



Planning &  
Environment

**2036**

***Hunter***

***Regional  
Plan***

*HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2036*

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# Foreword



The Hunter is entering a new and exciting phase with a growing metropolitan area, greater economic diversification and global gateways that link the region to the rest of the world. It has thriving communities and a diverse natural environment that will help to underpin not just the future prosperity of the region but also the State.

These are the key attributes in the *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* – a 20-year blueprint for the future that reflects community and stakeholder aspirations, the significance of the region's contribution to Gross State Product and its location on the fastest growing population corridor in the State.

Greater Newcastle will have its first metropolitan plan focused on connecting a network of strategic centres including a revitalised Newcastle City Centre, developing a centre of excellence for health and education and achieving a target of 95 per cent of residents living within a 30-minute trip to a strategic centre that has shops, dining, entertainment and services.

The Hunter's increasingly diversified economy and global gateways – the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport – will enable the region and the State to satisfy the demand from growing Asian economies for products and services associated with education, health, agriculture, resources and tourism.

Business innovation, the expansion of advanced manufacturing and the defence and aerospace industries, a dynamic agricultural sector and a diversified energy sector will generate local jobs.

More housing and greater housing choice will be available throughout the Hunter including within Greater Newcastle, existing towns and villages, and the growth areas of the Maitland Corridor, Newcastle - Lake Macquarie Western Corridor and the emerging corridor centred on Cooranbong, Morisset and Wyee.

A 'green grid' will link open space, natural areas and recreation facilities, supplemented by the protection of high environmental value areas and biodiversity corridors.

Transport networks, including cycling and walking paths, will be extended for both recreation and commuting, and enhanced inter-regional transport connections will bolster business and industry growth.

We recognise the Awabakal, Worimi, Wonnarua, Biripi and Geawegal people are original custodians of the Hunter region. They are important partners in the economic, social and environmental future of the Hunter.

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* encompasses a vision, goals and actions geared to delivering greater prosperity in the years ahead for those who live and work in this important region. I urge everyone committed to the Hunter to unite in support of it.

**Scot MacDonald MLC**

Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter



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# Introduction



## The Hunter's future has far-reaching consequences for NSW and Australia

The Hunter has the largest share of both regional population and regional employment and is located in the State's fastest growing corridor – from the northern edge of Sydney to Newcastle. The projected population along this corridor is estimated to be 1.1 million by 2036.<sup>1</sup>

This makes for an exciting future for the Hunter and the *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* is the blueprint to deliver that future.

The Plan will guide the NSW Government's land use planning priorities and decisions over the next 20 years. It is not intended to be a step-by-step approach to all land use planning. Rather, it provides an overarching framework to guide subsequent and more detailed land use plans, development proposals and infrastructure funding decisions. While a series of priority actions are included, medium and longer term actions will be identified to coincide with population growth and economic change.

Priorities for each council are set out in Local Government Narratives, which will guide further investigations and implementation.

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* is the product of extensive consultation with councils, stakeholders and the wider community, conducted around a discussion paper (Lower Hunter) released in 2014 and a draft plan released in 2015. The feedback from these consultations has been integral to finalising the Plan.

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* provides the strategy necessary to deliver the vision for the Hunter region.

### Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund

The NSW Government's Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund is supporting economic growth and enhancing the liveability of the region.

It is delivering funding for the Lake Macquarie Football Centre, Singleton Gym and Swim Complex, Hunter Sports High School, John Hunter Children's Hospital, Nelson Bay Road, New England Highway and Wine Region Roads.

In 2016 the Government announced funding for the following projects:

#### New Cruise Ship Terminal

\$12.7 million to build a new 3,000 square metre multi-purpose cruise ship terminal in Newcastle Harbour. This project will secure the future of cruise shipping in Newcastle and gives the city and the region the opportunity to compete for the growing east coast tourism trade.

#### Hunter Innovation Project

\$9.8 million to provide free Wi-Fi, cutting edge smart parking and smart street lighting technology and a new innovation hub for researchers, students, industry and entrepreneurs. The project provides a significant boost for Newcastle and capitalises on its strong education and research sectors, the region's highly skilled workforce and diverse range of industries.

### Population Growth

732,400



2016

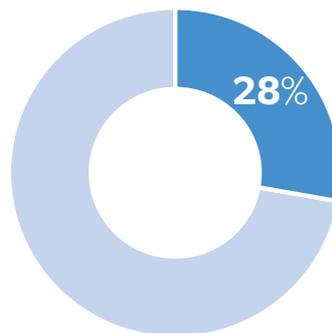
862,250



2036

25% of the population aged over 65 years by 2036

### Regional NSW GRP



28% Hunter

Other NSW Regions

### New Jobs by 2036

+61,500



### Newcastle City Centre Employment

24,937



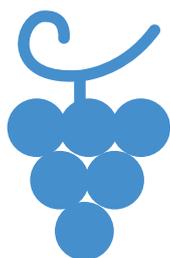
2016

32,691



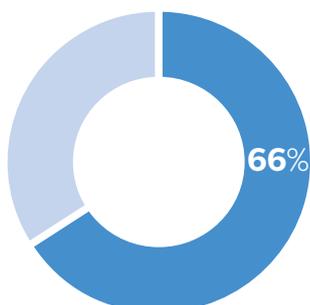
2036

oldest wine making region in Australia



1 of 3 world's best thoroughbreds centres

### Small/Medium Enterprises



66% of the Hunter's 45,000 businesses employ 4 people or less

### Hunter Region Tourist Visits 2011-12



7,618,000 Domestic

113,000 International

# Delivering the Plan

## The NSW Government's commitment



To deliver the *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* all levels of government, the private sector and the community will have to work together. The Plan needs to be incorporated into each stakeholder's future activities.

### Coordination

The Hunter Development Corporation will deliver, coordinate and be accountable for achieving the vision and goals of the Plan. The Corporation will listen and work with all stakeholders and the community to make sure that growth is aligned with infrastructure and delivered in the right places at the right times.

### Delivery

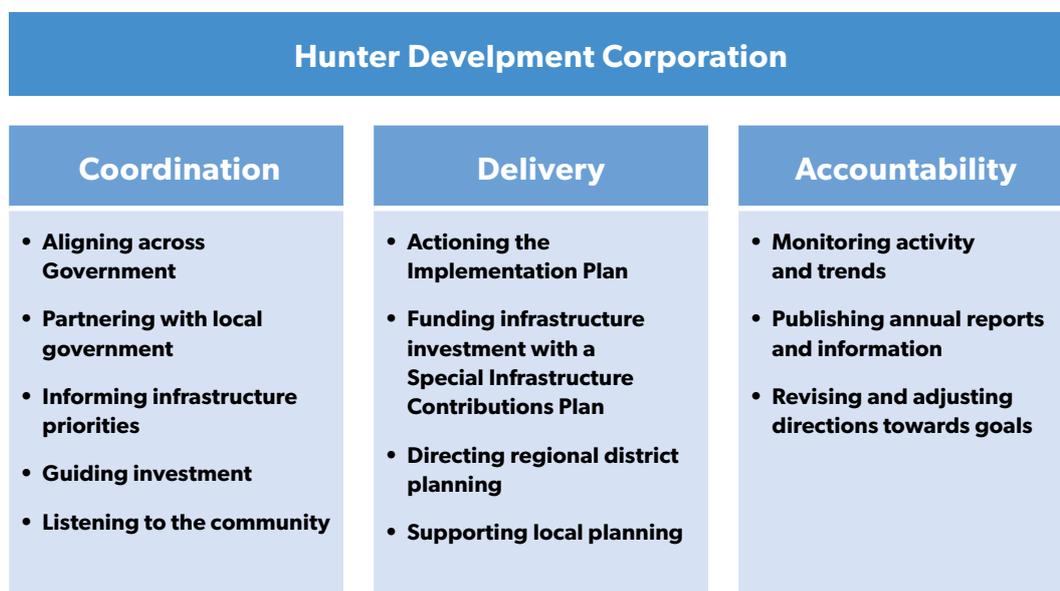
The Corporation will take ownership for implementing the Plan. In the short term, it will develop a Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area Plan and oversee action on planning for land along the Hunter Expressway; global gateways;

economic changes in the Upper Hunter; and the protection of regionally significant biodiversity corridors. The Government acknowledges the calls to set up a new Commission. This will be investigated by the Government.

Funding will be provided to growth areas for regional infrastructure for the transport, health, education and justice sectors, as well as for open spaces. The Government will have a Hunter Region Special Infrastructure Contributions Plan that outlines a schedule of infrastructure projects to support growth.

The Plan sets priorities and provides a direction for regional planning decisions. It focuses on new housing and jobs and targets growth in strategic centres and renewal corridors close to transport to deliver social and economic benefits. It sets in place line-of-sight land use planning for the region, regional districts like the Greater Newcastle metropolitan area and each council area.

Figure 1: **Hunter Development Corporation**



Regional district planning will be done through a partnership with all stakeholders and will be led by the Corporation. Priorities for regional district planning are included where matters cross council or jurisdictional boundaries.

A Government direction will be issued to councils so that when they prepare new planning proposals or update local planning controls, they are consistent with the vision and guiding principles of the Regional Plan. The Local Government Narratives provide detailed guidance for each council. The Corporation will support the preparation of local land use strategies that help to translate the vision and guiding principles of the Plan into more detailed priorities for growth and change that can be applied at the local level.

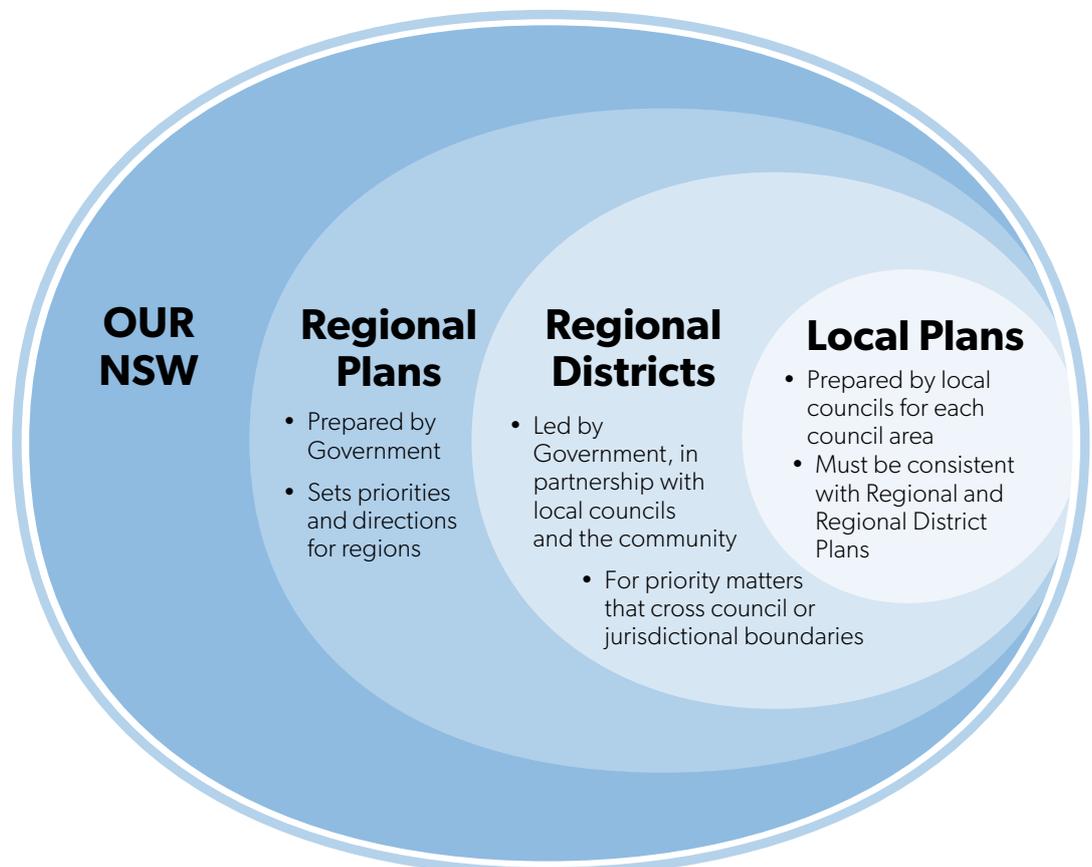
## Accountability

The Corporation will monitor and review progress towards achieving the vision and goals of the Plan. This will help prioritise Government infrastructure delivery and influence policy settings.

An annual report will be prepared that considers indicators such as housing, employment, communities and the environment, and offers advice to Government on the delivery of short term actions.

Every five years, or as necessary, the Plan will be reviewed and adjusted to make sure the vision for 2036 is realised.

Figure 2: **Planning hierarchy**



# Vision



## ***The leading regional economy in Australia with a vibrant new metropolitan city at its heart***

The Hunter is the leading regional economy in Australia, with thriving communities and a biodiversity-rich natural environment. The Hunter is home to more than 860,000 people and is still growing due to its reputation as one of the great places to live and work.

Greater Newcastle is the centrepiece of the region, renowned as a connected metropolitan city where 95 per cent of residents live within 30 minutes of a strategic centre, including the new growth areas at Glendale and Broadmeadow.

Newcastle City Centre is the heart of Greater Newcastle and the capital of the region. The city centre has been transformed by capitalising on its active port, vibrant waterfront and heritage. It hosts more residents, students, businesses, researchers, educators and entrepreneurs than ever before.

A knowledge centre of excellence in health and education is providing world-class research into medical technologies, agricultural productivity, renewable energy and mining services.

A skilled science, technology and engineering workforce is engaged in advanced manufacturing and digital technologies.

Beyond Greater Newcastle are vibrant centres, towns and villages, many of which have benefited from emerging job opportunities in the health, agriculture, tourism, defence, energy and transport sectors. Faster inter-regional transport and digital technology are making it easier for residents and businesses to interact and do business.

Newcastle Airport is synonymous with the technology, defence and aerospace industries.

The Port of Newcastle is a vital hub for exporting agricultural produce (including prized beef, lamb, dairy and oilseed) and coal to new markets throughout Asia. Productive agricultural land and natural resources are the foundations of the region's gross domestic product.

Visitors are arriving in greater numbers on cruise ships, via Newcastle Airport and by a variety of rail and highway links to sample international quality wines and fresh food, walk along convict-built trails, trek through World Heritage-listed national parks and swim at lovely beaches.

Infrastructure investment is the linchpin of economic development across the Hunter. It supports freight, health and education services, and agribusiness and tourism, as well as building resilience to global economic cycles and climate change.

Greater housing choice is available in existing and new communities, close to jobs and services and well supported by public transport and walking and cycling options. More housing has reduced the upward pressure on house prices.

Communities are enjoying a green grid of open space and recreational facilities – including more walking and cycling networks – as well as the distinctive character and heritage of their areas.

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

***To achieve this vision the  
NSW Government has:***

***acknowledged the growing  
importance of Greater Newcastle  
and ...***

***set the following regionally  
focused goals:***

- **The leading regional economy  
in Australia**
- **A biodiversity-rich natural  
environment**
- **Thriving communities**
- **Greater housing choice and jobs**

Figure 3: **Hunter 2036**

-  Strategic Centre

---

-  Centre

---

-  Indicative Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area

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-  Newcastle Airport - Global Gateway

---

-  Port of Newcastle - Global Gateway

---

-  Railway

---

-  Inter-regional Road

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-  Major Road

---

-  Inter-regional Connection

---

-  Growth Area

---

-  Biodiversity Corridor

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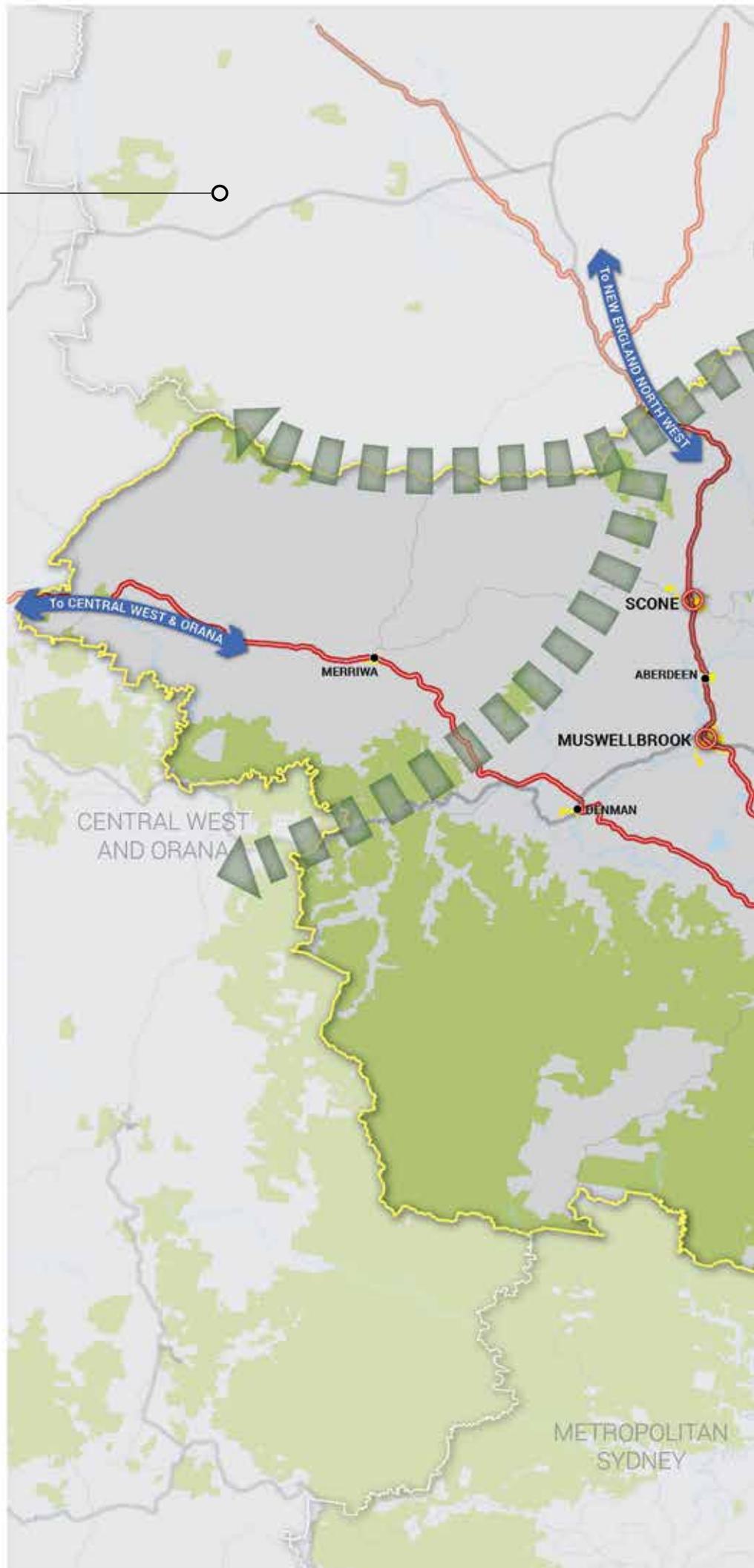
-  National Park and Reserve / State Forest

