



PLANNING PROPOSAL

- **Lot 11, DP844443, 7 Standen Drive, Lower Belford;**
- **Part of Lot 12, DP1100005, 5 Standen Drive, Lower Belford;**
- **Part of Lot 13, DP1100005, 133 Standen Drive, Lower Belford;**
- **Part of Lot 6, DP237936, Standen Drive, Lower Belford;**
- **Lot 91, DP:1138554, 147B Standen Drive, Lower Belford;**
- **Lot 92, DP:1138554, 147A Standen Drive, Lower Belford.**

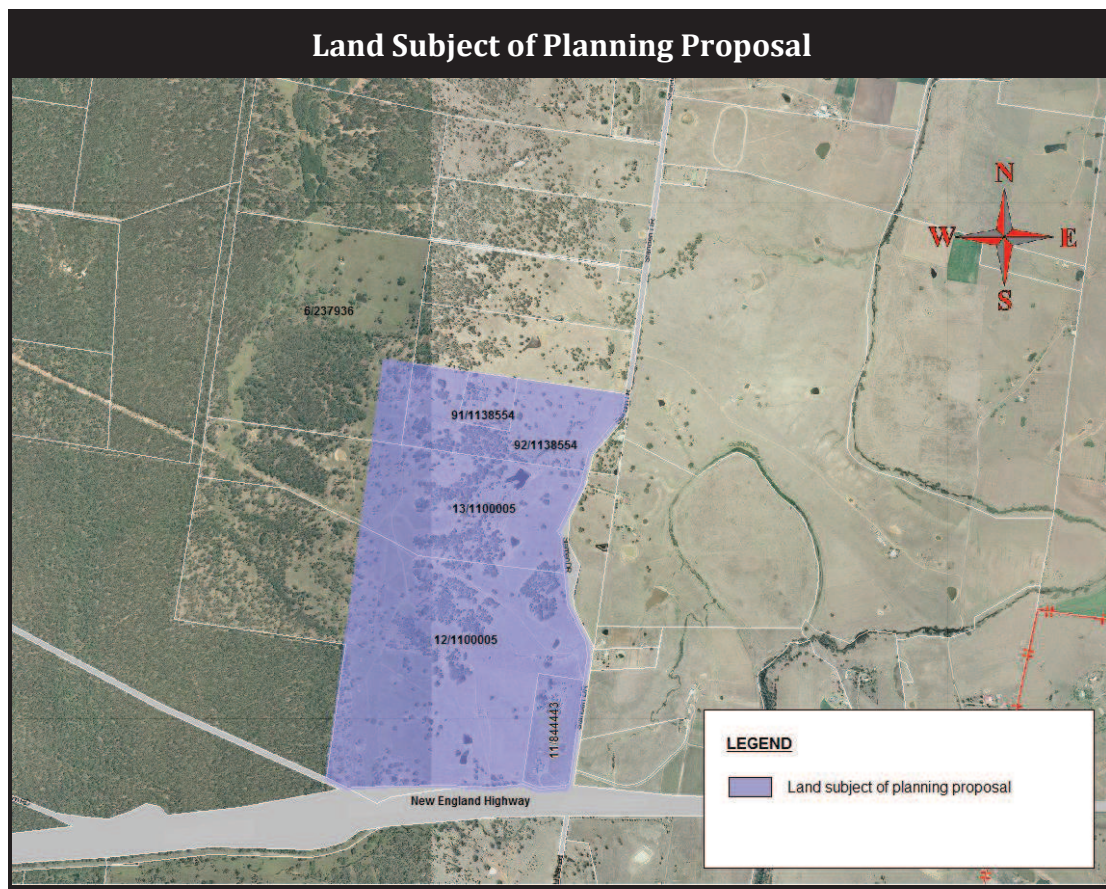
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SITE DESCRIPTION

The site subject of this planning proposal is identified in the plan which follows.

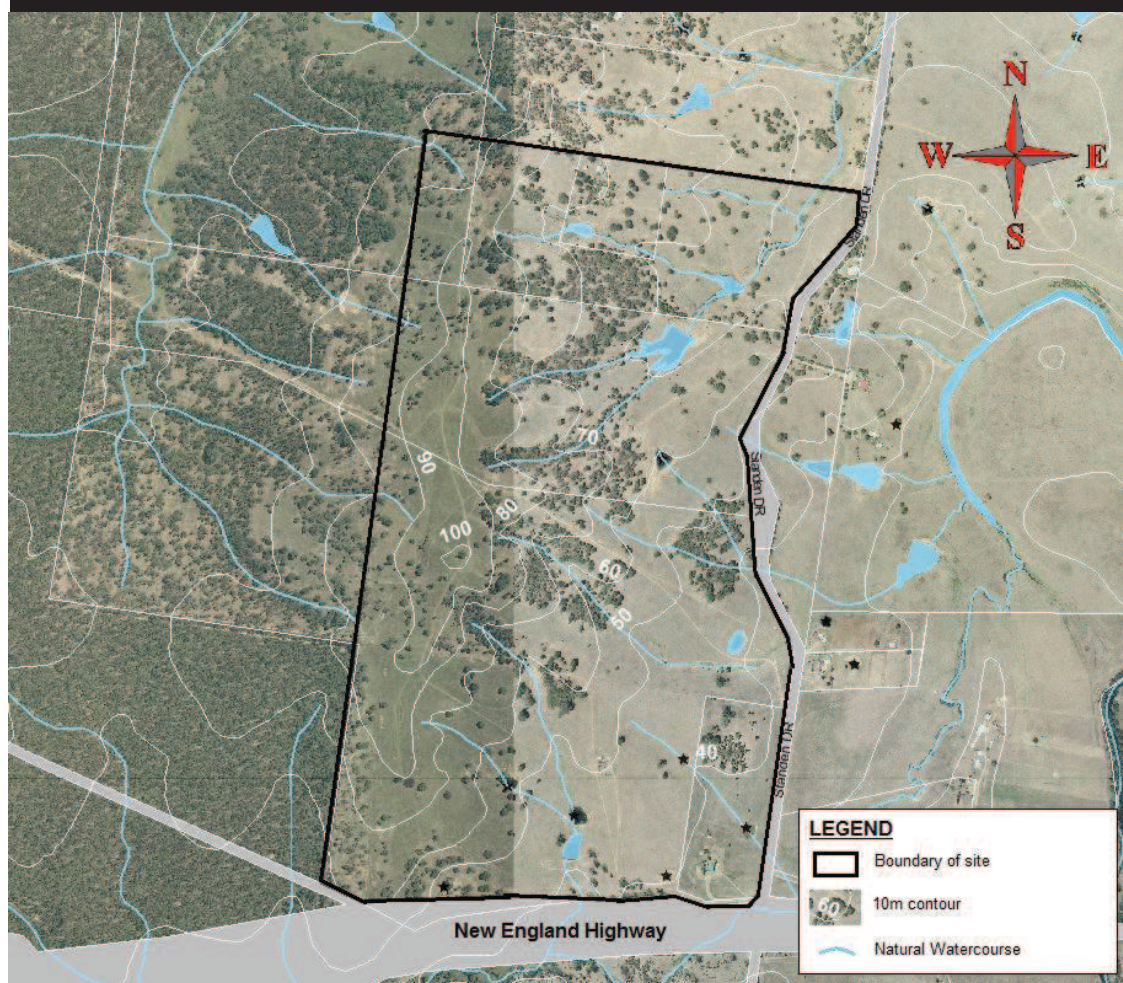


The following parcels of land make up the site:

- Lot 11, DP844443, 7 Standen Drive, Lower Belford (approximately 7.4Ha in area);
- Part of Lot 12, DP1100005, 5 Standen Drive, Lower Belford (approximately 72.8Ha in area);
- Part of Lot 13, DP1100005, 133 Standen Drive, Lower Belford (approximately 31Ha in area);
- Part of Lot 6, DP237936, Standen Drive, Lower Belford (approximately 3.6Ha in area);
- Lot 91, DP:1138554, 147B Standen Drive, Lower Belford (approximately 4Ha in area); and
- Lot 92, DP:1138554, 147A Standen Drive, Lower Belford (approximately 20.64Ha in area).

The site has a predominantly hilly topography and is dissected by intermittent natural watercourses. It comprises unimproved grassland and scattered groups of trees.

Contour Plan



PART 1 – OBJECTIVES OR INTENDED OUTCOMES

The intention of this Planning Proposal (Council file reference: LA65/2008) is to rezone land consistent with the SLUS to deliver rural residential development on a site that is recognised by the Strategy as being suitable for rural residential development.

The specific objectives of the proposed LEP are:

- (a) To change the land use zoning of Lot 11, DP844443; Part of Lot 12, DP1100005; Part of Lot 13, DP1100005; Part of Lot 6, DP237936; Lot 91, DP:1138554; and Lot 92, DP: 1138554; Standen Drive, Lower Belford; to land use zone(s) which appropriately correspond to the minimum lot sizes and constraints of the site.
- (b) To apply minimum rural residential lot size provisions of 8,000sqm for subdivision of the land with a minimum average lot size of 1ha.
- (c) To prevail over State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008 to the extent to which the policy prohibits a dwelling to be erected on Lot 92, DP 1138554.
- (d) To require development control plan (DCP) provisions to be prepared for the site to the satisfaction of Council.

PART 2 – EXPLANATION OF THE PROVISIONS

Council is currently operating under the Singleton Local Environmental Plan 1996. Like most Councils in NSW, Singleton Council is in the process of drafting a new Local Environmental Plan (LEP) in accordance with the LEP standard instrument (SI) template to replace the Singleton LEP 1996.

Preparation of Singleton Councils new SI LEP is not prioritized by NSW Planning as reflected in its list of SI LEPs proposed to be fast-tracked which was publicised in 2009. The timing of preparation, exhibition and adoption of Singleton Councils SI LEP is therefore uncertain.

Council is currently processing rezoning proposals separately from the new SI LEP to simplify and streamline the process of developing the SI LEP. This provides for matters associated with individual rezoning proposals to be resolved without affecting the SI LEP process.

The method of achieving the objectives of this Planning Proposal will differ according to whether or not the amendment occurs to the Singleton LEP 1996 or the SI LEP.

Amendment of Singleton Local Environmental Plan 1996 (SLEP 1996)

Description

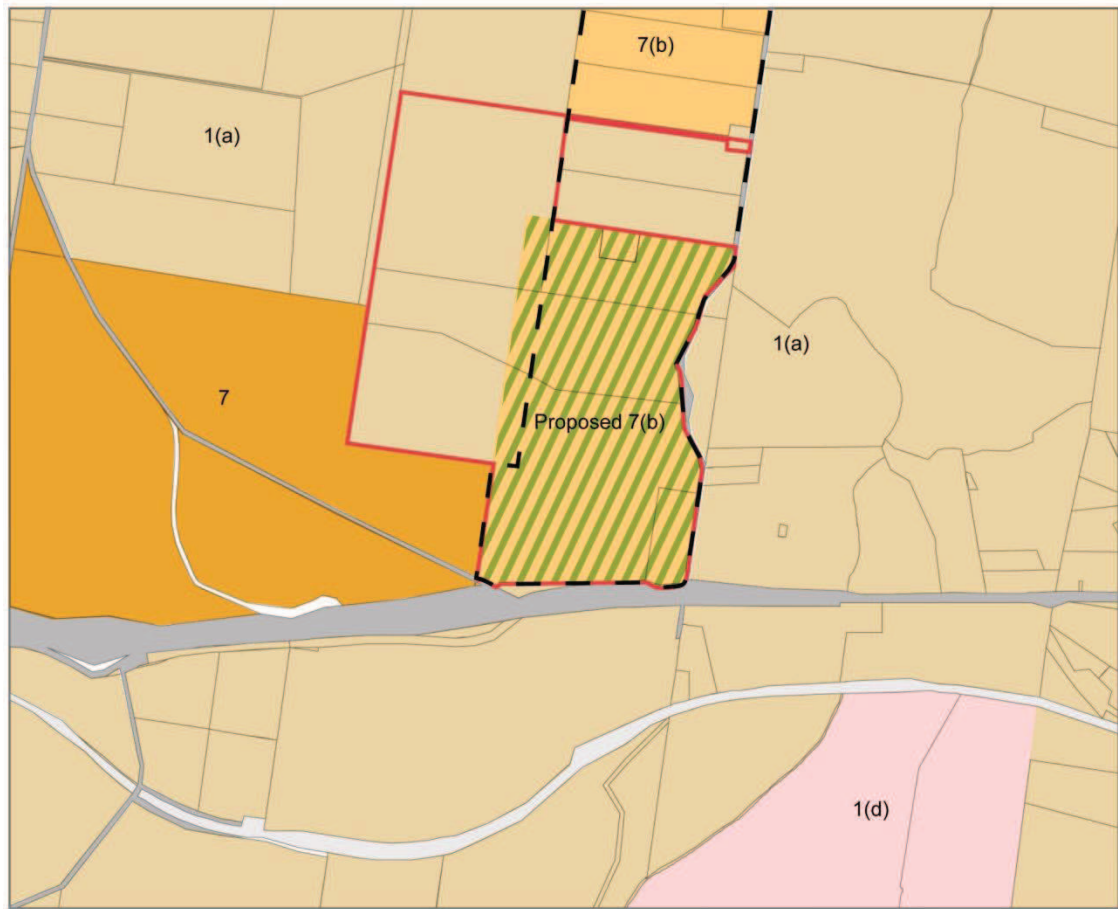
Implementation of this Planning Proposal as an amendment to the Singleton LEP 1996 would involve:

- Utilisation of the 7(b) (Environmental Living Zone) for the site. Note: This zone was incorporated into the Singleton LEP 1996 on the 18th June 2010 as part of Amendment No. 55 to the Singleton LEP 1996.
- Creation of a zoning plan and lot size map for the site.
- Modification of Part 2 of the Singleton LEP 1996 so that it requires a development control plan to be prepared for the land subject of this planning proposal.
- Modification of the definition of "Lot Size Map" of clause 9(1) of the Singleton LEP 1996 to include the subject amendment.
- Modification of the definition of "the map" of clause 9(1) of the Singleton LEP 1996 to include the subject amendment.

Zoning

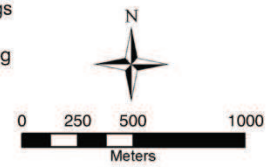
In consideration of the proposed lot sizes, the 7(b) (Environmental Living Zone) is considered appropriate for the site. The site comprises an EEC of ecological value. The 7(b) zone provides for low-impact development in areas comprising ecological value such that the value is not adversely impacted.

Map Showing Area Proposed to be Rezoned



- Cadastre
- Lower Belford Candidate Area
- Belford Land Corporation Landholding
- Site subject to Planning Proposal
Proposed 7(b) Environmental Living

- 1(a) Rural
- 7 Environment Protection
- 1(d) Rural Small Holdings
- 7(b) Environmental Living



Objectives

The following objectives of the 7(b) (Environmental Living) zone as contained in the SLEP 1996 would apply to the Proposal:

- (a) to provide for low-impact residential development in areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values,
- (b) to ensure that residential development does not have an adverse effect on those values,
- (c) to ensure development maintains and contributes to the character of the locality and minimises disturbance to the land,
- (d) to protect, enhance and manage riparian corridors to facilitate species movement and dispersal and maintain the integrity of banks of watercourses,
- (e) to encourage rehabilitation and conservation of environmentally important land.

Definitions

The definitions to be modified would include:

- Modification of the definition of "Lot Size Map" of clause 9(1) of the Singleton LEP 1996 to include the subject amendment.
- Modification of the definition of "the map" of clause 9(1) of the Singleton LEP 1996 to include the subject amendment.

Minimum Lot Size

The LEP amendment would apply the 8,000 sqm minimum lot size and 1ha minimum average lot size requirements for subdivision using a lot size map (as referred to in Clause 11 of the Singleton LEP 1996).

The averaging provision promotes location of smaller lots in cleared areas of the site and location of larger lot sizes in areas comprising significant vegetation. This helps minimise the impacts of rural residential development on the EEC.

LOT SIZE MAP

 7(b) – 8,000 square metres with 1ha minimum average lot size

LOCALITY	LOWER BELFORD	PARISH	BELFORD	COUNTY	NORTHUMBERLAND
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & ASSESSMENT ACT, 1979					
SINGLETON LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 1996 (AMENDMENT NO.)					
DRAWN BY		DATE		SHEET 1 OF 1	
SUPERVISING DRAFTSPERSON		STATEMENT OF RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS THIS PLAN AMENDS THE SINGLETON LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 1996 IN THE MANNER SET OUT IN SCHEDULE 1			
PLANNING OFFICER					
COUNCIL FILE NUMBER					
DEPT. FILE NUMBER					
Gateway Determination Date:		CERTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT 1979, AND REGULATIONS		GENERAL MANAGER/DELEGATE DATE	
Published on NSW Legislation website on:					

Preparation of Development Control Plan

A requirement to prepare development control plan provisions for the site is proposed to implement the recommendations of the SLUS, provide for sustainable development of the site and minimise the potential for impacts on biodiversity and Indigenous cultural heritage.

The requirement to prepare development control plan provisions for the site (which would occur as an amendment to the Singleton Development Control Plan incorporating locality specific provisions for the site) would be implemented by amending Part 2 of the Singleton LEP 1996 so that the clause applies to the site.

Amendment to Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (SI LEP)

Description

Implementation of this planning proposal as an amendment to the SI LEP would involve:

- Utilisation of the E4 (Environmental Living Zone) for the site.
- Creation of a zoning plan and lot size map for the site.
- A requirement for development control plan provisions to be prepared for the site.

Zoning

In consideration of the proposed lot sizes, the E4 (Environmental Living Zone) is considered appropriate for the site. The site comprises an EEC of ecological value. The SI template E4 zone provides for low-impact development in areas comprising ecological value such that the value is not adversely impacted.

Objectives

The objectives of the E4 Environmental Living Zone under the Standard Instrument will be adopted:

- To provide for low-impact residential development in areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values.
- To ensure that residential development does not have an adverse effect on those values.

Council may choose to expand upon the SI objectives. Suggested additional objectives include:

- To ensure development maintains and contributes to the character of the locality and minimises disturbance to the land.
- To protect, enhance and manage riparian corridors to facilitate species movement and dispersal and maintain the integrity of banks of watercourses.
- To encourage rehabilitation and conservation of environmentally important land.

Definitions

As per the SI definitions (Dictionary).

Minimum Lot Size

Lot size provisions are to be implemented using a Lot Size Map in the SI LEP.

Local Provisions

The preparation of a DCP (amendment to the Singleton DCP) is intended for the site. The draft DCP proposal would be processed concurrently with the Planning Proposal. Such a draft DCP could be exhibited with the Planning Proposal and would need to take effect at the time of making of the LEP amendment so that it can be considered as part of the assessment any development applications to develop the site.

The DCP for the site would need to:

- Contain a subdivision layout and staging plan, which provides for the progression of subdivision of the site in a logical and coordinated manner, providing for necessary infrastructure sequencing. The plan is to provide for connectivity of infrastructure throughout the site.
- Provide an overall movement hierarchy for the site, showing the major circulation routes and connections to achieve a simple and safe movement system for private vehicles and public transport.
- Contain stormwater and water quality management controls.
- Provide for the amelioration of natural and environmental hazards, including bushfire, flooding, landslip and erosion, and potential site contamination.
- Contain measures to conserve any heritage items or places of significance.
- Contain an overall landscaping strategy for the protection and enhancement of riparian areas and remnant vegetation, including visually prominent locations, which includes concept plans for street tree planting.
- Comprise any buffers necessary to ameliorate visual and amenity impacts.
- Contain detailed urban design controls for significant development sites.
- Provide for suitably located public facilities, services and recreational areas.

The concept subdivision layout of the draft could be used as a basis for preparation of the LEP minimum lot size map. The concept subdivision layout and minimum lot size map should be designed such as to minimise vegetation removal.

PART 3 – JUSTIFICATION

Section A - Need for the Planning Proposal

1. Is the planning proposal a result of any strategic study or report?

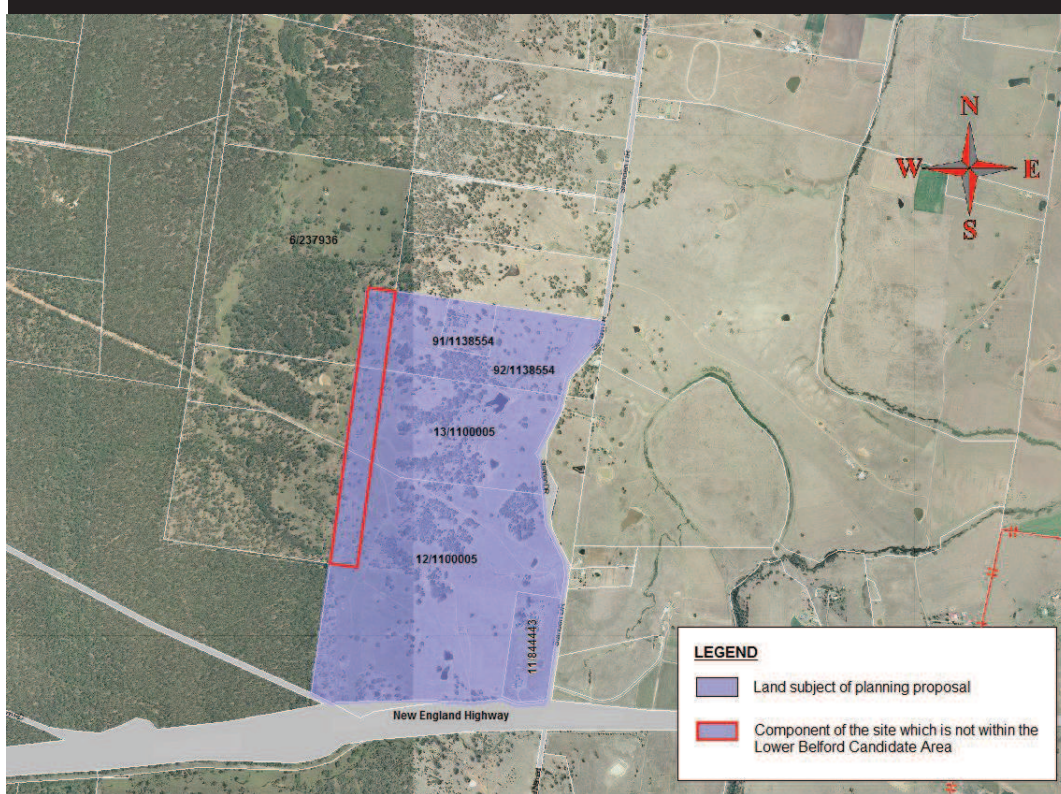
Singleton Land Use Strategy (2008)

Section 7 of the Singleton Land Use Strategy (**Attachment 1**) identifies candidate areas potentially suitable for rural-residential development. The majority of the land intended to be rezoned through this planning proposal is within the Lower Belford Candidate Area (LB Candidate Area).

The site subject of this planning proposal incorporates a strip of approximately 12Ha of land which is not within the LB Candidate Area. This strip of land adjoins the candidate area and represents an extension to the candidate area.

The extension is contained within lots 12 and 13, DP: 1100005 and Lot 6 DP 237936. Parts of lots 12 and 13 already fall within the candidate area. Lot 6 is not within the candidate area boundary.

**Map Showing Component of Site that is
Not within the Lower Belford Candidate Area**



The boundaries for the LB Candidate Area, as comprised in the SLUS, were determined during preparation of the *Singleton Rural Residential Development Strategy 2005* (RRDS).

The 12Ha strip of land (extension) that is not in the LB Candidate Area was excluded at the request of the Natural Resources component of the *NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Natural Resources* (now the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage). The basis for this request was to minimise inclusion of vegetation.

Provided that suitable buffers are in place to mitigate impacts on vegetation to the west of the site, the proposed variation from the Lower Belford Candidate Area boundary is considered to be justified.

Inclusion of the 12Ha strip of land improves potential subdivision layout opportunities and the likely potential lot yield. The extension is subject to review by public authorities as part of the consultation phase for this planning proposal.

The site subject of this planning proposal, is intended to be serviced with reticulated water but not sewer. In cases where reticulated water is provided and sewer is not provided, the Singleton Land Use Strategy (SLUS) “Strategic Actions” for rural-residential development, indicate that the absolute minimum size of lots should be no less than 8,000m². Table 12 of the SLUS details that such lots should have a minimum average area of 1Ha. These lot size provisions are considered to be suitable for the subject site.

Based on the proposed 1Ha average lot size, topographical constraints on the site and proportion of land likely to be utilized for roads; subdivision of the land is expected to yield approximately 122 allotments. The prospective lot yield will be clarified further as part of the Development Control Plan (DCP) master-planning process.

Table 12 of the SLUS proposes an environmental living zoning for the LB Candidate Area. This planning proposal is supported by an Ecological Constraints Assessment (**Appendix 2**) prepared by Cumberland Ecological (August 2011). The assessment report details that the site comprises two (2) Endangered Ecological Communities (EEC's) being:

- Central Hunter Ironbark-Spotted Gum Grey Box Forest; and
- Hunter Lowlands Redgum Forest.

In recognition of the environmental importance of the land, this planning proposal seeks to rezone the land to an environmental living zoning, which is consistent with the SLUS.

The 7(b) (Environmental Living Zone) under the SLEP 1996 and the E4 (Environmental Living Zone) under the SI LEP provide for low-impact residential development in areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values. It is an objective of the zones to ensure that residential development does not have an adverse effect on those values.

In addition using an environmental living zone for the land, this planning proposal seeks to require DCP provisions to be developed for the site. This is recommended by sections 7 and 9.4. of the SLUS. The proposed DCP provisions shall encourage retention and rehabilitation of vegetation and aim to ensure that development of the site results in no net loss of biodiversity.

Housing Demand – Singleton LGA

The *Singleton Rural Residential Development Strategy* (RRDS) reviewed historical demand for rural-residential dwellings in the Singleton LGA for the period 1997 to mid-2004. Based on this data, it predicted annual demand for a 10 year horizon. The RRDS projected that there would be a need for approximately 75 rural-residential dwellings per year in the Singleton LGA.

In 2008, the *Singleton Land Use Strategy* (SLUS) replaced the RRDS as the primary local strategy relating to rural residential development in the Singleton LGA. The concept that approximately 75 rural-residential dwellings would be required per year in the Singleton LGA was, however, maintained by the SLUS.

Of the 75 projected rural-residential lots per annum, the SLUS predicted that there would be demand for a range of lots falling within the following broad lot size categories:

- Lots with a minimum lot size of 2,000sqm and a minimum average lot size of 4,000sqm, which are provided with reticulated water and sewer. The SLUS suggests that consideration should be given to using the “E4 – Environmental Living zone” where such lots are proposed;
- Lots with a minimum lot size of 8,000sqm and a minimum average lot size of 1Ha, which are provided with reticulated water. The SLUS suggests that consideration should be given to using the “R5 Large Lot Residential zone” where such lots are proposed; and
- Lots with a minimum lot size of 4Ha and a minimum average lot size of 5Ha where no services are provided. The SLUS suggests that consideration should be given to using the “E4 – Environmental Living zone” where such lots are proposed.

The SLUS identifies candidate areas potentially suitable for rural-residential development within the Singleton LGA and indicates which lot size categories may be appropriate for the respective candidate areas. It also makes lot yield projections for each of the candidate areas based on the suggested lot size categories.

Intensification of Development

The land subject of this planning proposal is substantially within the “Lower Belford Candidate Area” (note: this proposal includes a proposal to rezone a strip of land adjoining the candidate area).

The SLUS indicates that the land would be suitable for lots with a minimum lot size of 4Ha and a minimum average lot size of 5Ha if no services are available. The SLUS details that consideration can be given to applying a lower minimum lot size to subdivision of the candidate area if it is serviced with reticulated water.

At the time of preparation of the SLUS, the ability to service the site with reticulated water was uncertain. As such, the SLUS projections for the Lower Belford Candidate Area suggest a minimum lot size of 4Ha and a minimum average lot size of 5Ha. A yield of approximately 30 lots is projected from the Lower Belford Candidate Area if such minimum lot size provisions are applied. Approximately 22 of these 30 lots would be within the site subject of this planning proposal.

Since preparation of the SLUS, the Hunter Water Corporation has expanded its area of operations to incorporate the Lower Belford Candidate Area and has confirmed that the site is able to be serviced with reticulated water. Smaller minimum lot size provisions are therefore proposed to be applied to the site.

This planning proposal intends to apply a minimum lot size of 8,000sqm and a minimum average lot size of 1Ha to subdivision of the subject land. This would generate a yield of approximately 122 lots from the site, which is an increase of 100 lots to the SLUS projections.

Development of the subject land in accordance with the recommendations of this planning proposal would increase the total yield projected for the SLUS candidate areas from 670 lots to 770 lots, assuming that there is no intensification of other land within the candidate areas.

