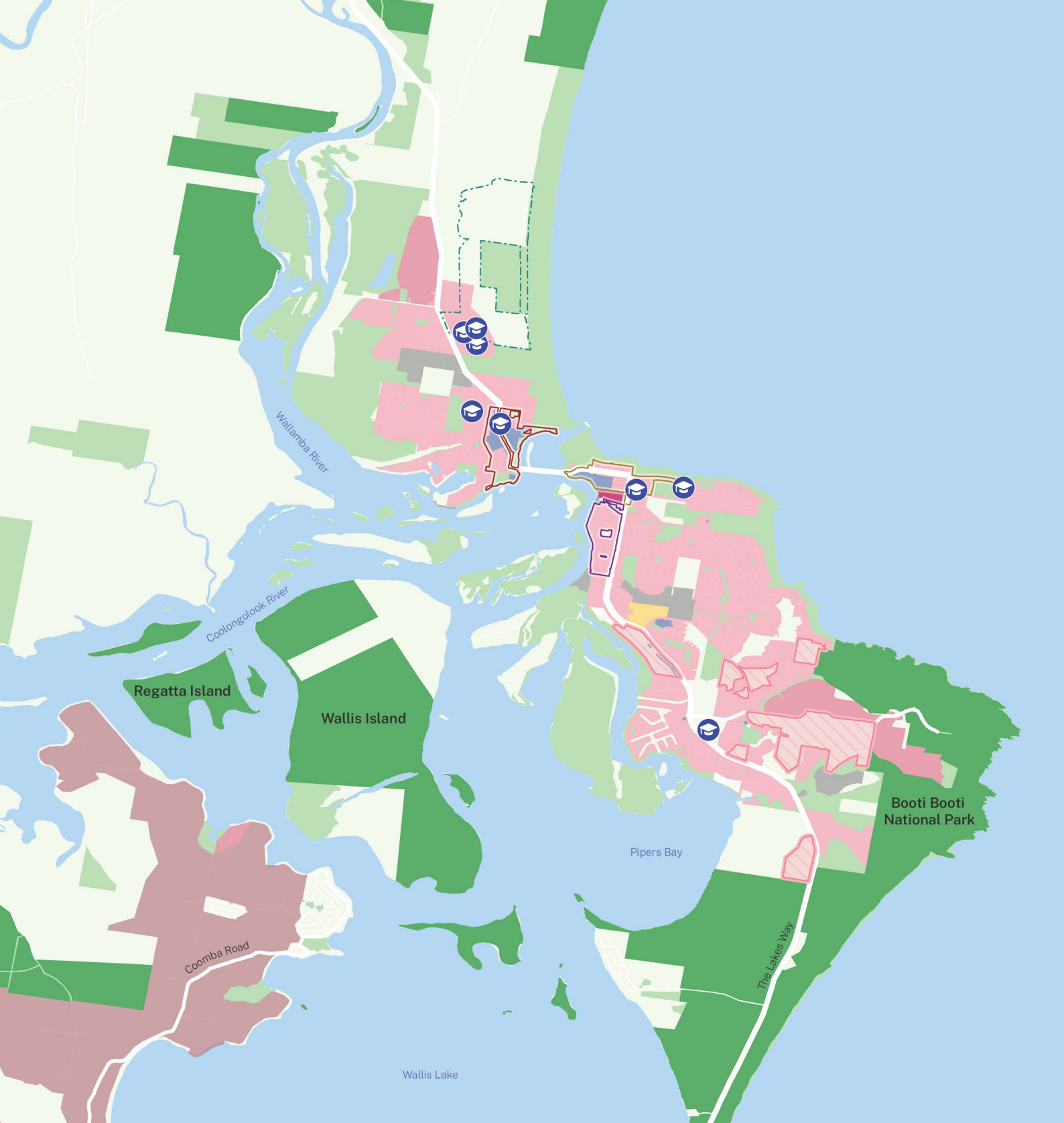
The NSW Government identified sixteen coastal 'Significant Open Coast Locations' along the NSW coastline where the impact of coastal hazards and the risk to assets is high. Two of these hotspots are located at Jimmys Beach near Hawks Nest and at Old Bar/Manning Point.

Under the NSW Coastal Management Framework, MidCoast and Port Stephens councils are updating their approaches to coastal management planning by preparing Coastal Management Programs in consultation with community, over the coming few years. The outcomes of each plan may be incorporated into the local environmental plans and development control plans and may result in amendments to the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018*.