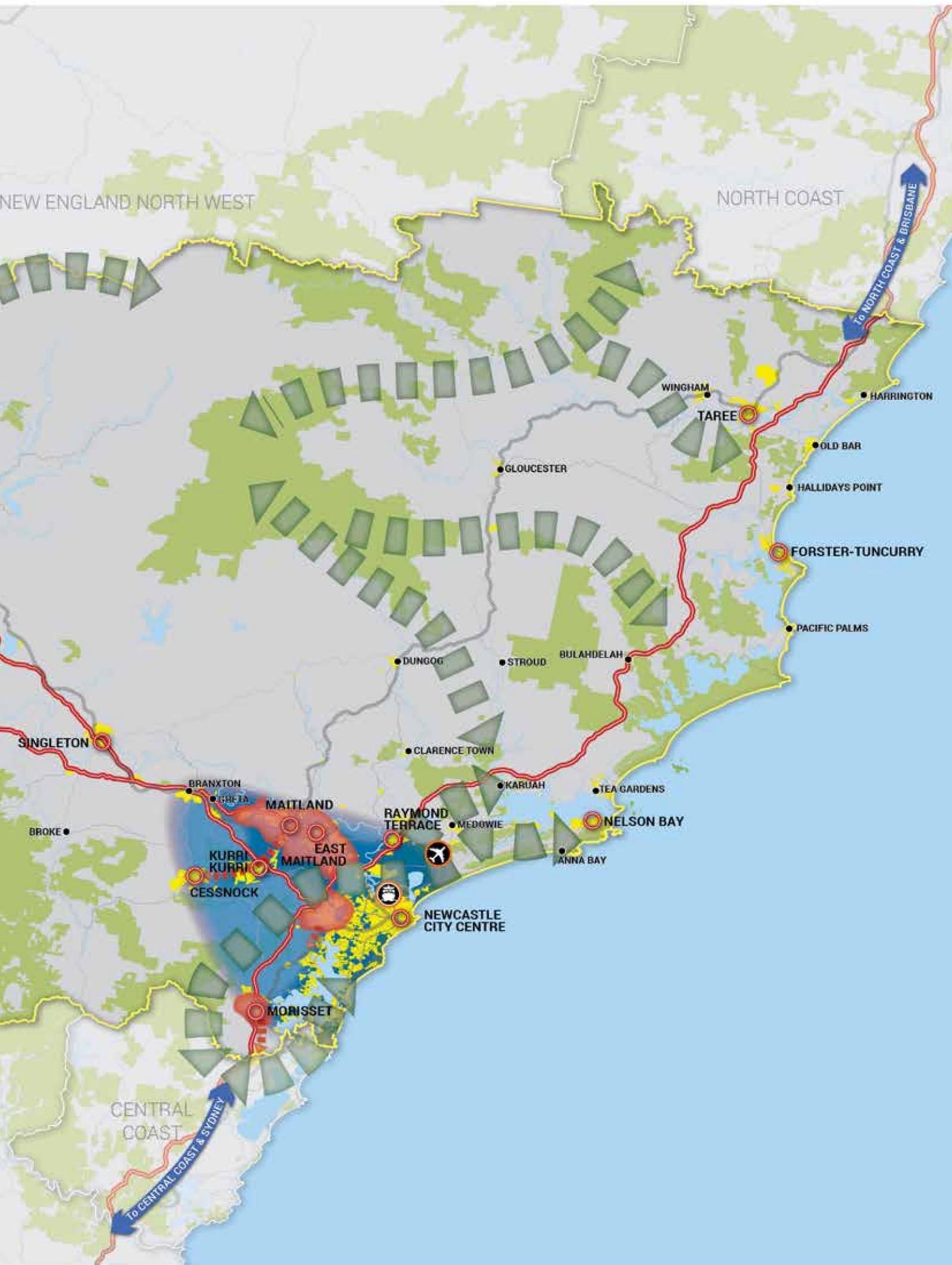
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-  Residential and Employment Land

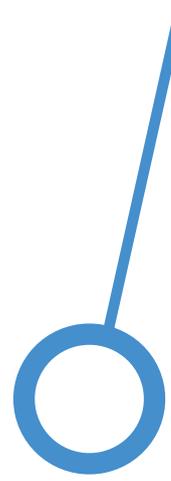
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-  Waterway





# Greater Newcastle



## A key component in the Hunter's success

Greater Newcastle is a key element in the future productivity of the Hunter region and critical to it being the leading regional economy in Australia. It comprises the closely connected urban areas of Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle and Port Stephens local government areas (see Figure 4 for indicative boundary).

Presently, Greater Newcastle is home to around 475,000 people but it is expected to grow to around 600,000 over the next 20 years.<sup>2</sup>

To build economic prosperity across the entire region, over the next 20 years Greater Newcastle must leverage emerging macro trends that include growing demand in Asia for agricultural produce, increasing environmental tourism and greater demand for education and innovation in medical research.

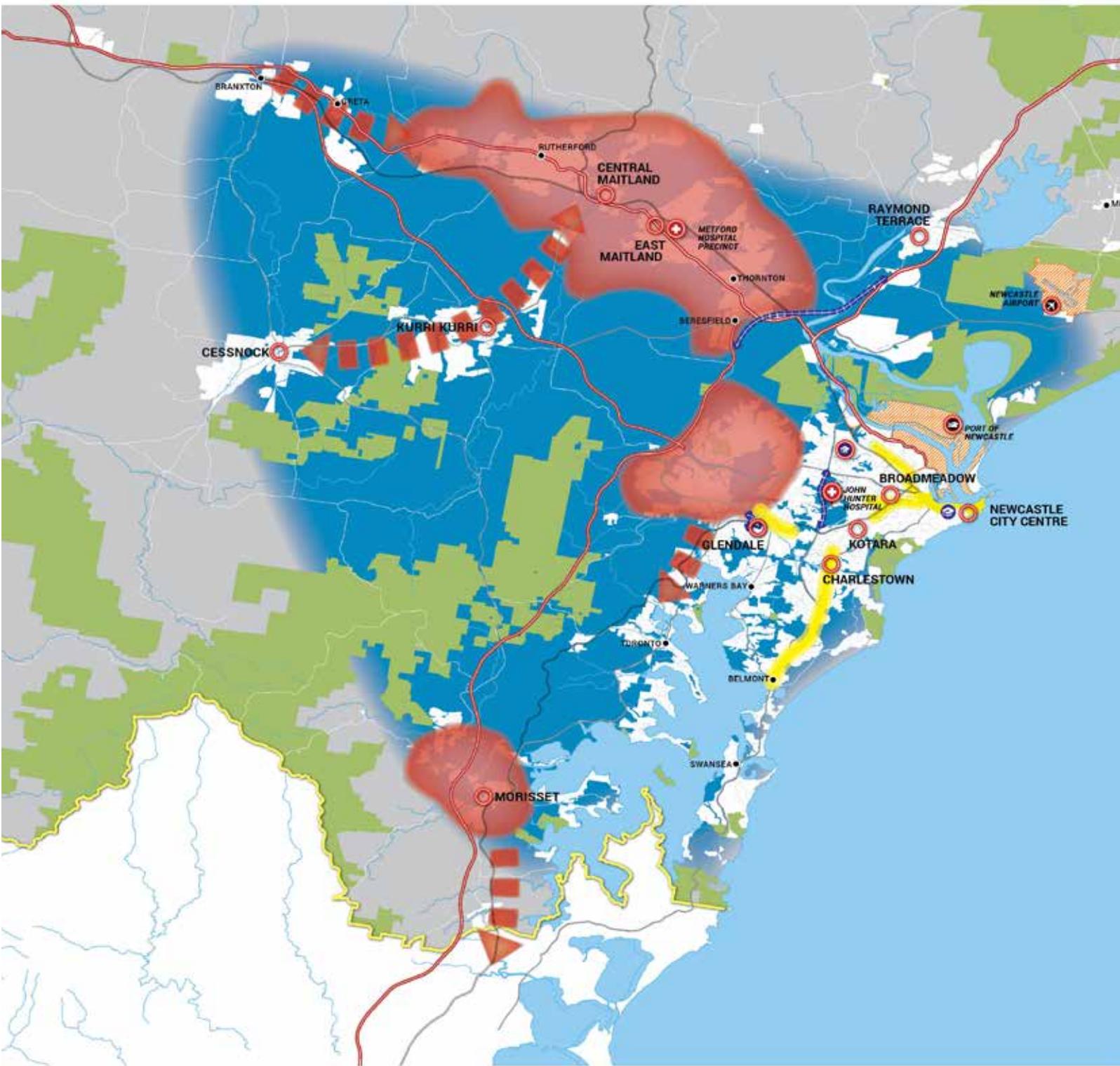
The NSW Government commits to developing and delivering the first-ever Metropolitan Plan for Greater Newcastle. The vision is for a vibrant new metropolitan area with global gateways that maximise exports and tourism, and a centre of excellence for health and education.

A strategic long term plan that crosses local council boundaries will ensure that homes, jobs and infrastructure are delivered in the right locations, and that the region's competitive advantages, environmental assets and natural resources are safeguarded and maximised.

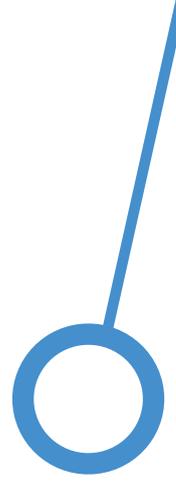
There are four important elements to the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan:

- connect strategic centres in Greater Newcastle;
- develop a national Centre of Excellence for Health and Education;
- expand the capacity of Global Gateways – Newcastle port and airport; and
- establish governance.

Figure 4: **Greater Newcastle 2036**



- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  Strategic Centre                               |  Growth Area            |  University                              |
|  Centre   |  Urban Renewal Corridor |  Inter-regional Road                     |
|  Indicative Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area |  Transport Gateway      |  Residential and Employment Land         |
|  New Road Link                                  |  Hospital               |  National Park and Reserve /State Forest |



## 1. Connect strategic centres in Greater Newcastle

The success of metropolitan Newcastle depends on the ability to develop, diversify and connect strategic centres, including a successful city centre. These are the largest centres of activity and employment in the region. They contain significant clusters of professional, retail, health and education services that are forecast to be major drivers of the economy in the future.

Reinforcing and encouraging development in strategic centres will help sustain their functions and create jobs closer to home. Improving connections between strategic centres and transport nodes will make it easier for people to get to work, to recreation facilities and to services.

A large portion of the 50,000 dwellings<sup>3</sup> and 48,000 jobs<sup>4</sup> required in Greater Newcastle by 2036 will be accommodated through the renewal of established areas. Revitalising Newcastle's historic city centre and transforming Broadmeadow and Glendale into attractive places to live, work and visit will be key components of this renewal.

Population-driven growth will be matched by the opportunities created by emerging technology and the enhanced role of the port and airport in freight and logistics.

The completion of the Inner City Bypass, walking paths and cycleways will help to support the network of strategic centres and make urban living even more appealing. They will also help achieve the Regional Plan's target of 95 per cent of people living within 30 minutes of a strategic centre by 2036.

## 2. Develop a national Centre of Excellence for Health and Education

The University of Newcastle is expanding its presence in Newcastle City Centre with a \$95 million investment.<sup>5</sup> The John Hunter Hospital is the principal referral centre for northern NSW and the Hunter region. Together, these facilities offer health and research facilities of an international standard. Private sector investment and Government infrastructure could further enhance their productivity.

The world-class health, education and research services at the Callaghan and John Hunter Hospital campuses will help attract more well-paid knowledge-based jobs to the region.

Further, innovative research clusters that leverage the capabilities of the Hunter Medical Research Institute and the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources will help expand the knowledge capacity of the region.



### 3. Expand the capacity of Global Gateways – Newcastle port and airport

Greater Newcastle benefits from direct access to national and international markets through the global gateways of Newcastle Airport and the Port of Newcastle. They have enabled the Hunter to become the largest regional economy in Australia and an important gateway for regional NSW for goods and tourists.

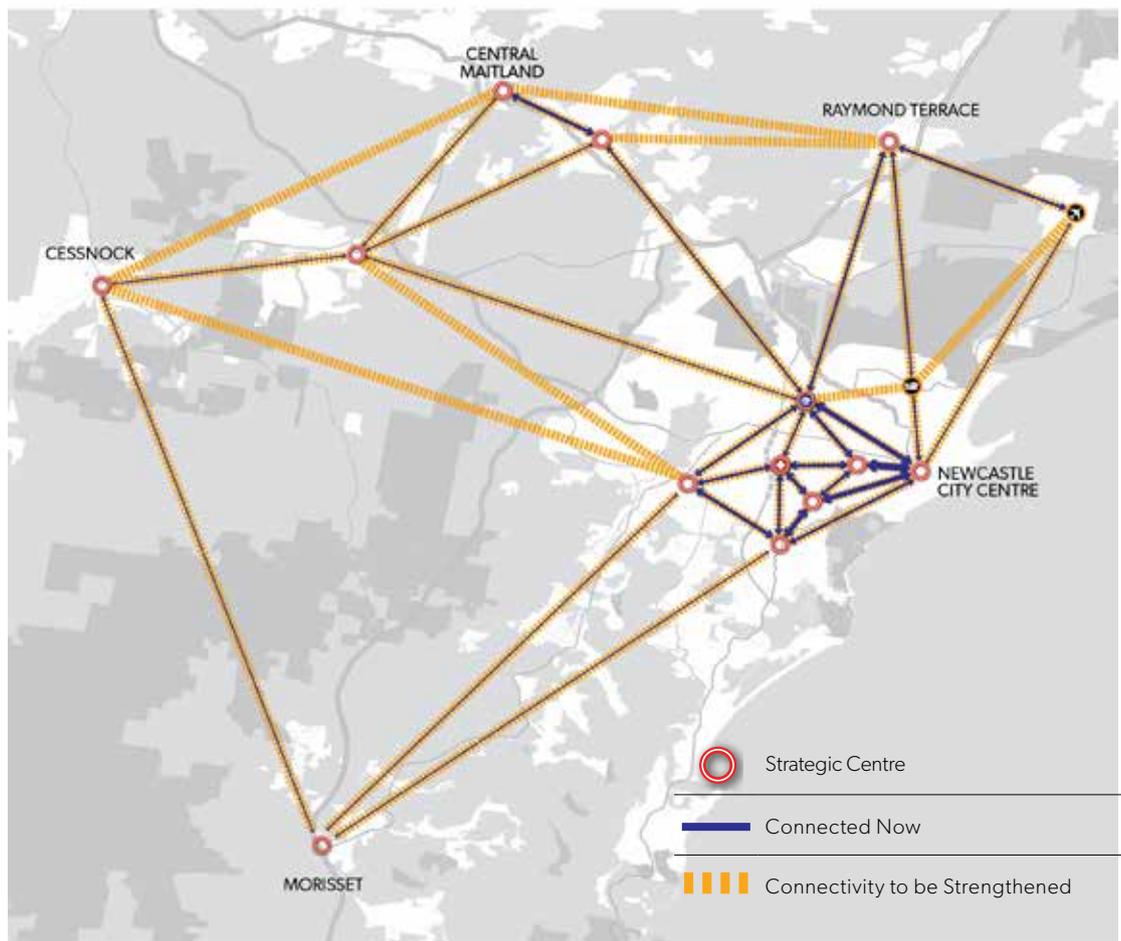
The region’s ongoing economic prosperity will depend on its ability to capitalise on these strategic assets. The gateways and their associated networks will be safeguarded so they remain viable, globally competitive and adaptable.

Improving connectivity and ‘last mile connections’ between freight routes – and to the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport – will improve freight movements to global markets and drive regional economic growth. It will also improve connections between the labour force and global markets, sustaining productivity in the Hunter.

### 4. Establish Governance

The Hunter Development Corporation will have responsibility across the Hunter region. It will lead the coordinated and integrated economic development and infrastructure planning that is necessary to grow Greater Newcastle as a metropolitan area. The Government acknowledges the calls to set up a new Commission. This will be investigated by the Government.

Figure 5: **Greater Newcastle Strategic Centre Connectivity**







# GOAL 1

## ***The leading regional economy in Australia***

The Hunter is the largest regional economy in Australia,<sup>6</sup> ranking above Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory in terms of economic output. It drives around 28 per cent of regional NSW's total economic output and is the largest regional contributor to the State's gross domestic product.<sup>7</sup>

The region has an estimated 322,000 jobs and this is projected to increase to 384,000 by 2036.<sup>8</sup> There is potential to achieve higher jobs growth by planning for more diversified use of employment land.

The economy is increasingly diversified, with strong growth occurring in health care, social assistance, accommodation, food and professional services. This growth demonstrates the region is well placed to benefit from the macro trends affecting the Australian economy, such as the ageing population and greater exposure to the global economy.

The Hunter is strategically situated to leverage proximity to Asia and the region's growing agricultural, health, education and tourism sectors to supply developing Asian economies with resources and products.

The Plan aims to strengthen the region's economic resilience, protect its well-established economic and employment bases and build on its existing strengths to foster greater market and industry diversification.

The development of strategic employment centres is a priority across Greater Newcastle, including revitalising Newcastle City Centre and enhancing specialist centres like the University of

Newcastle, John Hunter Hospital, the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport. Growth in these centres will expand the regional economy and support more jobs close to where people live.

The Upper Hunter will undergo a transition in the context of a changing industry environment, particularly in mining and power generation, and emerging trends in agribusiness.

### **Emerging industries**

Regional Development Australia's *Smart Specialisation Strategy for the Hunter Region* (2016) identified the following growth areas:

- advanced manufacturing;
- creative industries;
- defence;
- food and agribusiness;
- mining equipment, technology and services;
- medical technologies and pharmaceuticals; and
- oil, gas and energy resources.

There are other industries, such as tourism, health and education, which are expected to expand as part of an overall national trend.

## **Direction 1: Grow Greater Newcastle as Australia's next metropolitan city**

Greater Newcastle is a nationally significant city and its success is essential to the prosperity of the Hunter region; however, it does not have a Metropolitan Plan. A strategic long term plan will be prepared to help grow an internationally competitive economy, with innovative businesses, an extensive open space network and efficient transport, and to ensure homes and jobs are delivered in the right locations. The aim is to develop the potential of the city and leverage its competitive advantages for the long term growth of the region and the State and national economies.

A focused approach across local government boundaries will improve infrastructure delivery.

A strong governance framework will provide a coordinated approach to metropolitan planning.

### **Actions**

- 1.1 Prepare a Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan, underpinned by the following principles:
  - Conduct wide-ranging engagement with stakeholders and the community.
  - Retain the identity of communities, towns and cities across Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Newcastle.
  - Establish a governance framework that can attract long-term investment and undertake coordinated planning.
  - Integrate transport and land use planning to enhance public transport connectivity and improve employment accessibility.
  - Focus investment to unlock potential in growth industries and increase economic diversification.
  - Increase inter-regional and international connectivity.
  - Focus development to create compact communities that allow 95 per cent of people to live within 30 minutes of a strategic centre.

- Protect the environment and respond to climate change.

An indicative boundary has been identified for the Metropolitan Plan. The Hunter Development Corporation will consult with stakeholders on the boundary for the plan.

## **Direction 2: Enhance connections to the Asia-Pacific through global gateways**

Greater Newcastle is home to two nationally significant gateways, Newcastle Airport and the Port of Newcastle. These assets have enormous potential to enhance the connectivity of the Hunter to the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

The Port of Newcastle will continue to play an important role in the regional economy through the international export of goods and commodities (including coal and grains) from the Hunter and regional NSW. It is the largest coal exporting port in the world.

The Port of Newcastle has diversified its operations over time to respond to changing markets and demands. The port's facilities and services will need to remain responsive to changes arising from global demand and national economic policy.

Newcastle Airport currently caters for around 1.1 million passengers each year, which will almost double by 2030.<sup>9</sup> It is significant to unlocking the potential of the region's tourism industry and providing an opportunity for the Hunter and Central Coast regions to export services and skilled labour to other parts of Australia and internationally.

The port and airport place high demands on land and infrastructure, affect surrounding lands and require levels of separation from adjoining land uses to sustain their success. They have the capacity to generate associated industries and regional and local employment.

Long term planning and management of both gateways will provide greater certainty for these assets and identify opportunities for further growth.







## Actions

- 2.1 Promote diversification of operations at the Port of Newcastle and the Newcastle Airport and enhanced connectivity to the Asia-Pacific.
- 2.2. Develop and review strategies and precinct plans for the global gateways and surrounding lands to support their growth, diversification and sustainability.
- 2.3. Prepare local plans that adequately respond to air, noise and other issues relevant to the gateways to protect their ongoing operations and expansion.

## Direction 3: Revitalise Newcastle City Centre

Revitalising Newcastle City Centre will be the catalyst that transforms 'Newcastle' as a regional centre to Greater Newcastle as a metropolitan city.