At the time of lodging this planning proposal, no other proposals for intensification had been lodged with Council. The SLUS does not incorporate land supply relating to the Huntlee proposal which is identified by the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy. The potential land supply at Huntlee (projected to provide for approximately 7,000 dwellings) responds to growth drivers of

the Lower Hunter region rather than for the projected local growth associated with the Singleton LGA.

Impacts of Development Intensification

The rural-residential candidate areas are projected by the SLUS to yield approximately 670 dwellings over a 10 year period (based on 1 dwelling per new rural-residential lot). This provides for an average of 67 dwellings per year, which is 8 dwellings below the number of new rural-residential dwellings required to meet the demand projected by the SLUS (75p.a. x 10 = 750).

The gap between the projected yield for the candidate areas; and the yield required to meet projected demand, presents an opportunity to intensify development of the land subject of this planning proposal. This potential to increase number of lots (and therefore dwellings) yielded from the Lower Belford Candidate Area is highlighted in Table 12 of the SLUS.

This planning proposal would increase the projected yield from the rural-residential candidate areas to 77 dwellings per year for a 10 year period. This is only 2 additional dwellings per year above the SLUS projected demand (i.e. $77-75=2$). This proposed increase in land supply would not result in an oversupply of land for rural-residential development in the Singleton LGA or in the Branxton area.

Given that the Branxton Area has been identified as being suitable for catering for future regional population growth (*Lower Hunter Regional Strategy*) and given the additional housing demand expected to be generated as a result of development of the nearby Whittingham Industrial Estate, provision of significant employment lands within the Huntlee New Town site, continued expected growth in the coal industry, intensification of the Singleton Army Base and planned extension of the Hunter Expressway; the additional 2 dwellings per year is considered to be a reasonable increase on the SLUS target.

Implications of Undersupply of Rural-Residential Land

Demand for an average of 75 rural-residential dwellings per year in Singleton LGA has been established by the RRDS and SLUS.

High demand and low supply of rural-residential land over the last 5 years has generated housing affordability issues in the Singleton LGA. The comparatively higher house prices in Singleton LGA are evidenced in the recent property sales statistics published by NSW Housing (Appendix 6).

High house prices have resulted in an increased dependency on rental accommodation and an increase in the number of people who work in the Singleton LGA, but reside outside of the LGA.

Recent rental accommodation statistics published by NSW Housing (Appendix 6) indicate that LGA's similar to Singleton LGA tend to experience lower average rental prices compared to the average rental prices for the Singleton LGA. As a result of the high demand for rental accommodation, Singleton LGA has relatively high rental prices compared to similar LGA's.

It is not only necessary to provide affordable housing opportunities, it is also important to provide housing choice to meet demand. High historical take-up rates for vacant rural-residential allotments of the type sought by this planning proposal and extremely low current supply indicates that there is unfulfilled demand for rural-residential allotments in the Singleton LGA ranging in the 8000sqm/1Ha size. This view has been reinforced by responses to consultation with local real estate agents.

The high demand for rural-residential land in the region is evidenced by similar developments outside of the Singleton LGA, such as the Sutton Grove and Highfield Way Estates in the Belford-Branxton area, which were all pre-sold 'off the plan' before subdivision certificate release (Sutton Grove comprises a total of 22 lots including 19 in DP1022400 registered January 2001, Highfield Way comprises 12 lots in DP1060301 registered October 2003).

Continued undersupply of vacant rural-residential land within the Singleton LGA is expected to exacerbate housing and rental affordability issues in the LGA. Housing and commercial opportunities would be lost and the Singleton LGA would suffer.

While the subject planning proposal will not resolve the housing supply and affordability issues currently experienced within the Singleton LGA, it is believed that the proposal will positively contribute to addressing these issues

2. Is the planning proposal the best means of achieving the objectives or intended outcomes, or is there a better way?

Placing land use and minimum lot size provisions for subdivision in Council's LEP, in conjunction with appropriate design controls in Council's DCP; is considered to be the most appropriate method for managing subdivision and land use in the locality. This method is supported by the adopted SLUS (2008) and is consistent with the method of managing land use for similar proposals in the Singleton LGA.

3. Is there a net community benefit?

Council envisages that this planning proposal will result in a net community benefit. The subject planning proposal will make land available for the creation of approximately 122 rural residential style lots in the Lower

Belford/Branxton area. It is to the benefit of the community to plan for population growth such that it occurs in an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable manner.

The main transport corridor in the vicinity of the site is the New England Highway. The site has access to reticulated water supply infrastructure and is not proposed to be serviced by sewer. Some road upgrades may be required to provide for the additional traffic generated by the development. The costs associated with infrastructure provision are not considered to be cost prohibitive to development of the site. Given the rural-residential nature of the area, pedestrian paths and cycle ways are not intended to be provided as part of the development of the site.

The proposed environmental living zone objectives support low impact development in areas with special ecological value. While some of the site comprises established vegetation, other areas of the site are cleared of vegetation, comprising predominantly native grasses. The proposed 8,000sqm minimum lot size and 1ha minimum average lot size requirements for subdivision, provides for the creation of smaller lots in cleared areas of the site and larger lots in vegetated areas, so that impacts upon vegetation and segregation of vegetation is minimized.

The requirement to prepare a DCP (amendment to the Singleton DCP) allows for the broad subdivision layout for the site to be planned (via a concept subdivision layout plan) and for application of controls on development of the site, such as to maintain or potentially improve the existing biodiversity situation. It is viewed that development of the site is able to occur in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Rezoning and development of the site is considered to be economically sustainable. The Lower Belford and Branxton localities have been identified as being suitable for catering for future population growth in the Hunter Region. This is evidenced by the inclusion of the Huntlee site into the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (2006) and through the identification of rural residential candidate areas in the Lower Belford and Branxton localities by the SLUS (2008).

Provision of significant employment lands in the Huntlee New Town proposal, development of the Whittingham Industrial Estate, growth in the coal industry, intensification of the Singleton Army Base and extension of the Hunter Expressway are all expected to generate substantial employment opportunities in the area.

Such development opportunities are expected to increase the demand for housing in the Lower Belford/Branxton area and thus increase the demand for rural residential land past that which is projected by the SLUS, because those projections were based on maintaining historical growth rates. The site is ideally located for housing development to help provide for the

expected growth in population associated with the nearby employment opportunities.

The proposal is considered to be socially sustainable. It provides for development of rural residential lots which have an environmental living focus, which in turn, helps fulfil particular lifestyle demands of the community. Given the lot size and DCP requirements, development of the site is able to occur in a manner which is sympathetic to; and compatible with, surrounding land uses.

Overall, the proposal is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable and as such, is considered to generate benefits to the community.

Section B - Relationship to Strategic Planning Framework

4. Is the planning proposal consistent with the objectives and actions contained within the applicable regional or sub-regional strategy (including the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy and exhibited draft strategies)?

Singleton Council is located adjacent to the Lower Hunter Region and is not part of the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy area. As such, the relevant Strategy is Council's SLUS. However, given the proximity of the site to Branxton, which is partly within the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy; it maintains some relevance.

The main objective of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (LHRS) is to ensure that appropriately located and serviced land is made available. This is to ensure that projected housing, employment and environmental needs of the Lower Hunter Region population are accommodated over the coming 25 years.

A key consideration is the housing target of 115,000 new homes required to accommodate future growth in the area. More specifically, the LHRS has identified development of a new community ("Huntlee New Town" site) adjoining Branxton. This is intended to accommodate approximately 7,000 dwellings.

While Huntlee had been on track to provide dwellings in the short term the potential for this area to supply land in the area, particularly in the short term, is subject to review by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure under the Major Projects approvals process.

The Huntlee development included some large residential lots within the Singleton LGA. While this may ultimately comprise 200-300 lots, it is part of the overall scheme for over 7,000 dwellings which was required in the Lower Hunter Strategy to meet demand in the Lower Hunter.

Huntlee was not progressed to address land supply issues in Singleton. As such the potential development associated with Huntlee is permitted by and to be pursued under the LHRS not the SLUS.

In addition to major land release sites, Singleton Council's preferred approach to managing rural residential development is to support smaller, well located development, as is the subject of this of this application. This provides a more modest and consistent approach to providing land supply that reflects the urban structure of Singleton LGA. Furthermore, this rezoning proposal is consistent with the Department of Planning and

Infrastructure's approach in the LHRS, which encourages and focuses growth at or around existing centres.

As Singleton LGA has not formed part of any regional or sub-regional planning, the SLUS (2008) is the governing strategic plan for the Singleton LGA. Endorsed by the Department of Planning (now the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure), it provides the appropriate framework for managing growth, such as rural residential development in the Singleton LGA. In particular, it provides and maintains its relevance through the objectives and actions for managing land use and supply.

5. Is the planning proposal consistent with the local Council's Community Strategic Plan, or other local strategic plan?

Community Strategic Plan

At the 19 March 2012 Singleton Council meeting, the *Singleton Community Strategic Plan – Our Place: A Blueprint for 2022* (SCSP 2022) was endorsed by the elected Council. Prior to that time, Council did not have an endorsed Community Strategic Plan pursuant to the Department of Local Government's "Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework". The associated Draft Delivery Program and Draft Operational Plan have been placed on exhibition for the period 8 May 2012 – 8 June 2012 and are yet to be endorsed.

The subject planning proposal is consistent with the SCSP 2022. An objective of the SCSP 2022 is to ensure that land is available to enable growth. The SCSP 2022 seeks to achieve sustainable outcomes and promotes a balance between the built and natural environments.

The subject planning proposal seeks to rezone land to an environmental living zone to provide for rural residential development. The proposed development control plan provisions are intended to incorporate requirements to achieve positive biodiversity outcomes, such that an appropriate balance is achieved between the built and natural environments.

Local Strategic Plan

The Singleton Land Use Strategy (SLUS) 2008 is a local strategic plan that contains key strategic land use policies and principles for land within the Singleton LGA. It guides future land use and supply within the LGA.

The aim of the SLUS is to provide strategic recommendations that align with the land use objectives of the Singleton community and Council, as well as to provide recommended changes to the Council's Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

Within rural residential development considerations, the SLUS recognises the need to provide additional land to cater for rural residential purposes and associated infrastructure requirements. As an outcome of the detailed process undertaken to arrive at the SLUS, areas identified within the LGA that are appropriate for rural residential development have been categorised into the following Candidate Areas:

- Lower Belford.
- Jerrys Plains.
- Wattle Ponds North East.
- Wattle Ponds North West.
- Sedgfield.
- Gowrie.
- Branxton North West.
- Branxton North East.
- Branxton South West.

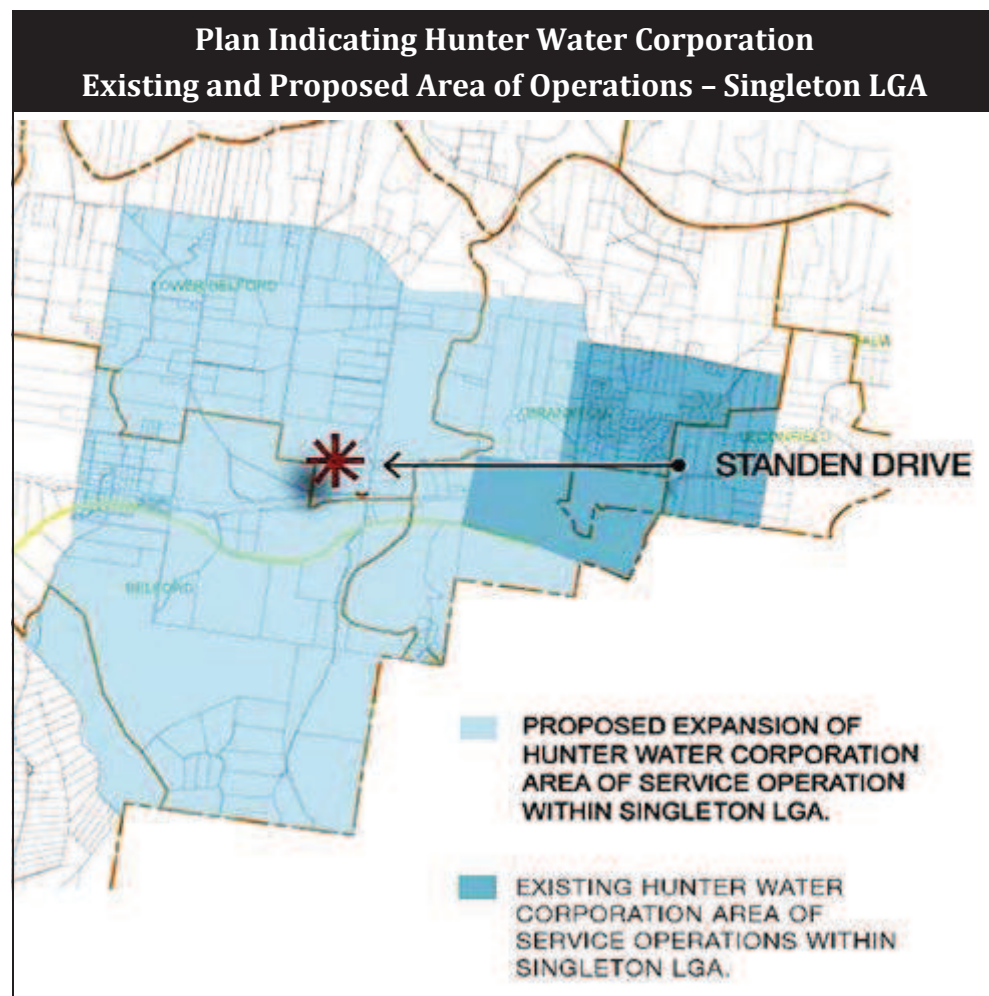
The site is situated within the Lower Belford Candidate Area, as detailed in the SLUS. Approximately 3ha of Lot 6, DP237936 is included as part of this Planning Proposal, which, despite not being within the Lower Belford Candidate Area, will not affect the intended outcome of the site, or hinder the proposal's consistency with the aims and objectives of the SLUS. An additional 9ha is located outside the Candidate Area but within the lots 12 and 13 DP 1100005 that are subject of the Candidate Area.

The SLUS indicates that an environmental living zone is appropriate for the site. The absence of confirmation that the site could be serviced with reticulated water at the time of preparation of the SLUS, resulted in the SLUS recommending a 4ha minimum and 5ha minimum average lot size for subdivision of the land. The SLUS acknowledges that consideration can be given to applying a lower minimum lot size to subdivision of the land if reticulated water is available.

The proposal is considered to be consistent with the rural-residential development objectives of the SLUS for the following reasons:

- *Provide opportunities for additional rural residential subdivision and development in suitable locations, and enable a range of different types of rural residential development*
 - As recommended by the Department of Planning, the expansion of villages should be proximate to village centres to prevent urban sprawl. The site is in a suitable location, being within close proximity to the centre of Branxton.

- A range of lot sizes will be provided for by the proposal due to the 8,000sqm minimum lot size and 1ha minimum average lot size requirements. Lots of such sizes are not catered for elsewhere in the Lower Belford/Branxton area by the SLUS. These lot size provisions allow subdivision of the site to appropriately respond to its topographic and environmental characteristics.
- *Ensure that adequate services are available for rural residential lots*
- Hunter Water Corporation has confirmed that they are able to service the site.



- The SLUS does not require reticulated sewer to be provided where lots are greater than 8,000sqm. For reticulated water not to be required, lots need to be 5ha or greater. As such the subject proposal would require provision of reticulated water but not sewer.
- The site is able to be provided with suitable electricity provision and telephone connection, as electricity supply services are readily available to be upgraded and connected to development on the site.

- *Ensure that the supply of zoned rural residential land does not unreasonably exceed demand*
 - The Planning Proposal is expected to increase the total yield projected for the rural residential candidate areas by approximately 103 lots.
 - The SLUS estimates a yield of approximately 670 lots from the rural residential candidate areas if developed in accordance with Table 12 of the strategy. However, the SLUS identifies that there is a need for approximately 75 lots per year, which equates to 750 lots for a 10 year projection.
 - The supply of 670 lots is 80 lots short of what is projected by the SLUS as required for the LGA for a 10 year period. An addition of 103 lots would place the total yield from the candidate areas to 767 lots, which is approximately 10.23 years supply.
 - 10.23 years supply of rural residential land is not considered to be an unreasonable amount of zoned land to be available for development. Considering that some land within the candidate areas are not (at the time of preparation of this Planning Proposal) subject of rezoning proposals, this Planning Proposal is considered to be acceptable and not expected to result in supply unreasonably exceeding demand.
- *Apply criteria to identify the best location for rural residential estates and balance socio-economic goals associated with new rural residential development with the needs to preserve areas of high agricultural, scenic or environmental value.*
 - Table 13 of the SLUS comprises criteria for use when identifying potential rural-residential land. The land subject of this planning proposal is considered to be consistent with these criteria. The site is less than 5km from the Branxton Township and approximately 18km from the Singleton Township. It is therefore viewed to be within reasonable travel distance/time from these centres.
 - The site is able to be provided with relevant service utilities and is ideally located for rural residential purposes. The site has the ability to provide for onsite water storage, subject to water resource limits and harvestable water rights. No adverse impacts on existing infrastructure have been identified. Staged road upgrades may be required to cater for the additional traffic generated by the development.

- Development of the site is able to be managed in a manner which will minimise impacts on flora, fauna and biodiversity. Bushfire impacts are able to be managed through appropriate subdivision design. Given the extent of cleared areas of the site, there are suitable options for developing the land, while still complying with requirements to plan for bushfire protection.
- The site is distanced away from operational coal mines. While coal seam methane exploration activities associated with Petroleum Exploration Lease 267 (Sydney Gas) may impact upon the expectations of future residents, there is no coal title over the land. The scope for significant minerals development within close proximity to the site is minimal.
- The proposal is compatible with surrounding land uses and should not have an adverse impact on water supply catchment land. While the site does comprise endangered ecological communities (EECs), the recommendation of this planning proposal provides for development of the land without generating significant adverse impacts on the EECs.
- Development of the site is able to occur without generating significant adverse impacts in regard to soil erosion. The site does not comprise forestry land and is not identified as being contaminated. Any minor contamination which may have occurred on the site as a result of historical farming activities would be minor and would not preclude development of the site in the manner proposed.
- The site is capable of providing for the onsite effluent disposal associated with the development density proposed. The site is not within a floodplain and is not identified as comprising sites or items of indigenous cultural heritage. Given the proposed minimum lot size requirements, there would be ample housing sites available that would not disturb indigenous heritage, should such heritage be discovered as part of preparation of detailed environmental studies for the proposal.
- The proposal should not have an adverse impact upon existing groundwater tables or slopes greater than 18 degrees.

6. Is the planning proposal consistent with applicable state environmental planning policies?

State Environmental Planning Policy No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection

The flora and fauna assessment that has been prepared for the proposal has not identified any koala habitat on the site. No suitable habitat has been identified on the subject land and the majority of vegetation on the site is

intended to be protected; therefore *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection* does not apply.

State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 – Remediation of Land

Urban Capability Assessments (Attachment 3) have been conducted for the site. The assessments indicate that there is not a risk to rural-residential development of the site on the basis of contamination. The proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 – Remediation of Land*.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008

Lot 92, DP 1138554, which forms part of the site subject of this planning proposal, was created pursuant to Clause 9(2) of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008* (Rural Lands SEPP). Pursuant to Clause 9(4) of the policy, a dwelling cannot be erected on the lot. As reflected in Clause 5 of the SEPP, the policy prevails over Council's Local Environmental Plan to the extent of any inconsistency, irrespective of whether an amendment to the plan was made before or after the commencement of the policy restriction.

To make prospective purchasers of the lots aware of the restriction created by the Rural Lands SEPP, the consent for the development application, which approved the creation of the lot (DA537/2008 - SA71/2008), required creation of a restriction under the *Conveyancing Act 1919*. This was to ensure that the restriction on the erection of a dwelling on the land was identified on the 88B instrument relating to the lot, so that prospective purchasers would be made aware of the restriction.

The removal of the restriction created under section 88B of the *Conveyancing Act 1919* does not void the restriction created by the Rural Lands SEPP.

Where there is an inconsistency between the Rural Lands SEPP and the *Singleton Local Environmental Plan 1996*, the Rural Lands SEPP takes precedence to the extent the inconsistency. As such, the restriction could continue to prevail over Council's Local Environmental Plan irrespective of whether a change in the zoning of the land takes place under the plan after the commencement of the restriction created by the policy.

The restriction under the Rural Lands SEPP needs to be removed to provide for the proposal. This is because the rezoning is for the purposes of providing land to help meet demand for rural-residential (Environmental Living) style lots for the purposes of building houses on them. If dwellings were unable to be constructed on the land, then it would defeat the purpose of rezoning it.

The Rural Lands SEPP does not appear to clearly provide for the removal of the restriction. As part of the process associated with this planning proposal,

it must be made legally clear that there is no underlying restriction to development of the land.

Notwithstanding the restriction, this planning proposal is considered to be consistent with the aims of the policy, which are:

- To facilitate the orderly and economic use and development of rural lands for rural and related purposes.
- To identify the Rural Planning Principles and the Rural Subdivision Principles so as to assist in the proper management, development and protection of rural lands for the purpose of promoting the social, economic and environmental welfare of the State.
- To implement measures designed to reduce land use conflicts.
- To identify State significant agricultural land for the purpose of ensuring the ongoing viability of agriculture on that land, having regard to social, economic and environmental considerations.
- To amend provisions of other environmental planning instruments relating to concessional lots in rural subdivisions.

The lot size provisions and requirement to prepare a DCP for the site provide for the development of the site to occur in a logical and orderly manner. The site is not considered to be of high agricultural value and as such, subdivision of the site into numerous rural residential lots would be a better economic use for the land. The proposal is consistent with the rural planning principles contained in section 7 of the SEPP and rural subdivision principles contained within section 8 of the SEPP.

As discussed earlier in this report, the minimum lot size provisions and requirement to prepare a DCP for the site provide for development of the land to occur such that land use conflicts are minimized. The site is not identified as State significant agricultural land. This planning proposal does affect concessional lot provisions.

Hunter Regional Environmental Plan 1989

The *Hunter Regional Environmental Plan 1989* (HREP) was repealed in June 2009 and as such, the provisions of this REP are no longer relevant.

Draft State Environmental Planning Policy No 66— Integration of Land Use and Transport

This policy no longer needs to be considered as it has been in draft form since 2001.

7. Is the proposal consistent with applicable Ministerial Directions (s.117 directions)?

The table which follows contains a response to each of the s117 directions in relation to the planning proposal.

Compliance with Section 117 Directions			
Ministerial Direction		Relevance (Yes/No)	Consistency and Implications
No.	Title		
1.1	Business and Industrial Zones	No	This planning proposal does not affect land within an existing or proposed business or industrial zone.
1.2	Rural Zones	No	The planning proposal does not seek to rezone the land to a residential, business, industrial, village or tourist zone.
1.3	Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries	No	The proposal would not have the effect of prohibiting the mining of coal or other minerals, production of petroleum, or winning or obtaining of extractive materials. The proposal is not viewed to restrict the potential development of resources of coal, other minerals, petroleum or extractive materials which are of State or regional significance.
1.4	Oyster Aquaculture	No	The planning proposal does not seek a change in land use which could result in adverse impacts on a Priority Oyster Aquaculture Area or a "current oyster aquaculture lease in the national parks estate". The planning proposal does not seek a change in land use which could result in incompatible use of land between oyster aquaculture in a Priority Oyster Aquaculture Area or a "current oyster aquaculture lease in the national parks estate" and other land uses.
1.5	Rural Lands	Yes	This planning proposal affects land within an existing rural zone. It also seeks to change the existing minimum lot size for subdivision of the land. The objectives of this direction are to: • protect the agricultural production value of rural land, and • facilitate the orderly and economic development of rural lands for rural and related purposes. Inconsistencies with this direction are considered to be justified by the Singleton Land Use Strategy (SLUS). The SLUS considered the issues raised by the objectives of this direction. The SLUS identifies the site subject of this

			planning proposal as a candidate area for rural-residential development. The SLUS was approved by the Director-General on the 8 June 2008 and is still in force as at the date of preparation of this planning proposal. This planning proposal seeks confirmation from the Director-General (or delegate) that any inconsistency with this direction is justified and of minor significance.
2.1	Environment Protection Zones	Yes	This planning proposal includes requirements which facilitate the protection and conservation of environmentally sensitive areas through the proposed Environmental Living zoning and Development Control Plan (DCP) provisions. This planning proposal does not reduce the environmental protection standards that apply to the land. This planning proposal is considered to be consistent with the direction.
2.2	Coastal Protection	No	This direction does not apply to the planning proposal because it does not affect land in the coastal zone.
2.3	Heritage Conservation	Yes	The planning proposal is considered to be consistent with this direction. It requires preparation of DCP provisions which incorporate measures to conserve any identified heritage. Any perceived inconsistencies with this direction are considered to be of minor significance and justified by the fact that: • The <i>Singleton Local Environmental Plan 1996</i> (SLEP 1996) and draft Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (SI LEP) comprise provisions to protect items of environmental heritage. • The <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> comprises provisions to protect objects and places of Indigenous heritage. This planning proposal seeks confirmation from the Director-General (or delegate) that any inconsistency with this direction is justified and of minor significance.
2.4	Recreation Vehicle Areas	No	This planning proposal does not seek to enable land to be developed for the purpose of a recreation vehicle area within the meaning of the <i>Recreation Vehicles Act 1983</i>.
3.1	Residential Zones	No	This planning proposal does not affect land within an existing or proposal residential zone.
3.2	Caravan Parks and Manufactured Home	NO	This planning proposal is not for the purposes of identifying suitable zones,

	Estates		locations or provisions for caravan parks or manufactured home estates.
3.3	Home Occupations	Yes	The mandatory provisions of the SI LEP make home occupations exempt from requiring development consent in the <i>E4 Environmental Living Zone</i>. “Home activity” is the equivalent definition for “home occupation” in the SLEP 1996. Home activities are exempt from requiring development consent in the <i>7(b) (Environmental Living zone)</i>. The objectives of this direction are considered to be addressed by this planning proposal. This planning proposal seeks confirmation from the Director-General (or delegate) that any inconsistency with this direction is justified and of minor significance.
3.4	Integrating Land Use and Transport	No	This planning proposal does not seek to create, alter or remove a zone or a provision relating to urban land.
3.5	Development Near Licensed Aerodromes	No	This planning proposal does not seek to create, alter or remove a zone or a provision relating to land in the vicinity of a licensed aerodrome.
3.6	Shooting Ranges	No	This planning proposal does not seek to create, alter or remove a zone or a provision relating to land adjacent to and/or adjoining an existing shooting range.
4.1	Acid Sulfate Soils	NO	This planning proposal does not apply to land having a probability of containing acid sulfate soils as shown on the Acid Sulfate Soils Maps held by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure.
4.2	Mine Subsidence and Unstable Land	NO	The land subject of this planning proposal is not within a designated mine subsidence district and is not identified as being unstable.
4.3	Flood Prone Land	NO	The site is not within a designated floodplain. During significant storm events, water may overflow the banks of the intermittent natural watercourses (drainage gullies) dissecting the site. The site, however, is not considered to be flood prone land as defined by the <i>Floodplain Development Manual 2005</i>.
4.4	Planning for Bushfire Protection	Yes	This planning proposal is considered to be consistent with this direction. The land subject of this planning proposal is mapped as being bushfire prone land on Council’s bushfire prone land mapping. This planning proposal seeks to consult with the NSW Rural Fire Service subsequent to gateway determination being issued and

			prior to undertaking community consultation. A large proportion of the land is cleared of significant vegetation. The site is considered to be capable of providing for development that complies with <i>Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006</i>. The planning proposal requires preparation of DCP provisions which incorporate measures to ameliorate bushfire. Such measures would include avoiding placing inappropriate development in hazardous areas. Bushfire hazard reduction is not intended to be prohibited as part of this planning proposal.
5.1	Implementation of Regional Strategies	No	The regional strategies do not apply to the land subject of this planning proposal.
5.2	Sydney Drinking Water Catchments	No	The land subject of this planning proposal is not within the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment.
5.3	Farmland of State and Regional Significance on the NSW Far North Coast	No	This direction does not apply to Singleton Council.
5.4	Commercial and Retail Development along the Pacific Highway, North Coast	No	This direction does not apply to the Singleton Local Government Area.
5.5	Development in the vicinity of Ellalong, Paxton and Millfield (Cessnock LGA)	No	This direction has been revoked.
5.6	Sydney to Canberra Corridor	No	This direction has been revoked.
5.7	Central Coast	No	This direction has been revoked.
5.8	Second Sydney Airport: Badgerys Creek	No	The land subject of this planning proposal is not within the boundaries of the proposed second Sydney airport site or within the 20 ANEF contour as shown on the map entitled "Badgerys Creek-Australian Noise Exposure Forecast-Proposed Alignment-Worst Case Assumptions".
6.1	Approval and Referral Requirements	Yes	This planning proposal is considered to be consistent with this direction. This planning proposal does not include provisions that require the concurrence, consultation or referral of development applications to a minister or public authority and does not identify development as designated development.
6.2	Reserving Land for Public Purposes	Yes	This planning proposal is considered to be consistent with this direction. It does not seek to create, alter or reduce

			existing zonings or reservations of land for public purposes.
6.3	Site Specific Provisions	Yes	The aim of this direction is to discourage unnecessarily restrictive site specific planning controls. Lot 92, DP1138554 has a restriction created over it by <i>SEPP (Rural Lands) 2008</i>, which prohibits the construction of a dwelling (or dwellings) on the land. It is intended by this planning proposal allow dwelling house development on Lot 92, DP1138554. This dwelling-house restriction is considered to be unnecessary, given that the SLUS identifies the site as being appropriate for rural residential use. Given that SEPP (Rural Lands) 2008 does not incorporate a provision for removing the restriction and the fact that the SEPP takes precedence over Council's LEP to the extent of any inconsistency; the legal status of this restriction, once the land is rezoned, is uncertain. In summary, this planning proposal seeks to make it clear that the restriction no longer applies. The method of achieving this outcome is proposed to be resolved by the Department of Planning / Parliamentary Counsel as part of the drafting of the amending instrument. This is in accordance with verbal advice provided to the proponent by the Department of Planning in September 2010.
7.1	Implementation of the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036	No	This direction does not apply to the Singleton Local Government Area.