Oyster farming is an important aquaculture activity in the Coastal district with Wallis Lake one of the largest producers of Sydney Rock Oysters in the state, accounting for 24.5% of production in NSW. On-going management of development within sensitive water catchments and protection of environments that sustain the oyster industry will support on-going aquaculture in the district.



*Number One Beach, Seal Rocks  
Credit: Destination NSW*



**Figure 29: Forster-Tuncurry regionally significant growth area**



- |                            |   |                           |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Business land              | Proposed urban release areas            | Educational facility      |
| Industrial land            | North Tuncurry urban release area       | National park and reserve |
| Residential land           | Forster town centre and Main Beach      | Open space                |
| Existing rural residential | Tuncurry town centre and lake foreshore | Water body                |
| Forster Shopping Village   | Lakeside residential                    |                           |
| Civic cultural precinct    |   |                           |



## Regionally Significant Growth Areas

### Forster-Tuncurry Place Growth Area

Forster-Tuncurry centres around lifestyle. Ideally located between the coast and lakes, both tourism and retirement living drive the economy. This has led to extensive shopping, entertainment and service facilities to support both residents and visitors.

There are many benefits from creating a vibrant and desirable residential and tourism centre. Establishing more dense and walkable town centres, combined with dwellings and houses that are suitable for the long-term needs of the community.

Smaller growth areas in south Forster will also be needed to supplement growth. Early resolution of environmental and infrastructure constraints will be needed to ensure their efficient release.

Forster-Tuncurry bridge reaches capacity during peak holiday seasons. Closure of the bridge due to accidents can bring the towns to a standstill with alternate routes requiring significant journeys. To accommodate for population and tourism growth, planning is needed to develop options to improve traffic movement and cater for emergency situations.



Hamilton's Oysters, Tuncurry  
Credit: Destination NSW

#### 1. Forster town centre and Main Beach

- Promote connections between Forster Harbour and Main Beach.
- Ensure design excellence for taller buildings to reduce impacts on coastal town character
- Vibrant retail and service industries cater for the residents and visitors and interfaces with coastal recreation activities.
- Public domain enhancements encourage residents and visitors to spend more time in this locality in the tourist off-season.

#### 2. Tuncurry town centre and lake foreshore

- Tuncurry main street couples high traffic volumes with retail and commercial activity.
- Retail and service offerings are connected to the wharf and foreshore, area to leverage on the amenity of the Forster Harbour and views over the waterway.

#### 3. Lakeside Residential

- Quality residential density leverages proximity to Wallis Lake shoreline the walkable catchment of the Forster Civic Precinct and centres around a private hospital and aged care facility.

#### 4. Urban Release Areas

- Promote diversity of housing, integrated with commercial and recreational activities.
- Integrate into the sensitive environmental setting and the broader Tuncurry and Forster community, the supporting services and infrastructure such as health and transportation networks.

#### 5. Environmental lands

- Provide a green backdrop to the centre and define its character.
- Booti Booti, Wallis Island and Minimbah National Parks, other islands within the lake retain habitat for important ecological communities.

#### 6. Wallis Lake

- High level of environmental quality for Wallis Lake and access for the community to ensure cultural, economic and tourism benefits.

#### 7. Shopping and employment precinct

- Shopping centre provides retail and service needs for residents and tourists. Expansion opportunities will ensure the centre can develop to meet its future needs.
- Surrounding employment lands support the centre and provide for a mixture of business, commercial and service industry activities. Linkages between these areas will enable connectivity for users.

# Appendix A: Centres

Metropolitan Capitals of Newcastle City Centre and Gosford are economically significant to NSW and are undergoing significant transformation through new housing and jobs. Strategic centres that are the heart of the surrounding district, such as Charlestown, Maitland, Morisset, Taree and Singleton provide a range of civic, retail, commercial and recreational services, and the potential for increased housing and employment will be determined by local 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 LSPS.