The revitalisation of Newcastle City Centre will create a place that attracts people, activities and investment from all over the Asia-Pacific.

Over the next 20 years, it is projected job numbers will increase from 25,000 to 33,000,<sup>10</sup> as a result of the region's potential to attract a growing number of national corporate headquarters. Accommodation, food and entertainment will add value to the city's economy. They will be supported by upgrades to tourism infrastructure that will enable more visitors to arrive in the city centre by sea and air, expanding on the more than one million people that currently visit Newcastle each year.

The expansion of the University of Newcastle will be a catalyst for the development of the city centre. The education and job offerings, great lifestyle and relative affordability compared with Sydney, will attract new residents to Newcastle City Centre.

The Newcastle Light Rail, from Wickham to Pacific Park, will provide frequent, reliable and comfortable travel through the city centre.

The new transport interchange at Wickham will integrate trains, buses, taxis, light rail, cyclists and pedestrian drop-offs and pick-ups. These projects will provide the backbone for future extensions of the transport network.

Development will leverage the city centre's urban amenity, industrial heritage, harbour and ocean frontage, and access in the region. The revitalisation of Newcastle City Centre will strengthen connections between the city and the waterfront and enhance the public domain.

Focusing investment in developing infrastructure to alleviate pinch points will lead to large-scale renewal projects, including site amalgamation and remediation. The NSW Government will lead by example and partner with other organisations to deliver landmark infrastructure projects.

## Actions

- 3.1 Promote the growth and renewal of Newcastle City Centre through local strategies and controls.
- 3.2 Leverage the increased presence of the University of Newcastle in the city centre.
- 3.3 Develop local housing strategies for student and visitor accommodation and social and affordable housing.
- 3.4 Focus investment in developing infrastructure to:
  - alleviate pinch points, delivering large-scale renewal projects including site amalgamation and remediation;
  - enhance the public domain and relevant services to make it easier to get around the city centre, recognising Wickham as the public transport gateway into the centre; and
  - lead by example and partner with other organisations to deliver landmark infrastructure projects.



### Direction 4: Enhance inter-regional linkages to support economic growth

Freight and logistics contributed \$58 billion to the NSW gross state product (14 per cent) and this is expected to grow by 2036.<sup>11</sup> The Hunter has several national freight networks linking the State's economy to the global transport gateways of the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport.

Managing the land uses surrounding important transport corridors is important to maintain efficiencies in the network, particularly the national freight network, and to allow for future growth. The reduced travel times achieved by the recently completed Hunter Expressway provide unprecedented access between the Upper Hunter and Greater Newcastle. Future planning for land along the Hunter Expressway corridor will consider its region-shaping potential.

Improvements to transport corridors will be needed to maintain efficiencies in the network, particularly for freight, and to allow for future growth. Planning is under way to extend the M1 Pacific Motorway to Raymond Terrace and to complete the Newcastle Inner City Bypass.

The rail network is critical to the movement of raw materials and freight and therefore to the regional economy. Investigations are under way to provide a freight rail bypass around Newcastle's residential suburbs.

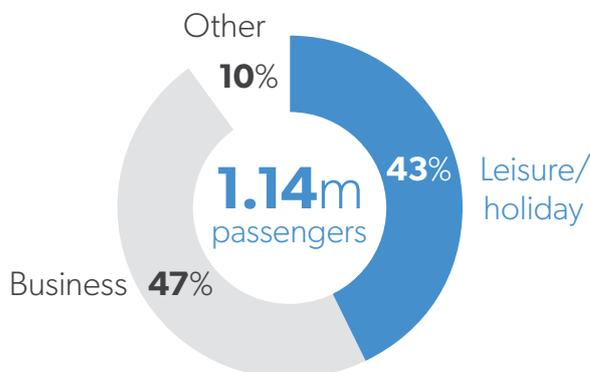
Freight transport facilities, warehousing and distribution centres depend on efficient supply chains, access to customers, land availability and access to main roads. These elements need to be planned in the right locations to make the best use of existing and future improvements to road and rail.

#### Newcastle Airport

2014-15



**310**  
flights/week

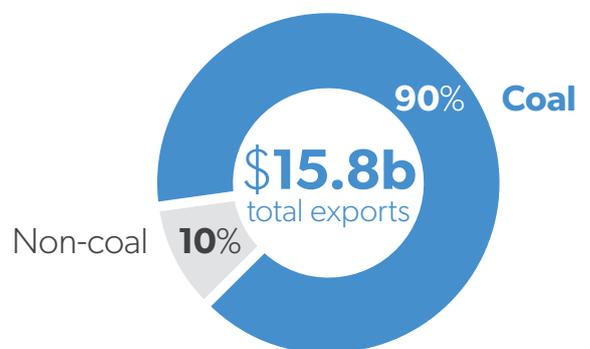


#### Port of Newcastle

2014-15



**158.1m**  
tonnes coal  
exported



Left: Hunter Street mall, Newcastle

Above: Coal train near Muswellbrook

Figure 6: Inter-regional transport connections



Improving rail passenger services to Sydney will allow more residents to access jobs and business opportunities. The Australian Government is investigating the merits of a high-speed rail network to reduce travel time between capital cities along the east coast. This would generate new opportunities for economic development in the region.

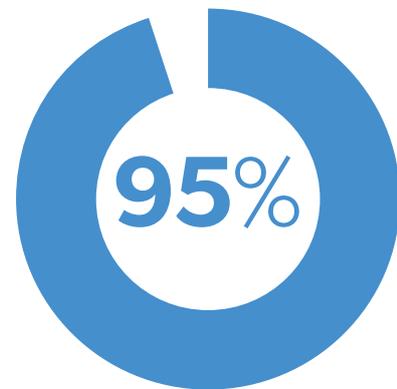
The planned upgrades to Newcastle Airport will permit more people to travel to and from the region and will accommodate international passengers from the Asia-Pacific. Taree Airport can provide additional capacity for domestic travel and improve inter-regional passenger connections.

## Actions

- 4.1 Enhance inter-regional transport connections to support economic growth.
- 4.2 Work with stakeholders to upgrade transport network capacity in line with changing demands.
- 4.3 Strengthen and leverage opportunities from the interconnections with other regions, particularly the Pacific Highway, the Golden Highway and the New England Highway.
- 4.4 Promote freight facilities that leverage the Port of Newcastle and its associated freight transport network.
- 4.5 Plan for multimodal freight facilities that support economic development of the region and respond to the location of the proposed Freight Rail Bypass.
- 4.6 Investigate opportunities for logistics and freight growth and other complementary land uses around airports, leveraging investments at Taree and Newcastle airports.
- 4.7 Enhance the efficiency of existing nationally significant transport corridors and protect their intended use from inappropriate surrounding land uses.
- 4.8 Enable development that relies on access to the Hunter Expressway interchanges,

provided it encourages efficiencies to the inter-regional transport network.

- 4.9 Balance competing interests and deliver conservation, transport and land use planning objectives in the national pinch point area by:
  - identifying preferred habitat corridors and priorities for investment in conservation to sustain habitat connectivity; and
  - developing an integrated management plan for the area.
- 4.10 Prepare a strategy for land along the Hunter Expressway that considers its region-shaping potential.
- 4.11 Update the *Hunter Regional Transport Plan* to ensure there are improved connections to jobs, study and centres for Hunter residents.



OF PEOPLE WILL  
LIVE WITHIN  
**30 MIN** OF A  
STRATEGIC CENTRE  
BY 2036



## **Direction 5: Transform the productivity of the Upper Hunter**

The Upper Hunter is undergoing a transition with major transformation occurring in power generation, emerging technologies, growth opportunities in agriculture and changes in the mining sector. With its links to the global gateways and the Greater Newcastle area, there are opportunities for growth in the Upper Hunter.

This part of the region has natural features and resources that sustain some of the most mature, diverse and successful rural and resource industries in Australia. The Upper Hunter is recognised as a major supplier of coal, energy, wine and thoroughbred horses to national and global markets. These industries have driven investment in transport and energy infrastructure, and will continue to underpin the growth and diversification of the Hunter's economy and employment base.

In the coming decades, the growth and diversification of the Hunter's mining and energy industries will be influenced by global and national energy demands and policies. Identifying land and infrastructure requirements that can support the future development of the region's coal and alternative energy resources will enable the Upper Hunter to respond to new and emerging opportunities.

The Upper Hunter is recognised for its agricultural diversity and there is growing demand for its beef and other agricultural products. These industries, together with the viticulture and equine sectors, will continue to benefit from the quality of the region's natural features and systems and the competitive advantages of the Upper Hunter. They will also be able to capitalise on new and emerging opportunities in both the domestic and Asian markets.

There is capacity to export mining and agricultural knowledge, especially in the equine and viticulture industries.

Protecting the Upper Hunter's landscape and leveraging its established agricultural industries will help to increase its appeal as a tourist destination.

It is important that the Upper Hunter connects to the broader Hunter region 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.

### **Actions**

- 5.1 Prepare for the diversification and innovation of the economy in response to long term industry restructuring in coal and power generation and the growth in new high-technology primary industry and associated specialist knowledge-based industries and rural tourism.
- 5.2 Leverage the regional advantages of the Upper Hunter to create a diverse, thriving and prosperous economy built upon industry growth and investment.
- 5.3 Identify the land and infrastructure requirements to develop the Hunter's coal and alternative energy resources.
- 5.4 Protect the availability and quality of resources to sustain agricultural industries in the region.
- 5.5 Improve land use certainty and enable innovation by reviewing and amending planning frameworks.
- 5.6 Plan for water security to shape regional infrastructure investment and economic development.
- 5.7 Develop the Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Project report.
- 5.8 Review the *Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan*.



## **Direction 6: Grow the economy of MidCoast and Port Stephens**

The MidCoast and Port Stephens area is defined by its pristine natural environment and diverse agriculture.

The area's economy and employment base are largely service-based and highly seasonal, especially in the coastal towns of Forster and Nelson Bay. These factors reflect its tourism economy and ageing communities. The quality of the natural environment also underpins valuable rural and resource industries.

Health care is the largest provider of jobs and this sector is expected to grow with the forecast increases in the ageing population. Clustering of allied health around the Manning Base Hospital at Taree, and other health facilities will support continuing economic and population growth.

The completion of the Pacific Highway upgrade has cut travel times for visitors accessing the wide range of tourist activities in the area. This is supported by upgrades to Newcastle and Taree airports, allowing more visitors to directly enter the area.

Travel times offer opportunities for industries to expand and supply products to Greater Newcastle and Sydney. This will act as a catalyst for employment growth. Attracting new industries and growing existing industries that can leverage the accessibility provided by the Pacific Highway will support economic growth.

### **Actions**

- 6.1 Enhance tourism infrastructure and connectivity, recognising the importance of:
  - regional and inter-regional connections via the Pacific Highway and the Newcastle and Taree airports and cruise ship gateways; and
  - local routes such as the Lakes Way and Nelson Bay Road.

- 6.2 Enhance links to regional services in Greater Newcastle.
- 6.3 Enable economic diversity and new tourism opportunities that focus on reducing the impacts of the seasonal nature of tourism and its effect on local economies.
- 6.4 Promote growth of industries that can leverage accessibility provided by the Pacific Highway.
- 6.5 Plan for and provide infrastructure and facilities that support the ageing population.

## **Direction 7: Develop advanced manufacturing, defence and aerospace hubs**

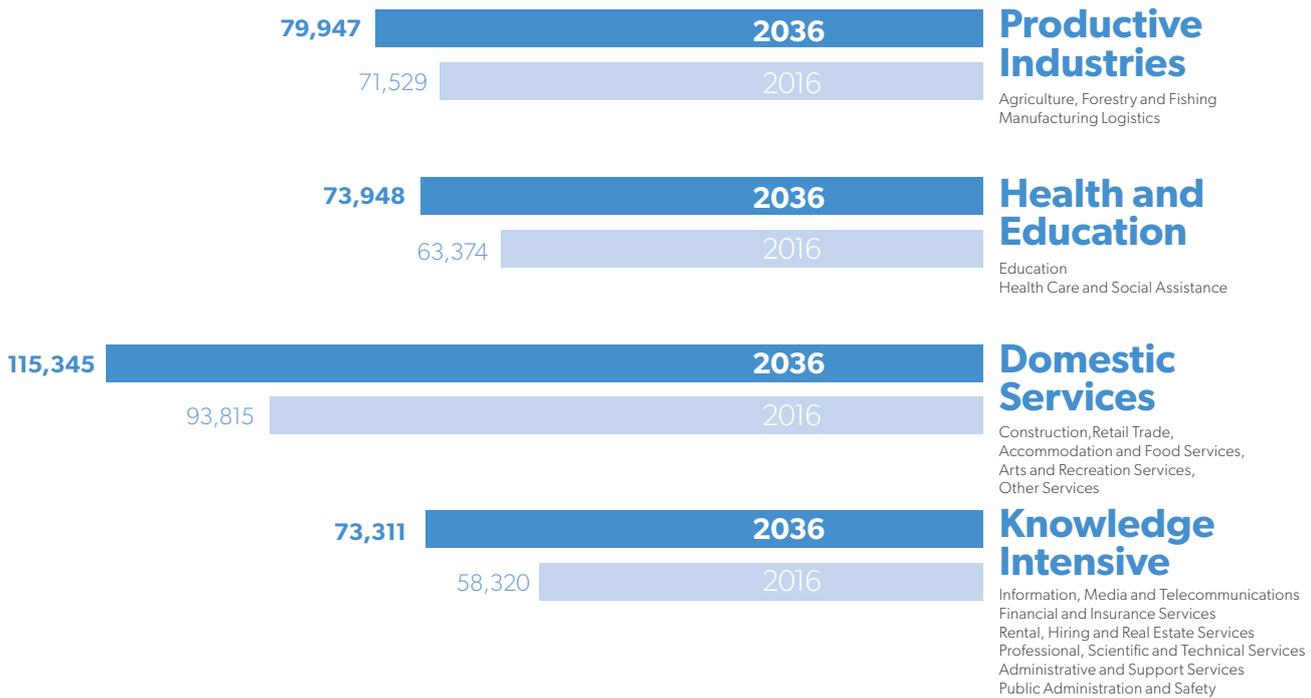
Defence is an important sector in the Hunter economy, with defence establishments at the Royal Australian Air Force base in Williamstown, Lone Pine Barracks in the Singleton Military Area and Myambat Logistic Company near Denman. The defence sector has strong relationships with housing, logistics, technology, education and manufacturing industries in the region.

The Australian Government is seeking to grow the defence and aerospace-related industries in and around the Royal Australian Air Force base at Williamstown and has committed to upgrading the national air defence infrastructure in the precinct. A cluster of aerospace knowledge industries, both in the civil and defence sectors, is emerging in the precinct.

Manufacturing is the third-largest employer in the Hunter region, employing 9.9 per cent of the region's workforce, compared with 8.5 per cent for the rest of NSW.<sup>12</sup> The Hunter's manufacturing sector will remain important to the region.

Innovation and new practices will help manufacturing businesses adapt to changing global and national markets. This includes exploring opportunities to increase exports of products and partnering with education and research institutions. Delivering infrastructure that supports innovation in manufacturing will support the regional economy.

## MAIN EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES 2016 - 2036<sup>13</sup>



### Actions

- 7.1 Facilitate development opportunities on land surrounding Newcastle Airport at Williamstown to cluster emerging high-technology industry, defence and aerospace activities.
- 7.2 Grow and diversify the manufacturing sector through local planning and appropriate planning controls.
- 7.3 Promote manufacturing business export opportunities and become part of global supply chains.
- 7.4 Facilitate research partnerships between tertiary education providers and businesses.
- 7.5 Protect strategic defence establishments with appropriate planning controls and compatible adjoining land uses.

### Direction 8: Promote innovative small business and growth in the service sectors

The service sector is growing rapidly compared with the rest of the economy. Supporting service sector growth and innovation is key to the Hunter's economic success as it drives business competitiveness and job creation.

The rise of middle-class consumers throughout the world, particularly in Asia, significantly increases the potential customer base for new products and services in the health, education and tourism sectors.<sup>14</sup>

Small businesses are a large employer in the Hunter region and a significant contributor to its economy, with two-thirds of the 45,000 Hunter businesses employing fewer than four people.<sup>15</sup> Small and medium businesses account for the largest share of job creation.<sup>16</sup> They are also more likely to be innovative and introduce new or improved goods. Therefore, providing a diversity of development opportunities is important to support jobs growth in sectors such as manufacturing and professional services and creative industries.

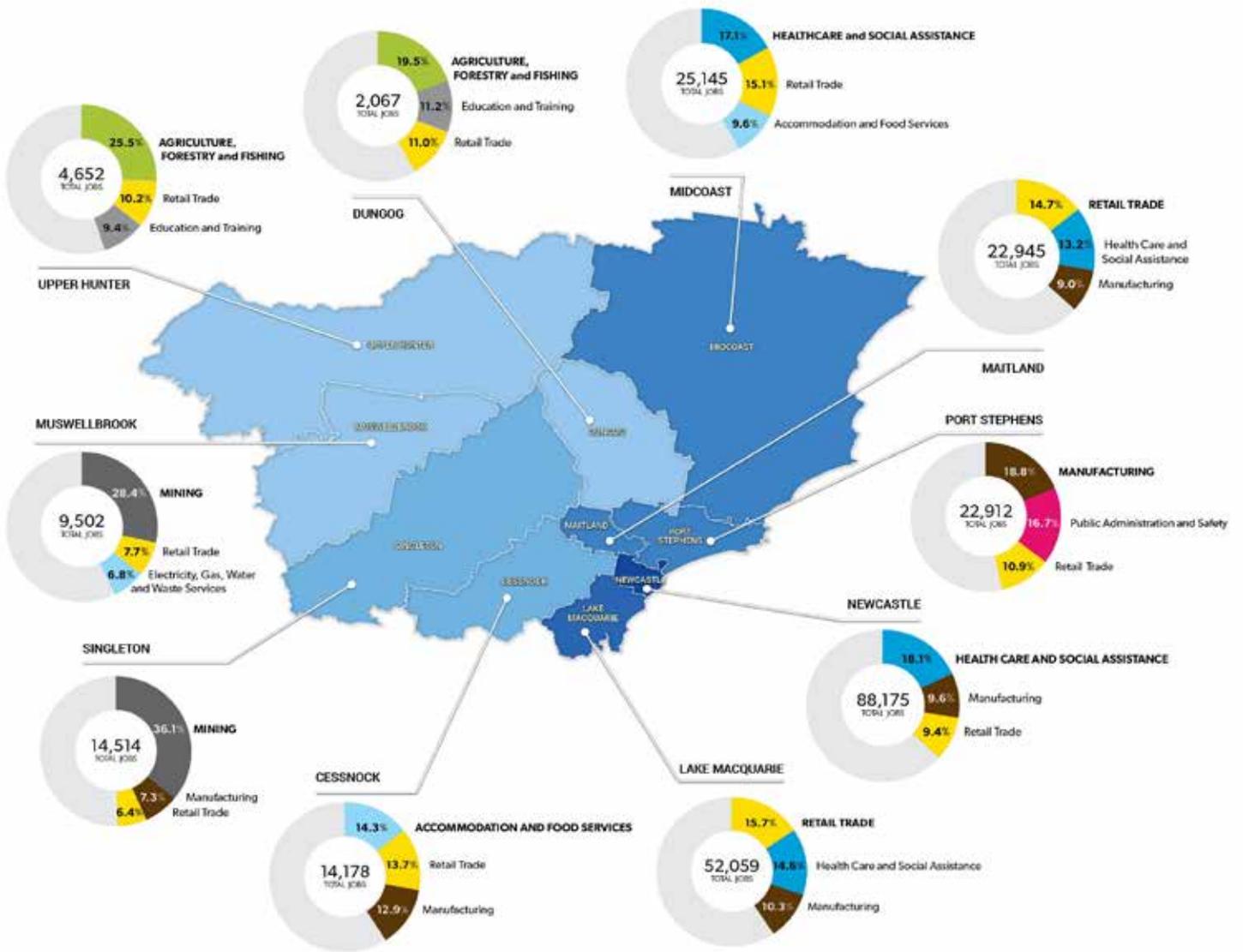
The Hunter has the largest concentration of people employed in creative industries in regional NSW, with one in four people working in this sector in the area. Over 97 per cent of businesses are small enterprises, which are mostly located in the Newcastle Local Government Area.<sup>17</sup>

Health and education are two of the largest sectors in the region's economy. They are also two of the fastest-growing sectors, with the number of jobs projected to increase from 63,000 to 73,000, representing 21 per cent of the workforce by 2036.<sup>18</sup> Health and education services will be essential to support the growth of local communities.