8. Is there any likelihood that critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats, will be adversely affected as a result of the proposal?

Threatened Flora

An Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Assessment report has been conducted for the site and is appended as “**Attachment 2**” to this planning proposal. The report indicates that a single Tiger Orchid (*Cymbidium canaliculatum*) was identified in a Grey Box tree in a paddock at the southern edge of the site.

The report indicates that there is the potential for the following threatened flora to exist on the site:

- *Prasophyllum sp. Wybong* – a leek-orchid;
- *Pterostlis gibbosa* – Illawarra Greenhood; and
- *Thesium austral* – Austral Toadflax.

The proposed DCP provisions (Refer to Part 2 of this Planning Proposal), intend to prevent adverse impacts on vegetation and biodiversity and achieve an improved or maintained biodiversity outcome. It is believed, that development of the site should be able to occur without adversely impacting upon threatened flora.

Threatened Fauna

The Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Assessment details that the following threatened fauna were detected on or near the site:

- Squirrel Glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*);
- Eastern Freetail Bat (*Mormopterus norfolkensis*);
- Little Bentwing Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis*);
- Greater Broad-nosed Bat (*Scotoeanax rueppellii*);
- Grey-crowned Babbler (*Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*); and
- White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*).

The assessment report identifies a further 25 species have a potential to occur on the subject site based on the proximity and abundance of known records in the wider study area, and the availability of suitable habitat.

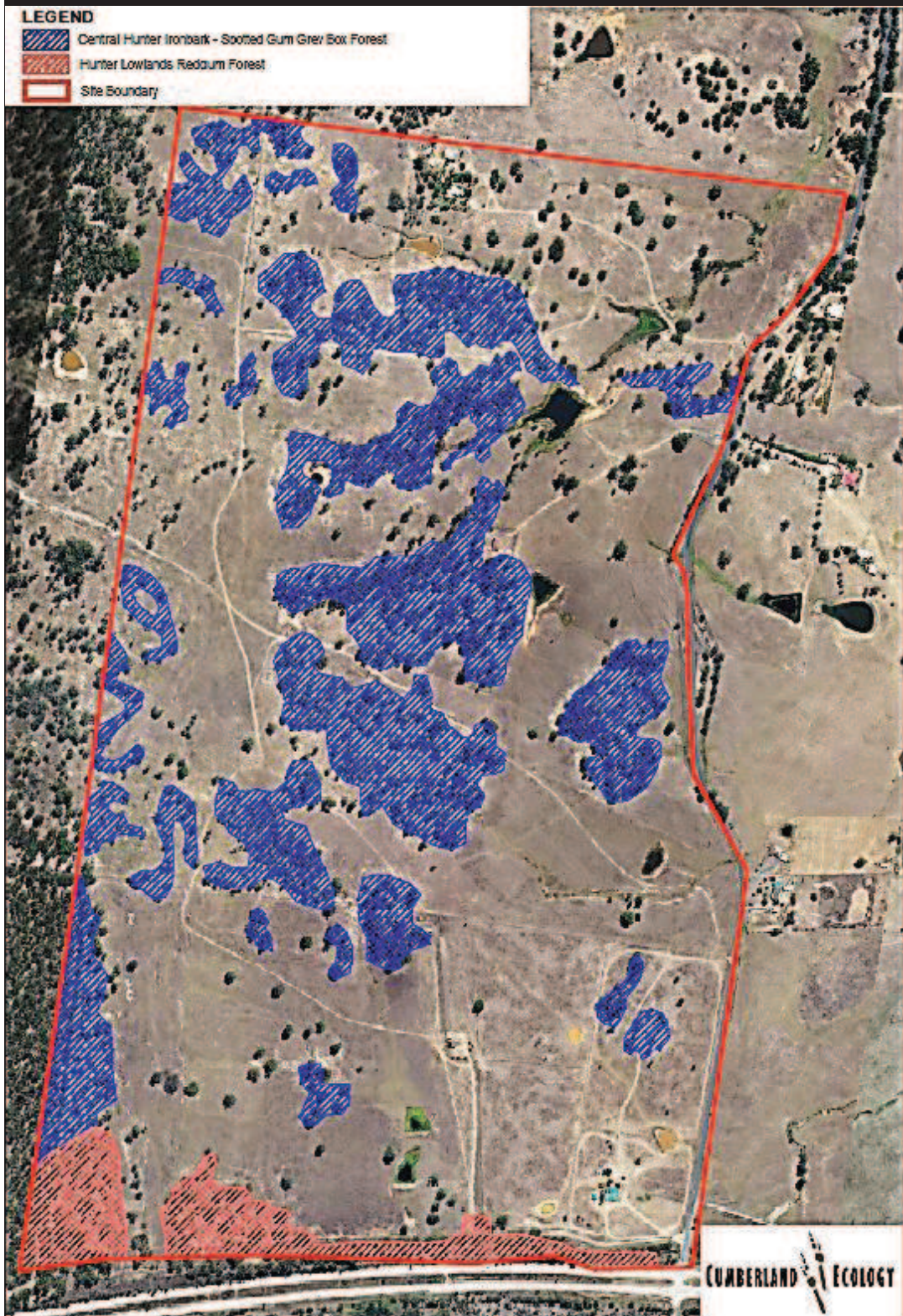
The assessment report indicates that rural-residential development of the site is considered unlikely to have a significant adverse effect on the lifecycle of any viable local threatened species populations.

The proposed DCP provisions (Refer to Part 2 of this Planning Proposal), intend to prevent adverse impacts on biodiversity and achieve an improved or maintained biodiversity outcome. It is believed, that development of the site should be able to occur without having a significant adverse impact upon threatened fauna.

Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs)

The plan which follows has been adapted from the Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Assessment report that has been prepared and lodged for the proposal. The plan shows the forest and woodland communities which exist on the site.

Forest and Woodland Communities



The site comprises assemblages of the Central Hunter Spotted Gum – Ironbark – Grey Box Forest and the Hunter Redgum Forest. These vegetation communities are listed as being Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs) under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

The Development Control Plan (DCP) provisions, required by planning proposal (Refer to Part 2 of this Planning Proposal), are intended to encourage conservation, enhancement and regeneration of the EECs.

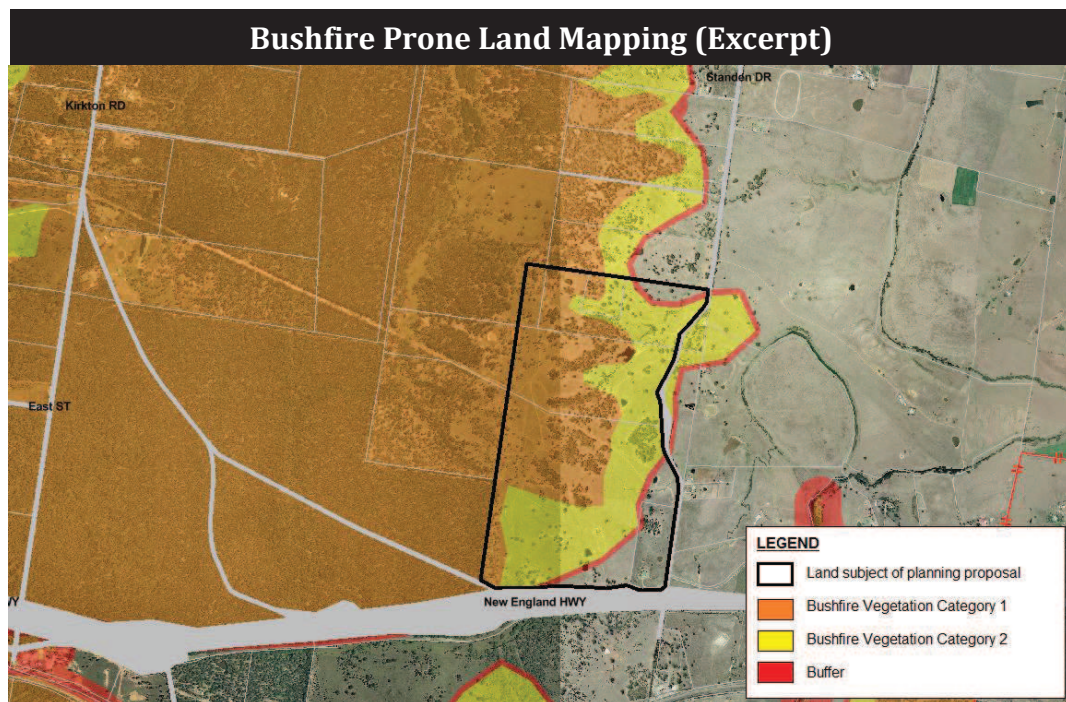
Habitat

The Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Assessment report details that retention of the majority of forest and woodland on the site will retain habitat for flora and fauna. The vegetation conservation provisions of the proposed DCP will help minimize impacts on vegetation and thus minimize impacts on habitat trees.

9. Are there any other likely environmental effects as a result of the planning proposal and how are they proposed to be managed?

Bushfire

The site is identified on Council's Bushfire Prone Land mapping as being bushfire prone land.



A large portion of the site is cleared of significant vegetation. The site is considered to be capable of providing for development which complies with *Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006*.

The concept layout and provisions of the DCP (amendment to Singleton DCP), which is intended to be required for the site, will encourage development which complies with *Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006*.

The proposal should not have a significant adverse impact in regard to bushfire.

Flooding and Drainage

During significant storm events, water may overflow the banks of the intermittent natural watercourses (drainage gullies) dissecting the site. This planning proposal is supported by a Stormwater Management Strategy (**Attachment 5**), which is intended to be used to guide the design of the DCP concept subdivision layout, so that concept lots comprise land suitable for dwelling-house development that is not subject to inundation.

The proposal should not have a significant adverse impact in regard to flooding and drainage.

Native Vegetation

Impacts on biodiversity should be avoided. A Biodiversity Impact Assessment Report prepared in accordance with the *Environmental Outcomes Assessment Methodology of the Native Vegetation Regulation 2005*; is considered to be required for this planning proposal.

The Biodiversity Impact Assessment Report can be used as a basis for preparing the DCP "Concept Vegetation Plan" for the site and associated biodiversity conservation/improvement provisions. The report should demonstrate how maintained or improved biodiversity outcomes will be achieved.

This planning proposal seeks to consult with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage subsequent to gateway determination being issued and prior to undertaking community consultation.

Soils

A geotechnical assessment report (Attachment 3) has been prepared for the subject site. The assessment indicates that the site is suitable for rural-residential style development from a geotechnical perspective, subject to appropriate design and construction. The DCP concept subdivision layout will need to provide concept lots with suitable areas for onsite effluent disposal.

The reports indicate that there is not a risk to rural-residential development of the site on the basis of contamination. The planning proposal should not have a significant adverse impact in regard to soils.

Loss of Rural Lands

The site is situated within the Wattle Ponds North East Candidate Area as identified by the Singleton Land Use Strategy (SLUS). The need for lots with a minimum lot size of 8,000m² and a minimum average lot size of 1Ha was identified by the SLUS as a result of a demand and supply analysis.

The SLUS candidate areas were identified in consideration of a constraints analysis which considered the need to protect agricultural land of high production value. The planning proposal is not considered to result in a significant loss of rural lands.

Traffic Access and Transport

A Traffic Impact Assessment has been prepared by Hyder Consulting (June 2009) to provide a detailed analysis of traffic generation and capacity resulting from the proposal. The Traffic Impact Assessment indicates that

that Standen Drive has the capacity to accommodate traffic generated by the proposal and that rural residential development on the site would be acceptable in terms of traffic impacts.

Development of the site in accordance with the proposed absolute minimum and minimum average lot size provisions would be expected to generate up to 1,350 vehicle trips per day and 128 trips per hour. The intersection of Standen Drive and the New England Highway would continue to operate satisfactorily beyond 2014, factoring in the annual growth rate of 3.4% on external roads.

Development of the site should not warrant upgrading of the intersection of Standen Drive and the New England Highway. This would, however, be determined through consultation with the responsible road authorities.

The intersection provides sight distances of at least 500m for drivers leaving Standen Drive, which adequately meet standard minimum site distance requirements for speeds up to 120km/hr.

Traffic Impact Assessment Report will help inform preparation of the DCP Concept Movement Hierarchy Plan.

European Heritage

No items of European heritage significance have been identified on the site.

Indigenous Heritage

The planning proposal is supported by an *Indigenous Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment* report (**Attachment 4**). The report details that no sites were identified during the survey process for the assessment. It indicates that the results are likely attributable to the following factors:

- As the Hunter River is over 4 kilometres away and 3rd and 4th order stream are located to the east of the study area, it appears that distance from reliable water would have played an important role in the occupation of the area and rendered the study area not suitable for camping. However, the area may have been suitable for hunting/gathering and/or travel and evidence of this would be expected to have been isolated finds and/or low density artefact scatters;
- Disturbances in the form of clearing and agricultural practices would have displaced the expected isolated finds and/or low density artefact scatters;
- The severe erosion would also have contributed to the disturbance/destruction of any cultural materials that may have been present.

This planning proposal recommends preparation of DCP provisions for the site which include measures to conserve any identified heritage. As such, the planning proposal is unlikely to have any significant adverse impacts in regard to indigenous heritage.

10. How has the planning proposal adequately addressed any social and economic effects?

Social Effects

Proximity to Branxton town

The Lower Belford Candidate Area is a strategically suitable location for housing intensification due to its proximity to Branxton township, and the subject site's easy accessibility to the town. The site is situated within the southern portion of the Lower Belford Candidate Area; with the southern site boundary adjoining the New England Highway. The site is approximately 3km from Branxton Railway Station which is located at the south-west corner of the Branxton town centre.

An increase in development yield on the site will have a positive social impact as it will provide future residents with accessibility to jobs, social and other support services and infrastructure located within Branxton town, including but not limited to:

- A number of speciality shops.
- Newsagency.
- Pharmacy.
- Butcher.
- Post office.
- IGA supermarket.
- Cafes, restaurants, takeaway food outlets.
- Toilets.
- Sporting facilities, district recreational areas, open space.
- Medical centre.
- Primary schools and pre-school.

An increased density on the site will also provide the opportunity to enhance existing bus services that currently run along the New England Highway to these services within Branxton town, to the benefit of the broader community.

Rural Residential Lot Supply

The site subject of this planning proposal is supported by the SLUS, which has been endorsed by the NSW Department of Planning (now Department of Planning and Infrastructure).

The proposal would enable subdivision of the land into lots with a minimum lot size of 8,000sqm and a minimum average lot size of 1ha. Lots within this size range are not provided for in the Lower Belford and Branxton area by the SLUS, or any of the Planning Proposals lodged with Council at the time of preparing the subject Planning Proposal.

It would contribute to the overall supply of rural residential housing opportunities in the region, which would positively affect housing affordability, because high housing prices are largely a result of increased demand due to undersupply.

Economic Effects

The proposal is a logical expansion of the existing Branxton town, and is consistent with the land use planning framework set out in the LHRS that encourages and focuses growth at existing centres.

The location of rural residential housing on the site will also help to ensure Singleton LGA is accommodating an equitable share of the growth in the Hunter region, which will reinforce Singleton's economic sustainability. Singleton's economic sustainability will also be strengthened as a result of the Planning Proposal, as:

- 'Tree-changers' are an increasing phenomenon of people relocating from cities to areas offering high amenity and a leisure focus:
 - Due to the limited availability and affordability of coastal areas for 'sea-changers', a move to high amenity hinterland and regional areas has occurred.
 - The Branxton-Belford-Pokolbin locality is a prime area for tree-changers, given its proximity to the Wine Country, scenic amenity, and proposed F3 extension.
 - Cellar doors, restaurants and recreational facilities within the area would be well supported by tree-changers, with money to spend from relocating in search of lifestyle living.
- Rural residential housing plays an important role servicing the premium end of the housing market, which is extremely important in underpinning a community's economic development. Opportunities for successful locals to stay in the area are an important economic and social consideration to maintaining their ongoing investment in local business and often leadership roles within the local community.

- The supply of additional and alternative housing choice will also increase the economic support of employment and industries around Singleton such as coal, and tourism associated with the Wine Country.

11. Is there adequate public infrastructure for the planning proposal?

All necessary infrastructure services are available to service minimum 8,000 sqm / 1ha average lots. If the proposal is supported to allow these lot sizes, the proposed net increase of 103 lots will not result in any unmanageable demand on existing public infrastructure such as roads and services, including reticulated water, electricity and telecommunications supply. Investigations by the proponent as part of the SLUS amendment to confirm intensification on this site are outlined as follows.

Road Infrastructure

The Traffic Impact Assessment (that has been prepared for the proposal indicates that Standen Drive has the capacity to accommodate traffic generated by the proposal and that rural residential development of the site would be acceptable in terms of traffic impacts.

Development of the site in accordance with the proposed absolute minimum and minimum average lot size provisions would be expected to generate up to 1,350 vehicle trips per day and 128 trips per hour. The intersection of Standen Drive and the New England Highway would continue to operate satisfactorily beyond 2014, factoring in the annual growth rate of 3.4% on external roads.

Development of the site should not warrant upgrading of the intersection of Standen Drive and the New England Highway. This would, however, be determined through consultation with the responsible road authorities.

The intersection provides sight distances of at least 500m for drivers leaving Standen Drive, which adequately meet standard minimum site distance requirements for speeds up to 120km/hr.

Water and Sewage Services

The Hunter Water Corporation (HWC) has indicated that they will be able to service the site, although not immediately in the short term. Infrastructure works required to be able to service the site are expected in 2013/2014. Given the time associated with the rezoning, development control plan and development application processes; it is feasible that construction of the subdivision will coincide with provision of sewer and water services from the HWC. The SLUS did not have the benefit of the HWC's plans when finalised in 2008, but had flagged the potential for these services.

The increased demand for water supply services as a result of the additional lots within the site is acceptable as HWC's water servicing plan for this area provides for an 'additional capacity' of 3,000-3,500 Equivalent Tenements

(ETs) as contained in correspondence between the HWC and Singleton Council (letter dated 3 November 2008, as previously provided to Council). The HWC defines an ET as 'the average annual demand of a single detached dwelling'. As the proposal will restrict development to a single detached dwelling per lot through zoning and planning controls, the proposal requires a maximum allocation of 140 ETs. This represents a small portion of the overall additional capacity being provided, as it represents less than 5% of the lower ET capacity of 3,000 provided by the HWC.

In accordance with Council's provisions, minimum lot sizes of 8,000sqm do not require reticulated sewage services. As such, sewage service requirements are not an impediment to approval of the Planning Proposal.

Electricity and Telecommunications

The site is able to be provided with suitable electricity provision and telephone connection, as electricity supply services are readily available to be upgraded and connected to development on the site.

Stormwater

Appropriate stormwater management systems are able to be provided to accommodate the proposed increased density as a result of the 8,000sqm minimum lot sizes. Design for this will be part of detailed development outcomes following consultation with relevant agencies to ensure appropriate riparian conservation, water quality and stormwater management issues are addressed in a coordinated way.

12. What are the views of State and Commonwealth public authorities consulted in accordance with the gateway determination?

The gateway determination which has been issued for this planning proposal indicates that the following public authorities should be consulted:

- NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (now the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage);
- Aboriginal Land Council (Wanaruah LALC);
- Hunter/Central-Rivers Catchment Management Authority;
- NSW Department of Industry and Investment (Agriculture); and
- NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (now NSW Roads and Maritime Services).

On the 23 December 2010, the abovementioned public authorities were requested in writing to review and provide comment on the planning proposal. Pursuant to the recommendations of the gateway determination, responses were requested to be lodged with Council within 21 days of the date of the notification letter.

Public authority responses are appended to this planning proposal (**Attachment 6**). The table which follows summarises public authority responses.

Summary of Public Authority Submissions		
Public Authority	Issues	Council Response
NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)	The NSW OEH identifies biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural heritage issues which need to be addressed.	- The Indigenous Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment Report for the proposal details that no items or places of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance were identified on the site during the survey process. - The development control plan (DCP) provisions to be prepared for the site are to minimise impacts on biodiversity, such that an improved or maintained biodiversity outcome is achieved as a result of development of the site. - The e-mail from the NSW OEH dated 9 August 2012 (refer to Attachment 6) details that OEH raises no objection to the planning proposal going on exhibition if it includes the agreed “alternative solution”, which amalgamates 2 of the concept allotments of the draft development control plan provision for the site.
Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)	- Wanaruah LALC would like to see a full cultural heritage study for the proposal. - The site is in close proximity to major pre-invasion habitation areas, teaching places and the transit way (known as a songline) between Mt Arthur and the coast.	On the 14 September 2011, Wanaruah LALC was provided with a copy of the Indigenous Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment Report for the proposal. The report indicates that Wanaruah LALC was invited to be involved in the survey process. No further submissions on the proposal from Wanaruah LALC were

	• There is much to be lost environmentally and culturally as a result of increased development of the area. • There is concern that an intensification of development in the area will increase the potential for dumping of unwanted pets, garden waste and rubbish in the Belford State Forest and surrounding parks and reserves. • There is a significant site situated on the Black Creek floodplain, which is in proximity to the subject site. • Wanaruah LALC has requested to be involved in the archaeological survey process for the site.	received. • The Lower Belford Candidate Area was identified as a result of a constraints analysis, which gave consideration to minimising impacts on the environment as a result of development. The proposed DCP provisions are to minimise the potential for adverse impacts on the environment. Environmental impacts will be further considered as a result of the development application process associated with development of the site.
Hunter/Central-Rivers Catchment Management Authority	• The Planning Proposal needs to be consistent with the Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan. • Vegetation clearing may require consent under the Native Vegetation Act 2003. If consent is required, the development proposal would need to demonstrate that environmental outcomes will be improved or maintained. • The CMA has no comment in respect of the development boundary or minimum lot sizes.	• The planning proposal is considered to be generally consistent with the Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan. • The Ecological Constraints Assessment (Attachment 2) will provide the basis for the Development Control Plan (DCP) provision for the site. Such provision will aim to ensure that environmental outcomes are improved or maintained. • The proposed site boundary and lot size provisions are considered appropriate for the site.

	• It is viewed that a Salinity Management Plan should be prepared for the site and surrounding land. • Wherever possible, building sites and effluent disposal areas should be placed within cleared areas.	• The geotechnical report for the proposal indicates that rural residential development of the site will not generate any significant adverse impacts in regard to salinity. • The DCP provision for the site will aim to ensure that concept lots have sufficient cleared land for building sites and associated onsite effluent disposal fields.
NSW Department of Industry and Investment (Agriculture);	• No response received from public authority	N/A
NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (now Road and Maritime Services)	• The Hunter Expressway is under construction. No direct access is to be provided from the estate to the New England Highway. • Consideration is to be given to s117 Direction 3.4. (Integrating Land Use Development and Transport). In particular, pedestrian and cycle connections and access to public transport (especially for the elderly) is to be given due consideration. • The proponent should be made aware of the potential road traffic noise impact on future development of the site. The proponent will be responsible for providing suitable noise attenuation measures.	• It is not intended to permit direct road access to the New England Highway from the estate. Access to the New England Highway would be via Standen Drive. • Subsection 7 of Section B of this planning proposal gives consideration to s117 Direction 3.4. (Integrating Land Use Development and Transport). • The proponent has been made aware of the potential road traffic noise impact on future development of the site. The proposed DCP provisions should incorporate measures to minimise the impacts of road traffic noise on future development on the site.

PART 4 –COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The Gateway Determination for this planning proposal requires it to be placed on public exhibition for a period of not less than 28 days. T The planning proposal and Draft DCP amendment were concurrently exhibited during the period 28 September 2012 – 26 October 2012. No submissions were received in response to the exhibition.

RECOMMENDATION

The planning proposal is consistent with Council's strategic planning framework and aims to address Public Authority concerns. It would make land available for development into rural-residential allotments. The proposed development control plan (DCP) provisions would encourage positive environmental and design outcomes. It is recommended that this planning proposal be supported.

Attachment 1 – Singleton Land Use Strategy

SINGLETON LAND USE STRATEGY



SINGLETON COUNCIL

Adopted by Council: 21 April 2008

Endorsed by Department of Planning: 8 June 2008

SINGLETON LAND USE STRATEGY

PREPARED FOR
SINGLETON COUNCIL

The Singleton Land Use Strategy (April 2008) has been prepared for Singleton Council by Planning Workshop Australia, in association with Land and Environment Planning.

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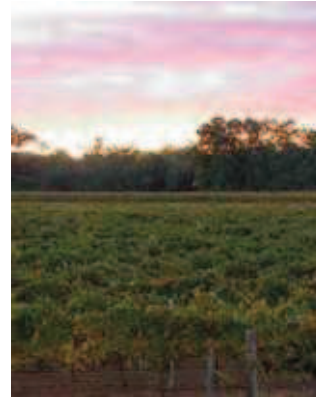
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1 INTRODUCTION

The Singleton Land Use Strategy has been prepared for Singleton Council.

The Strategy outlines key land use policies and principles for the Singleton local government area (LGA), and provides the planning context for the preparation of local environmental plan provisions. The Strategy has a time frame of 25 years, to 2032. The area to which the Strategy applies is shown in Map 1.1.



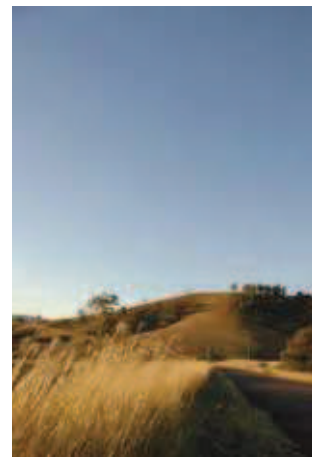
The intent of the Strategy is to:

- Recommend actions for achieving the land use objectives of the Singleton community, consistent with the Council vision.
- Recommend changes to Singleton Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1996 to reflect the Singleton Council and community vision, the adopted 2030 Strategy, and the land use objectives, consistent with NSW Government planning requirements, including the Standard LEP provisions.