**Table 2: Regionally Significant Centres**

| Centre Typology                      | Centre  |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Metropolitan Capital                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newcastle City Centre</li> </ul>   |  |
| Strategic Centres                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broadmeadow</li> <li>East Maitland</li> <li>Glendale</li> <li>Kotara</li> <li>John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct</li> <li>Callaghan Campus</li> <li>Charlestown</li> <li>Maitland</li> <li>Morisset</li> <li>Taree</li> <li>Singleton</li> <li>Muswellbrook</li> <li>Forster-Tuncurry</li> <li>Cessnock</li> <li>Raymond Terrace</li> <li>Kurri Kurri</li> <li>Nelson Bay</li> <li>Scone</li> <li>Dungog</li> <li>Branxton (Emerging)</li> <li>Gloucester</li> </ul> |  |
| Global Gateways                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newcastle Port</li> <li>Newcastle Airport</li> </ul>   |  |
| Significant Employment land clusters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tomago</li> <li>Heatherbrae</li> <li>Cardiff Industrial Estate</li> <li>Thornton</li> <li>Black Hill</li> <li>Rutherford</li> <li>Mount Thorley Industrial Area</li> <li>Mayfield West</li> </ul>  |  |



# Appendix B: Repealed plans and strategies

To avoid any doubt, the following plans and strategies will be repealed by the final *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

# Appendix C: Infrastructure first and place-based delivery

The department is focused on delivering the regional plan through improved alignment of infrastructure planning, alignment and collaboration across government. Primarily, this includes two main components:

- the urban development program committee analysing and sequencing growth areas; and
- a place delivery group chaired by the department in collaboration with agencies, councils, LALCs and community members to deliver a place strategy and infrastructure delivery plan for the relevant growth area.

Projects will be subject to the same stringent checks, balances and community consultation that ensures transparency, public benefit, and a merit-based assessment.

The pathway will translate the Hunter Regional Plan into outcomes for local communities in:

- catalyst areas under the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036;
- interchange growth areas;
- investigation areas identified by councils;
- growth areas in the Hunter Regional Plan; and
- areas with an overall yield greater than 2,000 homes for residential land or at least 200ha of proposed employment/industrial land.

Where an area may be subject to two plans (e.g. identified as a Catalyst Area and as Growth Area, the most recent plan will provide directions for land use outcomes for consideration by the PDG.

## Place delivery group nomination

For a growth area to be eligible for the place delivery group pathway it must be identified by the urban development program committee.

A council must then submit a site nomination to the place delivery group addressing how the site:

- aligns with NSW Government policy and priorities, including identified growth areas in strategic planning documents (such as local strategic planning statement, Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan or Hunter Regional Plan);
- aligns with the creation of new jobs and homes;
- is greater than 2,000 dwellings for residential development or is greater than 200 ha for employment/industrial land;
- demonstrates that appropriate education infrastructure and necessary active and functional transport can be provided;
- is predominantly within single ownership; or if in multiple ownership:
  - contains agreement from relevant landowners, or
  - provides details of how council will forward fund the place strategy.

The site nomination must also include:

- the proposed site and land ownership;
- the intended objectives or outcomes of the proposal;
- information on any state government or council consultation undertaken;
- whether any technical studies are underway or complete; and
- any other relevant information.

As the chair, the department will review site nominations and consult with councils and agencies to seek their views on consistency with the eligibility criteria.



| Plan / Strategy   | Growth Areas                        | Planning Pathway                 |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Draft Hunter Regional Plan<br>Regionally significant growth areas | Broadmeadow                         | PDG                              |
|   | Morisset                            | PDG                              |
|   | Taree                               | PDG                              |
|   | Forster-Tuncurry                    | PDG                              |
|   | Hunter Expressway                   | PDG                              |
|   | National Pinch Point                | PDG                              |
|   | Hunter Valley Viticulture Precincts | PDG                              |
|   | Liddell and Bayswater Power Station | PDG                              |
|   | Scone Equine Precinct               | PDG                              |
| Greater Newcastle Metropolitan<br>Plan catalyst areas             | North-West Lake Macquarie           | PDG                              |
|   | Newcastle City Centre               | Complete                         |
|   | Kotara                              | PDG                              |
|   | Williamstown                        | Special Activation Precinct      |
|   | Newcastle Port                      | Three Ports SEPP                 |
|   | East Maitland                       | PDG                              |
|   | John Hunter Hospital                | NSW Health Infrastructure        |
|   | Callaghan                           | University of Newcastle          |
|   | Tomago                              | State Significant Precincts SEPP |

Not all growth areas identified in the above plans will require involvement of the PDG.