Figure 7: Main employment sectors for each local government area



Data shown is of employed persons aged 15 years and over working in LGA, derived from BTS 2011 Summary By LGA based on 2011 Census V1.1

## Actions

- 8.1 Implement initiatives to promote small business growth and innovation, particularly in Newcastle City Centre and other strategic centres.
- 8.2 Facilitate opportunities for incubator spaces for technology and non-technology early stage businesses, and ensure opportunities for new and emerging enterprises are encouraged.
- 8.3 Improve connectivity to the region's major health and education precincts and strategic centres.
- 8.4 Foster education precincts in Greater Newcastle to encourage a centre of excellence in tertiary and vocational education.
- 8.5 Establish a health precinct around Metford and other hospitals in the region, including Manning Base Hospital at Taree.
- 8.6 Determine potential to grow allied health services on land around hospitals and health services at Kurri Kurri, Belmont, Cessnock, Gloucester, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Nelson Bay and Dungog.

## Direction 9: Grow tourism in the region

There is huge potential for the Hunter to increase the number of nights visitors spend in the region from an annual 8.8 million.<sup>19</sup>

Protecting the Hunter's pristine natural areas will keep them attractive to visitors. The coastal areas are some of the most visited and scenic parts of the region and are entry points to the vast Barrington Tops National Park, a World Heritage area.

Increasing the appeal of the Hunter Valley's vineyards and cellar doors will support a range of complementary tourism activities. Maintaining the scenic rural landscape of the Pokolbin and Broke Fordwich wine-growing areas will encourage growth in tourism and agricultural production.

The region can also capitalise on the growth in food-based or gastronomic tourism throughout the Manning Valley and Hunter Valley to support growers of products such as olives and oysters, as well as the beef and dairy industries. There is potential to align growth of the international centre of excellence for thoroughbreds in the Upper Hunter with growth in food-based and wine tourism.

## Actions

- 9.1 Enable investment in infrastructure to expand the tourism industry, including connections to tourism gateways and attractions.
- 9.2 Encourage tourism development in natural areas that support conservation outcomes.
- 9.3 Undertake a land use assessment across the Viticulture Critical Industry Cluster to balance scenic amenity and ongoing growth in tourism.
- 9.4 Enable the growth of tourism in the Upper Hunter through integration with the Equine Critical Industry Cluster.
- 9.5 Develop capacity for growth in food-based tourism.

## Direction 10: Protect and enhance agricultural productivity

There are major international trends that the Hunter can capitalise on to increase agricultural productivity, such as increasing global connectivity and proximity to Asia, where the demand for fresh food is growing. Globally, middle-class markets are expected to be looking for value-added agricultural produce, including wine, cheese and other food products.

Domestically, the Hunter has competitive advantages courtesy of its proximity to the rapidly growing Sydney market, connectivity to regions to the north, west and south, and the export capability available through the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport.

Further diversification will enable the region's agricultural industries to seize these opportunities. There are already 3,503 agricultural businesses operating in the region, delivering more than \$946 million in wholesale value.<sup>20</sup>

Agricultural producers require ongoing access to a specific combination of resources and conditions such as quality land and water supply, favourable climate, labour, supply chains, processing facilities and markets. The NSW Government has mapped Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land, which contains high-quality soil and water resources capable of sustaining high levels of productivity.

The NSW Government has also worked with councils and industry to develop methodologies for mapping Important Agricultural Land. Mapping of agricultural industries will support their sustainable growth.

Promoting sustainable growth in the agribusiness sector alongside other key industries will require more focus on:

- regional water security;
- industry access to underused land resources (requiring greater appreciation of land use compatibility);
- new productive uses for mine and power generation buffer lands; and
- new economic uses for under-capacity mining infrastructure.

Biosecurity is important to the wellbeing and prosperity of the region. In 2013, the NSW Government developed the *NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021* to highlight the measures that can be taken to protect the economy, environment and community from the negative impacts of pests, diseases and weeds.

Biosecurity risks can often be minimised through appropriate land zoning and by applying buffers to separate different land uses, making use of distance, vegetation or topography.

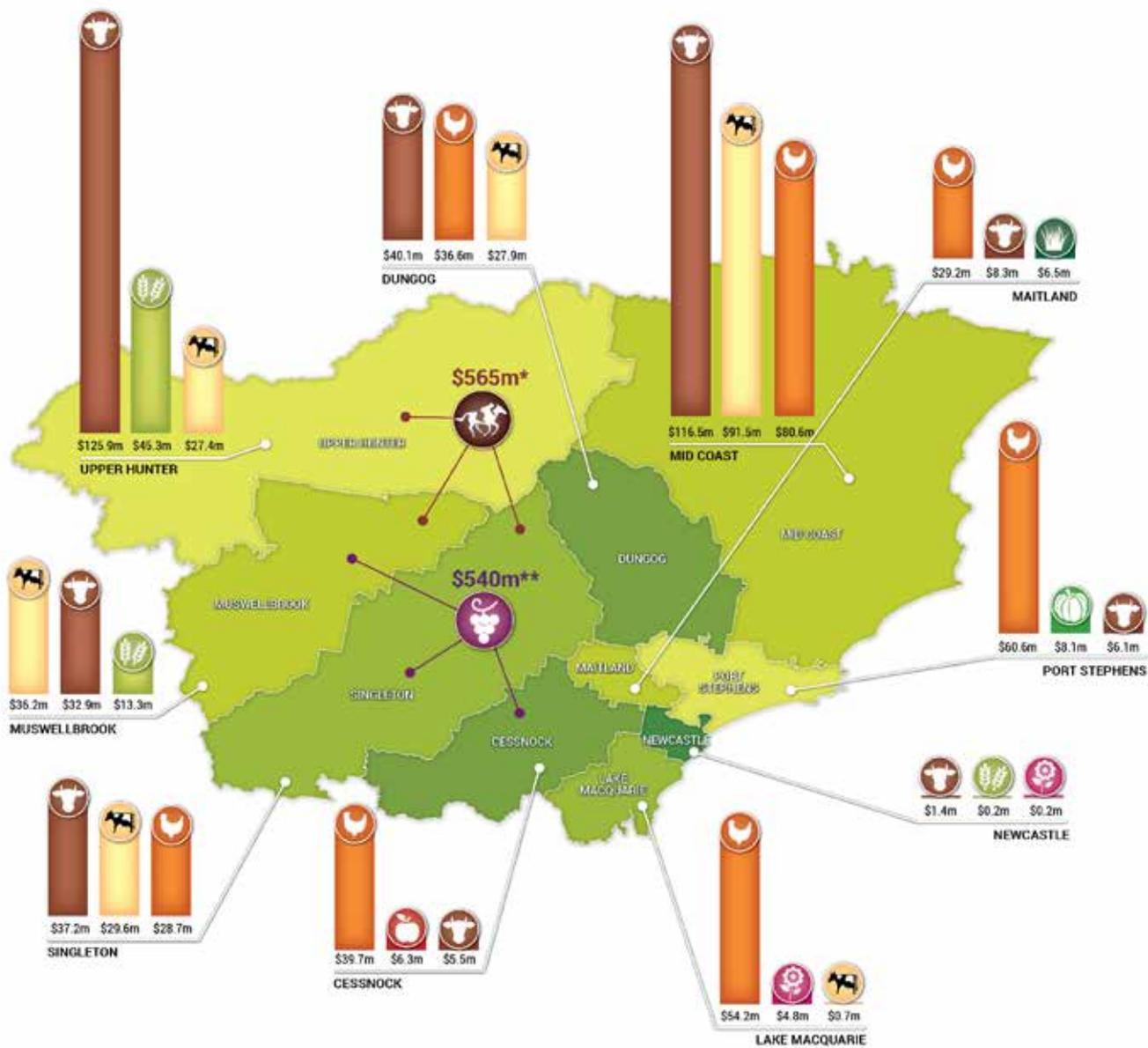
## Actions

- 10.1 Protect locations that can accommodate agricultural enterprises from incompatible development, and facilitate the supply chain, including infrastructure, distribution areas, processing facilities and research and development in local plans.
- 10.2 Address sector-specific considerations for agricultural industries through local plans.
- 10.3 Protect the region's wellbeing and prosperity through increased biosecurity measures.
- 10.4 Encourage niche commercial, tourist and recreation activities that complement and promote a stronger agricultural sector, and build the sector's capacity to adapt to changing circumstances.
- 10.5 Develop an agribusiness industry strategy in areas experiencing high population growth to retain jobs and agribusiness growth for the Hunter.
- 10.6 Manage Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land and other important agricultural land as locations for agricultural activities and complementary uses.

## Direction 11: Manage the ongoing use of natural resources

There are competing uses for land in this region and there is a need to balance these interests in order to deliver the vision for this region. As part of the process to achieve balanced outcomes, the NSW Government has introduced a Strategic Release Framework for Coal and Petroleum. This is a mechanism to review and define which lands may constitute new exploration release areas. New exploration licences will only be issued in areas released by the Minister for Resources and Energy after an assessment of resource potential and economic, environmental and social factors. Community consultation and an upfront assessment of social, environmental and economic matters will occur through a preliminary regional issues assessment.

Figure 8: **Agricultural production in the Hunter**



**NOTE:**

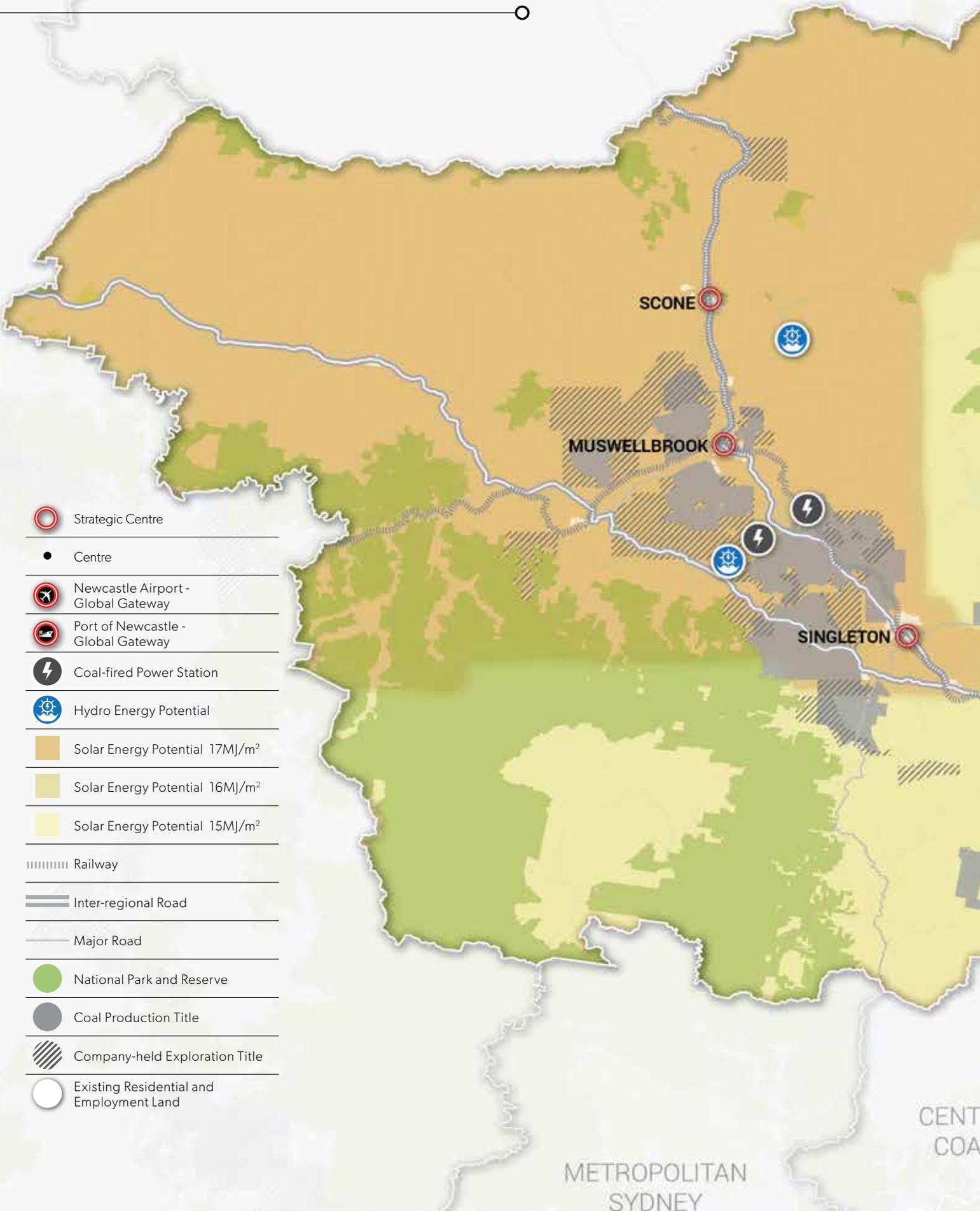
\* The gross value added, being the value of sales less the value of inputs used in production. This is not directly comparable to the other agricultural industry values listed. Source: IER, 2011, *Size and scope of the NSW Racing Industry*. Commissioned by the NSW Government.

\*\* Total value of investment expenditure directly associated with the grape and wine production for the Hunter Region. This figure is not directly comparable to other agricultural industry values listed. This does not include the value added associated with wine tourism. Source: Department of Primary Industries, 2013, *Upper Hunter Region Viticulture Profile*, Fact Sheet No. 5, NSW Government, based on data supplied by Hunter Valley Wine Industry Association (HVWIA) estimated for 2010).

Note: ABS data estimates the wholesale value of unprocessed agricultural products. These figures do not capture the flow-on contribution of agriculture to other businesses in NSW. An estimate of the overall contribution of agriculture to the NSW economy is obtained by multiplying the wholesale value of agriculture by the standard ABS multiplier for agricultural production which is 2.178 (industry and Investment NSW, 2011).



Figure 9: Coal mining and renewable energy



-  Strategic Centre

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-  Centre

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-  Newcastle Airport - Global Gateway

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-  Port of Newcastle - Global Gateway

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-  Coal-fired Power Station

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-  Hydro Energy Potential

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-  Solar Energy Potential 17MJ/m<sup>2</sup>

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-  Solar Energy Potential 16MJ/m<sup>2</sup>

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-  Solar Energy Potential 15MJ/m<sup>2</sup>

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-  Railway

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-  Inter-regional Road

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-  Major Road

---

-  National Park and Reserve

---

-  Coal Production Title

---

-  Company-held Exploration Title

---

-  Existing Residential and Employment Land



NORTH WEST

NORTH COAST

WINGHAM

TAREE

HARRINGTON

OLD BAR

GLOUCESTER

FORSTER-TUNCURRY

DUNGOG

BRANXTON

GRETA

KURRI  
KURRI

MAITLAND

RAYMOND  
TERRACE

TEA GARDENS

NELSON BAY

ANNA BAY

CESSNOCK

NEWCASTLE  
CITY CENTRE

MORISSET

Disclaimer:

Exploration Titles show where applications can be made for mining activities. They do not infer a right to mine.

Mining is excluded in National Parks and Historic Sites

CENTRAL  
WEST



This new framework is transparent, informed and consistent with the NSW Government's broader mineral and energy resource strategies. Coal mining will remain significant in the region.

The combination of undeveloped coal resources in the Hunter and Newcastle coalfields and the export capability of the Port of Newcastle provide significant opportunities for growth.

Mining activities have specific operational needs that can compete with other sensitive uses, however they are also temporary and depend on the productive life of the facility or resource. Once extractive resource lands have been identified, there may be opportunities to identify interim activities that can occur without sterilising the underlying resource.

Developing land use plans that respond to the lifecycle of the extractive resource area provides all stakeholders with certainty around the long term use and productive value of the land.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring the long term profitability and sustainability of our forests and forestry industries. The region's forests provide tourism and recreation activities, habitat and wood products through harvesting, and environmental services such as good water quality, native habitat and connectivity with other forests (such as national parks).

## Actions

- 11.1 Manage the ongoing use of mineral resources and provide access to up-to-date information about these resources through the Department of Industry's Common Ground website and its Geoscientific Data Warehouse.
- 11.2 Work with relevant stakeholders, including councils, communities and industry, to prepare land use plans that respond to the lifecycle of resource activity for active and emerging mining areas.
- 11.3 Implement the cumulative impact assessment methodology when planning for

important agricultural land and water resources.

- 11.4 Review the *Synoptic Plan: Integrated landscapes for coal mine rehabilitation in the Hunter Valley* (1999) in conjunction with the development of the Upper Hunter Strategic Biodiversity Assessment to ensure best-practice rehabilitation and visual impact management for closed mines.

## Direction 12: Diversify and grow the energy sector

The Hunter accounts for 44 per cent of power generation in NSW,<sup>21</sup> however prospective closures of Liddell and Bayswater power stations in 2022 and 2035 respectively,<sup>22</sup> mean the transformation in the energy sector that is under way will need to be accelerated.

The Hunter has the solar, wind and geothermal resources to deliver large-scale projects. It is already home to some landmark projects including CSIRO's solar farm in Newcastle.

Energy efficient and renewable energy technologies can drive innovation, improve business and agricultural productivity and underpin long term economic growth. Ground-source heat exchange, solar pumping in agriculture, bioenergy, small-scale hydro and storage technology advances have enormous potential to contribute to the regional economy.

With its energy industries and research base, the Hunter region has the potential to be a major hub for next-generation power.

## Actions

- 12.1 Diversify and grow the energy sector by working with stakeholders, including councils, communities and industry, to identify and support opportunities for smaller-scale renewable energy initiatives such as those using bioenergy or waste coalmine methane.



- 12.2 Enable opportunities for renewable energy industries by reviewing local planning controls.
- 12.3 Promote new opportunities arising from the closure of coal-fired power stations that enable long term sustainable economic and employment growth in the region.

### **Direction 13: Plan for greater land use compatibility**

Ongoing investment in rural and resource industries will underpin the sustainable growth, economic prosperity and ongoing productivity of the Hunter region. As the Hunter continues to grow and new economic development opportunities emerge for rural and resource industries, there is potential for compatibility issues to arise and for competition to develop for water resources and for infrastructure to support other uses.

There is also potential for conflict if new housing encroaches into rural and resource areas, leading to increased management costs. Conflict could also affect the potential to sustain or grow rural and resource industries. The expansion of rural and resource industries can also affect established urban activities if not managed appropriately. Land use planning can provide greater certainty for investment in rural and resource industries by establishing clear parameters and transparent processes to support new development.

Managing the compatibility of land uses requires a whole-of-government response. The NSW Government is already responding to community concerns about the long term future of coal and gas mining around the State. The Government has developed a policy framework for strategic release areas for coal and petroleum exploration licences and assessment leases. The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has begun a project to investigate and develop options to provide greater guidance on assessing and managing the social impacts of State significant mining projects.

The NSW Government will continue to engage with communities, interest groups and industry around land use conflict to better understand all sides of the debate. This will assist with future policy-making and initiatives that balance the economic, social and environmental needs of the Hunter community.

### **Actions**

- 13.1 Identify and protect important agricultural land, including intensive agricultural clusters, in local plans to avoid land use conflicts, particularly associated with residential expansion.
- 13.2 Limit urban and rural housing encroachment into identified agricultural and extractive resource areas, industrial areas and transport infrastructure when preparing local strategies.
- 13.3 Amend planning controls to deliver greater certainty of land use.
- 13.4 Provide non-statutory guidance on the types of land uses that would be considered most appropriate, suitable or sympathetic to existing land uses in the Upper Hunter and other areas where land use conflicts occur.