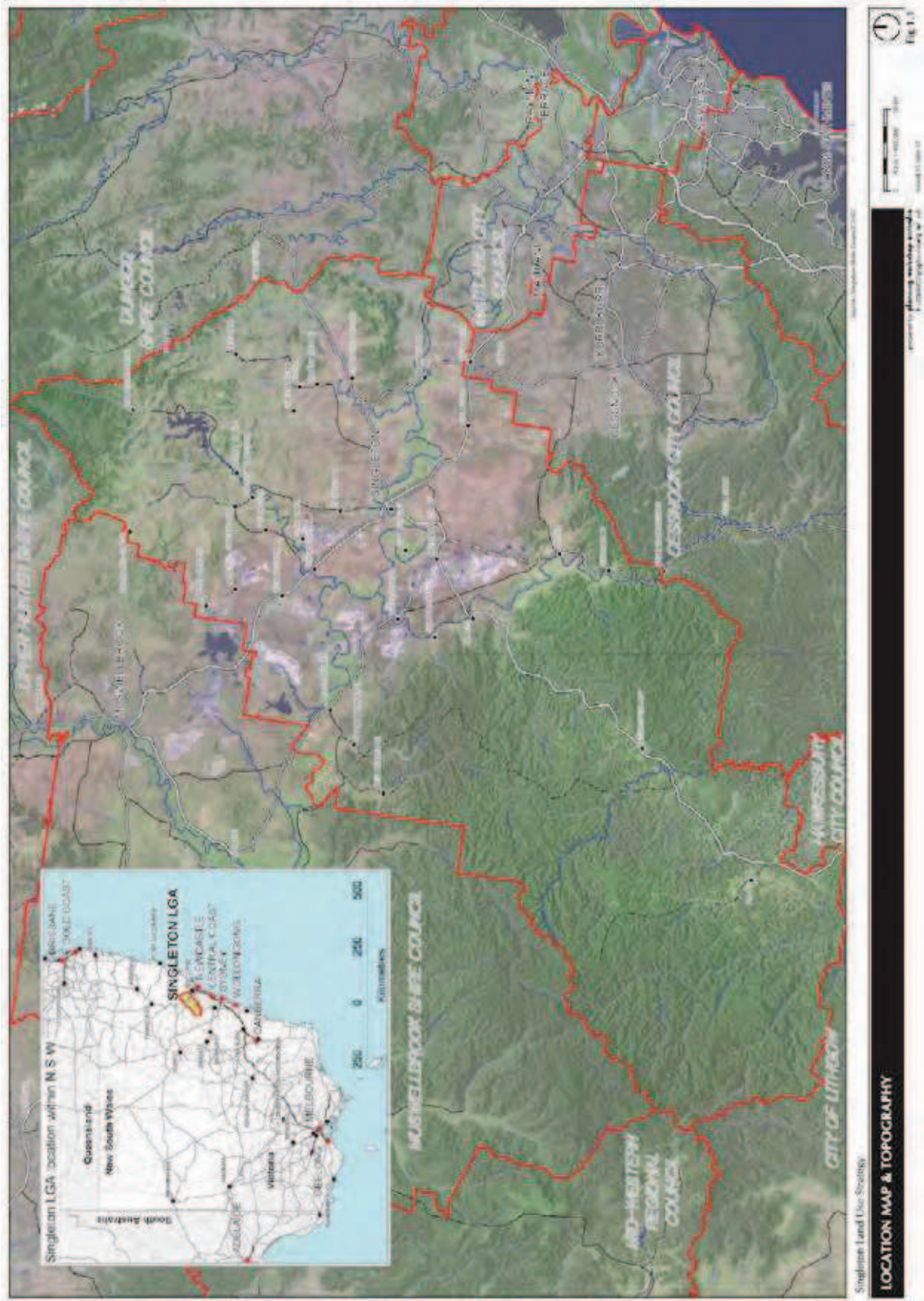
The Strategy identifies where growth and change is expected to occur, and land use planning objectives and strategies to guide this growth and change. It also identifies infrastructure requirements to support development, and will help inform local and state government budget processes.

The Strategy has been prepared with funding under the NSW Department of Planning's *Planning Reform Funding Program*. Preparation of the Strategy has been overseen by representatives from the Council and the Department, and has involved the following steps:

1. Review of the key planning issues
2. Consultation with Council and relevant NSW Government agencies
3. Preparation of a *Situation Analysis* report
4. Community consultation workshops
5. Preparation and public exhibition of the draft Strategy.



The Situation Analysis report provides a profile of Singleton LGA. It has established the key land use planning issues and strategic priorities and actions to be considered in the preparation of the Strategy and subsequent local environmental plan. A summary of the information in the Situation Analysis has been included in relevant sections of the Strategy.



2 VISION



The Strategy aims to provide clear direction for Council and NSW Government agencies to guide decisions relating to future use of land within the Singleton LGA, and to inform the preparation of a comprehensive local environmental plan (providing regulatory land use controls). It establishes a policy framework to facilitate opportunities as they emerge in the future.

The proposed vision for the Strategy is 'to create a progressive community of excellence and sustainability'. This is based on the vision statement outlined in Singleton Council's Management Plan, and complements Council's adopted 2030 Strategy. The Strategy takes into account the objects of Section 5A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* in identifying proposed actions to implement the vision. This legislation provides the legal framework for the preparation of local environmental plans.

3 STRUCTURE OF STRATEGY

The Strategy is based on the information and land use planning issues identified in the Situation Analysis and during the consultation process. Its priority is those issues that are within the scope of local environmental plan (LEP) provisions.

Key land use planning issues for the Strategy were identified in the Situation Analysis, and were classified according to whether they were mainly urban or rural issues, as follows:

URBAN ISSUES

- Catering for settlement needs
- Providing and maintaining urban infrastructure
- Reviewing development on highway frontage land
- Providing for industrial and commercial development
- Planning for risks and economic vulnerability to flooding
- Providing for social infrastructure and urban amenity

RURAL ISSUES

- Catering for rural residential subdivision and development
- Promoting agricultural development, protection of employment opportunities and the natural resource base
- Planning for rural servicing requirements (costs and maintenance)
- Planning for rural highway frontage development
- Identifying environmental values, constraints and protection requirements

The omission of reference to an issue does not mean that it has not been considered in the Strategy or is not of importance. While it may not be regarded as a key issue, it is likely to have been considered in conjunction with another issue.

The themes used in structuring the Strategy take into account the key land use planning issues, and are as follows:

- Urban settlement
- Villages and rural residential development
- Rural areas
- Environmental values and constraints.

A summary of the present situation is presented for each theme, followed by background information on each issue and objectives that can be considered for the subsequent local environmental plan. This is followed by a policy indicating how the Council should respond to each issue in a consistent manner, and strategic actions which would direct future planning and identify implementation responsibilities. Further background detail on each of the planning issues and themes can be found in the accompanying Situation Analysis report.

4 PLANNING CONTEXT

This section summarises important attributes of the LGA, and key characteristics which will affect future land use. It includes information on what is important about the area, and an overview of existing strategies and land use planning provisions.

Information is provided for the whole LGA as well as for 11 planning areas which enable spatial differences to be identified. This information is based on the Situation Analysis report, and more detailed information is included in that report.

Singleton is a large LGA with an area of 4,896km², comprising about 16% of the Hunter Region. It had an estimated resident population of 23,258 persons on 30 June 2007 (around 3.5% of the regional population) and has shown a steady growth. The increase in population over the previous year was 253 persons, representing a growth rate of 1.1%.

Important characteristics of Singleton LGA in 2008 which will influence future land use are summarised in Table 1, focusing on demographic and economic factors. These show that Singleton is a relatively prosperous area with a diverse economic and natural resource base, and has a relatively young population.



Table 1: Important existing characteristics of Singleton LGA

Characteristic
Outside the urban areas the main land uses are agriculture, national parks, and coal mining
Prosperous economy and employment opportunities (high dependence on coal mining and metropolitan spillover)
Compared to the Hunter Region and NSW, population is relatively well off and a relatively young average age
Adequate urban water and sewer infrastructure, and provision adequate for maintenance (in existing service areas)
Over the last 20 years new housing development has occurred at about 160 dwellings per year, with about 40% in residential areas and balance rural/rural residential.
Locational and transport advantages through location on New England Highway and Main Northern Railway Line. Increasing traffic flows (mainly New England Highway, Singleton town, and areas SE and E of Singleton), and high level of commuting by car to work. Rural road infrastructure improvement and maintenance pressures
Potential new infrastructure provision (F3 Freeway extension, gas supply)
Relatively poor public transport accessibility

Characteristic
Decline and uncertainty in agricultural sector
Identification of important remnant native vegetation within LGA, including endangered ecological communities (e.g. floodplain vegetation, Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Vegetation, Warkworth Sands, and Weeping Myall Woodland)
Uncertainty in relation to industrial land demand and supply (largely driven by Lower Hunter situation)
Limits on availability of water supplies at the regional level
Significant area of land in LGA subject to natural hazards (flooding and bush fires)

The distribution of population within the Singleton LGA is shown on Map 4.1, together with the planning areas used for demographic analysis in the Situation Analysis.

The planning areas have been used to differentiate between varying social, economic and land use characteristics occurring within the LGA. The boundaries of these planning areas are shown on Map 4.1, and are based on ABS Census Collection Districts amalgamated to group areas that have common characteristics. These planning areas correspond with those identified in the Singleton Community Social Plan, except that urban areas have been consolidated.

There are significant variations in the characteristics of each planning area, and land use issues vary between the areas as summarised in Table 2. Overall, in urban areas there is continuing pressure for urban development. Urban areas have accommodated about 50% of population growth over the last 10 years. Pressure for rural residential development is primarily within 20 km of Singleton and near Branxton, while more distant rural areas are stable.

Table 2: Singleton LGA planning areas and key land use issues

Planning area name	Description and key land use issues (e.g. growth expectations, land use constraints)
Urban	
Singleton Town	Focus of ageing population, flood liable land, commercial areas and consolidation of CBD, major transport and services, limited expansion potential, heritage issues, urban infill development, servicing and infrastructure issues (especially urban stormwater). Provision of industrial land.
Singleton Heights (North Singleton)	Relatively young population. Future urban growth will be concentrated in this area. Long term residential land opportunities need to be provided for and sites need to be identified for urban support uses (e.g. schools, health and social facilities).

Planning area name	Description and key land use issues (e.g. growth expectations, land use constraints)
	Consideration needs to be given to provision of retail areas and potential for additional industrial land. Transport accessibility is largely reliant on private transport, and there is limited accessibility to major transport links and Singleton Town.
Villages, rural residential and other	
Retreat	Relatively young, well off rural residential population. High car dependency. Increasing population requiring services. Some demand for additional rural residential development.
Broke Village	Reticulated water supply soon available. Lack of reticulated sewer limits development potential. Some flood liable land. Potential for mining impacts.
Jerrys Plains Village	Stable or slightly declining population with low urban growth, limited facilities and services. Potential land available for further urban development, but little land use change expected. Heritage issues for infill development. Potential coal mining in the vicinity.
Army Camp	Commonwealth land outside Council control.
Rural	
Rural North	Most stable planning area in LGA in terms of agriculture, land use and population change. Includes most important grazing enterprises and largest rural landholding sizes.
Rural East	Greatest pressure for rural residential development and small rural subdivision.
Rural South East	Pressure for more rural and rural residential development due to accessibility to Maitland, Cessnock and Greater Sydney Metropolitan area. Limited water availability. Lower Hunter Regional Strategy identifies potential for urban development in part of this area.
Rural South	Many absentee landowners due to accessibility to Greater Sydney Metropolitan area. Pressure for more rural and rural residential subdivision. Some mining impacts. High bush fire hazards on land in vicinity of Wollemi and Yengo National Parks.
Rural West	Stable population, with considerable open cut mining activity and associated land use change and environmental impact. A large proportion of the area is in mining ownership. Includes areas of Wollemi National Park.

Projected or anticipated changes, trends or pressures for the next 15 years which should be taken into account are summarised as follows:

- Pressure for extension to existing urban infrastructure (especially water service areas)
- Continuing coal mining production, and rehabilitation of coal mining areas with potential for subsequent post mining uses
- Increasing urban development pressure (including rural residential) around Branxton and near areas with transport accessibility and services (Singleton)
- Increasing pressure for improved public transport and accessibility to Newcastle for services
- Continuing population growth, with further ageing of population
- Increasing inadequacy of housing suited to ageing of population and reduced number of persons per dwelling (possible mismatch in housing supply and demand)
- Pressure for increasing intensive agriculture and consolidation of agricultural holdings (where this has not been prevented by subdivision and development)
- Increasing cost pressures for services (provision of roads and service infrastructure in rural/rural residential areas, transport costs) leading to less commuting
- Increasing demand for maintaining environment and amenity and 'tree change' lifestyle
- Reduced population 0 – 24 years, requiring fewer services and measures to maintain population and skills
- Requirement to improve landscape connectivity for biodiversity and maintain native vegetation (increased pressure from non-native species)
- Climate change leading to more variability in climate and reduced water security

Key matters that will affect land use in the area are the ability to maintain viable economic activities; the ability to maintain an attractive lifestyle; and the ability to attract new residents to the region. This will primarily be affected by providing and maintaining high quality key infrastructure and reasonable cost of provision (transport, water, and urban), community services (especially education and health), and amenity (landscape and environment).

4.1 Growth trends

Singleton's growth scenario anticipated for the 25 years to 2032 is for a population increase in the range 1.0 – 1.5% per annum. This Strategy adopts a population growth forecast of 1.5% per annum, and forecasts new dwelling demand averaging 200 dwellings per year. Growth is expected to substantially result from in-migration for

lifestyle and employment reasons. Dwelling requirements are expected to grow faster than population growth, based on lower dwelling occupancy rate trends. A large proportion of the workforce is employed in the mining industry which is expected to maintain its employment level over the Strategy period.

The population in most areas of the Singleton LGA is expected to increase, but some parts of the area will grow more quickly, especially Singleton Heights/North Singleton and the Rural East Planning Area. The increasingly ageing population structure reflects regional and national trends and contributes to a reduction in the dwelling occupancy rate. This is expected to result in additional demand for housing. An increasing proportion of the population is expected to live in urban areas. New dwellings in rural areas are expected to decline from up to 70% of all dwellings (e.g. 2000 and 2001) to about 35% of all dwellings, largely as a result of a reduction in the supply of rural lots, adequate supply of residential lots in Singleton, and trends towards increasingly expensive transport costs. These estimates do not take into account demand and supply in the Branxton area, since no timing is available for land supply in this area, and it is unlikely that this would occur within 5 years.

4.2 Planning framework

The Singleton LGA's existing planning framework is outlined in the Situation Analysis. There is a single existing local environmental plan (Singleton LEP 1996) and a range of development control plans.

The current regional planning framework for Singleton LGA is provided by Hunter Regional Environmental Plan 1989. This outlines a range of land use objectives and principles at the regional scale.

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006, prepared by the NSW Department of Planning, provides a broad land use planning framework for the Lower Hunter Sub Region, focusing on projected land requirements for housing and employment generating development. This Strategy is a policy document which updates the strategy and population projections outlined in the Hunter Regional Environmental Plan 1989, but does not replace the objectives, strategies and statutory requirements of the Plan. Under a Section 117 direction, LEPs are required to be consistent with a regional strategy.

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy has implications for the Singleton Land Use Strategy, as follows:

- Growth projections for the Lower Hunter sub region can be expected to affect parts of Singleton LGA because the area forms part of a larger regional housing market. Historical data has shown that Singleton is substantially aligned to Lower Hunter trends.
- It identifies additional urban expansion areas south of Branxton, including up to around 2000 lots in Singleton LGA as part of a new urban area having around 7000 lots, and a new overall potential population of 15-20,000 people. It indicates a national park proposal within Singleton LGA south west of Branxton, which forms part of a separate agreement between a private land owner and the NSW Government to allow urban development.

- It limits rural residential development within the Lower Hunter Region to existing zoned areas, potentially leading to greater demand for this type of development within Singleton LGA in the longer term.
- It identifies adequate medium to long term industrial land supply within the sub region, with large areas currently zoned industrial. This supply may reduce industrial land requirements elsewhere in the region, including Singleton.

This Strategy supports the implementation of a consistent planning framework for Singleton and has taken into account relevant State planning policies and directions under Section 117 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The format and content of the LEP resulting from the Strategy will be substantially determined by the NSW Government standard provisions for plans. Other specific agency requirements will also affect the LEP provisions.

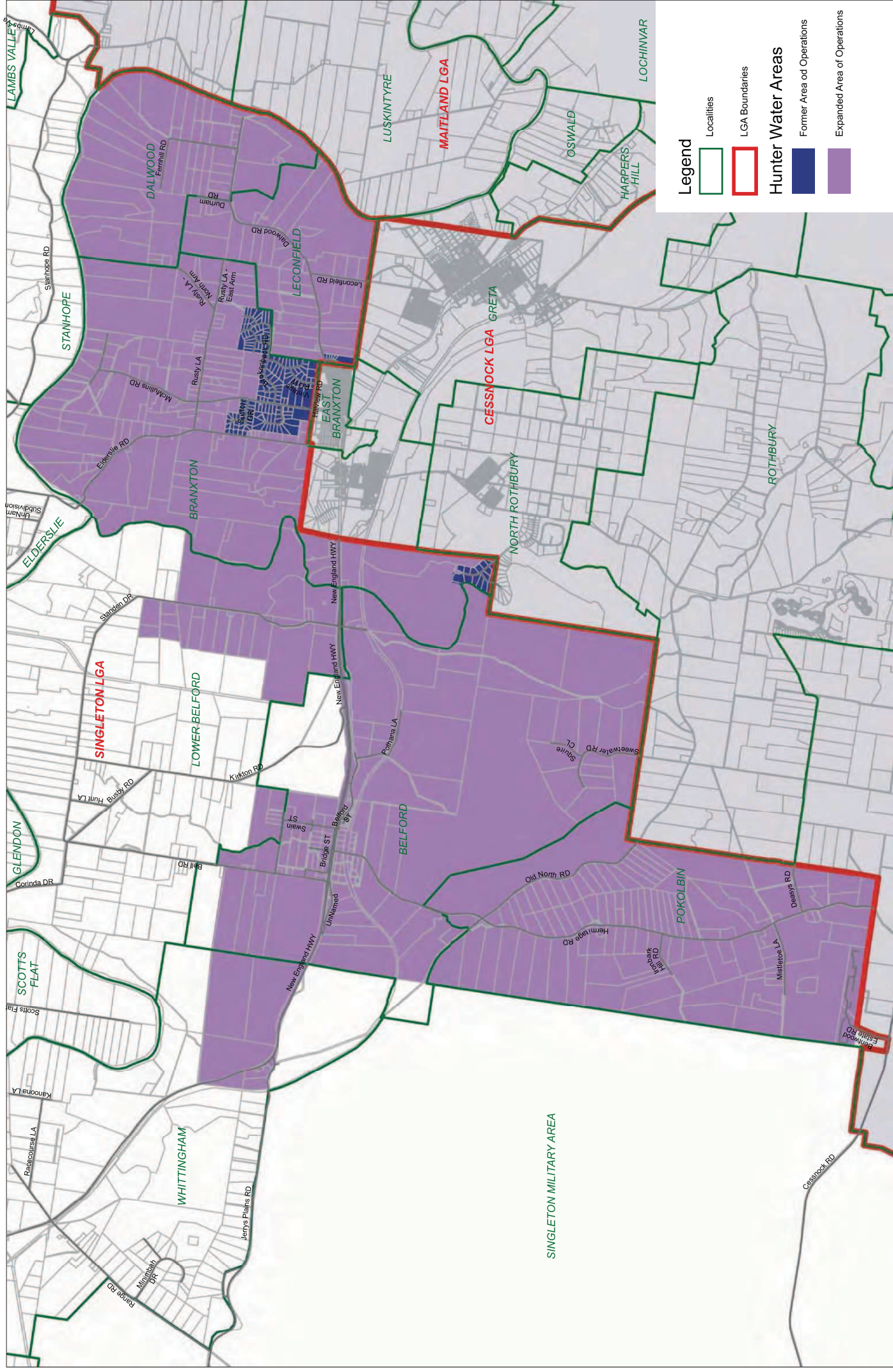
4.3 Settlement structure and infrastructure

Major economic activities within the LGA are coal mining, agriculture, defence and tourism, in addition to urban support activities such as business and industrial land. Information on the characteristics, economic value and land use requirements of these activities are included in the Situation Analysis report. Background information on these and other infrastructure and settlement structure issues identified in the Situation Analysis, such as climate and infrastructure, is presented in the relevant sections of the Strategy.

Housing characteristics and availability are important for future land use and development. ABS Census data for 2006 shows a total of 8374 private dwellings within the Singleton LGA, with an average increase of around 160 per year over the last 25 years. About 9% of the dwellings were unoccupied, which is average for NSW, but lower than the Hunter Region average. In 2001, separate dwelling houses accounted for 80.5% of all dwellings and there were 0.38 dwellings per capita, which is lower than most LGAs in the Hunter Region. Shortages of rental accommodation have periodically occurred in Singleton, and there are potential issues associated with provision of affordable housing, and changes in housing requirements associated with the overall ageing of the population.

Singleton LGA is well accessed by roads and transport routes and is adequately serviced with infrastructure. The Situation Analysis report reviewed key infrastructure issues within the Singleton LGA, including water supply, sewer, transport, stormwater, waste management, bushfire facilities and open space. Summary information is presented in Maps 4.2 to 4.4 and Table 3.





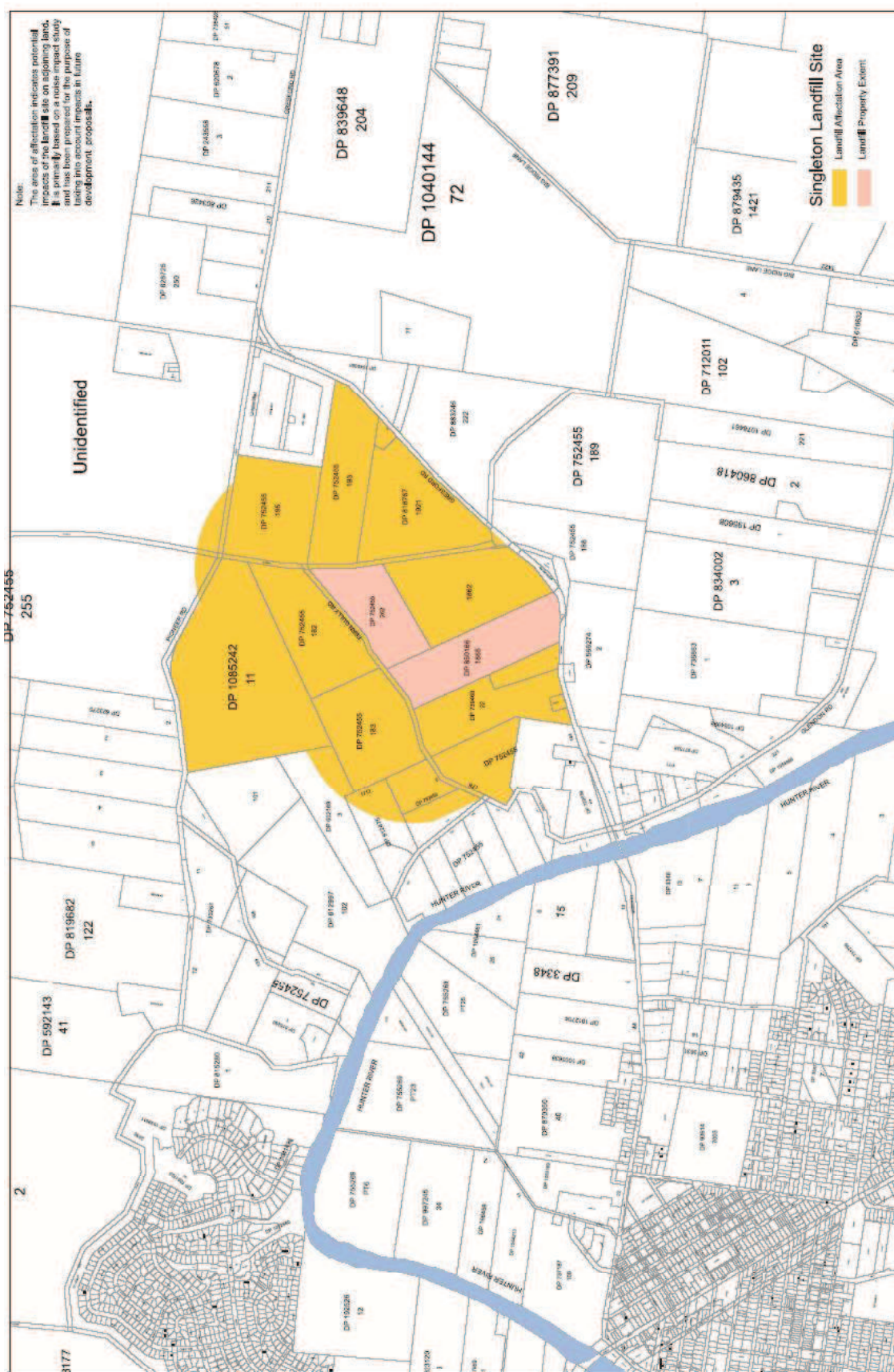


Table 3: Summary of key infrastructure issues

WATER SUPPLY	
Singleton	The town of Singleton is well placed in relation to existing urban water supply, and potential future demands with a supply from the Glennies Creek Dam via a pipeline. Residential and surrounding rural residential areas currently have an adequate water supply of good quality. All existing residences in the town area are supplied with treated water, plus some outside but close to the boundary. A non potable water supply is provided to some properties along the Glennies Creek Dam pipeline route.
Mt Thorley	A potable water supply is provided to the Mt Thorley Industrial Estate from Obanvale Water Treatment Plant via trunk mains.
Jerrys Plains	A potable supply was provided to the Jerrys Plains Village area, only, in 2004.
Broke	A potable water supply for Broke was provided in July 2007 from Obanvale Water Treatment Plant, via trunk mains.
Branxton (rural residential)	Water supply to rural residential allotments is provided by Hunter Water Corporation under an agreement with Singleton Council. The Hunter Water Corporation area of operations within Singleton LGA has been extended. The extension of the area of operation will not guarantee that land will be serviced.
SEWERAGE	
Singleton	Sewerage is connected to all dwellings within the town boundaries where economically feasible, and only a small number of properties are not connected. Council operates one sewage treatment plant at Doughboy Hollow south of Singleton. Sewage is now collected from Maison Dieu Industrial Estate and surrounding rural residential areas via a low pressure pump out system. Limited private pump out systems available to town sewerage immediately adjoining town boundaries.
Branxton	Sewerage service to some rural residential allotments is provided by Hunter Water Corporation under an agreement with Singleton Council. The future boundary of sewerage supply has not been determined, and is subject to further agreement.
ACCESSIBILITY AND TRANSPORT	
Highway	The sections of National and State Highway within the Singleton LGA are the responsibility of the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA). Singleton Council maintains sections of these roads under contract to the RTA. Consideration needs to be given to proposing a Singleton bypass for the New England Highway.
Urban roads	Urban roads are in reasonable condition, although there are some limitations on capacity. A traffic and parking study and plan is in the process of being undertaken to determine a plan to address these issues, and will assist in determining the future road hierarchy and traffic management measures. A proposal for a link road concept is in the process of implementation. This is an important infrastructure link which will connect future urban development opportunities.

Rural roads	Existing road network adequate to cater for expected demand with ongoing sealing program for gravel roads, and developer upgrading associated with individual development proposals. The main issues relate to the provision of adequate carriageway width, sealing of unsealed roads and level of service of intersections. Growth in traffic volumes on rural roads is primarily limited to areas in the east and south of the LGA, especially in the Braxton/Stanhope and Broke/Fordwich areas.
Public transport	Public transport includes limited rail services and regional and interstate buses provided by private providers. A limited private town bus service operates, together with an extensive school bus network servicing a large proportion of the LGA.
Bikeways	A small network of recreational bikeways exists, which is proposed to be progressively extended in accordance with the Singleton Bike Plan.

STORMWATER

Singleton	Issues with stormwater infrastructure are ageing capacity and water quality. Works are underway to improve provision of stormwater infrastructure.
Villages	Generally no formal trunk reticulated stormwater drainage system. Relies on natural drainage and soil infiltration.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Whole LGA	Provision of waste management facilities is a Council function in the Singleton LGA. Singleton Council operates one licensed waste management facility off Dyring Road, about 5km from Singleton. The Council's Capital Works Program includes provision for new landfill extensions, together with a range of resource recovery services over a period of several years, to 2015. Waste services will continue on the current landfill site potentially to at least 2025, although the makeup and extent of services on the site may be modified. A building exclusion zone around Singleton landfill has been proposed to provide a buffer to prevent incompatible uses. Council has advised that it now intends to establish a residential dwelling exclusion zone within the "Landfill Affection Area" identified in Figure 4.4.
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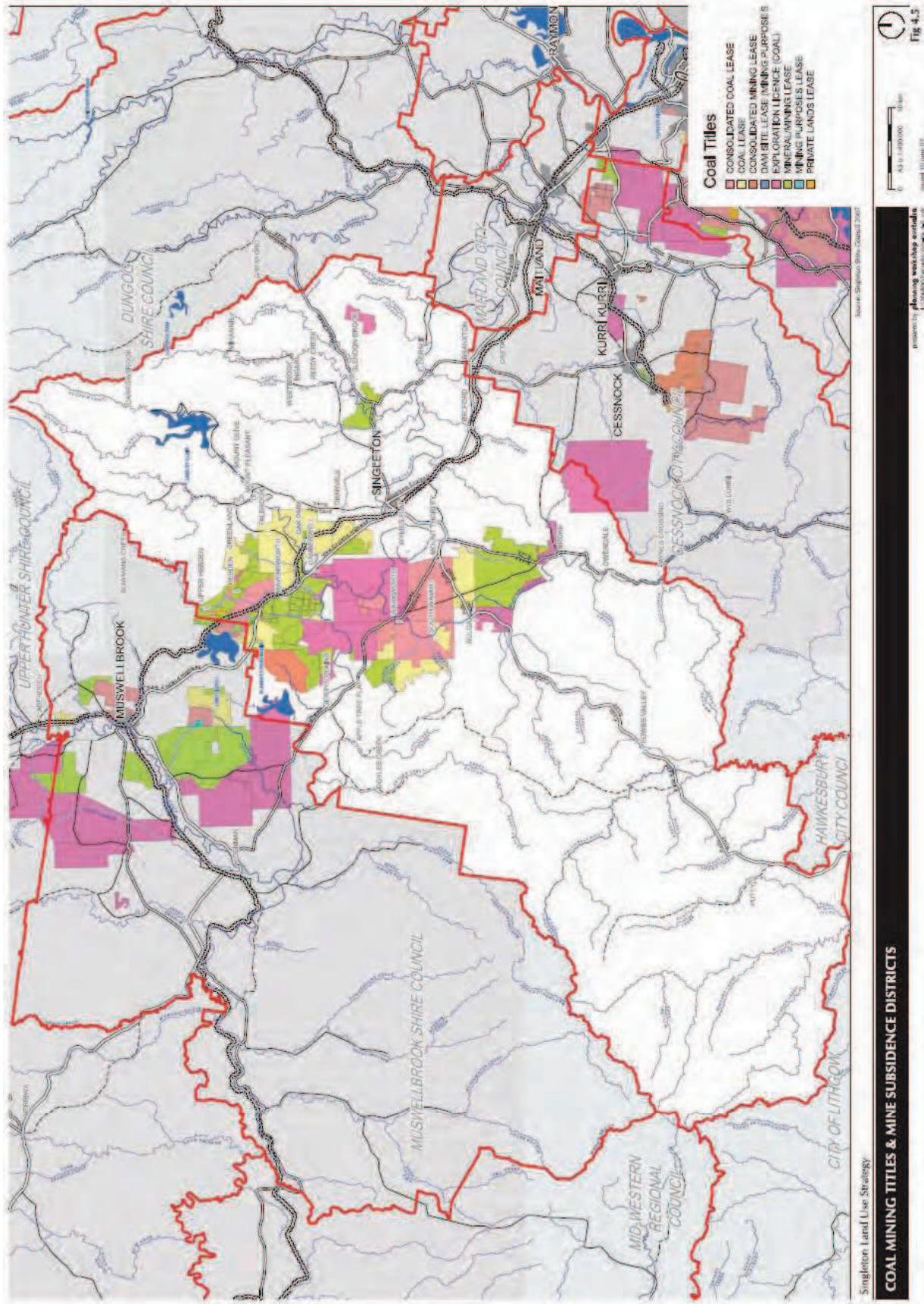
BUSHFIRE FACILITIES

Whole LGA	Reasonable provision exists for bushfire service provision within the LGA. This is provided by the NSW Rural Fire Service in conjunction with Singleton Council.
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OPEN SPACE

Singleton	Active and passive open space needs are currently well catered for. Key issue is the quality of the open space and maintenance costs. In new development areas, future consideration needs to be given to protection of biodiversity values on Council open space land (need for adequate size, shape and connectivity).
Rural areas	Active and passive open space needs are currently well catered for in rural areas.