A proponent may submit a proposal that has not been identified as a growth area for consideration by the place delivery group where it can:

- demonstrate cost-effectiveness of delivering growth for the region;
- has written support from council, Transport for NSW and infrastructure delivery agencies; and
- enters into an memorandum of understanding with the department to fund the operation of the place delivery group.

## Place strategy process via the place delivery group

If the nomination is accepted, the department will form a place delivery group with representation from the relevant council(s), agencies and community members.

The main outcome of the place delivery group at this step will be:

- A place strategy, which is a spatial representation of growth for an area. It does not rezone land but provides a spatial representation of key planning factors for that place. This may include areas of high-biodiversity value, key transport links, including cycle paths, areas where development is anticipated and where key supporting infrastructure will be provided to service growth (e.g. schools, sewer, water, roads); and
- an infrastructure delivery plan, which will identify the needs to service the growth envisaged in the place strategy and identify existing infrastructure capacity and opportunities to unlock catalytic infrastructure to service growth. The infrastructure delivery plan will also nominate expected sequencing and delivery authority responsibility to facilitate development nominated in a growth area. This plan will inform and be informed by the urban development program committee's sequencing and prioritisation framework.

The department, in collaboration with place delivery group members will prepare terms of reference, probity plans, and a program and clear milestones to delivery of a place strategy, infrastructure plan and streamlined assessment pathway for the growth area.

During the inception meeting, an agreed timeline and milestone will be agreed to inform feedback on the preparation of relevant technical studies.

Relevant technical studies to inform the development of a place strategy and infrastructure delivery plan will be provided for consideration by the place delivery group.

During this stage, the role of the place delivery group will be to:

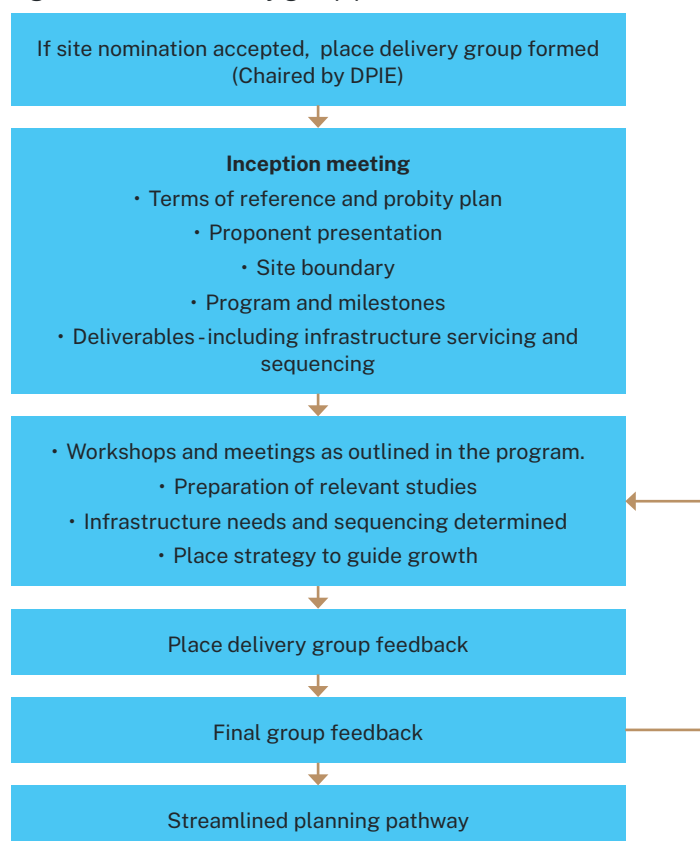
- oversee and assist the preparation of the place strategy in accordance with sequencing determined by the urban development program committee;
- determine technical investigation requirements to be undertaken for the place strategy and remove subsequent public authority concurrences and referrals at rezoning;
- track the performance of the place strategy and escalate to the Planning Delivery Unit where there are risks of not meeting objectives of the Hunter Regional Plan; and
- endorse the place strategy to remove subsequent gateway determination requirements for rezonings consistent with the endorsed place strategy.

If the place delivery group considers the place strategy meets the nomination criteria, the proponent will be invited to prepare a development application and planning proposal for consideration by the place delivery group. As identified above, place strategies provide an opportunity to determine upfront expectations and outline technical requirements early. This provides the potential to remove subsequent consultation with state agencies during the typical development application and rezoning process.

