



17/03739

Mr Ian Hunter
Executive Director Regional Operations
Office of Environment and Heritage
PO Box A290
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1232

Dear Mr ~~Hunter~~ *Ian*

High level flood evacuation route, Central Maitland

Maitland City Council recently requested the Department change the planning controls relating to Central Maitland so that additional shop top housing would be permitted. This proposal was the subject of an unresolved objection from the Office of Environment and Heritage. I have decided to not support the changes because Council was unable to demonstrate that the proposal would adequately address flood risks. A copy of my advice to Council is attached.

Central Maitland is identified as a strategic centre in the Hunter Regional Plan 2036. This means that it is an area where we want to increase housing and employment, facilitate urban renewal, and strengthen its role as the focal point for the broader Maitland community. However, we also recognise that until risks associated with flooding can be adequately managed, it will be difficult to achieve these outcomes.

As you are aware, Central Maitland is surrounded by high hazard floodways during large flood events and the existing evacuation routes are cut several hours before flood peak occurs. This creates the potential for many people to become isolated and require rescue. Council has recently adopted a Floodplain Risk Management Plan (FRMP) which identifies the provision of a high level evacuation route as being the best means of managing flood risks for residents.

The funding of a costing study for the provision of a high level evacuation route is the first step towards better managing flood risks in Central Maitland. I understand that Council has previously been unsuccessful in securing funding for this study through the Floodplain Management Grants scheme. I have encouraged Council to submit a new application for funding when the opportunity arises and request the Office of Environment and Heritage consider Council's request in the context of both the FRMP and the strategic direction of the Hunter Regional Plan and the Central Maitland Structure Plan.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, I have arranged for Ms Monica Gibson, Director Regions, Hunter to assist you. Ms Gibson can be contacted on (02) 4904 2708.

Yours sincerely



Marcus Ray
Deputy Secretary
Planning Services

22/08/17
Encl: DPE letter to Maitland City Council – Maitland LEP 2011 Amendment No. 21 – Housekeeping