The substantial coal resources within Singleton LGA significantly affect land use and settlement structure. Current mining titles and Mine Subsidence Districts are shown on Map 4.5.



Climate conditions are an important factor for settlement and are closely related to economic development opportunities. Over the life of the Strategy, there is an identified need for the community to adapt to climate change, and also to respond to the causes of climate change. Overall, Singleton LGA is poorly adapted to cope with climate change, for the following reasons:

- The urban structure is relatively dispersed, relies on high energy use (primarily motor cars), and there is a high degree of long distance commuting for employment.
- Water availability is limited but demands for all land uses are increasing. Agriculture on prime agricultural land is largely dependent on irrigation.
- The economic structure of the area is highly dependent on high carbon emission industries (coal mining and electricity generation).
- Anticipated new developments are not greenhouse gas neutral.

Combined with other initiatives, the Singleton Land Use Strategy can provide a framework for responding and adapting to climate change. In particular, to respond to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by the present economic and land use structure, it would be desirable to implement targets and approaches including:

- Support and provide incentives for new industrial and commercial development that is located close to the town, is carbon neutral, and provides onsite water servicing.
- Support enhanced public transport and accessible access networks (including pedestrian and cycle networks).
- Require future urban development and subdivision design to ensure that 100% of lots provide suitable orientation for passive energy efficiency.
- Ensure that economic impacts of rural residential development areas are fully costed, and that costs are recovered through financial contributions arrangements at the subdivision stage.
- Proactively promote a greenhouse gas neutral approach to coal mining within the LGA, including limiting further geographic extension of coal mining to present approved areas.

4.4 Biodiversity and natural ecosystems

Singleton LGA supports extensive biodiversity as a result of its topography, geology and climate. It includes parts of the North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions and supports extremely diverse biodiversity as a result of its varied topography, geology and climate. The area is botanically significant because it represents a zone of transition between the coast and inland, and between northern and southern botanical regions. As a consequence, it includes the eastern limit of distribution of some species, and the northern and southern limits of distribution of other species.

Significant proportions of some vegetation communities have been cleared, with the result that much of the remaining native vegetation is of significance (especially in the central Hunter Valley Lowlands). Although approximately 34% of the total area of

the Singleton LGA is included within dedicated conservation reserves (mainly in Wollemi, Yengo and Mt Royal National Parks), this protects only a limited range of the vegetation types and ecosystems occurring within the area.

Some significant characteristics of biodiversity and natural ecosystems occurring within the Singleton LGA are as follows:

- Seven listed endangered ecological communities, 53 fauna species, and 15 flora species listed as threatened under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1997 (NSW).
- Three of the national parks have World Heritage listing (Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage areas).
- Two listed threatened ecological communities and 45 flora and fauna species listed as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth).

The number of listed threatened species and threatened/endangered ecological communities has progressively increased over time, and this trend is expected to continue. Land use responses require improved and regularly updated information, especially in areas likely to be subject to land use change and development pressure. Land use and development are required by State and Commonwealth legislation to take into account environmental impacts on biodiversity, including threatened species and endangered ecological communities.

Map 4.6 shows key biodiversity constraints including conservation areas, and some areas identified as endangered ecological communities in the central Hunter Valley Lowlands geographic areas of the Singleton LGA.

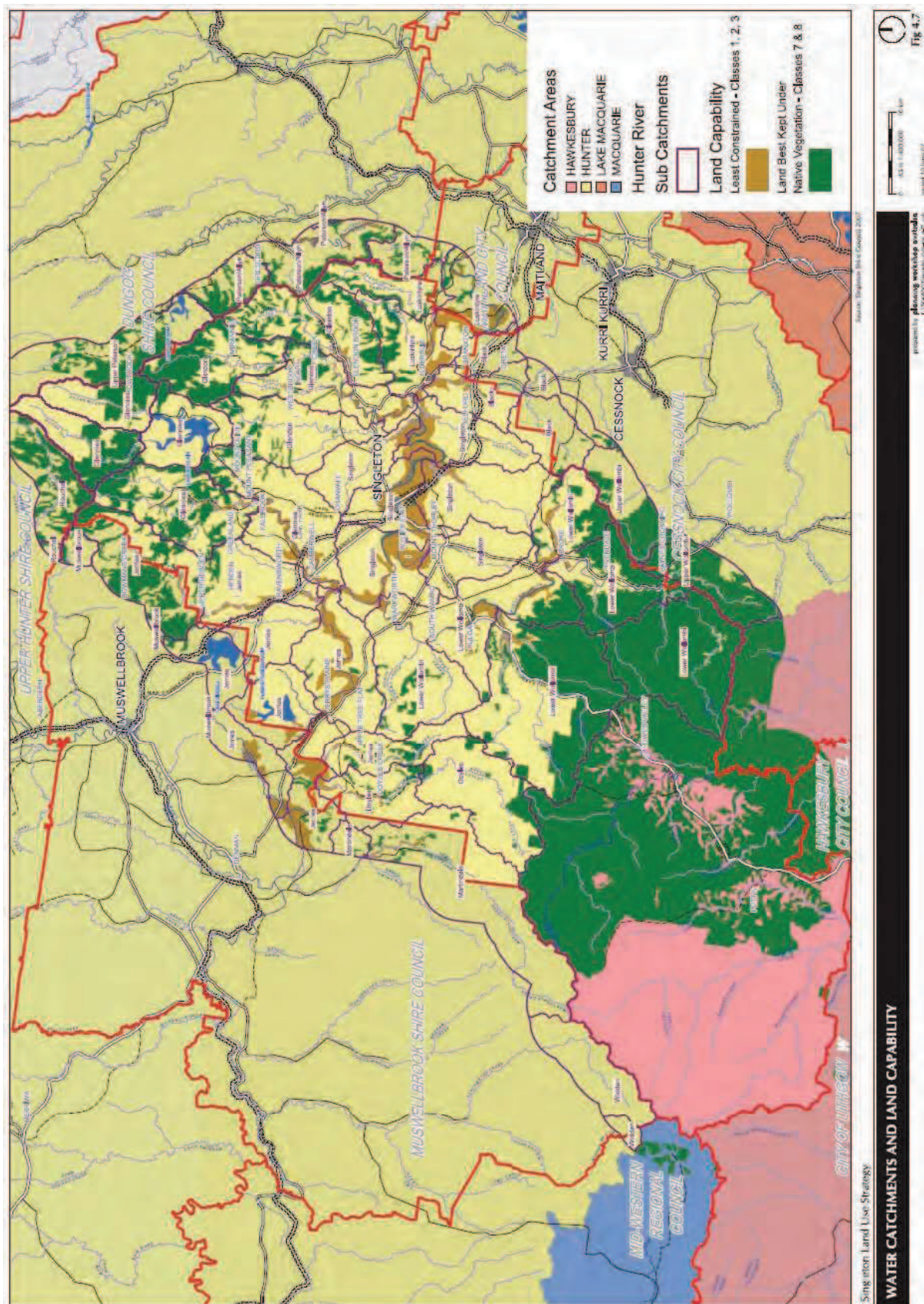
4.5 Land and water

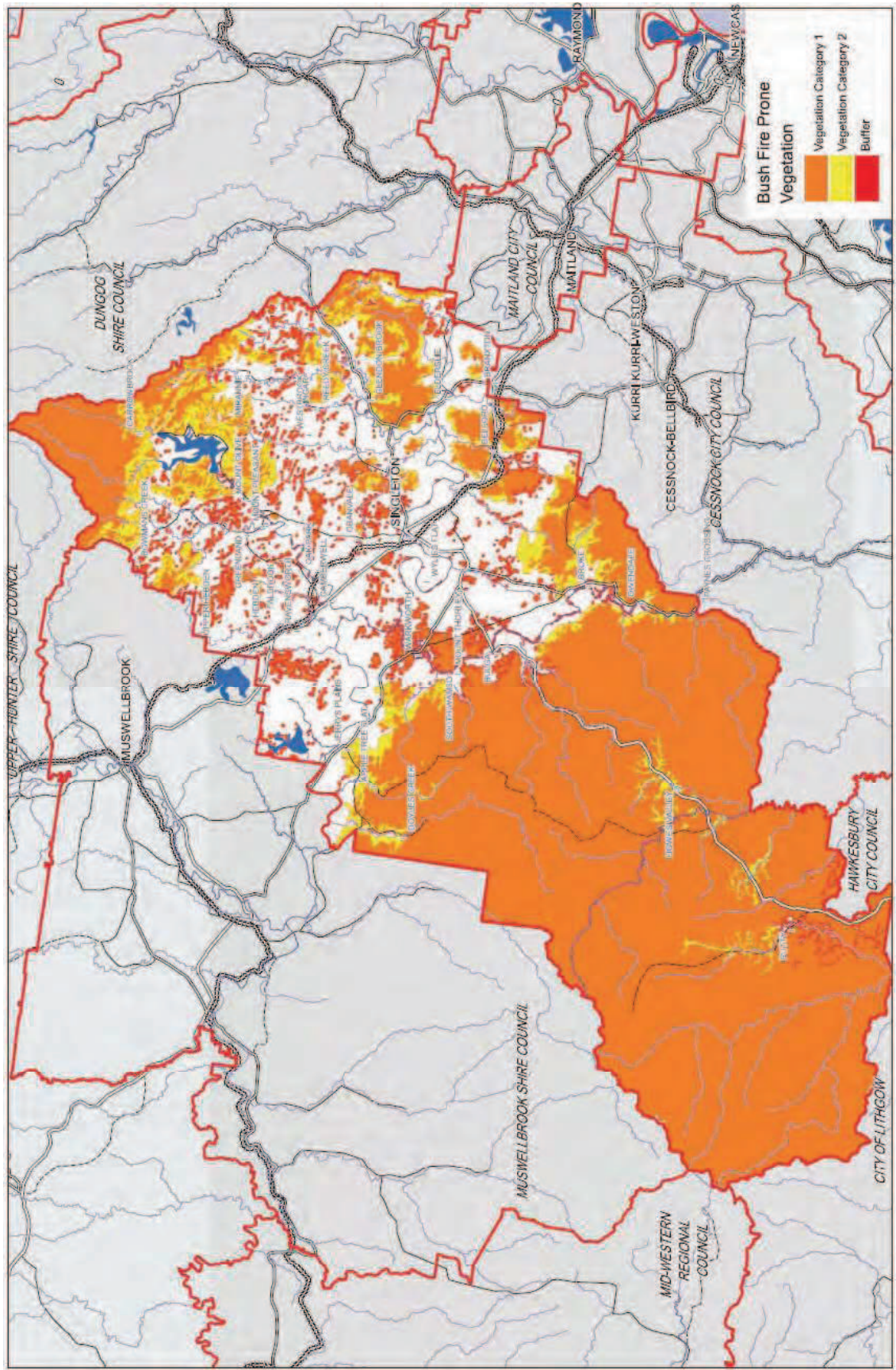
Land and water issues are closely related to land use, especially economic activities such as agriculture and urban settlement. In affecting land use change, the Strategy must consider important issues including land capability and land degradation, water availability and quality, flooding and bushfires. The characteristics of the LGA are summarised in the Situation Analysis report, and some of the key characteristics (river sub-catchments, land capability, and bushfire prone vegetation) are shown on Maps 4.7 and 4.8. Separate mapping of flood prone land is also available for some areas.

4.6 Design issues

Design issues apply primarily at the site development scale, and in the Strategy are secondary in importance to the issues of settlement structure and infrastructure, biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and land and water. Background to these issues is included in the Situation Analysis report, and the framework for consideration of these issues needs to be included within the Strategy. Important design issues include heritage conservation and environmental design, and Maps 4.9A and 4.9B show the boundaries of heritage conservation areas recognised in urban areas of the LGA. Heritage conservation issues have been included in relevant sections of the Strategy, as they apply to the key issues.





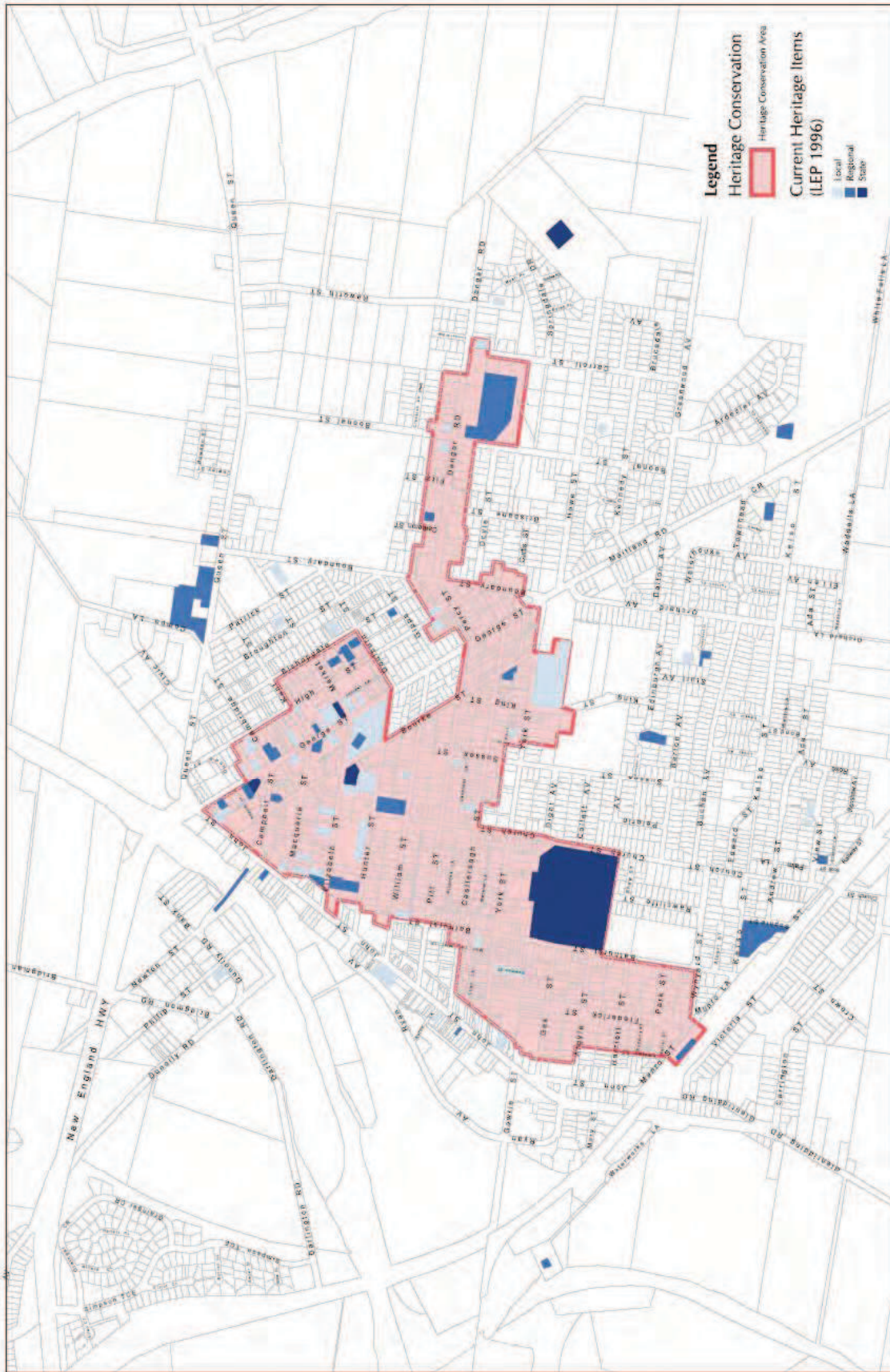


Singleton Land Use Strategy

BUSH FIRE PRONE VEGETATION

prepared by planning workspace
for Singleton City Council, 2017

Fig 4.6

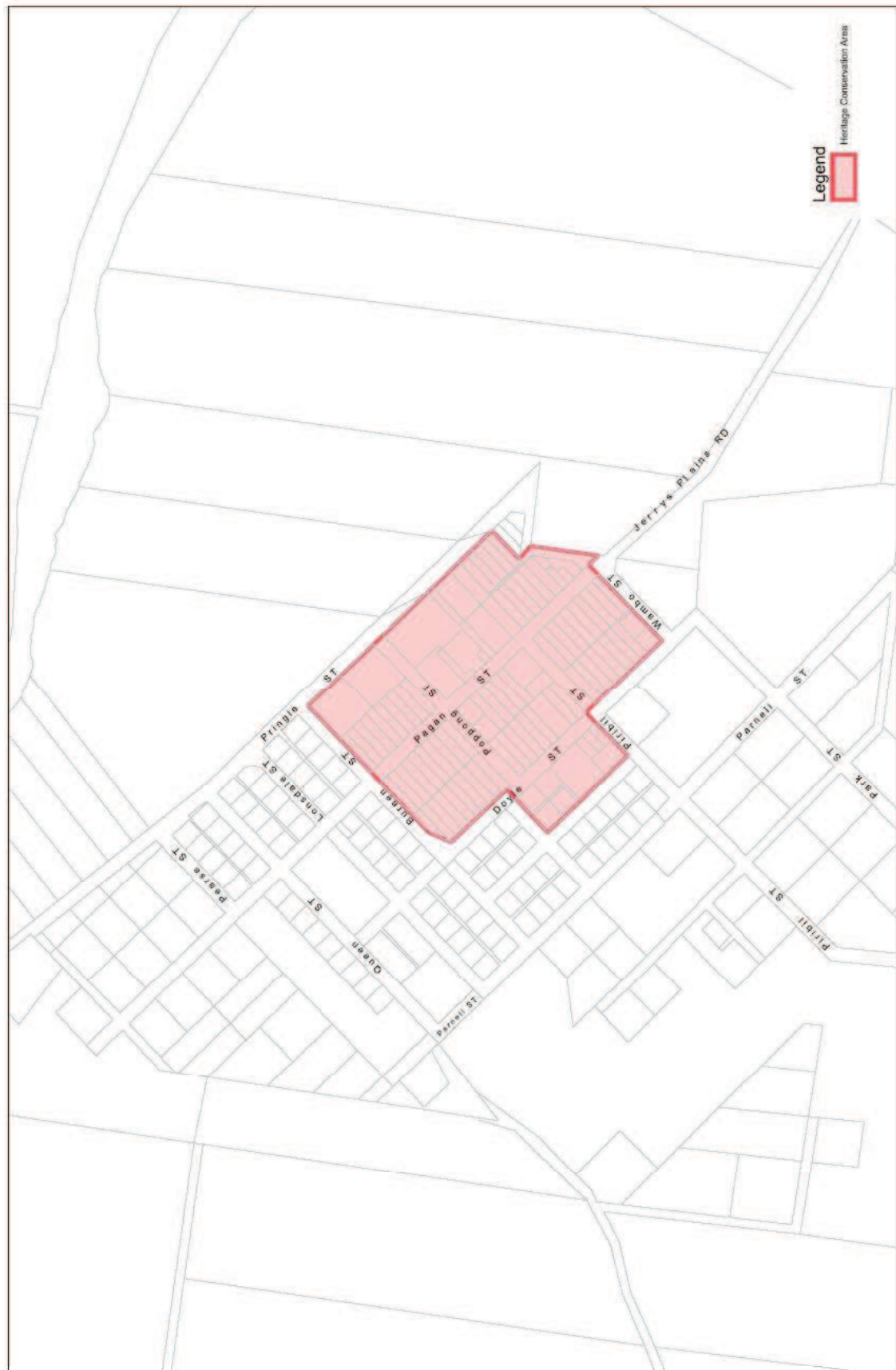


Singleton Land Use Strategy

HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREA - SINGLETON

prepared by **planning workshop australia**
a subsidiary of **planning workshop australia**

Fig 4.9A



HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREA - JERRYS PLAINS

prepared by planning services unit
 1. Singleton Shire Council, 2007
 2. Singleton Shire Council, 2007

Fig 4.9B

5 GENERAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

General aims and objectives for land use within Singleton are outlined in this section. These aims and objectives take into account the vision expressed by the Council, the strategic objectives of existing plans applying within the LGA, and the objects of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The Strategy provides a consistent direction for land use and community decision-making, and allows flexibility to respond and adapt to variations in the actual growth rate over time.

The Strategy's general aims and objectives are outlined below. These are largely based on the Singleton LEP 1996 objectives. They have been prepared in a form to enable incorporation into subsequent LEP provisions, and to align with Council's 2030 Strategy. The aims and objectives are:

- (a) to provide a framework for controlling and co-ordinating development within the Singleton local government area
- (b) to ensure the most appropriate and efficient use or management of land and natural resources
- (c) to co-ordinate economic development so that there is optimum and equitable economic and social benefit to the local community
- (d) to ensure that the environmental impact of development is adequately assessed, including the consideration of alternatives
- (e) to establish a pattern of broad development zones as a means of:
 - (i) separating incompatible uses
 - (ii) minimising the cost and environmental impact of development
 - (iii) maximising efficiency in the provision of utility, transport, retail and other services
- (f) to retain options for alternative land use strategies so that flexibility to allow economic, social and environmental change can be accommodated
- (g) to encourage adoption of land management practices which are sustainable over long periods of time without degradation of natural environmental systems
- (h) to provide adequate protection and minimise risk for the community (as far as possible) from environmental hazards, including flooding, soil erosion, bush fires and pollution
- (i) to enable public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment
- (j) to progress development in an ordered and economic manner.

In addition to the general aims and objectives outlined above, local environmental plans are required to have specific objectives for each land use zone identified within the scope provided by the NSW Government standard plan provisions.

6 URBAN SETTLEMENT

This part outlines the land use policies and strategies for urban settlement, and requirements for accommodating urban growth and change. Key issues are the provision of additional urban land, suitable housing to cater for the ageing population, and provision of industrial land and service infrastructure. The population of Singleton LGA is expected to increase in the Strategy time frame (25 years to 2032), and housing and settlement requirements are also expected to change. The population forecasts used in the Strategy are for a 15 year time frame, within the context of a 25 year Strategy, to provide sufficient infrastructure and urban land for future long term requirements. The population forecasts should be reviewed and updated after 5 to 10 years. The approach taken in the Strategy will affect how large Singleton will grow, and its long term structure.

Growth will be influenced by national and Sydney metropolitan conditions and trends, as well as growth in local and regional employment and changes in commuting patterns. It could be expected that factors influencing commuting patterns (e.g. increasing transport costs) may affect housing demand, and the spatial location of this demand within the LGA (e.g. the relative proportion located within residential and rural locations). As family sizes decline, it is likely that a higher growth rate for smaller sized dwellings will occur, including single storey dwellings for aged persons.

Additional residential zoned land is expected to be available in the near future following the amendment of the existing LEP provisions in Singleton Heights. This relates to the Huntergreen, Bridgman Ridge, and Gowrie Links proposals, and will ensure an adequate supply of residential land for at least 10 to 15 years. The Strategy needs to consider development options for the town over a longer period as well.

There is currently reasonable provision of urban infrastructure and services (e.g. roads, electricity, water and sewer) for the town of Singleton. Water supply limits and economic limits on service extensions have been taken into account in formulating the Strategy. Minimal growth is expected in villages, and there are servicing limits in all village areas.

Social infrastructure, community services and recreational facilities are reasonably well catered for within Singleton, although the trend for increasing centralisation of many specialist services means that these are located in Maitland and Newcastle, and transport must be available to access these. Housing affordability and providing adequate suitable aged persons accommodation are expected to continue to be significant issues over the life of the Strategy. These and other matters relating to housing needs were reviewed in the Singleton Community Housing Forum held in November 2006, which emphasised the importance of taking into account the full range of community housing needs in future planning for residential development. The Forum recommended strategies and ongoing actions which have been taken into account in the preparation of this Strategy.

A significant issue over the life of this Strategy is the proposed urban area identified south of Branxton by the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, including some land within Singleton LGA. While this has potential for around 2000 residential lots in Singleton, planning processes have been established to determine a structure plan, and the urban boundaries are to be defined through future local planning. Planning and

development within this area will primarily be aligned to growth within the Lower Hunter Region, and is not expected to significantly impact on growth and demand projections for Singleton identified in this Strategy. Policies and strategies for the South Branxton area are included in Section 8.8.

The following estimates in Table 4 are adopted/assumed for the purposes of the Strategy. These estimates are based on the Situation Analysis report, and it should be noted that these are for the LGA as a whole, and that there is considerable variability between different planning areas.

Table 4: Summary of Singleton LGA projections and trends

Strategy forecast	Estimate (25 years to 2032) - update	Comment
POPULATION CHANGE	Estimated 1.5% per annum growth (average 300 persons per year). Approximate population 27,500 in 2021.	Significant fluctuations from year to year would be expected. Most growth would occur in Singleton Heights (North Singleton).
Dwelling occupancy rate	Decline from 2.8 persons per dwelling to 2.5 persons per dwelling	Ongoing decline in occupancy rate, alone, creates demand for an average additional 43 dwellings per annum.
RESIDENTIAL DEMAND	Average 170 to 230 new dwellings per year	Depends substantially on dwelling occupancy rate and dwelling type availability.
Changes in type of dwellings required	Increase in small single dwellings, aged persons accommodation (especially single storey), and units/townhouses	Lower demand for large houses (i.e. 3 to 4 bedrooms) likely in long term
Urban/rural split	By 2021, urban Singleton is expected to have a population of 17,750 with 9,750 in rural areas.	It is anticipated that 60% of additional dwellings provided to 2021 will be in the Singleton Heights/North Singleton urban area, 5% in Singleton town area, and 35% in rural areas.
INDUSTRIAL LAND	Projected annual demand for light industrial land (3 to 6 ha per annum).	Variable depending on regional demand and supply.
URBAN WATER DEMAND	Average yearly urban water demand is 350kl/annum	Long term trend in water use is not clear, but usage has been reduced by recent water restrictions.

Strategy forecast	Estimate (25 years to 2032) - update	Comment
AVERAGE URBAN TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY (index of people within walking distance of bus route or CBD)	Figures currently unavailable, but trend is for declining transport accessibility.	Continuing relative population dispersal (especially in rural areas) is expected to increase reliance on car transport, and reduce opportunities for viable public transport.

Key land use planning issues regarding urban settlement in the Singleton LGA were identified in the Situation Analysis as follows:

- Projected residential land requirements
- Identification of areas for long term urban expansion around Singleton
- Town infill development opportunities and constraints
- Water and sewer capacity and service areas
- Road hierarchy, transport links and accessibility
- New England Highway Bypass for Singleton
- Development guidelines for highway frontage land
- Adequacy of land for industry and commerce, and requirements for additional land and services
- Floodplain development and management
- Availability of suitable sites for future institutional use

Objectives, policies and strategies for each of these are presented individually below.