Left: Port of Newcastle

Above: Maitland





# GOAL 2

## ***A biodiversity-rich natural environment***

The Hunter's diverse natural environment includes some of the most unique ecological systems in Australia. Within the region there are three terrestrial bioregions – the Sydney Basin, North Coast and Brigalow Belt South, and the Hawkesbury and Manning Shelf marine bioregions.

The natural environment sustains important terrestrial and aquatic ecological systems and good habitat connections, including part of a national corridor extending from Victoria to Far North Queensland.

Pristine natural areas are conserved in a network of protected areas, from the World Heritage values of the Greater Blue Mountains to the Port Stephens–Great Lakes Marine Park.

Residents and visitors are fortunate to have ready access to many of the region's natural areas – and an array of unique experiences. These areas contribute to the region's identity and the health of its communities. They are also important for recreational and tourism activities, as a focus for investment and a factor in where people choose to live.

The Hunter contains two major water catchments, the Hunter and the Manning River, which provide water that sustains the region.

Good planning and design will be fundamental to protecting the environment and building greater resilience to natural hazards and climate change.

### ***Direction 14: Protect and connect natural areas***

Investing in conservation (including biodiversity offsets) that protects, and where possible, enhances habitat connections will deliver multiple benefits to the environment and the community. Investments have already been made in the Green Corridor (identified in the 2006 *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy*), which is an important link in the Great Eastern Ranges initiative. Identifying other priority conservation areas is also important.

Modelling that identifies habitat connectivity is the first step to identifying and protecting existing habitat links and then establishing new links to support the movement of animals across the landscape.

Many of the region's natural features are already subject to a high level of regulation to protect their environmental values. Strategic land use planning should identify and take account of the location and extent of these areas of high environmental value.





## Actions

- 14.1 Identify terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity values and protect areas of high environmental value to sustain the lifestyle, economic success and environmental health of the region.
- 14.2 Identify and strengthen biodiversity corridors as places for priority biodiversity offsets.
- 14.3 Improve the quality of, and access to, information relating to high environmental values.
- 14.4 Protect biodiversity by maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the existing protection of high environmental value areas; implementing appropriate measures to conserve validated high environmental value areas; developing local strategies to avoid and minimise the impacts of development on areas of high environmental value and biodiversity corridors; and identifying offsets or other mitigation measures for unavoidable impacts.
- 14.5 Secure the long term protection of regionally significant biodiversity corridors.

### Biodiversity Corridors

Biodiversity corridors are areas that link vegetation to form wildlife habitat. Corridors support ecological processes for plants (for example, pollination and seed dispersal) and wildlife movement (for example, for migration, feeding and breeding). They provide habitat and can improve the ability of species to adapt to changes in habitat and climate. Corridors also have significant scenic values and often support recreation.

Corridors can take several forms, including:

- stepping stone corridors of discontinuous patches of vegetation;
- continuous lineal strips of vegetation along riparian strips; and
- part of a larger habitat area known or likely to be important to local fauna as could occur in a national park or State forest.<sup>23</sup>

A holistic approach across both public and private lands will protect and manage natural ecosystems and ensure connectivity between habitats. Planning and management tools can identify and establish corridors; processes which sometimes takes many years.

There are several areas in the Hunter where large areas of remnant vegetation could be connected to form a network. These include national parks, State forests, council reserves, floodplains, foreshore and riparian vegetation.



## **Direction 15: Sustain water quality and security**

Water catchments in the region include the Hunter and Manning river systems and the Karuah and Lake Macquarie water catchments, which encompass important coastal lakes and lagoons, coastal wetlands, sensitive estuaries and the protected waters of Port Stephens and the Great Lakes.

Monitoring and managing the impacts of existing land uses, and in the future those associated with growth, will be essential to protect the quality and security of the region's water supplies. This is particularly important in areas containing drinking water catchments.

Improvements to the networks operated by Hunter Water and MidCoast Water, and Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter councils will be necessary to ensure an ongoing supply of water. The linking of the Hunter Water network – the second largest in NSW supplying water to more than 500,000 people – to the Central Coast regional water supply network will increase the resilience of the two regions to future droughts.

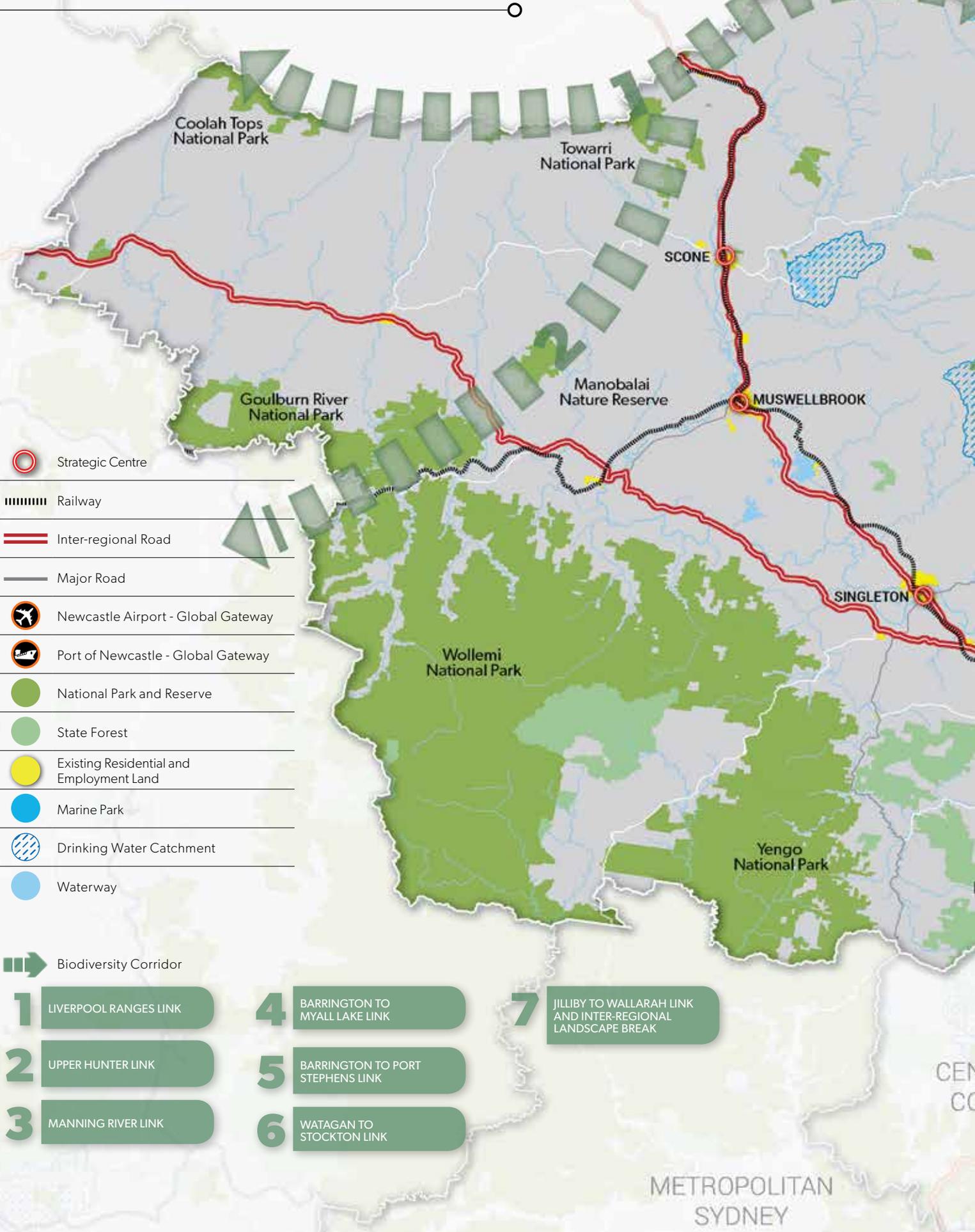
Water sharing plans form the basis of water sharing and water allocation in the Hunter. Changes in water demand from different uses may result in the potential reallocation of water over time.

## **Actions**

- 15.1 Protect water catchments to sustain high quality and dependable water supplies across the region.
- 15.2 Effectively manage surface and groundwater use in agricultural areas to support ecosystem function and food production, and to cater for the increasing demand of urban communities and industry.
- 15.3 Plan for the security of the region's town water supply.
- 15.4 Implement catchment-based plans for the ongoing sustainable management and health of estuaries.
- 15.5 Apply the 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.
- 15.6 Reduce the risk of introduction or spread of aquatic pests and diseases from new development that may affect fisheries and aquaculture industry practices.
- 15.7 Incorporate water-sensitive design into development that is likely to have an adverse impact on coastal water catchments, water quality and flows.



Figure 10: Proposed Biodiversity Corridors





NORTH COAST

Barrington Tops National Park

TAREE

Ghin-Doo-Ee National Park

FORSTER-TUNCURRY

Booti Booti National Park

Wallingat National Park

Myall Lakes National Park

PORT STEPHENS-GREAT LAKES MARINE PARK

Karuah National Park

Wallaroo National Park

MAITLAND

NELSON BAY

KURRI KURRI

CESSNOCK

NEWCASTLE CITY CENTRE

Watagans National Park

MORISSET

Wallarah National Park

CENTRAL COAST



## Sustaining regional habitat connectivity

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

This link recognises corridors previously identified in the *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006-2031* and the *North Wyong Shire Structure Plan (2012)*. It 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 the Central Coast region and creating an inter-regional landscape break between the two regions.

### **Watagans to Stockton Link**

This link was first proposed by the *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006-2031* and 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.

Recent desktop modelling indicates that the narrowest point in the Watagans-Stockton Link (generally between Weakleys Drive and Tomago) may not be able to support landscape-scale habitat connections. 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 region. 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 encompasses fauna corridors first identified in the *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy* (2006). It is located between Barrington Tops National Park and large patches of existing vegetation in the Myall Lakes and Port Stephens areas. It extends across an area that the NSW Government is currently investigating for future gas resources to diversify the State's energy supply and is an emerging (economic) growth area. 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.

## **Direction 16: Increase resilience to hazards and climate change**

Most people in the Hunter live near the coast, bushland or rivers. The appeal of these places is obvious; however, they may also come with challenges such as flooding, coastal inundation, erosion and bushfires. For example, the Hunter and Manning rivers and their major tributaries are flood-prone. These issues are a significant factor when planning for future growth.

Climate change is likely to result in varying rainfall, higher temperatures and prolonged dry periods or drought. These conditions may cause more frequent and intense hazards. Coastal communities are likely to be more vulnerable to the threat of coastal recession and over the longer term, sea level rise.

The Hunter and Manning Valley floodplains provide some of the region's most fertile soils. The floodplains also host important inter-regional freight connections, including the Hunter Valley Coal Rail Network and North Coast Railway. Tools have to be developed to manage the risk to communities, infrastructure and agricultural productivity from the impacts of climate change.

Land use planning that supports changes to the physical environment and infrastructure can help to avoid or manage risks and build community resilience to hazards. The NSW Government will support councils to develop evidence and provide strategic advice to inform their decision-making.

### **Actions**

- 16.1 Manage the risks of climate change and improve the region's resilience to flooding, sea level rise, bushfire, mine subsidence, and land contamination.
- 16.2 Review and consistently update floodplain risk and coastal zone management plans, particularly where urban growth is being investigated.
- 16.3 Incorporate new knowledge on regional climate projections and related cumulative impacts in local plans for new urban development.
- 16.4 Review and update the Newcastle Mines Grouting Fund and investigate its relevance to other areas.







# GOAL 3

## Thriving communities

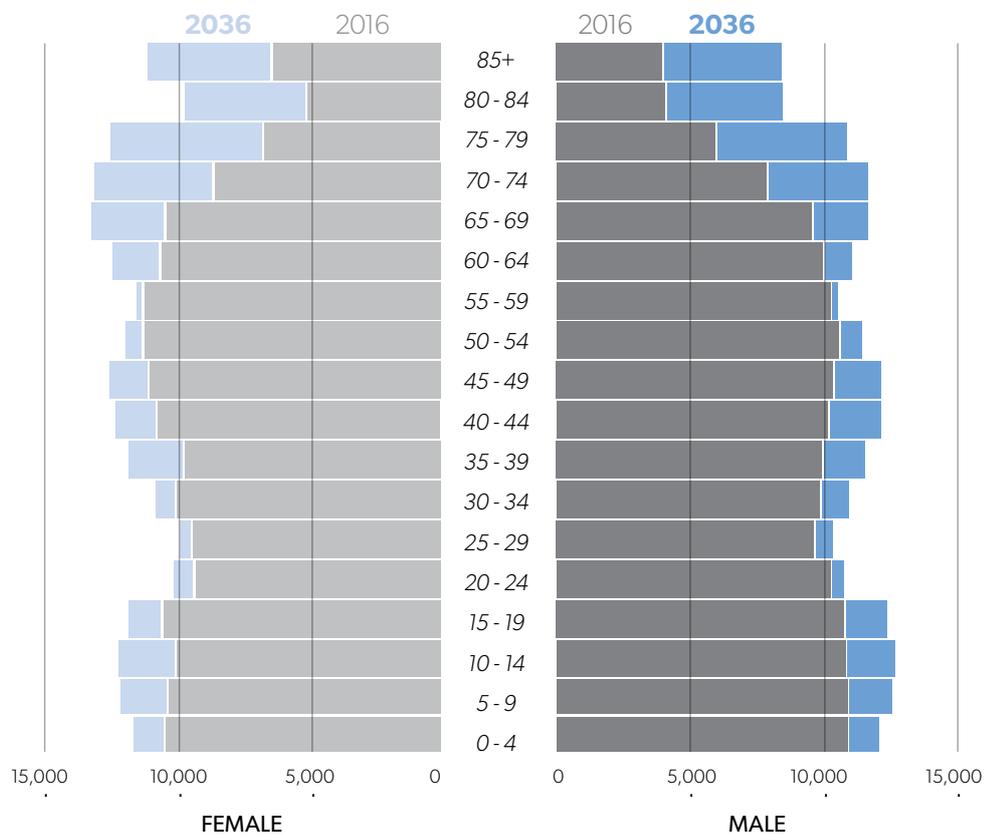
The Hunter is home to some of the most diverse communities in NSW and their distinctive character is a significant competitive advantage for the region.

Many communities are set within and around the Hunter's natural features and open space, which are among the region's best assets. The quality of these areas and the ability to access them gives residents an array of unique experiences and the opportunity for a healthy lifestyle.

The Hunter contains natural features that are important cultural heritage for Aboriginal communities. Conserving these assets and respecting the Aboriginal communities' right to determine how they are identified and managed will preserve some of the world's longest-standing spiritual, historical, social and educational values.

Protecting built heritage values through revitalisation will create thriving communities that are great places to live.

### 2016 - 2036 Population Pyramid





## **Direction 17: Create healthy built environments through good design**

Communities should be designed so that they enrich the quality of life and wellbeing of residents by encouraging physical activity, social cohesion and access to healthy, locally grown food.

Councils should consider precinct planning as a way of promoting these attributes. Precinct planning can establish a framework to achieve more intensified housing in certain places, attracting new housing development or creating mixed use economic investment through renewal.

Integrating recreational walking and cycling networks in the design of new communities will help to encourage physical activity. Opportunities to extend the network should be investigated as part of planning new residential release areas and renewal sites.

A number of planning tools are available to support planning for healthy communities, including the *Hunter New England Population Health 2012 Liveability Assessment Tool*.

Access to locally grown fresh food also supports healthy communities and broader sustainability objectives. There should be increased access to food production in urban areas and in adjoining spaces through community gardens, which provide home-grown produce, and through better access to produce grown in surrounding agricultural areas.

### **Actions**

- 17.1 Develop best-practice guidelines for planning, designing and developing healthy built environments.
- 17.2 Enhance access to fresh food by promoting initiatives that increase urban food production and access to produce from local farmers.

- 17.3 Enhance the quality of neighbourhoods by integrating recreational walking and cycling networks into the design of new communities to encourage physical activity.

## **Direction 18: Enhance access to recreational facilities and connect open spaces**

Expanding on the recreational walking and cycling trails that already exist in the region will allow more people to experience the region's wonderful natural areas. This includes extending the Great North Walk – a 250-kilometre bushwalking track that already links Sydney to the Hunter Valley and Newcastle – along the coast to Forster and inland. Investigations are under way on the Richmond Vale Rail Trail, which will provide a recreation link between Newcastle and Kurri Kurri.

The Hunter has an extensive network of open space spread across 9,775 hectares of land that provides many opportunities for people to experience the environment.<sup>24</sup> By 2036, the network of recreation facilities, open space and bushland will extend to form a 'green grid' across the region. Within Greater Newcastle, this means there will be connections between Glenrock State Conservation Area, Blue Gum Hills Regional Park and Blackbutt Reserve.

The waterways in the region, such as Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens and Manning River, support important water-based recreational activities including both powered and non-powered boating activities.

### **Actions**

- 18.1 Facilitate more recreational walking and cycling paths including planning for the Richmond Vale Rail Trail and expanded inter-regional and intra-regional walking and cycling links, including the NSW Coastal Cycleway.
- 18.2 Deliver connected biodiversity-rich corridors and open space areas for community enjoyment.



- 18.3 Enhance public access to natural areas, including coastal and lake foreshores.
- 18.4 Assist councils to develop open space and recreation strategies that identify a range of accessible open space and recreation opportunities; integrate open space, active transport and recreation networks; and improve public foreshore access.
- 18.5 Implement actions and invest in boating infrastructure priorities identified in regional boating plans to improve boating safety, boat storage and waterway access.

### **Direction 19: Identify and protect the region's heritage**

Cultural heritage is important to communities by providing tangible connections to the past. Heritage items can also attract tourism, which can contribute to local economies.

Interpreting and adaptively reusing built heritage items has been successful in giving smaller communities across the State a new lease on life. Enhancing main streets through heritage conservation creates authenticity, attracts new businesses and residents, and offers tourism potential, as demonstrated in Morpeth. It is worth investigating opportunities to do this in the region as it can contribute to building resilience in smaller communities such as Stroud, Denman and Wingham.

The Hunter contains natural features that are important to the cultural heritage of Aboriginal communities. Conserving these assets, and respecting the Aboriginal community's right to determine how they are identified and managed, will preserve their significant values.

#### **Actions**

- 19.1 Consult with the local Aboriginal communities to identify and protect heritage values to minimise the impact of

urban growth and development, and to recognise their contribution to the character and landscape of the region.

- 19.2 Assist the preparation of appropriate heritage studies to inform the development of strategic plans, including regional Aboriginal cultural heritage studies.

### **Direction 20: Revitalise existing communities**

The region is home to diverse communities located throughout the Hunter's urban areas, towns, villages and rural localities. These places have unique histories and a strong sense of identity.

Concentrating development in existing areas will revitalise communities. It can reinforce and enhance the sense of community and belonging.

As the population grows there is potential to provide more social infrastructure, including health, education, community facilities and public transport, as well as opportunities to enhance open spaces, civic squares and other gathering places.

The design of centres can make them more attractive for residents. There are ways to do this, such as transforming traditional main streets through place-making and other small-scale improvements. Good design can help to create accessible, safe and attractive local areas.

#### **Actions**

- 20.1 Accelerate urban revitalisation by directing social infrastructure where there is growth.
- 20.2 Undertake planning and place-making for main streets and centres.
- 20.3 Enhance the amenity and attractiveness of existing places.

Left: Shoal Bay

Above: Kurri Kurri Hotel

## Supporting increases in walking and cycling

Greater Newcastle has an extensive and expanding walking and cycling network. This network provides excellent opportunities for recreational and commuter walking, cycling and jogging, and includes:

- Bathers Way, which was upgraded under the Newcastle Coastal Revitalisation Program, providing five kilometres of uninterrupted shared pathways from Nobbys Head to Glenrock Reserve, taking in Newcastle's five main beaches;
- a number of scenic shared paths along the foreshores of Newcastle Harbour and Lake Macquarie;
- the Tramway Track connecting Wallsend and Glendale; and
- the 15-kilometre Fernleigh Track, which winds through unique coastal habitats along a former railway.