Alongside early engagement with agencies and councils to streamline expectations and requirements, the proposed place delivery group will provide opportunities to utilise concurrent provisions in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1997* (EP&A Act).

Division 3.5 of the EP&A Act allows for a development application to be lodged with Council in conjunction with a planning proposal to amend the planning controls that apply to a site. Other development may be regionally significant development as outlined in schedule 7 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011*. Regional development is determined by the relevant planning panel in accordance with section 2.12 of the EP&A Act.

Figure 30: Place delivery group process





# Questions and answers

| Question   | Answer   |
|--|--|
| Is the place delivery group a statutory body and does it have any statutory role?  | No, the group is a mechanism for collaboration to allow state and local issues, including infrastructure needs and supply to be identified and addressed early in the preparation of a proposal to rezone/develop land.  |
| Is the place delivery group a Planning Proposal Authority (PPA)?   | No, the group will advise the proponent on the appropriate statutory pathway, with advice on the anticipated PPA. The PPA will be responsible for rezoning the site in accordance with the relevant statutory process.   |
| Will the place delivery group publicly exhibit the proposal?   | No, the PPA will be responsible for exhibiting the proposal as part of the statutory process.  |
| What if my site is not an identified growth area, but meets all other nomination criteria?   | All relevant technical studies, and resourcing requirements for the creation of the relevant place delivery group will be at the cost of the proponent. Demonstration of support from relevant council and state agencies will be required.  |
| What if my site is less than 2,000 dwellings (for residential) or 200ha (for industrial/commercial land) and I wish to nominate my site as part of the place delivery group process? | <p>The proponent will be required to cover the costs associated with the preparation of relevant technical studies.</p> <p>Given the scale of development, it may not be economical to fund detailed technical studies prior to endorsement from the local council or be of benefit to assess/consider the cost of infrastructure delivery for the area.</p>   |
| Will the place delivery group review and provide comments on technical studies?  | <p>Yes, the place delivery group may request revisions to existing technical studies or ask for certain technical studies to be undertaken.</p> <p>The group will advise what work is required prior to issuing the final assurance letter or may be undertaken prior to commencing the statutory process.</p> <p>The group is not responsible for procuring or engaging consultants, however prior to providing feedback, the group may seek specialist advice from agencies (or other experts) not represented. Procuring or engaging consultants will be the responsibility of the proponent.</p> |

# Glossary

## **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.

## **Green infrastructure**

The network of green spaces, natural systems and semi-natural 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, 'Catalyst Area' in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area and other areas where a planning proposal is greater than 2,000 homes for residential land or 200ha of proposed employment/industrial land.

## **Future potential growth area**

Identified in the plan are not supported for further investigation, Gateway assessment until 5 years unless the UDP Committee makes a determination to bring forward a site.

## **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 promotes and encourages 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 high-biodiversity value, key transport links, including cycle paths, 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.

## **Public space**

'Places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive', and these include:

- a. Public open spaces: active and passive (including parks, gardens, playgrounds, public beaches, riverbanks and waterfronts, outdoor playing fields and courts, and publicly accessible bushland);
- b. Public facilities: public libraries, museums, galleries, civic/community centres, showgrounds and indoor public sports facilities; and
- c. Streets: streets, avenues and boulevards, squares and plazas, pavements, passages and lanes, and bicycle paths.

## **Rural enterprises**

Land uses that are:

- located on rural land;
- consistent with the intended character of the area;
- may diversify, adjust, innovate and value-add to the area through ancillary uses, such as tourism based uses;
- not adversely affected by the encroachment of development.

Development proposals are matters under the relevant legislation, regulations and policies that need to be consider consistency with the Hunter Regional Plan.



# References

- i Remplan 2020 GRP
- ii Where a council or LALC has identified new growth areas through a strategy (even if not finalised or endorsed) or LSPS, the department will work with council or the LALC to transition the growth areas to the delivery framework. Council and LALCs will not be required to start the process again.
- iii <http://www.huntercircular.com.au>
- iv This supersedes the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan* (GNMP) target of 60% infill by 2036. However, as per the GNMP plan, the target applies to the district as a whole and not individual councils.
- v <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/climate-change/net-zero-plan/electric-vehicle-strategy>
- vi Healthy Built Environment Checklist, NSW Health, <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/urbanhealth/Pages/healthybuilt-enviro-check.aspx>