6.1 Projected residential land requirements

This section relates to how much residential land and housing will be required, its type and characteristics. Section 6.2 relates to where future urban land is best located.

Housing in Singleton is principally in the form of individual detached dwellings, representing 88% of the housing stock in 2006. This contrasts with NSW as a whole where 70% of dwellings were separate dwellings. The NSW proportion of medium density housing is 29% with Singleton having a much lower 10% of dwellings in this category. The dwelling occupancy rate for the LGA has shown a steady decline and was estimated at 2.9 persons per dwelling in 2006, slightly above the NSW figure of 2.7.

Future dwelling approvals of between 170 and 230 per year could be anticipated for the next 10 - 15 years assuming a continuation of current economic conditions.

Approximately 60% of total LGA population growth would be expected to occur within Singleton Heights/North Singleton and 5% in Singleton Town.

A local environmental plan amendment which has recently been finalised zones additional land for residential purposes in North Singleton is expected to ensure an adequate supply of zoned residential land for the next 15 years. Existing local environmental plan zones are shown on Map 6.1. The Huntergreen and Bridgman Ridge residential areas are located to the north of the existing Hunterview area, and have a combined area of approximately 240 ha, and an expected residential lot yield of between 1,100 and 1,200 lots. In addition, the proposed Gowrie Links residential area could supply an additional 450 to 550 lots. However, there are potential limits on water and sewer provision to service these residential areas which will require investment and upgrading of infrastructure, and may limit the land actually available to the market.

While a key feature of the Strategy is to provide for additional residential development in the urban area of Singleton, there are also a range of other housing issues that need to be considered in conjunction with this, that relate to housing affordability and suitability for anticipated demographic changes. These are considered in Section 6.3.

Objectives – residential land requirements

- Singleton will have urban land that is zoned and serviced to meet projected housing needs up to 2032.
- Housing will vary in size and form to meet changing household formations and the needs of an ageing population.

Policies – residential land requirements

- Maintain a minimum of 5 years supply of zoned residential land.
- Encourage aged persons accommodation (with suitable style, location and access to services).
- Support the provision of affordable housing requirements by maintaining adequate residential land.
- Facilitate medium density in existing residential areas, subject to accessibility, urban design, amenity and sustainability criteria.
- For new greenfield residential development, consider seeking planning agreements with developers to provide for residential development of a certain type, and/or affordable housing (e.g. medium density and single storey aged persons accommodation).
- Recognise the need to cater for different sectors (youth, aged persons and construction workforce accommodation).
- Ensure public transport accessibility for all residential development, and provision of shopping and other facilities within walking distance.

- Urban sustainability issues will be considered in the determination of new areas for urban expansion (e.g. future water recycling, protection of biodiversity values, road and subdivision layout to provide optimum orientation for solar access).
- Maintain existing residential character by limiting subdivision.

Strategic Actions – residential land requirements

- Facilitate LEP amendments to supply a minimum of 5 years of residential development potential through zoning based on demand/supply analysis undertaken.
- Ensure demand and supply analysis also considers available infill opportunities.
- Implement zoning consistent with Standard LEP recommended zones.
- Undertake periodic review and updating of growth projections to coincide with the release of ABS Census data.
- Ensure appropriate LEP provisions to encourage/enable smaller, single storey residential development in close proximity to transport and facilities, and located on flatter sites.
- Prepare a DCP to identify appropriate sequencing of development.
- Recognise Aboriginal heritage protection requirements in LEP provisions.
- Take into account future limits on water availability and anticipated requirements for increased energy efficiency by adopting sustainability criteria (e.g. 100% energy efficiency lot orientation, and suitable street layout) in LEP or DCP
- Provide for parks within walking distance of all homes in accordance with Open Space and Recreation Needs Study (2002).
- Maintain existing residential character by including minimum subdivision area requirements in LEP provisions. Resubdivision is to be consistent with existing character (e.g. 450m², 1200m², and 2500m² minimum areas in Bridgman Ridge area).
- Ensure appropriate LEP provisions to enable smaller, single storey residential development in close proximity to transport and facilities on flatter sites.
- Consider introducing sustainability targets for new buildings (e.g. energy efficiency, onsite renewable electricity generation, building recyclability and durability, carbon neutrality etc).

6.2 Identification of areas for long term urban expansion around Singleton

As outlined in Section 6.1, there is adequate existing provision for residential land within the time period of the Strategy. While there is no immediate need for further residential land in the Strategy time frame, it is essential to review the long term (25 to 50 year) urban expansion opportunities for Singleton, and to ensure that these are not prejudiced by short term development. This section focuses on the future urban structure of the town, major servicing and accessibility requirements, and the criteria that should be applied to future development proposals that may arise in long term urban growth areas.

The town of Singleton is particularly constrained by its physical setting, and surrounding land uses (i.e. coal mining and army camp). While the future long term growth of Singleton cannot be predicted, there are options that would provide for substantial future urban growth if this was ever required (e.g. doubling of the urban population in 50 years). These options are reviewed in Table 5 and could secure future land in the event that this is ever required. No detailed investigations have been undertaken.

Table 5: Summary of long term urban expansion options

Option	Comments
Singleton North East	The 1974 Singleton Planning Study found that north east expansion was the best long term urban expansion option. Since that time, this option has been made more difficult by land fragmentation, and is affected by the Singleton Waste Management facility. Physical constraints include undulating slopes, salinity and erodible soils, and presence of native vegetation. Development of this area would require improved road links, including upgrading Pioneer Road to Dyring Road. This area has reasonable potential for servicing with water and sewer. It also may be affected by the continuation of or future land use on the current Singleton Landfill site.
Singleton West	The Singleton Planning Study ruled out urban expansion to the west as a result of proposals for open cut mining. Mining commenced in about 1990 and could be expected to be substantially completed within 20 – 30 years. This would make land potentially available for urban development. Advantages of this option are that land is generally flatter and would have better highway access, with opportunities for commercial development sites.

Option	Comments
Town infill	Although there are larger sites with potential for additional residential development, substantial increases in density within Singleton Town should be discouraged as a result of flooding potential. Heritage conservation issues also would support retaining existing density. Opportunities exist for increased densities and alternative housing types in Singleton Heights, but may require reconsolidation of existing lots. Further investigation would need to be undertaken, but it appears that there are limited opportunities available.
Singleton North	Urban expansion to the north between the railway line and Bridgman Road is a possibility, but would result in a narrow, linear urban area. As a long term option with an additional New England Highway link, and the opportunity of providing a future railway station, there may be some accessibility benefits arising from this proposal. It would also allow incremental growth and future expansion to the west of the railway line. Location of suitable commercial land and schools represents a challenge. Council has also advised that the area may be impractical to sewer due to limited mains capacity through existing residential areas back to the treatment works.

Map 6.2 shows the conceptual location of the long term urban expansion options for Singleton. Map 6.3 shows current and proposed accessibility and transport links, and additional desirable links for investigation. This map does not include a long term highway bypass for Singleton, which is discussed in Section 6.6. Water, sewer and servicing are key issues requiring further investigation, and future access requirements and locations of commercial and industrial land also need to be taken into consideration.

The Strategy addresses this issue as outlined below, and should identify a preferred concept for long term urban expansion.

Objectives – Identification of areas for long term urban expansion around Singleton

- To limit the exposure of the town to major flood events, by preventing additional land being developed for residential purposes on the floodplain.
- To consolidate existing urban areas and increase the density within existing flooding and infrastructure capacity constraints.
- To identify land which should be investigated for long term future expansion and to zone this appropriately to prevent subdivision and inappropriate land use.

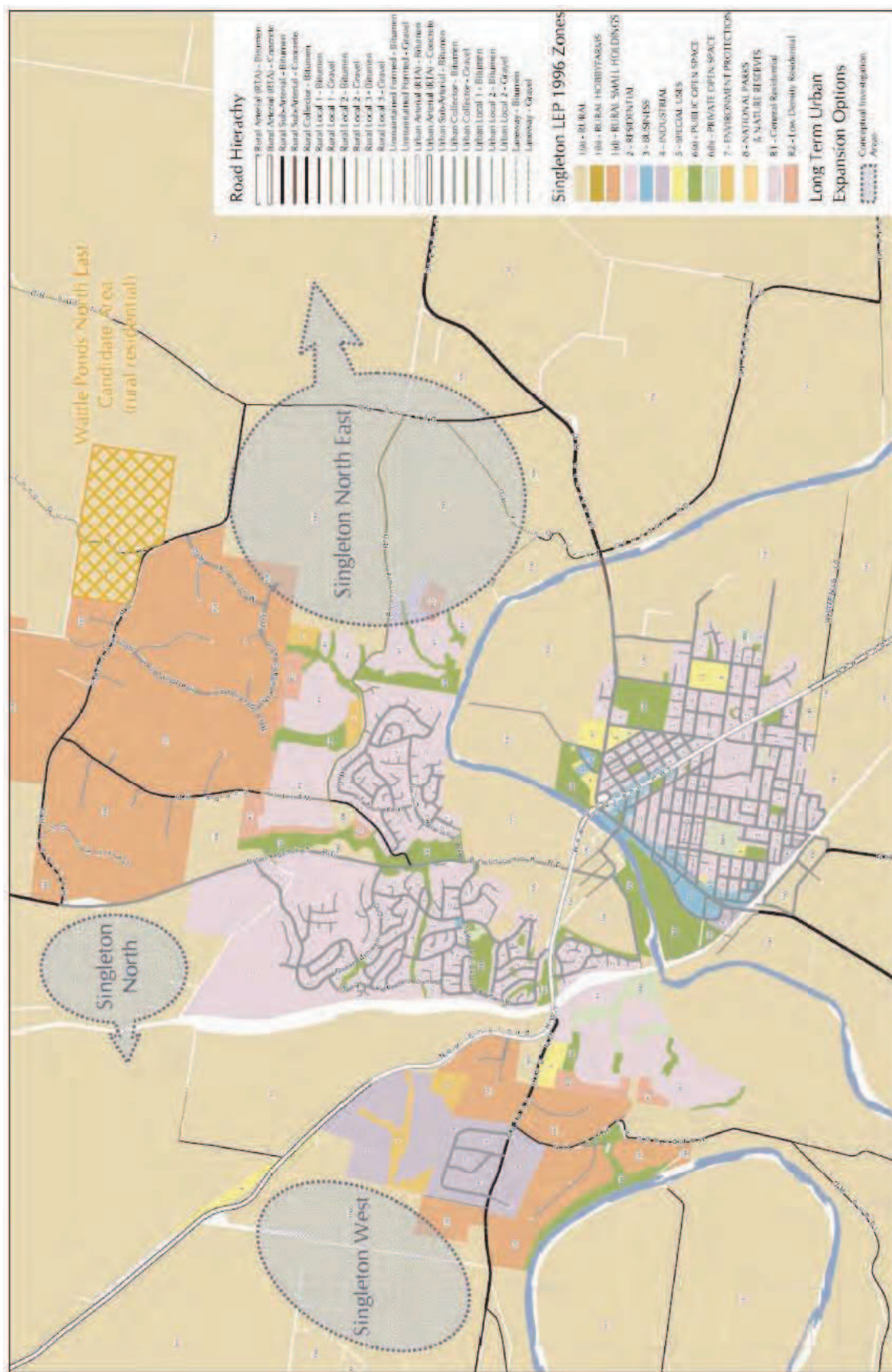
Policies – Identification of areas for long term urban expansion around Singleton

- Potential urban expansion areas shown on Map 6.2 should be investigated, with preference given to the Singleton North East option.
- Review and finalise transport hierarchy and accessibility proposals based on Map 6.3.
- Provide land for residential development (to ensure 5 years supply) based on following attributes:
 - Flat-moderate grades
 - Service and infrastructure capacity/staging
 - Access to community services and facilities
 - Access to convenience/other retail
 - Road access
- Direct urban growth to areas where effective use could be made of existing urban infrastructure/reserve where capacity is available (see also sections 6.3 and 6.4).
- Maintain a minimum of two development fronts to maintain competition.
- Prevent further subdivision or non-reversible land use within the identified preferred investigation area for future urban expansion.
- Maintain a future urban growth corridor. Prevent subdivision and limit development within the possible future corridors for urban expansion as identified on Map 6.2.

Strategic Actions – Identification of areas for long term urban expansion around Singleton

- Make detailed investigations of each of the potential urban expansion shown on Map 6.2 and listed in Table 5 by 2010.
- Review LEP zoning options within potential urban areas.
- Consider desirable LEP provisions to limit subdivision within potential urban investigation areas to prevent future fragmentation of land.
- Finalise future transport hierarchy and accessibility requirements based on Map 6.3.
- Determine criteria limiting consideration of future proposals for urban rezoning, unless it is in an identified long term investigation area, and facilitates economic water and sewer servicing, and supports future transport hierarchy and accessibility requirements.
- Review Section 94 plans to ensure that long-term growth is financially sustainable and facilitates the preferred urban structure.

- Prepare policies for facilitating planning agreements for large development proposals which support the preferred long term urban structure.
- Identify a buffer around the Singleton waste management facility, and review options for future long term urban/industrial use. As an interim measure, implement a residential exclusion zone within the "Landfill Affectation Area" shown in Figure 4.4.
- By 2015, undertake detailed investigation for long term urban development options/town boundary in the north-west, taking into account future coal mining prospects and impacts.
- Consider the following LEP zones and minimum lot sizes for residential development:
 - R1 General Residential with a minimum lot size of 450m²
 - R2 Low Density Residential with 2 minimum lot sizes (indicated on the lot size map), being 1200m² and 2500m².



6.3 Town infill development opportunities and constraints

Although there is still a clear market preference for conventional detached housing on the fringe of the existing urban area, infill residential development is an important consideration. Key issues related to infill are:

- Urban design and development scale (especially for 2 or 3 storey development).
- Heritage.
- Infrastructure servicing (especially water, sewer and stormwater).
- Minimum subdivision size and dimensions, and opportunities to facilitate consolidation of existing lots.
- Dual occupancy design and siting guidelines.
- Potential for integration into mixed use commercial/residential developments.
- Flood issues.

Singleton Council's Heritage Advisory Committee has reviewed and updated the schedule of heritage items listed in the existing local environmental plan, and is also undertaking a review of heritage conservation area boundaries.

Objectives – urban infill development

- Support urban infill development subject to an appropriate planning framework.
- Ensure planning controls allow appropriate residential infill development, taking into account important issues including flooding, adequacy of servicing, streetscape and urban character, heritage, and water sensitive urban design.

Policies – urban infill development

- Residential infill development in Singleton Heights will be encouraged in addition to further greenfield development outside the existing urban area.
- Residential infill development in Singleton Town will be subject to ensuring that the number of dwellings subject to flooding potential will not be increased, heritage conservation guidelines are to be implemented.
- Development should recognise existing infrastructure constraints (e.g. sewer and drainage) and ensure that best use is made of current infrastructure provision.
- Infill development should recognise the character and scale of existing development.

- Future development will take into account policies developed as part of any future housing strategy, including type size, affordability and locational requirements for housing to meet demands.

Strategic Actions – urban infill development

- As part of any proposed infill development, ensure that servicing capacities are assessed and are adequate, particularly water supply, sewerage and stormwater drainage.
- Undertake a review of infill potential and identify constraints to infill development (e.g. flooding, heritage).
- Review minimum lot sizes and DCP controls on infill development to ensure the protection of urban character and residential amenity.
- Establish a significant tree register, and include appropriate tree preservation provisions in the LEP.
- Update heritage registers and information, and incorporate an overlay map in the LEP.

6.4 Water and sewer capacity and service areas

Singleton Council holds a surface water town and water supply licence totalling 5,000 megalitres per annum. The current commitments to supply water, plus an estimate of additional commitments for existing and proposed development areas expanding at current growth rates, indicates that in 10 to 15 years time further water entitlements and alternative sources may be needed.

Short to medium term urban growth areas are catered for in respect of the provision of water and sewer services.

Augmentation of the Waste Water Treatment Works is scheduled for 2010 to 2012, subject to growth rate assessment and a final demand analysis study.

The Council has resolved to investigate supplying the Village of Bulga with water in the longer term, but is yet to commit to providing such services.

The Council has also resolved to investigate supplying sewer services to the Villages of Jerry's Plans and Broke in the long term, but has made no commitment to provide such services.

The recent extension of the Hunter Water Corporation area of operations in the Singleton LGA (Map 4.3d) has potentially significant implications for future urban growth opportunities, and for rural development, particularly around Branxton. Singleton Council should actively be involved in planning for future infrastructure servicing in this area to ensure that future land use is appropriately planned for.

Objectives – water and sewer services

- Provide high quality water and sewer services to urban areas of Singleton (including residential, commercial and industrial land) to meet reasonable demands.

- Provide town water services to the unserviced villages in Singleton LGA, where practical and financially sustainable, and investigate provision of sewer services.
- Ensure provision of additional water and sewer services is financially sustainable.
- Ensure adequate security of water supply by securing additional water entitlements and alternative sources prior to existing allocations becoming fully committed.

Policies – water and sewer services

- Limit the extension of existing water and sewer services around Singleton to areas identified in the Strategy for future urban development.
- Investigate securing additional water entitlements and alternative sources of water to provide for the medium to long term.
- Manage water and sewer services in a financially sustainable manner.

Strategic Actions – water and sewer services

- Investigate the establishment of an agreement between Hunter Water Corporation and Singleton Council in regard to the following:
 - Interconnection of the Hunter Water Corporation and Singleton water supply systems for the purpose of providing drought security and additional water to the Singleton Local Government Area; and
 - Coordination of infrastructure staging to meet the land and settlement policies and actions identified in the Strategy.
- Investigate provision of alternative water yield for Singleton in the long term.
- Investigate the feasibility of supplying the villages of Jerrys Plains and Broke with reticulated sewer in the longer term.

6.5 Road hierarchy, transport links and accessibility

The Situation Analysis report identified the current situation relating to roads, transport and accessibility and noted important matters requiring consideration. While existing roads and access links are satisfactory overall, there are long term capacity limitations and measures need to be taken to support improved accessibility in the long term.

Table 6 outlines major proposals for implementation or investigation over the life of the strategy. These are shown on Map 6.3 and support the proposed long term settlement structure for Singleton as outlined in section 6.2.

The proposals identified in this section do not include consideration of a New England Highway bypass of Singleton which would significantly impact on transport and accessibility in the long term. Intersection upgrading works and other measures to improve road capacity have been separately investigated in the Singleton Traffic and Parking Study and are consistent with the proposals in the table.

Table 6: Road, transport and accessibility proposals

Proposal	Priority/Importance	Strategy
Singleton Heights Link Road (Pioneer Road extension)	High. Important to support long term future urban growth in Singleton Heights	Implement adopted Council proposal
Identify bus routes as part of future public transport strategy	Medium. Important	Identify and plan for bus routes as part of implementation of urban structure plan
Dedicated cycle and pedestrian link from Singleton Heights to Singleton via Combo Land	Medium. Important in providing alternative local transport options	Update Singleton Bike Plan
Singleton North – New England Highway Link Road to the west	Medium. Relatively high strategic importance. Provides alternative flood free link to New England Highway via Rix's Creek Lane	Investigate and determine preferred routes, and integration with potential new long term railway station location
Passenger rail service improvement	High. Important for providing long term access to Sydney and Newcastle	Investigate mechanisms to improve frequency of passenger rail services
New railway station for Singleton Heights	Low. Important for long term accessibility	Investigate suitable locations, and plan future road hierarchy to accommodate preferred site
Links to improve cycle and pedestrian movement	Medium. Important.	Update Singleton Bike Plan
Pioneer Road – Fern Gully Road Link	Low. Medium importance. Long term potential to support urban development.	Investigate possible options in medium term in conjunction with review of long term urban expansion options

Objectives – road hierarchy, transport links and accessibility (Singleton and Singleton Heights)

- Provide a system of roads, transport and access links to support existing and future land use and social needs.
- Ensure that access provision is economically efficient, and enables provision of public transport in the long term.
- Facilitate the provision of telecommunications infrastructure in the LGA to provide accessible, high speed communications technology.

Policies – road hierarchy, transport links and accessibility (Singleton and Singleton Heights)

- The long term transport and accessibility concepts and road hierarchy will be implemented as shown on Map 6.3.
- Implement mechanisms to ensure that costs for the provision of roads, transport and access are equitably shared by the community. Suitable mechanisms include developer contributions towards facilities using Section 94 plans or planning agreements.
- Ensure land use decisions consider and support the long term transport and accessibility concept for Singleton.
- Promote early introduction of accessible, high bandwidth telecommunications infrastructure across the LGA to facilitate economic development opportunities.

Strategic Actions – road hierarchy, transport links and accessibility (Singleton and Singleton Heights)

- Implement the road, transport and accessibility proposals outlined in Map 6.3 and Table 6.
- Recognise classified roads in the LEP map and include relevant clause (28) from Standard Instrument relating to classified roads.
- Develop principles and mechanisms for implementing transport and accessibility concepts, including funding through Section 94 contributions.
- Implement measures identified in Singleton Traffic and Parking Study.

6.6 New England Highway Bypass for Singleton

Traffic volumes on the New England Highway through Singleton are increasing at a much higher rate than the rate of population growth, and are expected to continue growing with the completion of the F3 Freeway extension to Branxton. Increased traffic will affect the adequacy and safety of existing traffic arrangements within Singleton, and consequently options for a New England Highway Bypass of Singleton require consideration.

Bypass options are expected to be considered as part of the Singleton Traffic and Parking Study and Plan currently being undertaken. A highway bypass would have significant implications for future land use, and ongoing growth and development of the town.

While no routes have been determined for a possible bypass, potential options are summarised in Table 7. As a result of land use constraints, limited options are available, and all have significant engineering, economic, social and land use limitations and implications.

The benefits of determining a suitable bypass route are that provision can be made in future planning, particularly in determining the location and layout of future residential and commercial land. Future commercial and industrial development in Singleton will depend on providing certainty in relation to long term transport accessibility. Facilitating a decision on a highway bypass is therefore an important element of the Singleton Land Use Strategy.

Table 7: Potential options for Singleton highway bypass

Potential option	Comments
A Whittingham – Glenridding (From Cemetery Lane along railway to McDougalls Hill)	Shortest option. Disadvantages include engineering problems traversing major floodway, adverse impact on agricultural land, and amenity impacts to large number of existing residential properties. Requires railway overpass and Hunter River bridge.
B Western Route 1 (Mitchell Line Road, Putty Road, Hambledon Hill Road to McDougalls Hill)	Longer option, with 3km additional distance. Major benefit of route is minimal distance affected by flooding. Adverse effects on existing rural residential properties. Difficulty in route selection at McDougalls Hill due to existing development pattern. Requires relocation of Putty Road/Mitchell Line road junction and Hunter River bridge.
C Western Route 2 (Mitchell Line Road, Putty Road, Glenridding railway line to McDougalls Hill)	Longest realistic route option, with 5 km additional distance. Disadvantages include engineering problems traversing floodway and extensive flood liability. Primarily utilises existing road alignment. Relatively poor alignment, with adverse impacts on agricultural and rural residential properties as a result of development pattern. Requires relocation of Putty Road/Mitchell Line road junction and Hunter River bridge.
D Northern Route (North of existing town)	Major relocation of transport arrangements, increasing travel distance significantly. No suitable alignment apparent which would avoid conflict with potential future development.

Potential option	Comments
	Requires railway bridge and new Hunter River bridge. Most suitable route to avoid flood liable land would be via Elderslie or Belford. Not considered feasible. Requires Hunter River bridge.
E Upgrade existing alignment (New England Highway widening)	Major impacts on town amenity, and does not resolve accessibility and transport problems within Singleton. Significant adverse impact on Singleton commercial areas and residential amenity, including heritage. Retains existing problems of flood liability and traffic capacity.

Flood liability and risk is a significant cost and implication in determining the preferred route, and will be a key factor in determining a route alignment. The western routes appear to offer the most significant land use and development benefits to Singleton, and potentially provide some commercial and residential expansion opportunities that are not available with other routes.

Objectives – New England Highway Bypass for Singleton

- To ensure that regional and interstate traffic is provided with a suitable highway bypass of Singleton.
- To provide a bypass to enable improvements to road accessibility and safety within Singleton, and to maintain urban amenity.

Policies – New England Highway Bypass for Singleton

- To include highway bypass investigation routes in the Singleton Land Use Strategy concept map, and to indicate a preferred concept.
- To encourage NSW and Commonwealth Government support for the concept of a New England Highway Bypass of Singleton, and to secure necessary funding for its implementation.

Strategic Actions – New England Highway Bypass for Singleton

- To undertake a joint feasibility study of the potential route options identified, in conjunction with the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority with a view to reaching agreement on a preferred alignment.
- To provide funding for voluntary acquisition of land to facilitate the bypass.
- To recognise the preferred highway bypass alignment in the Singleton Local Environmental Plan.

6.7 Development guidelines for highway frontage land

There has been progressive land use change on highway frontage land within Singleton, and increasing demand for commercial development. Planning controls should encourage and provide for future uses which maintain the level of safety and service required of the National Highway, and accommodate adverse environmental and amenity impacts from highway traffic.

Based on current trends, it is likely that traffic volumes on the New England Highway will significantly increase in the future. An important consideration in determining the planning controls for highway frontage land will be the feasibility and timing of any highway bypass of the town. Until this matter is resolved, it is appropriate to limit further intensification of development and especially traffic generating development.

The provisions in the Standard LEP prepared by the NSW Government allow for flexible use within the R1 General Residential zone, and is the most appropriate zone for existing residential areas. An option for current commercial zones would be the B2 Local Centre zone or the B4 Mixed Use zone along some sections of the urban highway frontage.

Suitable land uses would include existing residential scale development, serviced apartments, motels, 1 - 2 storey residential flat buildings with suitable noise attenuation and traffic and parking arrangements, adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, use of existing residences for professional consulting rooms, mixed use office/residential development and community facilities.

Objectives – Development guidelines for highway frontage land

- To maintain the level of safety and service required of the National Highway, by encouraging new development which does not increase traffic demands.
- To allow new development subject to criteria which limits traffic impacts and maintains urban amenity.

Policies – Development guidelines for highway frontage land

- Maintain built form scale and character of existing highway frontage land and development by applying criteria set out in Table 8.
- Prevent adverse impacts of new development on adjacent rear residential properties (e.g. height, privacy, noise, overshadowing and other amenity impacts).
- Support consolidation of existing lots and provision of non-highway frontage road access (e.g. via side road or rear lane).
- Ensure no additional highway accesses.
- Consult with Roads and Traffic Authority in relation to new development proposals that do not meet the criteria.

- Shops or similar commercial uses should be consolidated within existing commercial zones. Highway frontage land is not recommended for bulky goods retailing or shopping centres.

Strategic Actions – Development guidelines for highway frontage land

- Develop specific DCP/development guidelines for land uses that comply with the criteria proposed in Table 8.

The following criteria (provided in Table 8 below) are proposed to be applied to determine appropriate uses for highway frontage land. Land use proposals should comply with the location and design criteria outlined. These criteria may be incorporated into LEP zone objectives or further clarified by preparing DCP guidelines and standards as appropriate. It would be appropriate to retain a residential zoning, but to allow additional uses subject to specified the criteria listed in Table 8.

Table 8: Criteria for appropriate uses for highway frontage land within Singleton

Broad Location Criteria	Comment
Water and sewer services for commercial uses over and above residential levels would be subject to availability.	Intensification of development would be limited to availability of existing public utility services.
Existing buildings or items with heritage values are to be retained.	Heritage values and the scale of development contribute to the special character and quality of the town at its entry points.
Traffic generation shall not be greater than equivalent residential use of the land unless no direct highway access can be provided (e.g. rear lane or side street).	Additional traffic generation with direct highway access is to be discouraged, to provide an incentive for alternative rear access. This results in traffic safety and management benefits.
The existing scale, character and density of development shall be generally retained.	Although desirable to maintain existing scale and character, opportunities exist for higher density and mixed use redevelopment, where this is high standard and results in other criteria being met. A general 2 storey height limit should apply. New development should not adversely affect privacy of the adjoining rear yards of residential properties by ensuring adequate design, setbacks and landscaping.
Use of land should be based on both traffic generation potential and the type of land use.	A range of small scale development types may be appropriate where these do not have high traffic generation.
Allow mixed use development which is designed to take into account sensitivity of land uses to air quality	For example, residential development may be compatible as a second storey with rear outlook above, or at the rear of ground floor small office or

Broad Location Criteria	Comment
and traffic noise impacts.	commercial space. Commercial development should not intrude into adjoining residential areas.
Large commercial and illuminated advertisements should be prohibited.	Clear advertising sign guidelines need to be developed which retain residential amenity.
Current lot sizes should not be reduced by further subdivision.	Incentives could be provided to consolidate lots to increase their size and provide greater future development opportunities.