Parts of Greater Newcastle have some of the highest rates of cycling in the State and walking is popular with people of all ages. Greater Newcastle is predominately flat and its high levels of employment create the right conditions to leverage the increasing popularity of walking and cycling. However, increases in use need to be supported by the creation of an active transport network that builds on existing links.

Supporting initiatives to extend this network will help to boost the physical activity and potential health and wellbeing of residents across the region. Integrating the recreational walking and cycling networks with commuter connections to centres, bus networks and railway stations will help to increase commuter walking and cycling use, support the public transport network and reduce congestion. There are also economic benefits associated with increases in walking and cycling, including the potential boost to tourism.

Improvements are being made to the planning and delivery of Greater Newcastle's active transport network. This includes the CycleSafe proposal, an initiative that aims to connect 90 kilometres of existing cycle paths with a 140-kilometre network of new construction to deliver a system of safe, easy-to-follow walking and cycling connections throughout Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.

A number of extensions and improvements to the network are being planned and constructed. This includes upgrades outlined in Transport for NSW's Walking and Cycling Program and the *NSW Cycling Infrastructure Fund*.









# GOAL 4

## Greater housing choice and jobs

An additional 70,000 dwellings will be needed in the region by 2036.<sup>25</sup> Providing the land and the infrastructure to meet this demand is central to the Plan. New housing will be focused in established areas through infill development, and will also continue to be provided through greenfield development.

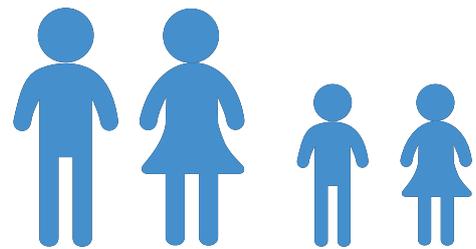
The Plan provides guidance for both of these options. It also provides a framework to identify long term development sites through local strategic planning.

Housing supply will be influenced by growth and change in the population across the region, and by the community's desire for greater housing choice. By 2036, the percentage of people aged over 65 years is projected to increase from 19 per cent to 25 per cent.<sup>26</sup>

It will be necessary to identify and protect employment lands to support the regional economy and to capitalise on its strengths.

### Average Household Size

2016 2.41



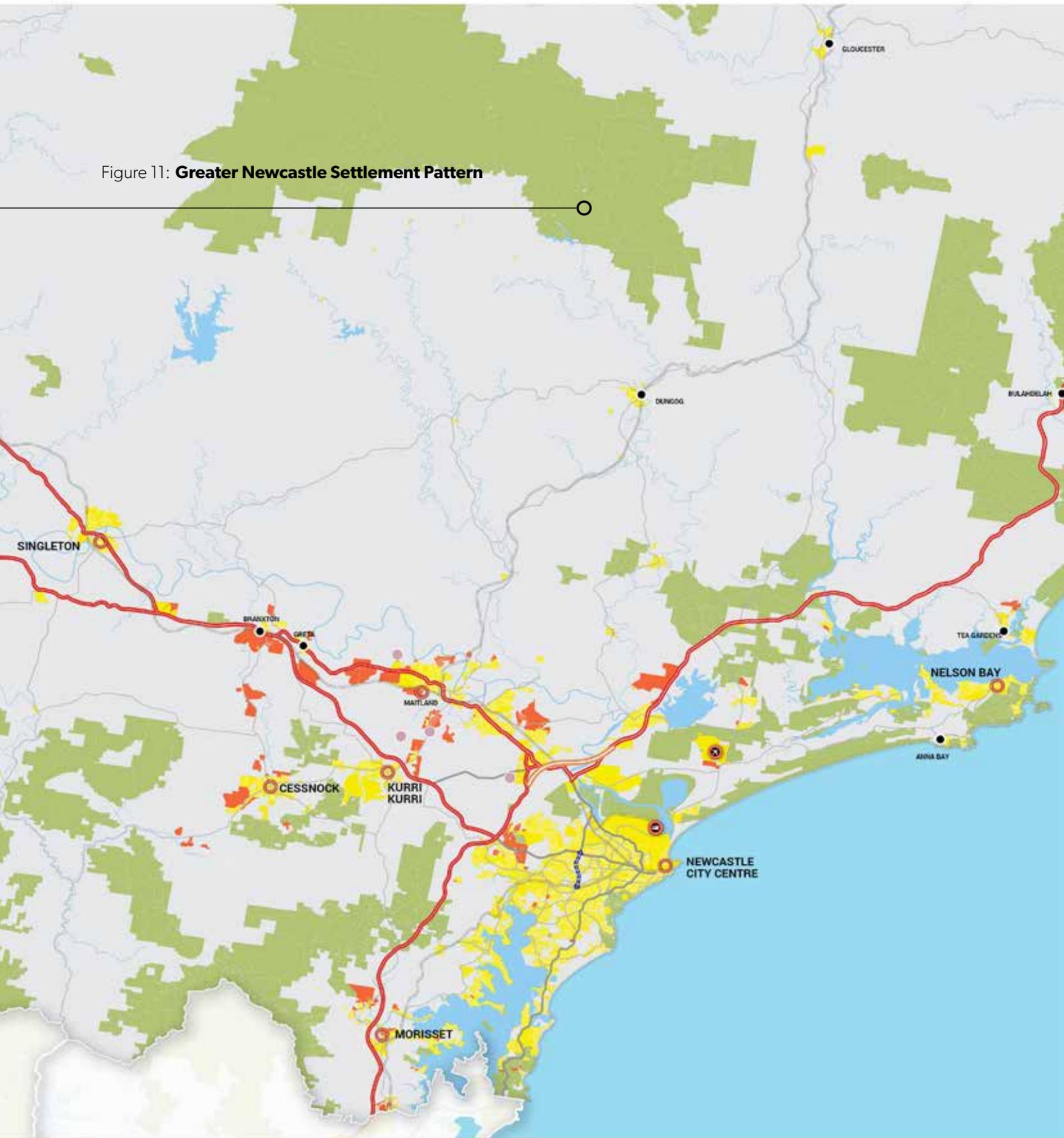
2036 2.28



2036

**70,000**  
more homes required

Figure 11: **Greater Newcastle Settlement Pattern**



 Strategic Centre

 Centre

 Airport

 Port of Newcastle

 New Road Link

 Inter-regional Road

 Major Road

 Current Urban Release Area

 Existing Residential and Employment Land

 National Park and Reserve /State Forest

 Waterway

 Gateway Determination Site

Figure 12: **Taree to Forster-Tuncurry Settlement Pattern**

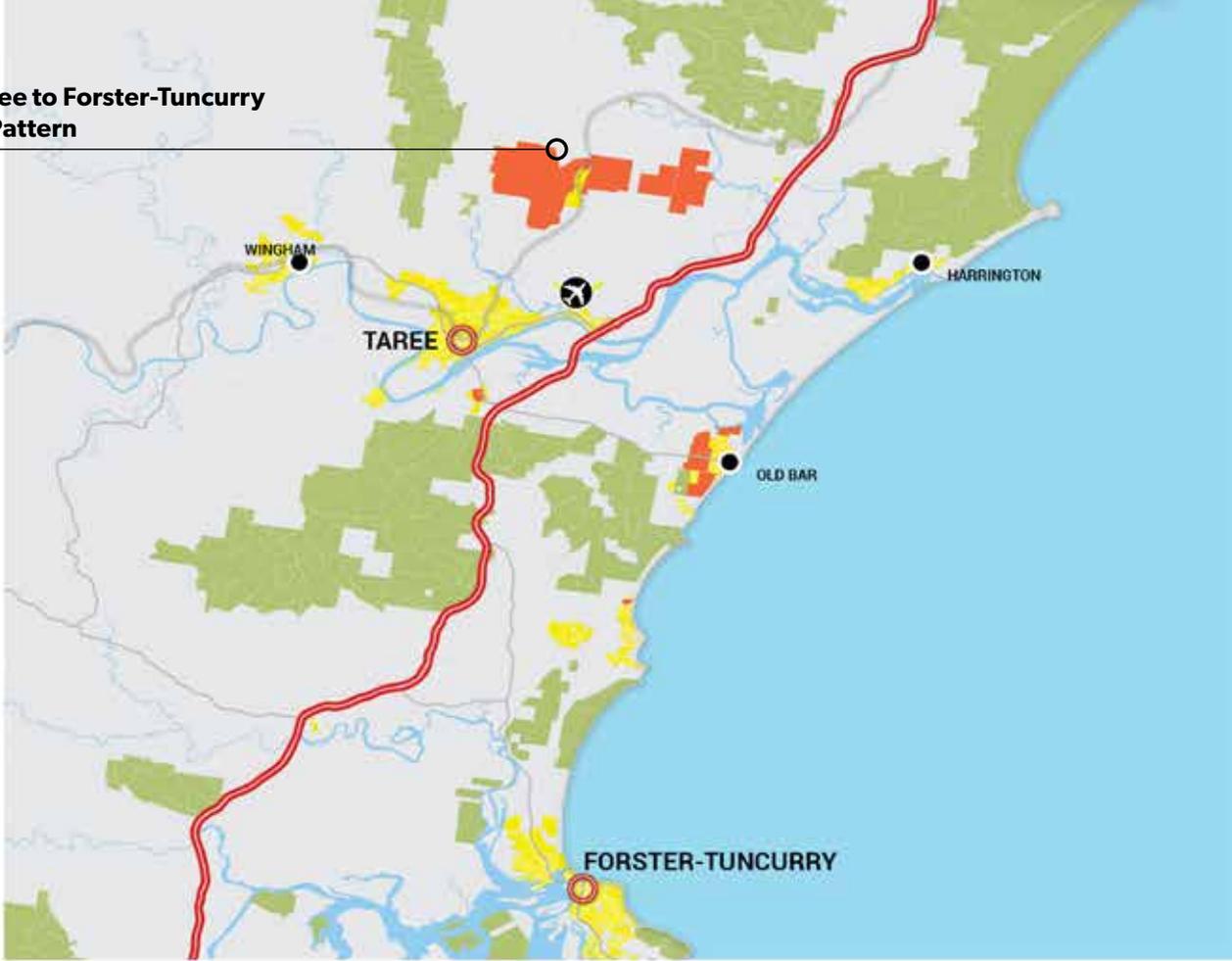


Figure 13: **Scone to Singleton Settlement Pattern**



## **Direction 21: Create a compact settlement**

Focusing development in locations with established services and infrastructure increases the appeal of these places for new residents. Planning will focus on delivering land for housing quickly and cost-effectively to establish new communities in the Maitland Corridor, Newcastle–Lake Macquarie Western Corridor and the emerging growth area around Cooranbong, Morisset and Wyee.

Councils should identify new medium to longer term development opportunities through their local planning strategies. Settlement planning principles will be developed to provide guidance to councils that are identifying new land release areas. A local planning toolkit will also be prepared to provide additional guidance on preparing local land use planning strategies.

In locations with good access to public transport and services, it makes sense to identify new opportunities for redevelopment and renewal. Greater Newcastle, coastal areas including Nelson Bay and Forster-Tuncurry, and other towns across the region have potential for this type of development.

There is also potential to maximise the capacity of larger urban renewal sites through good design and planning. However, the process of identifying new sites for urban renewal needs to be weighed against employment land supply and demand. It is also necessary to consider the remediation of contaminated land.

Small-scale renewal can be achieved across urban areas through single-lot redevelopment. Consultation with the community and industry will assure this type of development occurs in the right locations.

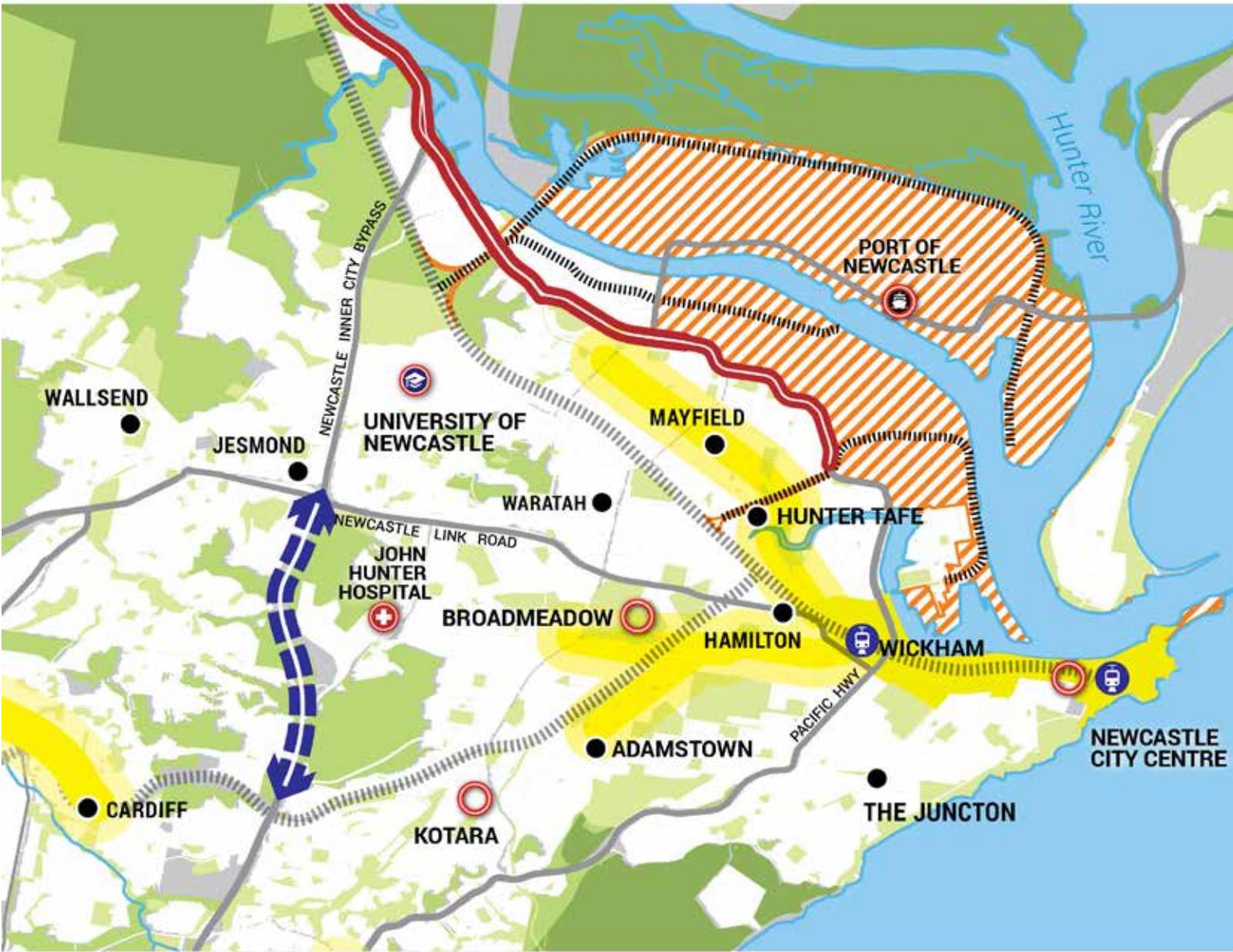
## **Actions**

- 21.1 Promote development that respects the landscape attributes and the character of the metropolitan areas, towns and villages.
- 21.2 Focus development to create compact settlements in locations with established services and infrastructure, including the Maitland Corridor growth area; Newcastle–

Lake Macquarie Western Corridor growth area; the emerging growth area around Cooranbong, Morisset and Wyee; and in existing towns and villages and sites identified in an endorsed regional or local strategy.

- 21.3 Identify opportunities for urban redevelopment or renewal in urban locations with access to public transport and services in the Greater Newcastle metropolitan area and where there may no longer be a need for employment land.
- 21.4 Create a well-planned, functional and compact settlement pattern that responds to settlement planning principles and does not encroach on sensitive land uses, including land subject to hazards, on drinking water catchments or on areas with high environmental values.
- 21.5 Promote small-scale renewal in existing urban areas, in consultation with the community and industry to ensure that this occurs in the right locations.
- 21.6 Provide greater housing choice by delivering diverse housing, lot types and sizes, including small-lot housing in infill and greenfield locations.
- 21.7 Promote new housing opportunities in urban areas to maximise the use of existing infrastructure.

Figure 14: Inner Newcastle



- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  Strategic Centre       |  Inter-regional Road                |  Open Space                               |
|  Centre                 |  Major Road                         |  Existing Residential and Employment Land |
|  Urban Renewal Corridor |  New Road Link                      |  Waterway                                 |
|  Railway                |  Port of Newcastle - Global Gateway |  National Park, Reserve and State Forest    |
|  Light Rail             |  |  |

## **Direction 22: Promote housing diversity**

Trends that will shape housing demand in the Hunter region to 2036 include an increase in the ageing population. There are also discrete sectors of the community that are seeking particular types of housing; for example, students, older people, short term visitors, visitors accessing health services and low income households. Better understanding of the needs of these groups and how they differ across the region will help inform strategic and infrastructure planning and delivery.

By 2036, the Hunter is expected to be home to around 69,500 more people aged over 65 years.<sup>27</sup> While the majority of these people are expected to live in Greater Newcastle, coastal communities in Port Stephens and the MidCoast, and many rural towns are also expected to age more rapidly than other parts of the Hunter.

Weekend and seasonal visitors will continue to influence local housing markets in coastal locations, driving demand for short term accommodation and holiday homes. Global fluctuations in resource markets will continue to influence housing markets in towns close to mines in the Upper Hunter. Further investigation is necessary to better understand these trends, anticipate their influence on housing and service demands, and provide an appropriate planning response. The number of single and couple-only households is growing; however, most houses in the Hunter region are three and four-bedroom detached homes. More studio and one and two-bedroom dwellings will be required to meet growing demand.

Similarly, social and affordable housing will be necessary to meet the needs of people on low incomes. Each community will have different housing needs and local solutions will have to be developed. Increasing the overall supply of housing will help to reduce pressure on the cost of housing.

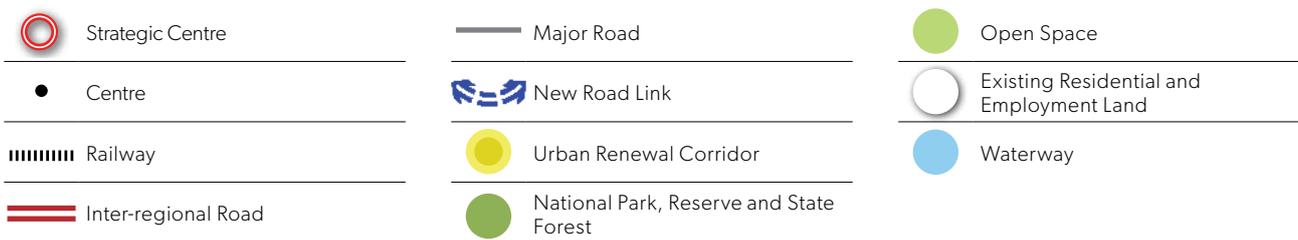
- 22.1 Respond to the demand for housing and services for weekend visitors, students, seasonal workers, the ageing community and resource industry personnel.

- 22.2 Encourage housing diversity, including studios and one and two-bedroom dwellings, to match forecast changes in household sizes.
- 22.3 Develop local housing strategies to respond to housing needs, including social and affordable housing, and support initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- 22.4 Develop Settlement Planning Principles and a local planning toolkit to assist councils in implementing the Plan.
- 22.5 Include guidance in local land use strategies for expanding rural villages and rural-residential development so that such developments will:
- not impact on strategic or important agricultural land, energy, mineral or extractive resource viability or biodiversity values;
  - not impact on drinking water catchments;
  - not result in greater natural hazard risk;
  - occur on land that is unlikely to be needed for urban development;
  - contribute to the conservation of important biodiversity values or the establishment of important corridor linkages; and
  - facilitate expansion of existing and new tourism development activities in agricultural or resource lands and related industries across the region.

## **Direction 23: Grow centres and renewal corridors**

The Plan identifies regionally significant centres known as strategic centres. These and other smaller local centres operate as part of a network. Each centre provides a different service, role and/or function in the region. Strategic centres will be the focus for population and/or economic growth over the next 20 years.

Figure 15: Northern Lake Macquarie





There are other locally significant centres with administrative and service roles that will support surrounding communities. The capacity of these local centres to accommodate additional housing will need to be investigated where plans are not already in place.

Integrated transport planning across Greater Newcastle is becoming more important given the growing trend towards inner-city living. Identifying extensions, or new renewal corridors and precincts, will help to better integrate land use and transport planning. More information about the role and function of strategic centres is provided in the Local Government Narratives.

## Actions

- 23.1 Concentrate growth in strategic centres, local centres and urban renewal corridors to support economic and population growth and a mix of uses.
- 23.2 Develop precinct plans for centres to take an integrated approach to transport, open space, urban form and liveable neighbourhoods, and investigate the capacity of centres to accommodate additional housing supply and diversity without compromising employment growth.
- 23.3 Consider improvements to the public transport network when planning new renewal corridors and precincts.
- 23.4 Investigate locations for new and expanded centres, including within the Newcastle–Lake Macquarie Western Corridor and Maitland Corridor growth areas, and in the established urban areas that are projected to have high demand for housing growth.
- 23.5 Focus commercial and retail development within existing centres and transport hubs and ensure that locations for new centres are integrated with existing or planned residential development; do not undermine existing centres; encompass high quality urban design; and consider transport and access requirements.

## Strategic Centres

### Upper Hunter:

Muswellbrook  
Scone  
Singleton

### MidCoast:

Forster–Tuncurry  
Taree

### Lower Hunter:

Broadmeadow Sport and Recreation Precinct (Emerging)  
Central Maitland  
Callaghan Precinct  
Cessnock  
Charlestown  
East Maitland  
Cardiff–Glendale (Emerging)  
John Hunter Hospital  
Kotara  
Kurri Kurri  
Morisset  
Newcastle City Centre  
Nelson Bay  
Raymond Terrace

### Global Gateways:

Newcastle Airport  
Port of Newcastle

Other locally significant centres are listed in the Local Government Narratives.



## **Direction 24: Protect the economic functions of employment land**

Industry clusters close to the Hunter’s inter-regional transport networks and global gateways will improve efficiencies and make the region more attractive for investment. There are opportunities to grow the significant employment precincts at the Port of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport, Tomago, Hexham, Rutherford, Singleton, Morisset and Taree, and at the convergence of the national road network around Thornton, Beresfield and Black Hill. Better understanding is needed of the type of industry specialisation in these employment precincts and the best way that land use planning and infrastructure investment can provide support.

A number of factors influence the release of zoned employment land to the market, including demand and the strength of the economy. Employment land that is ‘shovel ready’ will be more attractive to new business. The timely and coordinated delivery of infrastructure can make land more attractive for business and also contribute to market demand.

As Greater Newcastle grows, the encroachment of urban activities and take-up of industrial lands for retail uses will influence where manufacturing, construction, transport and supply chain industries choose to locate. Industries looking to attract new investment to expand can take advantage of the high level of connectivity provided by the Hunter Expressway and John Renshaw Drive.

As employers relocate there are opportunities to investigate other potential uses of this land. Sites located close to public transport nodes may be appropriate for other uses, providing issues such as contamination can be resolved.

### **Actions**

- 24.1 Locate new employment land so that it does not conflict with surrounding residential uses.

- 24.2 Protect the economic functions of employment land by not permitting non-industrial uses unless:

- opportunities for urban renewal arise through the relocation of industry and in locations well-served by public transport; and
- contaminated land can be remediated.

- 24.3 Provide for mixed use opportunities and themed employment precincts in local plans.

## **Direction 25: Monitor housing and employment supply and demand**

Regular monitoring of land supply and demand will permit the timely release of land for development. Over time, it will also contribute to better planning and infrastructure decision-making.

Up-to-date data will be provided to infrastructure providers, including councils, to better inform future infrastructure needs, priorities and service planning. Data will also be publicly available to inform private development and infrastructure investment decisions.

### **Actions**

- 25.1 Establish and implement an Urban Development Program to develop data on existing zoned land supply and its servicing status, monitor dwelling production and take-up rates, and coordinate the staged release and rezoning of land.
- 25.2 Establish and implement an Employment Lands Development Program to develop data on existing and future planned stocks of employment land.
- 25.3 Sequence new greenfield urban development that makes efficient use of infrastructure networks and capacity.

25.4 Maintain an adequate supply of employment land that is appropriately serviced and to respond to changing industry demands for land use, location and floor space.

### **Direction 26: Deliver infrastructure to support growth and communities**

Growth will be supported by plans that collect contributions towards the cost of enabling and supporting infrastructure. The delivery of infrastructure and services will be aligned with the preferred staging of development. Development that occurs outside of this sequencing will be required to pay a greater proportion of infrastructure costs.

Greater collaboration between the NSW Government and councils on strategic planning and sequencing will enable all infrastructure providers to plan and deliver infrastructure that responds to demand.

### **Actions**

- 26.1 Align land use and infrastructure planning to maximise the use and capacity of existing infrastructure and the efficiency of new infrastructure.
- 26.2 Enable the delivery of health facilities, education, emergency services, energy production and supply, water and waste water, waste disposal areas, cemeteries and crematoria, in partnership with infrastructure providers.
- 26.3 Protect existing and planned major infrastructure corridors and sites, including inter-regional transport routes like the M1 Pacific Motorway and the railway, port and airports, to support their intended functions.
- 26.4 Coordinate the delivery of infrastructure to support the timely and efficient release of land for development, including working with councils and service providers on inter-regional infrastructure and service delivery issues between growing areas.

26.5 Ensure growth is serviced by enabling and supporting infrastructure.

26.6 Review and finalise the Hunter Special Infrastructure Contributions Plan.

### **Direction 27: Strengthen the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities**

Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment (OCHRE) is the NSW Government's plan for Aboriginal affairs. It focuses on:

- revitalising and promoting Aboriginal languages and culture;
- creating opportunities;
- increasing the Aboriginal community's capacity;
- providing choice and empowering Aboriginal people to exercise that choice; and
- giving Aboriginal people the tools to take responsibility for their own future.

The planning system can support the OCHRE process by helping Local Aboriginal Land Councils identify how their landholdings can best be planned, managed and developed. This gives the Aboriginal community greater opportunities for economic independence and is consistent with the overall aim of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW), which lays the foundations for a more secure economic and self-reliant future for all Aboriginal people in NSW.

### **Actions**

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





VSTRAVELS

50% OFF

THE CRAFTED

MARKET

← Gate 2

↑ Gates 3 - 5

← Gate 3

↑ Gates 4 - 5



Figure 16: Hunter Region Context



▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ Rail Network

▬▬▬▬▬ Inter-regional Road

▬▬▬▬▬ Arterial Road

▬ Major Road

● Upper Hunter

● Lower Hunter

● Mid Coast

○ Local Government Area

● Waterway



# Local Government Narratives

The NSW Government will work with each council to deliver the directions and actions set out in this plan.

Priorities for each council are set out in the following section and will guide further investigations and implementation.

The priorities build on the directions and actions in this plan to achieve outcomes on the ground. Planning will encourage infrastructure delivery that targets the needs of its communities. It will also encourage efficiencies in the allocation of resources and investment to improve the liveability and sustainability of the region.

The narratives identify:

- housing and employment projections;
- strategic intent, opportunities and regionally significant priorities;
- locations for growth for dwellings; and
- jobs and communities of regional significance.

The NSW Government will assist councils to translate these into local plans.

## LOWER HUNTER

Lower Hunter is composed of Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle and Port Stephens local government areas.

### Cessnock

<b>Population</b>	
2016	56,100
2036 (Projected)	69,250
Projected Increase	<b>+13,150</b>
<b>Dwellings</b>	
2016	24,000
2036 (Projected)	+6,350
Projected Increase	<b>+6,350</b>
<b>Employment</b>	
2016	18,905
2036 (Projected)	25,497
Projected Increase	<b>+6,592</b>

Cessnock Local Government Area is the focal point for the region's wine industry and a significant tourism destination and entertainment node. Opportunities exist to increase its appeal as a major wine and food tourist destination with a national and international reputation. The recent completion of the Hunter Expressway has improved connectivity to the Greater Newcastle and Upper Hunter area, increasing its attraction for housing and employment. Investigation of infill opportunities and new housing is required in the longer term.

### Regional Priorities

- Support the visitor and agricultural economies by conducting a land use assessment across the Viticulture Critical Industry Cluster.
- Investigate the region-shaping potential of the Hunter Expressway.
- Continue delivery of the Branxton Subregional Plan.
- Protect regionally significant transport corridors, including the Newcastle Freight Rail Bypass.
- Plan for, and deliver regional cycleway links along the Richmond Vale Rail Trail.

### Centres and Employment

*Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:*

- Strategic centres: Cessnock, Kurri Kurri
- Centres of local significance: Branxton and Huntlee
- Critical Industry Clusters: Pokolbin viticulture area.

### Priorities for strategic centres:

#### Cessnock

- Retain an administrative, retail and service function for the Local Government Area.
- Investigate opportunities to leverage the heritage character of the centre, and growth in wine tourism in Pokolbin.
- Provide additional housing in the adjoining town.
- Implement the Cessnock CBD masterplan.

#### Kurri Kurri

- Retain a retail and service function for surrounding communities.
- Leverage its proximity to the Hunter Expressway and existing significant industrial land.
- Investigate opportunities for urban renewal of the town centre and new housing opportunities.
- Develop and implement a masterplan for Kurri Kurri CBD.

### Housing

#### Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:

- Deliver existing Urban Release Areas at Bellbird North, Nulkaba, Huntlee, Greta (Anvil Creek), West Street Greta, Golden Bear, Vintage Balance, Mount View Road, Rose Hill, Clifleigh and Avery's Village.
- Develop the Kurri Kurri Corridor.

## Port Stephens

### Population

2016	74,100
2036 (Projected)	92,650
Projected Increase	<b>+18,550</b>

### Dwellings

2016	36,900
2036 (Projected)	47,950
Projected Increase	<b>+11,050</b>

### Employment

2016	28,809
2036 (Projected)	34,475
Projected Increase	<b>+5,665</b>

Port Stephens Local Government Area contains a mix of rural land, towns, villages and coastal areas (largely focused along the Tomaree Peninsula) that are a major recreational, tourist and retirement destination. The regionally significant Newcastle Airport provides capacity to support growth in defence and aerospace-related industries.

### Regional priorities

- Protect the functioning of the Newcastle Airport and support its growth.
- Leverage proximity to major global gateways – and its attractive and valuable natural environment and coastal and rural communities – to generate economic growth and diversity.

### Centres and employment

Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:

- Global Gateways: Newcastle Airport
- Strategic centres: Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay
- Centres of local significance: Salamander Bay, Anna Bay, Medowie, Karuah, Tanilba Bay, Lemon Tree Passage, Fern Bay, Hinton, Woodville and Seaham.
- Significant employment land clusters: Tomago and Heatherbrae.

#### *Priorities for strategic centres:*

##### *Raymond Terrace*

- Support its role as the main service centre in the Local Government Area, and in providing a range of facilities for surrounding communities, including retailing, government, civic and professional services.
- Investigate increasing social, transport and economic connections to surrounding communities and centres across the Greater Newcastle area.

##### *Nelson Bay*

- Maintain it as one of the primary tourist centres for the region and a hub for the Tomaree Peninsula.
- Maintain retail and professional services for the surrounding communities.
- Investigate opportunities for high-density development that maintains and enhances the tourist, recreational and residential appeal of the centre.
- Balance the mix of permanent residential and tourist accommodation to enhance the vibrancy and appeal of the centre and surrounds.

##### *Newcastle Airport*

- Support the ongoing operations of the Royal Australian Air Force Base at Williamstown.
- Investigate opportunities to cluster defence and aerospace-related research, manufacturing and businesses around the airport.
- Expand passenger services (including international flights) by increasing connections domestically and with the Asia-Pacific.
- Manage growth and respond to the natural and cultural values in the area and to mitigate the impacts of drainage and flooding.
- Increase access to the airport from the M1 Pacific Motorway and Newcastle to increase its competitiveness as a passenger and business destination for the Hunter and surrounds.

## Housing

#### *Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:*

- Deliver existing Urban Release Areas at Fern Bay, Medowie and Kings Hill (future).
- Investigate and deliver infill potential within the strategic centres of Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay.

## Lake Macquarie

### **Population**

2016	202,350
2036 (Projected)	226,800
Projected Increase	<b>+24,450</b>

### **Dwellings**

2016	87,700
2036 (Projected)	101,400
Projected Increase	<b>+13,700</b>

### **Employment**

2016	66,860
2036 (Projected)	78,601
Projected Increase	<b>+11,741</b>

Lake Macquarie Local Government Area includes the southern portion of the Greater Newcastle metropolitan area. It is the largest city in the Lower Hunter by population. The area's picturesque landscape and convenient connections to other parts of the Hunter, Central Coast and Sydney attract residents and visitors to the area. There is a mix of centres, including Charlestown, Glendale and Morisset, and also housing opportunities, many in scenic locations. Lake Macquarie will continue to attract new residents because of these attributes.

### Regional priorities

- Revitalise existing suburbs and explore opportunities for new infill and greenfield release areas.
- Develop Charlestown, Cardiff–Glendale and Morisset into well-connected strategic centres.

## Centres and employment

*Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:*

- Strategic centres: Charlestown, Morisset, Cardiff–Glendale (emerging)
- Significant employment land cluster: Cardiff Industrial Estate
- Centres of local significance: Belmont, Toronto, Cardiff, Warners Bay, Swansea and Mount Hutton.

*Priorities for strategic centres:*

### *Charlestown*

- Support the development of Charlestown with further higher-density residential development and employment diversity to enable it to better function as a city centre with a range of commercial and government services, and housing.
- Retain and increase regionally significant retail and higher-order community facilities.
- Improve public transport connections to other strategic centres.
- Implement the Charlestown Town Centre Area Plan.
- Continue investigations into the economic diversification of the centre, increasing residential densities through redevelopment and public transport access, and improving public amenity and access to open space.

### *Morisset*

- Grow the centre to accommodate a range of land uses, including business, residential and open spaces, close to the railway station.
- Provide services for the areas identified for urban growth, supported by established infrastructure and services.
- Implement Morisset Town Centre Area Plan.
- Investigate options to improve traffic flow through the centre.

### *Cardiff–Glendale*

- Plan for development as an emerging strategic centre that will provide services to the growing Newcastle – Lake Macquarie, Western Corridor, deliver renewal in Cardiff and redevelop the former industrial lands at Boolaroo.
- Implement the Glendale Regional Centre Area Plan.
- Provide support for the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange and associated roadworks.
- Develop Glendale as a strategic gateway to Greater Newcastle.
- Leverage the existing good access to employment and services in the metropolitan area and commuter connections to the Upper Hunter Valley and Central Coast.

## Housing

*Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:*

- Deliver existing Urban Release Areas at Cooranbong, Wyee, Morisset, Cameron Park, Edgeworth, Catherine Hill Bay and West Wallsend.
- Support the development of Warners Bay, Toronto and Belmont into higher density, compact mixed-use centres.
- Implement Town Centre Area Plans for Warners Bay and Belmont.
- Investigate the potential of a Glendale–Cardiff Renewal Corridor, including opportunities for linkages/extension to Boolaroo and Speers Point.
- Investigate the extension to the Pacific Highway Corridor (Gateshead to Belmont).
- Continue to plan for the Glendale–Edgeworth Corridor for longer-term growth.
- Deliver and maximise the potential of urban infill opportunities at the Pasmenco redevelopment area in Boolaroo.

## Maitland

### Population

2016	78,200
2036 (Projected)	104,850
Projected Increase	<b>+26,650</b>

### Dwellings

2016	31,650
2036 (Projected)	44,200
Projected Increase	<b>+12,550</b>

### Employment

2016	28,311
2036 (Projected)	34,790
Projected Increase	<b>+6,476</b>

Maitland Local Government Area contains a high-growth metropolitan area that includes strategic centres servicing the hinterland and rural areas of Dungog and the Upper Hunter area. It includes a number of urban release areas that are contributing to significant greenfield housing supply for the region, as well as centres undergoing revitalisation, and historic rural villages. Maitland will continue to supply housing, connect its settlements and offer civic, health and educational services.

### Regional priorities

- Deliver housing in the Maitland Corridor.
- Investigate the region-shaping potential of the Hunter Expressway.
- Grow Central Maitland as an emerging regional city centre.

### Centres and employment

*Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:*

- Strategic centres: Central Maitland and East Maitland
- Significant employment land clusters: Thornton and Rutherford
- Centres of local significance: Lochinvar (emerging), Thornton and Rutherford.

*Priorities for strategic centres:*

#### Central Maitland

- Develop Maitland as a strategic centre that services the western sector of Greater Newcastle, one of the fastest growing areas in the State.
- Leverage recent renewal activities to increase its ability to attract additional retail and commercial activity.
- Implement the Central Maitland Structure Plan.
- Explore opportunities to improve the public domain and access to the Hunter River.
- Support increases in residential development that addresses flood risk.
- Support flood mitigation infrastructure and initiatives to increase the resilience of existing properties against flood risk.

#### East Maitland

- Investigate opportunities to develop a health cluster that leverages the NSW Government commitment to build a new Maitland Hospital.
- Diversify the economy and employment opportunities in the area.
- Investigate the potential of East Maitland and adjacent Green Hills and Metford areas to increase economic and population growth.

### Housing

Strong population growth in the Maitland Local Government Area is resulting in ongoing pressures for additional residential land and a shortfall in infrastructure provision. There are significant challenges to servicing a number of development fronts and increasing dwelling density near centres, transport nodes and in areas of high amenity. The growth in housing needs to be balanced against the natural constraints of flooding and the agricultural value of the floodplain and other rural lands.

*Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:*

- Deliver the existing Urban Release Areas of Anambah, Aberglasslyn, Gillieston Heights, Bolwarra/Largs, Lochinvar, Thornton North, Louth Park and Farley.
- Investigate growth and renewal corridors along main roads in existing urban areas, such as the New England Highway.

## Newcastle

<b>Population</b>	
2016	165,050
2036 (Projected)	198,350
Projected Increase	<b>+33,300</b>
<b>Dwellings</b>	
2016	75,450
2036 (Projected)	92,250
Projected Increase	<b>+16,800</b>
<b>Employment</b>	
2016	111,299
2036 (Projected)	129,263
Projected Increase	<b>+17,964</b>

This is the city at the centre of Greater Newcastle, the largest regional centre in NSW and the economic, service and administrative centre for the region. Newcastle provides the most diverse mix of specialised services in the Hunter region, and significant employment and residential development, and associated infrastructure.

### Regional priorities

- Provide a buffer to the Port of Newcastle operations through appropriate zoning to safeguard its future.
- Continue the revitalisation of Newcastle City Centre.
- Reinforce established renewal corridors by encouraging densities that support further improvements to the public transport network.
- Provide small-scale renewal and redevelopment of larger sites for infill housing.

## Centres and employment

*Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:*

- Global Gateways: Port of Newcastle
- Strategic centres: Newcastle City Centre, John Hunter Hospital, Callaghan and Kotara, Broadmeadow (emerging)
- Centres of local significance: Waratah, Hunter TAFE at Tighes Hill, Wallsend, The Junction, Jesmond, Hamilton and Mayfield.