6.8 Adequacy of land for industry and commerce, and requirements for additional land and services

Provision of adequate and appropriate industrial and commercial land is important in catering for future economic activity within the town. A number of studies have been undertaken in the past, which have been taken into account in the preparation of the Strategy, together with the response to community consultation undertaken in relation to the Situation Analysis review.

Commercial land

Commercial development in Singleton as a whole is well catered for under existing zonings. However, sectors that need consideration in future land use planning are the provision of land for bulky goods retailing, and provision for long term commercial land requirements in future urban areas in North Singleton.

Commercial land use in Singleton is concentrated within the town CBD area, with additional local shopping facilities in Singleton Heights. There is a need to provide additional local commercial areas to service future urban development in Singleton Heights, and demand exists for suitable sites with highway exposure for bulky goods retailing on larger sites.

A Review of Options for an Additional Local Retail Facility in North Singleton (Hirst Consulting Services 2007) evaluated 6 location options based on criteria including convenience, commercial attractiveness, investment optimisation, separation from CBD, site size, exposure and character. The review concluded that the only suitable sites are located along the proposed Pioneer Road link to Bridgman Road in North Singleton.

Future investigation on the suitability of, and options for, small scale non-residential facilities within the Clubhouse Precinct of the Gowrie Links Urban Release Area may occur. This will require a formal study.

Bulky goods retailing land options are extremely limited in Singleton. In the short term, this type of development can best be provided for in the Maison Dieu and McDougalls Hill Industrial Areas (an area with appropriate lot sizes and services close to the town), and in the long term by the provision of a specific bulky goods retailing

area. This will require local environmental plan provisions which support mixed use light industrial development in this specific area only. Some uses that occupy large areas of zoned commercial land in the Singleton CBD may be able to relocate to larger sites in the Maison Dieu/McDougalls Hill area. This may free up sites within the CBD and provide commercial redevelopment opportunities. A decision on the preferred long term site for bulky goods retailing development should await finalisation of the route of a future highway bypass, but would be located on the northern approach to the town. Although there has been interest in providing for this type of land on the New England Highway along the southern approaches to the town, sites in this location are not suitable, for the following reasons:

1. Adverse affect on nearby agricultural activities, noting that any development in this area will be on prime agricultural land which should not be developed.
2. The land is subject to significant flood impacts (being part of a floodway), and any development has potential to adversely affect urban areas as a result of changes to flood flows.
3. This area provides the gateway to Singleton for visitors and tourists, and it is essential to retain a high degree of amenity and rural character to be able to market Singleton as a destination with a unique and identifiable character, and as a community of excellence and sustainability.
4. Any premature development on this land has the potential to prejudice and prevent a future New England Highway bypass of Singleton.

Industrial land

The requirements for industrial land within the Singleton LGA are complex, and also require consideration within a regional context. Key elements to be considered in the Strategy are the types of industrial land and services required, existing and projected land supply and demand, the options for future provision for industry, and criteria for the location of new industrial development. The Strategy may also identify and promote employment generating activities for which Singleton is particularly suited.

Future employment generating opportunities where Singleton has locational advantages and which offer high potential to contribute to sustainable employment generation are as follows:

- Tourism
- Development related to transport infrastructure (e.g. railways and highways)
- Home based businesses and clusters
- Energy sector related
- Local and regional food processing and agriculture related (e.g. abattoir)

Regional demand for industrial land has been considered in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy. Projected demand for general purpose industrial land needs in the Lower Hunter for the 25 years to 2031 is 825 ha and the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy states that there are currently 503 ha for the whole Lower Hunter Region. There is also around 1,200 ha of specialised industrial land available for specialised activities. Five main types of industrial land can be identified in Singleton and are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: Industrial land types

Industrial land type	Comment
Light industrial/warehouse/bulky goods retailing (up to about 2 ha lot size)	Provided for in existing industrial areas, this comprises the predominant demand.
Large lot/heavy industrial	Generally equates to heavy industrial. Comprises uses requiring separation from other activities. Provided for in Mt Thorley Industrial Area.
Small scale, mixed use or rural industries able to be integrated with other uses (e.g. rural, residential or rural residential)	Includes transport and earthmoving, businesses, processing of rural produce, and small businesses associated with residential use or rural, with few or no non resident employees. Often conducted with no development consent or planning control.
Specialised employment areas (e.g. airport or transport related, and Macquarie Generation land)	Provide specific attributes, but are subject to limitations related to the specialised activities that can be carried out.
Adaptive reuse of sites having suitable infrastructure (e.g. former coal mines)	Have existing infrastructure (e.g. water allocation and supply), wastewater treatment, roads, rail access, electricity, etc.) and are separated from urban areas. Limited by current rural zoning.

Selmon and Broyd (2006) note that the Industrial and Commercial Lands Study of the Cessnock City Wide Settlement Strategy identifies an undersupply of light industrial land, with an additional 50 ha required to provide adequate supply for the next 15 years. Industrial land supply in Newcastle LGA is considered adequate for the short to medium term. Maitland is estimated to have industrial land supply for at least 10 years, but existing land available does not meet all demand characteristics of the market. Muswellbrook has a relatively small land supply and appears to have minor impact on demand and supply issues in Singleton LGA, with the exception of specialised industrial land opportunities around Bayswater and Liddell Power Stations.

Table 10: Summary of current zoned employment/industrial land in Singleton LGA

Name	Characteristics (total area, lot sizes, zoning and occupation)	Infrastructure limitations	Comments
Mt Thorley Industrial Area	115.2 ha zoned 4 Industrial, predominant lot sizes 0.5 to 2.0 ha, 80% of lots occupied	No sewer, water supply at capacity limits. Separated from residential uses.	Currently 20% of land is vacant, but is subject to constraints that limit development with 15.9 ha realistically available, including some large lots. Suited to heavy industrial uses and those with a mining focus
Maison Dieu Industrial Area	64.2 ha zoned 4 Industrial, with 87% occupied, no large lots with predominant sizes 0.3 to 0.5 ha	Low pressure sewer	Vacant land which could realistically be available is 6.7 ha. Site restricted to small and medium users, with no large sites
McDougall's Hill Industrial Area	53 ha zoned 4 Industrial, proposed 0.2 to 0.8 ha lot size, not subdivided or developed	Low pressure sewer	Proposed for development in near future. Some biodiversity constraints
Industrial areas in Singleton town area	Small lots zoned 4 Industrial, all occupied	Sewered	Some lots are occupied by residential uses

Source: Urbis JHD, Selmon and Broyd 2006

Selmon and Broyd (2006) suggest that there is currently about 5 years supply remaining at current development rates at Mt Thorley and Maison Dieu, plus McDougalls Hill. This study suggests planning for additional land provision of 60 ha for next 10 to 20 years. However, the industrial lands analysis prepared by Urbis JHD to support the Whittingham industrial proposal indicates that land sales and demand have been steady, with a significant rise since 2003.

Selmon and Broyd (2006) identified 3 options for provision of additional industrial land:

1. Defer until growth potential of LGA is established in Singleton Land Use Strategy (particularly considering infrastructure requirements and options and locations for industrial growth).
2. Investigation of potential for additional land at Mt Thorley for large lot industrial development.
3. Give further consideration to the Whittingham proposal, noting that this should provide for general industrial uses rather than light industrial, and that bulky goods retailing should be prohibited.

There is a high degree of uncertainty in relation to the demand for large lot medium and heavy industrial land uses. The uptake for these sites in the Hunter Employment Zone and Macquarie Generation lands has historically been very slow, and these uses typically will have a wide range of locational options, both within the region and Australia. To supply current demands, there is no immediate need to rezone further industrial land or to commit to the supply of additional infrastructure. However, the benefit of rezoning additional industrial land would be to provide a more competitive market for industrial land by increasing the number of developers, and to provide an opportunity to attract development by reason of land supply. It should be noted that this situation already exists in the Lower Hunter which currently has a supply of industrial land available, and proposals for additional rezoning of industrial lands appear likely to proceed. Accordingly, the Land Use Strategy proposes to rezone approximately 250 hectares in the Whittingham area as a “land bank” for heavy industrial purposes over a 25 year period. The rate of development of this area during the 25 year Strategy period should be staged to ensure that sequencing occurs in an orderly manner, and that adequate infrastructure such as water and sewer is available prior to subdivision and development taking place.

Proposed criteria for considering land use changes to allow new industrial areas are outlined in Table 11. These take into account the strategic principles proposed by Selmon and Broyd (2006).

Table 11: Criteria for location of additional industrial zonings

Broad location criteria
Located within or adjacent to an existing urban area (or within reasonable proximity to Singleton or Branxton) on relatively flat land which is not visually prominent.
Proximity to major transport facilities such as major roads and with railway access.
No direct access for individual industrial developments to the New England or Golden Highway, but otherwise convenient, suitable standard access.
Must have direct connection to water and sewer, provision for adequate electricity. Require water allocation and reticulated water supply and sewer for all new industrial lots.
Availability, or possible extension, of essential infrastructure such as water, sewer, electricity, sealed road access.
Must support an industrial land hierarchy, with industrial service land located close to town, and large lot industrial/mining related development separated from town.
Located so as to not have any adverse environmental impacts (e.g. visual impacts).
All large new areas for heavy industrial to be serviced by rail access.
Not subject to development constraints such as flooding, bushfire hazard, or biodiversity issues.
Access to industrial areas should avoid traversing residential areas and areas are to be accessible by public transport (if available).

Objectives – Industrial and commercial land

- Provide adequate industrial land bank to meet demand for development and enable employment opportunities.
- Provide adequate land for commercial development in Singleton in suitable locations, while maintaining compact, walkable centres.
- Encourage and support future employment generating opportunities which will contribute to sustainable employment generation.

Policies – Industrial and commercial land

- The LEP will provide adequate industrial zoned land to meet demand for development and enable employment opportunities.
- Additional land adjacent to that currently zoned for industrial purposes to be retained with planning provisions that safeguard adjacent land for prospective industrial zoning for longer term development.
- Support in-principle future heavy industrial development to be located on suitable former mine sites, where significant infrastructure already exists and/or new development can be collocated with existing mines.
- Maintain existing commercial zoned land, and strengthen the integrity of the CBD by adopting planning controls that consolidate commercial development.
- Ensure planning provisions for industrial areas do not support inappropriate commercial development, but allow bulky goods retailing in the Maison Dieu and McDougalls Hill Industrial Areas.

Strategic Actions – Industrial and commercial land

- Provide for medium/heavy industrial zonings, with up to 250 ha of additional zoned industrial land to be provided as a 25 year land bank. Staged release would be subject to demand and provision of infrastructure and services.
- Provide the additional zoned industrial land principally at the proposed Whittingham industrial site, allowing the site to be developed for heavy industrial purposes, subject to the following LEP provisions:
 - Provision and funding of reticulated water and sewer, as well as road transport infrastructure.
 - Establishment of an environmental conservation zoning to protect significant ecological areas of the site.
 - Provisions requiring the land to be directly accessible to the rail network.

- Prohibit bulky goods retailing.
- Prohibit light industry unless it supports or is ancillary to the medium/heavy industrial purposes.
- Apply criteria in Table 11 in considering any additional rezoning proposals for industrial purposes.
- Establish an industrial land monitor/database.
- Investigate the potential for encouraging infill development or facilitating more efficient use of existing industrial land supply.
- Undertake further assessment of the opportunities to expand the existing Mt Thorley Industrial Area.
- Initiate discussions with Rix's Creek Mine about the future of the Singleton N-W land use opportunities, primarily for large industrial sites.
- Ensure that available zoned industrial land is not in a single ownership, by enabling at least 2 development fronts.
- Consider including a specific LEP provision to allow industrial use of coal mining sites.
- Implement a Council policy or DCP for bulky goods to limit retailing in industrial areas.
- Implement LEP provisions to allow compatible home businesses in residential zones.
- Review CBD boundaries in preparation of draft LEP to ensure commercial areas are appropriately zoned and avoid oversupply of commercial zoned land. Zoned commercial land in CBD should be expanded to include Department of Housing land on southern end of Ryan Avenue (behind Franklins) and the former Telstra Depot off York Street.
- Consider 'core' and 'peripheral/supporting' commercial zones, subject to Standard LEP template.
- Implement recommended options of Hirst Consulting Services 2007 report on additional local retail facilities in North Singleton.
- Ensure the permissibility of community and cultural facilities in commercial zones.
- Encourage a compact town through infill and mixed use developments.
- Implement CBD Strategic Improvement Project through DCP provisions.

6.9 Floodplain development and management

Extensive areas of the LGA are subject to flooding, including the town of Singleton, parts of Branxton village and surrounds, Broke, Jerrys Plains and rural areas forming part of the Hunter River floodplain. The Floodplain Management Manual 2005 prepared by the NSW Government provides guidance on approaches to floodplain development and management.

The town of Singleton is economically vulnerable to flood impacts, and future new development should seek to reduce this vulnerability by measures such as restricting additional urban zoned land to flood free locations, supporting flood free road links, and limiting infill density within the flood liable areas of the existing town.

Singleton town is located on the natural flood plain. While the constructed levee system can reduce flood impacts from minor to moderate floods, it is not feasible to prevent major flood events impacting on the Singleton town area. As a consequence, the preferred strategy is to minimise further development on the floodplain to prevent impacts. Development in floodways such as at Dunolly and Glenridding is particularly vulnerable to flood impacts which cannot be mitigated except by limiting land use.

Objectives – Floodplain development and management

- To minimise development on the floodplain, especially in areas identified as of high hazard.
- To apply minimum standards to new development on flood liable land, based on the level of hazard.

Policies – Floodplain development and management

- Adopt the 1 in 100 year (1%) flood as the flood standard for Singleton LGA. New residential development and substantial extensions and alterations to existing residential development will be required to have a floor level above this standard.
- A flood hazard and management study is required prior to any future changes to land use (i.e. zoning) being considered by Council. Any study is to have regard to the above objectives.
- Prevent erection of additional new dwelling houses on the floodplain in rural areas.
- Confirm existing policy to prevent additional development at Glenridding, owing to its flood liability and hazard.

Strategic Actions – Floodplain development and management

- Consider formal adoption of the Singleton Floodplain Management Plan 2003.
- Update the Singleton Floodplain Management DCP in conjunction with the new Singleton LEP.

- Undertake data review, mapping and flood modelling to prepare more detailed spatial data showing the extent of the floodplain and estimated flood levels in rural areas of the LGA.
- Include LEP provisions to prevent development on unsuitable sites, to consider risks, and to ensure appropriate design and management.

6.10 Availability of suitable sites for future institutional use

As the population and economy in Singleton grows, it is critical for suitable land to be set aside for the needs of institutional uses, such as aged persons accommodation, health facilities and education facilities.

Key uses which may be anticipated/required as the town expands should be in appropriate locations (e.g. medical facilities, educational facilities, community facilities, nursing homes, childcare etc.). Important sites include Singleton Hospital surplus land which should be retained for institutional use.

Objectives – sites for future institutional use

- To provide suitable land for the future needs of institutional uses (e.g. aged persons accommodation, health facilities and education facilities).

Policies – sites for future institutional use

- Seek to maintain sites with a minimum area of 1 ha in suitable locations for future institutional use.
- Identify future school sites in North Singleton as a priority in the short term.

Strategic Actions – sites for future institutional use

- Reach agreement with Department of Education and Training in relation to future school site requirements in North Singleton.
- Include LEP provisions allowing integration of institutional uses.
- Identify future sites for institutional and nursing home/hostel development and maintain these at an adequate size.
- Ensure new subdivision and development proposals consider retaining suitable sites which are adaptable to a range of future purposes.

7 PROPOSED RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUBDIVISION

Current villages within Singleton LGA are Broke, Bulga, Jerrys Plains and Camberwell, which are currently zoned 1(d) Rural Small Holdings under Singleton LEP 1996. There are also areas in rural locations zoned for rural residential development. Villages and rural residential areas currently zoned 1(d) have a total area of about 2,052 hectares, of which the 4 villages referred to above comprise about 30%. Villages and rural residential areas comprise around 7% of the total population of the LGA.

Apart from villages, which were created as part of historic subdivision patterns, current demand exists for two broad types of general rural residential development:

- Rural fringe, generally in estates adjacent to an urban area with services such as sealed roads, water and reticulated sewer, and lot sizes of 4,000 square metres to 2 ha (e.g. Retreat, Hambledon Hill and Branxton rural residential areas);
- Rural living lots comprising residential use within a rural environment, generally with no services and lots 2 ha or larger (e.g. 'concessional' and other lots of less than the current general 40 ha minimum area subdivided since 1966 in rural areas generally, and 1(d) zoned land at Bulga and land off Wine Country Drive south of Branxton with access through Cessnock City Council area).



Purchasers of rural lifestyle lots are seeking lifestyle rather than productive attributes of the land and are generally persons relying on employment in Singleton and adjoining LGAs, or moving from outside the area. Rural residential subdivision and land use is often considered to be in conflict with commercial agriculture, and separation from agriculture is normally desirable.

Rural residential subdivision and development is a key land use planning issue in the Singleton LGA. Demand for small rural subdivision is primarily related to road accessibility, specifically proximity to Singleton, Broke, Branxton and Maitland and to mining related employment opportunities west of Singleton. Its development can affect agricultural land uses and viability, and the provision of services and infrastructure. It can also result in a range of environmental impacts including water availability, traffic, and biodiversity impacts.

The Singleton Rural Residential Strategy has identified short term candidate areas for development and has formed the basis for the proposals in this Strategy for new areas to be identified for rural residential subdivision. As part of the community consultation undertaken in relation to the Situation Analysis, additional further areas for rezoning have also been proposed and require evaluation.

As outlined in Section 6, for planning purposes it is anticipated that around 35% of new dwellings to 2021 will be in rural areas (around 70 per year), but this proportion is substantially dependent on the provision of land for rural residential development. The current demand for rural lifestyle development suggests that demand for rural residential land will exceed supply in the short term, with little further land available under the current LEP and DCP provisions. Singleton Council (December 2005) has estimated a demand for rural residential allotments (as distinct from new dwellings) of 75 per year.

Key land use planning issues were identified in the Situation Analysis as follows:

- Provision of adequate land for rural residential development in suitable locations.
- Future use and development of villages and all 1(d) zoned land.
- Village service provision and maintenance (including roads, water, sewer, groundwater and surface water runoff).

Strategic directions for each of these issues are presented in the sections below.

Appropriate zones for rural residential purposes need to be determined, taking into account the Standard LEP requirements implemented by the Department of Planning. The available zonings need to be considered in conjunction with minimum subdivision sizes. Zone options are RU4 Rural Small Holdings (objectives mainly relate to primary production), RU5 Village (flexible zone allowing uses incompatible with existing rural residential character), R5 Large Lot Residential (primarily supports residential use), and E4 Environmental Living (for areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values). The Large Lot Residential zone most closely reflects the character of most existing rural residential areas in Singleton.

7.1 Provision of adequate land for rural residential development in suitable locations

It is important to provide for certainty in relation to the location of rural residential development to prevent adverse impacts on primary production land and flow on effects of increasing land values for other rural land.

The Strategy recognises the need to provide additional land within the LGA to cater for rural residential purposes. It provides the framework for:

- (1) Determining areas for further investigation and rezoning.
- (2) The preferred LEP zones (Rural Small Holdings where intensive agricultural production is a key objective, Large Lot Residential, or Environmental Living).
- (3) Staging of rural residential development.
- (4) Providing criteria for future rezoning requests for rural residential development outside current investigation areas.
- (5) Flow on DCPs and Section 94 contributions plans required following rezoning.

The Situation Analysis identified demand and supply issues and future planning options. It is important to note that the drivers of rural residential differ between

Singleton and Branxton, and development rates may vary over the life of the Strategy depending on the availability of suitable land supply.

The Strategy determines what additional areas should be zoned for rural residential development, and the infrastructure servicing requirements for these areas. The proposed areas for rural residential development are shown on Maps 7.1A and 7.1B and in Table 12. These are based on the *Singleton Rural Residential Development Strategy 2005* and subsequent agreements between the Council and the Department of Planning. Based on the estimates in this table, there is a potential yield of 670 lots within these candidate areas, which would provide for just under 10 years demand based on 75 rural residential lots per year.

There is potential for expansion of the identified candidate areas, or for increasing the subdivision density to increase lot numbers. On this basis the Council would not need to consider additional candidate areas for rural residential development over the life of the Strategy.

The objectives, policies and strategic actions for rural residential development in Singleton LGA are as outlined below. This section includes infrastructure provision guidelines for new rural residential areas.

Table 12: Proposed candidate areas – rural residential

Candidate areas	Description
Lower Belford	Total area 277 ha in 17 existing lots. Proposed zoning Environmental Living, minimum average subdivision area 5 ha. Maximum potential approximately 30 lots. Potential occurrence of listed endangered ecological community requires detailed ecological investigation. Within proposed extension of Hunter Water Corporation service area and subject to service agreement. Consideration should be given to lower minimum lot size and potential reticulated water servicing, which would increase lot yield.
Jerrys Plains	Total area 20 ha. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 1 ha. Reticulated water available. Maximum potential 17 lots. Potential occurrence of nationally listed endangered ecological population may require detailed ecological investigation.
Wattle Ponds North East	Total area 88 ha in 4 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 1 ha. Reticulated water to be provided. Maximum potential approximately 70 lots.
Wattle Ponds North West	Total area is 167 ha in 8 existing parcels. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average area of 1 ha. Reticulated water to be provided. Maximum potential approximately 134 lots.
Sedgefield	Total area is 922 ha in 57 existing lots. Proposed zoning Environmental Living, minimum average area 5 ha. Maximum potential approx. 100 lots. Reticulated water not available. Rezoning should not progress until master planning of the area,

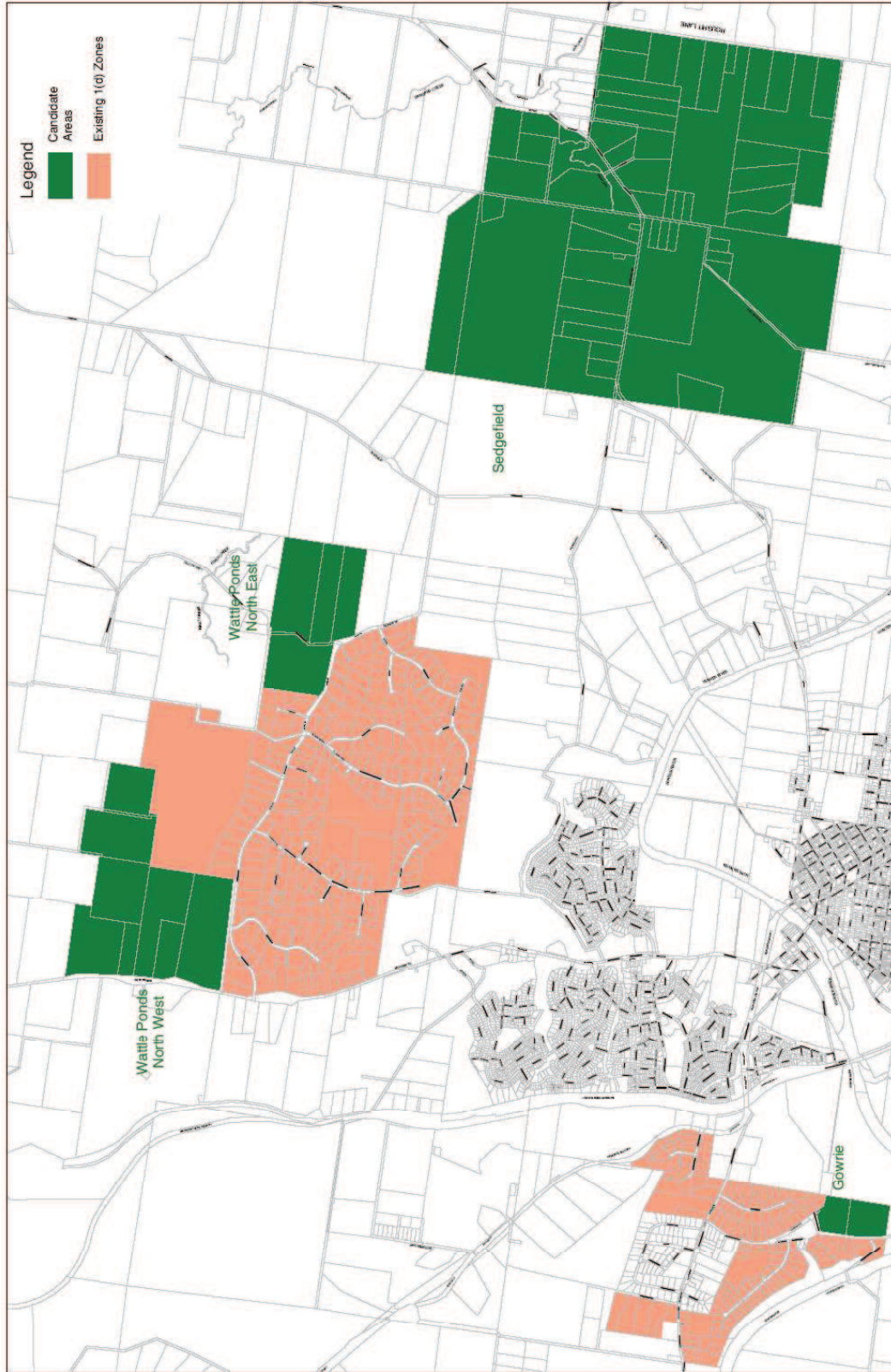
Candidate areas	Description
	required by DoP, is completed.
Gowrie	Total area 18 ha in 2 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 4,000m ² with reticulated water and sewerage provided. Maximum potential approximately 35 lots.
Branxton North West	Total area 88 ha in 7 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 4,000m ² (if sewer available). Full urban services required to be provided subject to service agreement with Hunter Water Corporation. Potential occurrence of listed endangered ecological community requires detailed ecological investigation. Maximum potential approximately 180 lots. Land adjoining to the south may have potential for rezoning to "Environmental Living" to provide a transition to agricultural lands.
Branxton North East	Total area 41 ha in 5 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 4,000m ² (if sewer available). Full urban services required to be provided subject to service agreement with Hunter Water Corporation. Maximum potential approximately 87 lots. Potential occurrence of listed endangered ecological community requires detailed ecological investigation.
Branxton South West	Total area 8 ha in 8 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 4,000m ² . Full urban services required to be provided subject to service agreement with Hunter Water Corporation. Maximum potential approximately 17 lots. Potential occurrence of listed endangered ecological community requires detailed ecological investigation.

Objectives – Rural residential development

- Provide opportunities for additional rural residential subdivision and development in suitable locations, and enable a range of different types of rural residential development.
- Ensure that adequate services are available for rural residential lots.
- Ensure that the supply of zoned rural residential land does not unreasonably exceed demand.
- Apply criteria to identify the best location for rural residential estates and balance socio-economic goals associated with new rural residential development with the need to preserve areas of high agricultural, scenic or environmental value.
- Identify appropriate development controls for rural residential areas through DCP provisions.

Policies – Rural residential development

- Provide for a supply of up to 75 rural residential lots per year split 60/40% between Singleton fringe and Branxton.
- Zone adequate land for between 5 and 10 years supply (i.e. up to 400 lots around Singleton and 350 lots around Branxton), with review of land supply being undertaken every 3 years.
- New rural residential areas must relate to the long term preferred settlement structure (i.e. not be located on land with potential for urban development in the long term – 50 year + time frame), and provide adequate transport accessibility.
- The staging and sequencing of new rural residential areas shall be dependent upon the provision of adequate water supply, reticulated sewer (smaller lots less than 8,000m²) and other infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunications and bush fire services.
- Consolidate further rural residential development of this type of land use in only two locations for each locality within the LGA, so that further services are potentially economic to provide in the long term if sufficient demand exists (i.e. do not disperse areas).
- Propose additional LEP objectives for rural residential under the proposed Standard LEP zoning provisions.
- No rezonings for rural residential in identified constraint areas (use map layers as an overlay for LEP).
- All rural residential development should have a good quality and secure water supply.
- Smaller lots (less than 8,000m²) shall have reticulated sewer provided.
- Biodiversity and water and sewer infrastructure reviews be undertaken prior to determining final zoning boundaries and minimum lot sizes.
- Subdivision for the purposes of rural residential development should be undertaken in a manner that will not increase the potential for water extraction from streams or groundwater and comply with harvestable water rights requirements.



Source: Singleton Shire Council 2007

Singleton Land Use Strategy

EXISTING RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS & PROPOSED RURAL RESIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION AREAS - SINGLETON

prepared by planning workshop outcomes
1. Consulting planning 21C off

Issued 2 Oct 07

Fig 7.1C

The following criteria (provided in Table 13) have been used to identify potential land for rural residential development under the Strategy. The application of these criteria satisfies requirements identified by the Department of Primary Industries for a strategy for rural residential development.