*Priorities for strategic centres:*

*Newcastle City Centre*

- Continue revitalisation to create an exciting place that attracts people, business and investment, domestically and from across the Asia-Pacific.
- Strengthen connections between the city and the waterfront and improve civic spaces.
- Monitor commercial floor space to assist with planning for growth in service industries and the projected increase in jobs from 25,000 to 33,000 in the next 20 years.
- Support upgrades to tourism infrastructure to enable increased visitation (by sea and air), to expand on the more than 1 million people that currently visit Newcastle each year.
- Plan for the expansion of the University of Newcastle and support initiatives to develop the city centre as a hub for innovation.
- Monitor residential development activity to assist with planning for 6,000 new dwellings.
- Deliver the Newcastle Light Rail from Wickham to Pacific Park to provide frequent, reliable and comfortable travel through the city centre.
- Deliver the new transport interchange at Wickham that will integrate trains, buses, taxis and light rail, as well as pathways for

cyclists and car drop-off and pick-up points. This is an important gateway into the city centre and is the backbone of future extensions of the transport network.

- Focus investment in infrastructure to alleviate pinch points that will deliver large-scale renewal projects such as site amalgamation and remediation costs. The NSW Government will lead by example, and partner with others to deliver landmark infrastructure projects.

#### *Broadmeadow Sport and Entertainment Precinct*

- Investigate the potential for renewal in the Broadmeadow precinct, given its location at the geographic centre of inner Newcastle and at the intersection of the inner city's major thoroughfares and rail corridor.
- Enhance public transport access to Newcastle City Centre, the John Hunter Hospital and other strategic centres.
- Diversify the range of services on offer and expand the large recreation and entertainment focus as industrial and manufacturing activities relocate.
- Implement existing renewal strategies along Tudor Street corridor, and consider a review of densities to ensure that a range of public transport improvements are viable. The review should investigate extending the renewal area and achieve better integration between Nineways, Broadmeadow and the sport and entertainment precinct.
- Continue the investment and precinct planning (by the NSW Government) for the Broadmeadow sporting and entertainment precinct and the Broadmeadow rail station.

#### *John Hunter Hospital*

- Support the development of a health cluster that provides world-class education, health and research services.
- Support expanded community health and wellbeing services, as well as industry sustainability and innovation activities.

#### *Callaghan Education Precinct*

- Continue to provide world-class education and research services.
- Support the development of an innovation cluster.

#### *Kotara*

- Continue to provide regionally significant retail, and support growth and diversification of other employment and economic activities.
- Investigate opportunities for medium- to high-density housing within (as shop top housing) or close to the centre, in areas not constrained by flooding.
- Enhance public transport access to other strategic centres in Greater Newcastle.

## Housing

### *Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:*

- Deliver housing and employment in the following existing renewal centres, precincts and corridors: Newcastle City Centre; Wickham–Hamilton–Broadmeadow (Tudor Road Corridor); Broadmeadow–Adamstown (Bunker Road Corridor); and Wickham–Islington–Mayfield (Maitland Road Corridor).
- Deliver housing in Urban Release Areas in the Newcastle–Lake Macquarie Western Corridor.
- Investigate new renewal opportunities in centres including The Junction, Georgetown/Waratah, Adamstown, Lambton, New Lambton and Kotara.
- Investigate and prioritise additional renewal corridors for longer-term growth that supports public transport improvements, including for Newcastle–The Junction–Merewether (Darby Street Corridor); Broadmeadow–New Lambton/Lambton; and Adamstown and Kotara.

## UPPER HUNTER

Upper Hunter is composed of Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter local government areas.

### Muswellbrook

Population	
2016	17,150
2036 (Projected)	20,300
Projected Increase	<b>+3,150</b>
Dwellings	
2016	7,400
2036 (Projected)	9,000
Projected Increase	<b>+1,600</b>
Employment	
2016	11,364
2036 (Projected)	13,551
Projected Increase	<b>+2,187</b>

Muswellbrook Local Government Area is located in the centre of the Upper Hunter Valley and is the predominant location for the State's power generation. It is also a key location for coal mining activities and an important agricultural area. Muswellbrook is well placed to enhance its role as an administrative centre and a centre of educational excellence in the Upper Hunter. Muswellbrook will have to balance an overabundance of resources and successful secondary agricultural industries.

### Regional priorities

- Conduct an assessment of land use compatibility.
- Undertake a land use assessment of the Viticulture Critical Industry Clusters to align planning controls to achieve a balance between scenic amenity and ongoing growth in tourism.
- Support diversification of the energy and agricultural sectors.
- Protect the Equine Critical Industry Cluster and allow for expansion of the industry.

## Centres and employment

*Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:*

- Strategic centres: Muswellbrook
- Centres of local significance: Denman and Sandy Hollow.

*Priorities for strategic centres:*

*Muswellbrook*

- Maintain its regional centre role in providing educational, administrative, government, retail and commercial functions for the Upper Hunter.
- Continue to provide business support services to the mining and power generation industries.
- Finalise and implement the Town Centre Strategy to guide future development in Muswellbrook Central Business District, including plans for a purpose-built civic services precinct.
- Support the development of Muswellbrook as a centre of educational excellence.

## Housing

*Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:*

- Deliver existing Urban Release Areas at Denman and Muswellbrook.
- Manage demand for rural residential development with the potential for longer term demand for residential development, and balance both in the context of potential mining activity surrounding Muswellbrook.
- Diversify housing opportunities to respond to changing demographics and housing affordability.

## Singleton

### Population

2016	24,700
2036 (Projected)	28,600
Projected Increase	<b>+3,900</b>

### Dwellings

2016	10,200
2036 (Projected)	12,200
Projected Increase	<b>+2,000</b>

### Employment

2016	17,249
2036 (Projected)	20,482
Projected Increase	<b>+3,233</b>

The Singleton Local Government Area forms part of the transition between the Upper and Lower Hunter. There are a number of important interchanges between State and regional roads, including the Hunter Expressway, New England Highway, Golden Highway and Putty Road, all of which intersect in the Local Government Area. Magnificent natural areas, such as Lake St Claire and parts of the Greater Blue Mountains and Gondwana Rainforest World Heritage areas, provide significant conservation and tourism opportunities. The future of Singleton lies in growing and diversifying its industry base (including primary industries), improving its housing product mix and minimising land use conflict. The mainstays of the economy are coal mining, agriculture (with growth in viticulture and related tourism), manufacturing and retail.

### Regional priorities

- Deliver the Branxton Subregional Plan.
- Investigate the region-shaping potential of the Hunter Expressway.
- Support tourism and agriculture by conducting a land use assessment across the Viticulture Critical Industry Cluster to align planning controls that balance scenic amenity with ongoing growth in tourism.
- Conduct and assessment of land use compatibility.

- Support the visitor economy by enhancing viticultural and nature-based tourism and associated infrastructure.
- Manage productive landscapes that sustain important agricultural sectors.

### Centres and employment

*Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:*

- Strategic centres: Singleton
- Significant employment land clusters: Mount Thorley Industrial Area
- Centres of local significance: Huntlee, Broke, Camberwell, Jerrys Plains and Branxton.

*Priorities for strategic centres:*

#### Singleton

- Maintain its role providing administrative, retail, commercial, education and health services.
- Leverage recent renewal activities to increase its ability to attract additional retail and commercial activity.
- Improve connectivity to major transport corridors.
- Implement measures to manage flooding impacts.
- Protect and revitalise items of heritage significance.

### Housing

*Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:*

- Deliver existing Urban Release Areas at Singleton Heights, Gowrie, Huntlee and Branxton.
- Explore redevelopment opportunities to provide medium-density housing areas in suitable locations in the Singleton Town Centre Railway Precinct.

## Upper Hunter

Population	
2016	14,700
2036 (Projected)	16,200
Projected Increase	<b>+1,500</b>
Dwellings	
2016	7,050
2036 (Projected)	8,100
Projected Increase	<b>+1,050</b>
Employment	
2016	5,948
2036 (Projected)	7,143
Projected Increase	<b>+1,195</b>

The Upper Hunter Local Government Area is predominantly rural and forms part of the western area of the region. It includes the Upper Hunter equine precinct and major beef cattle production, as well as manufacturing industries. It is part of the Upper Hunter Mining and Electricity Generation Precinct. Employment is concentrated in the agricultural sector, particularly in Merriwa and Murrurundi.

### Regional priorities

- Protect the Equine Critical Industry Cluster and allow for expansion of the industry.
- Protect Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Lands and other important agricultural lands.
- Support the tourism economy by investigating ways to leverage agriculture and equine industry strengths to attract food-based and equine-related visitors.
- Support the diversification of the energy sector and ongoing extractive industries, noting that the Upper Hunter Local Government Area is part of the Upper Hunter Green Energy Precinct.
- Encourage the establishment of employment-generating rural industries, value-adding industries and intensive agriculture in appropriate locations.

### Centres and employment

*Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:*

- Strategic centres: Scone
- Centres of local significance: Aberdeen, Merriwa and Murrurundi
- Significant agricultural employment clusters: Equine Critical Industry Cluster.

*Priorities for strategic centres:*

#### *Scone*

- Maintain its role as a commercial and administrative centre for the Upper Hunter with key facilities and services including a railway station, Scone Hospital, TAFE, Courthouse and local council administration building.
- Support development of Scone as the nationally recognised 'Horse Capital of Australia'.
- Maintain support services for the agricultural and equine industries, including veterinary and meat processing facilities, and livestock sales.

### Housing

*Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:*

- Deliver existing Urban Release Areas at Scone Heights, Kurrajong Estate, St Aubins Estate, Aberdeen Heights Estate, Oxley View Estate (Merriwa) and Rosedale Estate (Murrurundi).

## MIDCOAST

MidCoast is composed of MidCoast and Dungog local government areas.

### MidCoast

Population	
2016	91,250
2036 (Projected)	96,250
Projected Increase	<b>+5,000</b>
Dwellings	
2016	49,750
2036 (Projected)	54,750
Projected Increase	<b>+5,000</b>
Employment	
2016	30,936
2036 (Projected)	36,873
Projected Increase	5,937

The MidCoast Local Government Area, in the northern part of the Hunter, features pristine waterways, an extensive network of national parks and World Heritage wilderness areas. It is a popular destination for residents and visitors. The economy and employment are largely service-based, with industries such as tourism being highly seasonal. It contains diverse agricultural activities, including poultry, dairy and beef, and significant oyster-producing areas. The new MidCoast Council will have to consider the needs of diverse communities within a regional setting. It will have to capitalise on the opportunities provided by urban centres, rural areas and the natural environment to form a thriving economy based on food production, tourism, manufacturing and services that meet the needs of an ageing and growing population.

### Regional priorities

- Support the visitor economy by leveraging the natural beauty of the area and enhancing nature-based tourism infrastructure.
- Protect productive landscapes that sustain the poultry, dairy and beef industries.
- Manage development within sensitive water catchments and protect environments that sustain the oyster industry.

- Provide capacity for long-term employment through education and training, and by capitalising on intra- and inter-regional connections.
- Provide housing, services and facilities, as well as accessible public spaces for an ageing population.

### Centres and employment

*Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:*

- Strategic centres: Forster–Tuncurry, Taree
- Centres of local significance: Gloucester, Old Bar, Wingham, Tea Gardens–Hawks Nest, Harrington, Diamond Beach, Bulahdelah, Nahiic, Hallidays Point and Stroud.

*Priorities for strategic centres:*

#### *Taree*

- Enhance retail, health, education, cultural, civic and recreational activities.
- Maintain the retail and commercial role of the CBD, centred on Victoria Street.
- Support the Manning Rural Referral Hospital by developing a health precinct cluster.
- Develop opportunities to cluster appropriate economic activities around the Taree Airport and Pacific Highway interchanges (Northern Gateway and Manning River Drive) that support the ongoing commercial and retail role of Taree CBD.
- Support the continuing role of manufacturing.
- Encourage greater utilisation of the Manning River for tourism, recreational and commercial purposes.

#### *Forster–Tuncurry*

- Maintain retail, education, civic and tourism activities.
- Manage the role of tourism and accommodation.

- Protect environmental and natural attributes.
- Consolidate commercial activities in existing precincts.
- Enhance the services and facilities to support the ageing population.

## Housing

*Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:*

- Deliver existing Urban Release Areas at Figtrees on the Manning, Brimbin, Hallidays Point, Old Bar, Manning River Drive Business Park (employment), Tea Gardens and South Forster.
- Manage environmental values and residential growth in North Tuncurry.
- Investigate renewal and infill housing opportunities in Taree, Forster–Tuncurry, Old Bar and Tea Gardens–Hawks Nest that respond to changing demographics.

## Dungog

### Population

2016	8,750
2036 (Projected)	8,950
Projected Increase	<b>+200</b>

### Dwellings

2016	4,150
2036 (Projected)	4,550
Projected Increase	<b>+400</b>

### Employment

2016	2,635
2036 (Projected)	3,176
Projected Increase	<b>+541</b>

Dungog Local Government Area is bordered by the World Heritage-listed Barrington Tops plateau to the north, with strong connections to Maitland and Port Stephens to the south. It contains the local service centres of Dungog, Clarence Town and Paterson, and is characterised by important agricultural and water catchment areas. Dungog's future lies in strengthening its tourist connection to Barrington Tops, diversifying its already-strong agricultural base and capitalising on its potential for large-scale music festivals.

## Regional priorities

- Support the growth and diversification of the agricultural sector.
- Expand the tourism sector by leveraging its strengths, including growing of fresh produce and nature tourism.
- Protect the water supply.

## Centres and employment

*Regionally significant centres and employment land clusters:*

- Centres of local significance: Dungog, Clarence Town, East Gresford, Gresford, Paterson and Vacy.

## Housing

*Future housing and urban renewal opportunities:*

- Cater to the housing needs of 'tree changers' and the ageing population.
- Balance the demand for rural residential lifestyle housing with agricultural and environmental attributes.









# Glossary

## Affordable housing

Housing for very low and low income households where rent or mortgage payments are below 30 per cent of gross household income or the household is eligible to occupy rental accommodation under the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

## Biodiversity

'Biodiversity' or 'biological diversity' describes the variety of life on Earth – the life forms, the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form. It is usually considered at three levels: genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity.

## Biodiversity offsets

Measures that benefit biodiversity by compensating elsewhere for the adverse impacts of an action, such as clearing for development. Biodiversity offsets work by protecting and managing biodiversity values in one area in exchange for impacts on biodiversity values in another.

## Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the term used to apply to measures that are taken to protect the economy, environment and community from the negative impacts of pests, diseases and weeds.

## Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Lands

Lands with high-quality soil and water resources, capable of sustaining high levels of productivity.

## Coastal Zone Management Plans

Plans that address risks from coastal hazards such as coastal erosion, as well as manage threats to estuary health. These plans also need to address the projected impacts of climate change, including projected sea level rise, on coastal erosion and estuary health.

## Central Business District

The main cluster of business found within a town or city.

## Employment lands

Land zoned for industrial or similar purposes in planning instruments. These are generally lower density employment areas containing concentrations of businesses involved in manufacturing; transport and warehousing; service and repair trades and industries; integrated enterprises with a mix of administration, production, warehousing, research and development; and urban services and utilities.

## Enabling infrastructure

Essential services that are required for a development to occur, such as water supply, energy supply, waste water systems, stormwater drainage and vehicular access.

## Global gateways

The Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport.

## Greater Newcastle

The continuous urban area covering Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle and Port Stephens Local Government Areas. An indicative boundary is provided in the Plan and this will be refined in consultation with stakeholders.

## Greenfield housing

A new housing development area that has not been previously developed or used for other urban purposes.

## Gross domestic product (GDP)

A measure of the size of a country's economy and productivity. GDP is defined as the market value of all final goods and services produced in a country within a given period of time.



### **Gross regional product (GRP)**

A measure of the size of a region's economy and productivity. Similar to gross domestic product GRP is defined as the market value of all final goods and services produced in a region within a given period of time.

### **Gross state product (GSP)**

A measure of the size of a State's economy and productivity. GSP is a counterpart of GDP and is defined as the market value of all final goods and services produced in a State within a given period of time.

### **Household size**

The average number of people living in a dwelling in a State, region or locality.

### **Housing affordability**

The term refers broadly to a person's ability to pay for their housing.

### **Housing choice**

The types of housing available to meet the current or future needs of the community. Housing diversity is driven by factors such as the make-up of the population, affordability and lifestyle trends.

### **Housing types**

Forms of housing, such as single dwellings, boarding houses, dual occupancies, group homes, hostels, multi-dwelling housing, residential flat buildings, secondary dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, seniors housing and shop top housing.

### **Hunter Region**

The Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, MidCoast, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Singleton and the Upper Hunter.

### **Important agricultural land**

The existing or future location of local or regionally important agricultural industries or agricultural resources, mapped using the NSW DPI important agricultural lands methodology.

### **Infill development**

Development in areas already used for urban purposes. Specifically, the re-use of a site within the existing urban footprint for new housing, businesses or other urban development.

### **Inter-regional transport networks and gateways**

Major facilities that provide transportation into and beyond the region via the M1 Pacific Motorway and Hunter Expressway as well as the heavy rail network, Newcastle Airport and Port of Newcastle.

### **Local centres (centres of local significance)**

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

### **Local Plans (Local Environmental Plans or LEPs)**

A statutory, spatial plan, typically prepared for a local government area by a council, and endorsed by the Minister for Planning. Through the use of land zoning and other development controls, a local plan is typically the main mechanism for determining the type and amount of development which can occur on each parcel of land in NSW. Local plans are the main planning tool that shapes the future of communities and ensures local development is appropriate. They guide planning decisions by local councils.

### **Mixed use centres**

Local centres that facilitate a mixture of commercial, retail, residential and other land uses based on market demand and investment confidence rather than single land use zone boundaries.

### **Newcastle City Centre**

The historic centre of Newcastle, stretching from Wickham in the west to Newcastle East in the east.

### **Public domain**

Public spaces, used with little or no restriction on a daily basis by the community, including parks, plazas, streets and public infrastructure.

### **Special infrastructure contributions**

A financial contribution paid during the development process to help fund regional infrastructure required to support development in the region over the next 20 years.

### **Sustainability**

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

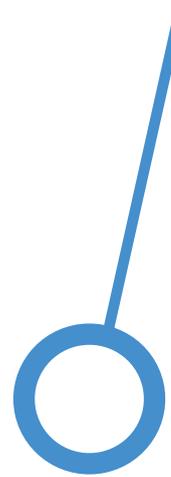
### **Transport interchange**

An identified interchange between different modes of transport or a place connecting different modes of transport.

### **Urban Development Program**

The NSW Government's key program for monitoring and managing the supply of housing land in the Hunter.

# End Notes



- 1 NSW Department of Planning and Environment 2016, *New South Wales State and Local Government Area Population Projections 2011-2036*, New South Wales Government, Sydney
- 2 Ibid
- 3 3 Estimated population at 2011 for LGAs of Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, and Newcastle. Population for Greater Newcastle based on these LGAs at 2016 is estimated to be 502,000. Source: NSW Department of Planning and Environment 2016, *New South Wales State and Local Government Area Household & Dwelling Projections 2011-2036*, New South Wales Government, Sydney
- 4 Bureau of Transport Statistics, *Summary Employment Forecasts 2011-2041*, September 2014 Release V2.0, New South Wales Government, Sydney
- 5 University of Newcastle, *New Space Project Fact Sheet*, n.d., viewed 20 July 2016 <[https://www.newcastle.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/145912/Project-Fact-Sheet.pdf](https://www.newcastle.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/145912/Project-Fact-Sheet.pdf)>
- 6 Deloitte Access Economics 2012, *Prospects and Challenges for the Hunter Region: A Strategic Economic Study*, p. 4, Regional Development Australia Hunter, viewed 7 July 2016 <[http://rdahunter.org.au/literature\\_343/Prospects\\_and\\_Challenges\\_for\\_the\\_Hunter](http://rdahunter.org.au/literature_343/Prospects_and_Challenges_for_the_Hunter)>
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- 8 Except for Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook, and former Gloucester and Greater Taree Council areas which are estimates based on the employment shares of these areas to total Hunter employment using the 2011 JTW Census. Bureau of Transport Statistics, *Summary Employment Forecasts 2011-2041*, September 2014 Release V2.0, New South Wales Government
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