Table 13: Criteria used in identifying potential rural residential land

Broad Location Criteria	Comment
Distance from town	Land should be within a reasonable travel distance/time from the centre of an urban area (e.g. 10 km or 15 minutes from centre of Singleton or Branxton).
Provision of services	Ability to provide reticulated water, sewer, electricity, telecommunications, bush fire services should be considered.
Location	Avoid 'stand-alone' rural residential development unless it is a logical extension of an existing significant rural residential subdivision area that will contribute to achieving a critical mass to support basic services.
Capacity for onsite water storage	This relates to the ability to have supplementary dam water supplies. Additional dam storage may not be feasible due to water resource limits and harvestable water rights.
Minimal impact on existing infrastructure	Sufficient reserve capacity should exist in power, school bus and telecommunications services.
Good sealed road access	Efficient use needs to be made of the existing road network. In general, this is relatively lightly trafficked apart from the New England Highway and some major roads leading to Singleton.
Exclude environmentally sensitive land	This land often has good visual outlooks, vegetation and privacy, all of which are in demand.
Exclude areas of high bushfire hazard	Vegetated land is in demand, but is subject to bushfire hazard constraints.
Exclude known mineral and extractive resources	Includes appropriate buffers to extractive and other non-compatible land uses.
Exclude areas near non-compatible land uses	Includes appropriate buffers to uses such as sewerage treatment works, etc.
Exclude water supply catchment land	This issue predominantly relates to avoiding contamination from onsite treatment systems, but may also relate to water access rights and usage.
Avoid areas with threatened species or	Remaining areas of native vegetation are expected to have biodiversity and ecological values. Presence of endangered ecological communities and threatened species needs

Broad Location Criteria	Comment
EECs	identification.
Avoid areas with high soil erosion risk	Primarily relates to steeper lands, and land with soil characteristics that make it more prone to erosion.
Avoid forestry land and contaminated land	Relates generally to former orchard areas, stock dip areas, and areas with identified forestry resources.
Avoid saline land and areas with soils unsuitable for onsite effluent disposal	Although not an absolute constraint, development of these lands would require reticulated sewer or alternative on site effluent treatment systems.
Avoid flood prone land	Acceptable only if flood free access and building sites/waste disposal areas are available.
Avoid Aboriginal and European heritage areas and sites	Examples include the curtilage surrounding historic dwellings.
Avoid areas with high groundwater tables	Potential problems with on site wastewater disposal, and salinity.
Avoid land with slopes greater than 18 degrees	Increased erosion potential, including from vehicle access.

Strategic Actions – Rural residential development

- Rural residential around Singleton must ensure that future urban growth options are not constrained by rural residential development, and that the road hierarchy allows flexibility for future growth of the town (e.g. maintains options for highway bypass and link roads).
- Determine arrangements with Hunter Water Corporation for provision of water and sewer to service all Branxton Rural residential areas, and Lower Belford candidate area.
- With Cessnock City Council and DoP, review the need for further areas for urban expansion within Singleton LGA adjacent to the Branxton urban area prior to rezoning any additional land for rural residential purposes.
- Adopt criteria for considering further applications for rural residential areas that are not in the currently identified candidate areas (as outlined in Table 13).

- Prepare Section 94 Contributions Plans prior to gazettal of LEP providing for additional rural residential land.
- Establish a land monitor to review rural residential supply and demand, dwelling and subdivision approvals. This monitor represents a compilation of subdivision and development approvals, dwelling completions, land releases and land sales within the rural residential candidate areas.
- Consider sunset clause provisions for rural residential zoned areas. Will prevent long term vacant developable land around villages and urban areas which may hinder future land use options, and also promotes supply of developed land.
- Maintain existing development limits within Village of Camberwell (as per existing Clause 19).
- Consider both minimum and average lot size (and possibly maximum) as a requirement. Allows for more flexible design to reflect environmental and planning constraints.
- Relate minimum subdivision size to servicing and to soil capacity for onsite disposal.
- Ensure appropriate minimum areas for onsite disposal depending upon soil type, slope, proximity to watercourse, and amount of effluent likely to be generated.
- Avoid reliance on groundwater sources as the primary water supply for rural industry or potable uses for dwellings.
- Ensure adequate water supply for fire fighting by way of dams and 20,000 litres minimum dedicated supply for this purpose.
- Consider the following LEP zones and minimum lot sizes for rural residential development:
 - R5 Large Lot Residential where town water is provided, with two minimum average lot sizes (indicated on the lot size map), being 4,000m² where both sewer and water are provided, and 1 ha where water only is provided. The absolute minimum lot sizes for these areas being 2,000m² and 8,000m² respectively.
 - Use of RU5 Village zone is not proposed.
 - Large unserviced rural residential lots (4 ha minimum with 5 ha minimum average) could be an E4 Environmental Living zone, although in most cases provision of services is preferable taking into account the criteria in Table 13.
- Prepare a DCP to identify appropriate sequencing of rural residential development and associated road, water, sewer, electricity, and telecommunications infrastructure. Subdivision layout is to be master planned and investigation made to create

certainty for future residents by use of the LEP Lot Size Map provisions of the Standard Instrument.

7.2 Future use and development of existing villages and all existing 1(d) zoned land

This section addresses the development potential and future zoning of existing rural villages and other existing 1(d) zoned land. There are 9 distinct areas currently zoned 1(d) Rural Small Holdings under Singleton LEP 1996.

The villages of Broke, Bulga, Jerrys Plains and Camberwell villages have individual character and planning issues, and provide alternative residential opportunities to larger urban areas. Villages currently have minimal infrastructure services and historic subdivision patterns with not all lots having a dwelling entitlement under the current planning controls. Section 7.3 reviews infrastructure service provision for these areas.

Other areas currently zoned 1(d) are primarily rural residential subdivisions approved by Singleton Council.

An analysis of lot availability and demand undertaken by Singleton Council (December 2005) found that existing 1(d) zones have little potential to provide further rural residential lots to meet anticipated demands based on historic trends. This analysis assumed that lots of less than 5 ha are unlikely to be developed, notwithstanding the existing LEP minimum subdivision area within 1(d) zones of 1 ha. This was largely due to native vegetation and topographic constraints. The situation for each of the existing zoned areas is summarised in Table 14 and these are shown on Map 7.1.

Table 14: Situation for existing villages and existing 1(d) zoned land

Village or area	Description
Camberwell	Special provisions apply in current LEP (Clause 19) which should be continued. No significant development potential, subject to coal mining impacts.
Jerrys Plains	No significant development potential, subject to possible future coal mining impacts. Potential infill development. Reticulated water supply provided.
Broke	No significant development potential, parts are subject to flooding. Reticulated water supply provided.
Bulga	No significant development potential due to development constraints. Generally has rural small holding character, rather than residential. Environmental Living zone appropriate.
Whittingham	Unlikely to yield significant new infill lots. Currently serviced by low pressure water supply at limit of capacity. Environmental Living zone appropriate.
Branxton	Serviced by Hunter Water Corporation reticulated water supply and pump out sewer system, but no further pump out systems will be approved. Potential for an additional 6 to 15 lots.
Hanwood Estate	Subject to significant development constraints, and unlikely to be

Village or area	Description
	further developed in short term. Included in urban investigation area under Lower Hunter Regional Strategy. Under current planning controls there is potential for an additional 310 rural residential lots to be subdivided.
North West Singleton	Potential for up to 5 additional lots. Subject to servicing constraints, and close proximity to industrial area.
Retreat	Potential for around 50 additional lots.

The following objectives, policies and strategic actions are derived from the Situation Analysis. Strategic directions for issues are presented in the sections below. Future LEP provisions (including zoning) are proposed for existing 1(d) zoned land, and infill or additional development potential should be considered in villages.

Objectives – Development of villages and existing 1(d) zoned land

- Generally retain existing subdivision and development provisions for existing 1(d) zoned land, within the framework provided by the Standard LEP. Provide for 1 ha minimum average lot size and 4,000m² minimum average if sewerage.
- Review options for infill and consolidation of existing areas (except Camberwell).

Policies – Development of villages and existing 1(d) zoned land

- Review options for consolidating additional rural residential development within existing zones to facilitate more efficient infrastructure utilisation.
- Maintain and enhance the distinctive character and landscape setting of existing villages, and ensure that the character of villages is identified in DCP or LEP supplementary objectives.
- Prepare draft outline for the security of villages from further underground and open cut mining with an emphasis on a buffer zone and the way forward for growth for these villages.
- Seek to maintain or encourage at least two development options in terms of land ownership for each rural residential area where growth is anticipated and provided for.
- Put in place strong controls on incompatible land uses in rural residential zones, including the use of supplementary objectives.
- Minimum lot sizes for each village are to take into account existing lots, character requirements, on-site wastewater servicing requirements, and separation distances from existing dwellings.

Strategic Actions – Development of villages and 1(d) zoned land

- Zone existing 1(d) zones (except Bulga and Whittingham) R5 Large Lot Residential. Retain current 8,000m² minimum subdivision area but implement a 1 ha minimum average.
- Zone Bulga and Whittingham 1(d) zones E4 Environmental Living with 4 ha minimum subdivision area and 5 ha minimum average.
- Update DCPs to reflect updated LEP provisions.

7.3 Village service provision and maintenance (including roads, water, sewer, groundwater and surface water runoff)

This section addresses the infrastructure capacity and maintenance of the rural villages of Broke, Bulga, Jerrys Plains and Camberwell. A review of infrastructure issues relating to each of the villages within the LGA was included in the Situation Analysis report (Table 69).

The Village of Broke is being provided with a reticulated water supply, and is the only village where substantial demand for additional development could be anticipated. There is currently minimal land available for subdivision at Bulga under current LEP and DCP provisions. Further development at Camberwell is restricted by LEP provisions, and historic trends show little demand for new development at Jerrys Plains.

Objectives – Village service provision and maintenance

- Provision of limited urban services within villages (e.g. water, and waste) where demand for growth is identified and service provision is economic.

Policies – Village service provision and maintenance

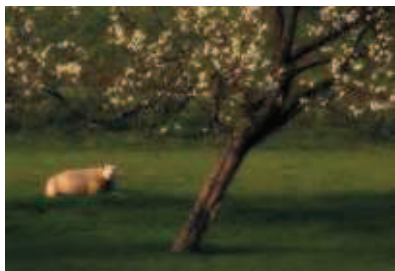
- Reticulated water is available to Broke and Jerrys Plains, but not Bulga, Camberwell or any other village type areas.
- Reticulated sewer will not be provided to any village, and minimum lot sizes for subdivision and construction of dwelling houses is to be based on on-site wastewater disposal requirements.

Strategic Actions – Village service provision and maintenance

- Review potential for further development at Broke and current Section 94 contributions plan provisions.
- Maintain current level of development potential in LEP provisions for all villages to relate to service provision.

8 RURAL AREAS

Agriculture is one of the main rural land uses within Singleton LGA and continues to significantly contribute to local economic activity. The main agricultural activities are beef cattle grazing, dairying, viticulture, horticulture and equine activities. Singleton has substantial alluvial areas with high levels of agricultural productivity, with 2% of the LGA (over 8,500 ha) identified as Class 1 agricultural suitability. This land is significant at a regional and state level.



The 2001 ABS agricultural census indicates that the economic value of agriculture for the year was \$34 million and there were around 600 producers. Average farm size for the Singleton LGA in 2001 was estimated at 356 ha and has been declining, and the total number of farms has been increasing. This does not take into account small holdings on which there is limited agricultural production.

A significant proportion of the LGA is used for coal mining or part of mining company land holdings, predominantly in the Rural West Planning Area. There are land use issues related to the impact of transport of coal and road access, as well as mining impacts on surrounding land and the need for appropriate buffers. Coal mining production and employment are expected to be stable or increase during the period of the Strategy.

The Singleton Military Area comprises an area of about 12,500 ha south of the town. This houses the Infantry Centre and other units, and provides economic benefits. There are also potential adverse impacts on land surrounding this area, primarily from noise and vibration.

Rural tourism is increasingly significant in Singleton LGA, with pressure for diversified tourism development particularly in vineyard areas (e.g. Hermitage Road and Broke Fordwich). Vineyards have a high agricultural and tourism value. There is a range of potential land use conflicts relating to agricultural use and impacts, development potential for dwellings, traffic impacts, scenic amenity and commercial activities in rural areas. Future planning should take these issues into account.

Key land use planning issues for the rural areas of Singleton were identified in the Situation Analysis as follows:

- Minimum rural subdivision size
- Protection of agricultural land and viability
- Coal mining lands and buffers
- Defence lands and buffers

- Climate change implications for land use
- Rural water quality and availability and protection of catchments and resources
- Rural servicing costs and requirements
- Branxton-Whittingham corridor development options

Each of these issues is presented below. In addition, the *Central West Rural Lands Inquiry* conducted for the Minister for Planning and concluded in August 2007 has potentially significant impacts for rural planning in NSW. The findings of the Inquiry are discussed in Section 8.9.

8.1 Minimum rural subdivision size

Singleton Council has a significant regulatory influence over future rural land use through controls over the subdivision of rural land. The Strategy and subsequent local environmental plan identify the requirements that will apply to future rural subdivision. Minimum subdivision size affects agricultural viability, enables effective provision of infrastructure servicing, and prevents land use conflicts which may arise from allowing residential uses on small lots in rural areas. Other provisions relating to maintaining and protecting agriculture within the LGA are referred to in Section 8.2.

The demand for rural subdivision is primarily affected by the dwelling entitlement on subdivided lots. Although planning provisions in the LEP could separate dwelling entitlements from lot sizes, the Strategy does not propose this. Proposed minimum rural lot sizes will generally retain existing character and entitlements, with the objective of ensuring that LEP subdivision provisions will be unlikely to change land use significantly.

A minimum area of 150 ha is proposed for the Rural North and Rural West planning areas where the predominant land use is grazing and where larger holdings are common. This is anticipated to have the effect of supporting the retention of commercial grazing activities. In parts of the LGA where the predominant land use is other than grazing and where lot sizes are less than this already, the 40 ha minimum should be retained (e.g. parts of the Rural South, Rural South East and Rural East planning areas).

The standard local environmental plan provisions include a primary production zone, within which a range of minimum lot sizes can apply. The NSW Department of Planning has developed a methodology for determining rural lot sizes which is substantially based on Department of Primary Industries methodology, but which is not readily applicable to the range of land use and existing subdivision pattern within the Singleton LGA. The Department of Primary Industries has indicated a preference for a minimum 150 ha property size to enable effective cattle grazing enterprises in the Hunter Valley which may be considered in determining minimum subdivision area where grazing is a predominant agricultural use.

LEP provisions could provide for a rural small holdings zone, permitting smaller subdivision sizes with the objective of providing for agricultural production. Holdings analysis within selected areas of Singleton LGA shows that there are enough small lots currently in existence to provide for this purpose, and no specifically identified rural small holding areas should be identified for agricultural purposes. Future

investigation may be warranted in the medium term (e.g. in vineyard areas) but water is a significant limitation and at the present time a specific provision cannot be justified. Holding the current 40 ha minimum area in areas with rural small holding potential provides adequate opportunities and prevents land values increasing due to speculation that may occur with such a zone.

Objectives – Minimum rural subdivision size

- Minimum rural subdivision sizes within Singleton LGA will be of sufficient size to accommodate and maintain a range of commercial agricultural production (predominantly grazing enterprises).
- Minimum allotment sizes will take into account land capability and agricultural suitability.

Policies – Minimum rural subdivision size

- LEP provisions for subdivision of rural land should reflect land use capability and the requirements for maintaining commercial agriculture.
- minimum lot sizes (with a dwelling entitlement) are to reflect broad scale land capability/suitability.
- Additional rural subdivision should ensure that adequate infrastructure and services are provided to new lots (including roads, electricity and telecommunications).
- The retention of 'concessional allotments' allowing subdivision of land less than the general minimum area is not supported, recognising that these have resulted in rural residential development in inappropriate locations.
- Adopt a differential minimum rural lot size within the LGA based on predominant land use and existing subdivision pattern.
- New subdivision is not to result in the creation of a right or expectation of additional water rights (e.g. by ensuring no creation of additional lots with river frontage, requiring onsite water provision, or by prior purchase of water entitlement).
- Farm or property management plans should be recognised as an LEP consideration in determining rural subdivision requirements.
- Recognise that production systems now often utilise multiple properties when setting minimum lot sizes.

Strategic Actions – Minimum rural subdivision size

- Consider the following minimum rural lot sizes (with input from DPI):
 - general minimum 40 hectares throughout rural areas of LGA (except where the predominant land use is grazing

on larger holdings and/or mining, and/or the retention of existing land use and subdivision pattern is desirable);

- broad acre grazing, 150 hectares in those parts of LGA where there is currently a predominant rural subdivision size of greater than 40 ha and/or where retention of existing land use and subdivision pattern is desirable (e.g. Rural North and Rural West planning areas).
- Consider permitting agricultural subdivision to occur without dwelling rights or without minimum lot sizes. Could be linked to consolidations, boundary adjustments, property management plans, etc.
- Consider smaller minimum subdivision areas for horticultural areas on an individual basis, where the land use is established prior to subdivision.
- Consider a farm adjustment clause (as per standard LEP).

8.2 Protection of agricultural land and viability

Significant employment in the LGA is generated by agriculture and related activities. Tourism in agricultural areas is also economically important, and needs to be taken into account and provided for. The importance of maintaining commercial agriculture is essential from both an economic and environmental point of view, and has been particularly emphasised by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Important ways in which the Strategy and LEP can influence agriculture are in determining suitable locations for rural residential subdivision and development; supporting the provision or improvement of infrastructure (such as roads or telecommunications); specifying minimum sizes for subdivision of rural land (dealt with in Section 8.1) and the erection of dwellings, affecting the permissibility of agriculture-related activities (e.g. rural worker dwellings, sheds and buildings, farm based industries, etc.); and restriction of uses that may be incompatible with agriculture. The most significant mechanisms relate to separation of rural subdivision entitlements from dwelling entitlements, zoning (including whether there should be more than one rural zone), permissible uses within the zone and exempt and complying development.

Certain measures proposed in the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan to support agricultural land use, and improved environmental management practices may be able to be linked to the Strategy and LEP.

Objectives – Protection of agricultural land and viability

- The Singleton LGA will have agricultural land that:
 - Is sufficient in size and quality to accommodate and maintain a range of commercial agricultural production in accordance with land capability and suitability.
 - Maintains a significant share of the local labour force.

- Rural production areas will be clearly identified by LEP zoning and uses in rural areas should be compatible with agricultural production.
- Other environmental values in rural areas which support agriculture should be maintained (including protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems, rural landscapes, and water quality).

Policies – Protection of agricultural land and viability

- Recognise catchment management authority catchment action plan objectives and priorities as a matter of consideration in LEP provisions.
- Ensure water availability is considered in new development proposals and that adequate supplies are maintained for existing agriculture.
- Rural residential areas will be clearly identified and separated from rural production areas to reduce potential land use conflicts.

Strategic Actions – Protection of agricultural land and viability

- Consider using RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape, and E3 Environmental Management zones in the LEP (These zones are from the DoP Standard LEP provisions).
- Ensure that water supply for non-residential rural development is appropriately considered, including necessary water licences and appropriateness of ground water usage.
- Introduce LEP provisions to ensure that incompatible land uses and activities in agricultural zones are not permitted.
- In conjunction with the CMA, implement performance-based outcomes for the quality of water being discharged.
- In conjunction with the CMA & DPI, develop a framework for requiring farm and property management plans to address water quality and availability.
- Develop policies for dwellings erected in conjunction with intensive agricultural production.
- Review zoning options to enable diversified tourism and accommodation, especially in the Hermitage Road and Broke Fordwich areas.

8.3 Coal mining lands and buffers

Coal mining is probably the most significant land use and economic activity affecting the future of the LGA. In Singleton, coal production and employment is reaching its expected peak, and is likely to be stable or increase for the next 10 – 15 years and then progressively decline as easily accessible coal resources are depleted.

Within the LGA, coal mining directly employed about 4,000 persons in 2004 and produced about 52 million tonnes of coal. Mining has a range of environmental and social impacts which need to be taken into account in future land use planning.



Objectives – Coal mining lands and buffers

- Recognise that coal mining will remain a major land use within the Singleton LGA for the foreseeable future, especially in the Rural West planning area.
- Ensure that incompatible land uses are not permitted within coal mining areas, and appropriate buffers to protect environmental amenity are applied.

Policies – Coal mining lands and buffers

- Recognise that coal mining will remain a major land use within the Singleton LGA for the foreseeable future, especially in the Rural West planning area.
- Ensure that incompatible land uses are not permitted within coal mining areas, and appropriate buffers to protect the environmental amenity of adjacent uses are applied.
- Ensure that the environmental impact of new coal mining developments is to be fully assessed, including the planning context and regional scale impacts (especially relating to water, air quality and biodiversity).

Strategic Actions – Coal mining lands and buffers

- LEP to include objectives for coal mining, provide for mining as a permitted use in rural zones, and contain principles and criteria for the development of coal mining proposals.
- Support a strategic review by the NSW Government of future coal mining proposals within the Upper Hunter Region, including rehabilitation, infrastructure and land use options, and an update of the DPI (Minerals) Synoptic Plan for rehabilitation of mined landscapes.

8.4 Defence lands and buffers

The Singleton Military Area comprises an area of about 12,500 ha and is an important Army training facility. The area is a major land use and contributes substantially to the Singleton economy. Activities within the area include a live firing range, which may periodically result in noise and vibration impacts on land in the vicinity.

Objectives – Defence lands and buffers

- Recognise Defence lands as an important land use within the LGA and provide adequate buffers to surrounding land uses to maintain environmental amenity.

Policies – Defence lands and buffers

- Consult with Defence in relation to future land use change and major development proposals in the vicinity of the Singleton Military Area.

Strategic Actions – Defence lands and buffers

- Consider LEP provisions and/or overlay map to require consideration of noise and vibration impacts on land uses in the vicinity of the Singleton Military Area.
- Consider identifying principles for the use of lands around the perimeter of the Singleton Military Area, for inclusion in DCP provisions.

8.5 Climate change implications for land use

Climate change has potentially significant implications for water supply, agriculture and rural land use generally in the medium term. It also has significant implications for urban land use. There is a long term likelihood of greater frequency of extreme events (affecting natural hazards such as bush fires and flooding), increasing temperatures, evaporation, and potential changes in seasonal patterns.

Climate change is expected to have implications for agricultural viability. The three major implications of climate change for agriculture will be change to the growing season (and number of frosts), the impacts on the availability of water (including total rainfall and higher evaporation), and lower predictability of climate. A longer growing season and higher temperatures may benefit the introduction of new crops, while lower effective water availability may increase the frequency of drought conditions.

Climate change predictions indicate that there may be opportunities for new types of enterprises in the future, and that rural subdivision policy should seek to protect current water entitlements and availability.

Objectives – Climate change implications for rural land use

- Take into account the best available information on climate change scenarios for Singleton in making strategic land use decisions, especially for uses with sensitivity to climate change.

Policies – Climate change implications for rural land use

- Review impacts of climate change on water supply and security.

- Review responses to climate change periodically as further information becomes available.

Strategic Actions – Climate change implications for rural land use

- No specific land use response is identified. However there may be implications for the growth potential of areas utilising town water supplies (e.g. limited availability), and climate change may exacerbate some natural hazards with potential to require higher building construction standards. Flooding and bush fires may also become more intense, suggesting a conservative approach in critical areas.
- Promote energy efficient settlement through appropriate urban structure, transport systems and design.
- Periodic review through State of the Environment reporting.
- Rural water quality and availability and protection of catchments and resources

8.6 Rural water quality, availability and protection of catchments and resources



Many land uses are affected by the availability of adequate water of suitable quality. Water entitlements for rural subdivisions have the potential to reduce general water availability and security, although access to water is primarily the responsibility of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change under the provisions of the Water Management Act 2000.

In some instances, particular land uses or activities may have the potential to impact on water availability, and consideration should be given to whether these may require consent (e.g. rural industries, farm dams, plantation forests, and aquaculture) or whether special requirements may be desirable.

Protection of urban water supply catchments is a priority. Measures to identify and protect Singleton's urban water supply catchment may be implemented through the LEP and should take into account the recommendations of the Glennies Creek Total Catchment Management Study.

Objectives – Rural water quality, availability and protection of catchments and resources

- Maintain adequate water quality and availability to enable sustainable rural land use within the area.
- Ensure water availability, quality and protection of catchments and water resources is recognised in land use decision-making.

Policies – Rural water quality, availability and protection of catchments and resources

- Recognise Department of Natural Resources water sharing plan provisions for sub-catchments in land use decision-making.
- Rural rezoning or subdivision proposals shall be required to provide details of existing and proposed provision for water entitlements. Subdivisions which create additional basic water right entitlements on rivers or streams, or within catchments subject to high stress will not be supported.

Strategic Actions – Rural water quality, availability and protection of catchments and resources

- Include consideration of water implications of development as a general LEP objective.
- Include specific water quality and use objectives for rural zones (e.g. reference to Catchment Action Plan provisions and Hunter Water Sharing Plan).
- Consider including an LEP overlay identifying sub catchments and stressed streams.
- Include LEP provisions which require consideration of water entitlements and access in the determination of development applications for subdivision (except consolidation of lots).
- Prepare DCP provisions to provide guidelines on water availability and utilisation for development proposals.

8.7 Rural servicing costs and requirements

Important rural servicing requirements include roads, electricity, telecommunications, garbage services, bush fire services, and mail delivery. While these are adequately provided in most areas at present, further upgrading and ongoing maintenance are generally expensive and may be uneconomic for service providers.

Service provision is primarily an issue for Singleton Council and other agencies who are service providers, and is an important consideration in rural subdivision proposals, and other development proposals. The land use planning system provides a means of ensuring that community costs are taken into account in new rezoning proposals and development projects.

Objectives – Rural servicing costs and requirements

- Maintain adequate services and infrastructure for rural land use within the area.
- Ensure rural servicing costs and requirements are taken into account in land use decision-making.

- Generally limit extensions to current rural service areas to minimise ongoing maintenance costs.

Policies – Rural servicing costs and requirements

- Prepare clear Council policy guidelines (or DCP provisions) relating to service standards and requirements.
- Development within rural areas should not adversely affect rural infrastructure or existing service levels such as roads or electricity.
- Developers to be responsible for paying the full costs of capital upgrading for necessary services required by Council policy.
- Develop contributions plans or planning agreements to provide for necessary upgrading to rural infrastructure and services.
- Prepare a policy and requirements regarding use of non Council maintained roads for access in subdivision and development proposals, including agreement with the Department of Lands in relation to use of Crown roads for access.

Strategic Actions – Rural servicing costs and requirements

- Prepare a DCP and updated Section 94 contributions plan relating to rural servicing provision and costs. This may identify current levels of service in rural areas and areas where services will not be provided.
- Develop a policy on use of planning agreements to provide for infrastructure and services.
- Finalise agreement between Singleton Council and the Hunter Water Corporation in relation to the proposed future area of operations of the Corporation within Singleton LGA as outlined in Map 4.3.
- Seek to enter into a joint Section 94 contributions plan with Cessnock City Council to provide for road upgrading for roads that cross the LGA boundary.

8.8 Branxton-Whittingham corridor development options

Singleton Council anticipates pressure for a range of commercial, industrial, rural residential and residential development in the area generally between Branxton and Whittingham. This affects approximately 15 km of New England Highway frontage, and is primarily related to the foreshadowed extension of the F3 Freeway to Branxton and the identification in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy of significant areas of land for investigation for potential urban development near Branxton.

The Department of Planning has held several meetings with Cessnock and Singleton Councils during 2007. One issue addressed in these meetings concerned planning and development in the Branxton area. In this respect, the Department in July 2007 advised as follows:

- *Cessnock Council has stated that it has no intention of pursuing new residential development in the vicinity of Branxton other than those already identified in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy: Huntlee New Town (7200 dwellings), Greta Migrant Camp (up to 2000 dwellings) and Greta Wyldham Street Precinct (approx 300 dwellings).*
- *Following initial consideration, there does not seem to be a need for an additional cross-LGA boundary strategic planning project. Apart from Huntlee (which has been declared State Significant and will be assessed under Part 3A) planning in the vicinity of Branxton is essentially a local scale planning exercise to be undertaken by each Council.*
- *Given the land supply provided by the above developments, there is unlikely to be a need for additional residential sites around Branxton for a considerable number of years.*
- *Via its local strategy, Singleton Council should consider opportunities for intensifying (or making minor adjustments to) existing and proposed rural residential zones close to Branxton.*

There will be ongoing consultation with Singleton and Cessnock Councils in respect of the Huntlee site, including the need for provision of local infrastructure in the Branxton/Huntlee area (this is not seen as a matter to be resolved in the current local strategy projects).

Accordingly, no additional residential land in the vicinity of Branxton will be provided for in Singleton LGA, other than south of the railway line as provided under the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy.

The demand for highway frontage land development in this location is primarily related to its location and relative accessibility by road to Newcastle and the Lower Hunter region, the advantages of sites having highway exposure, and projected growth in the Lower Hunter.

While recognising the potential demand for this type of development within the corridor in the future, determination to proceed with encouraging or allowing more intensive development in this location is premature at this time and during the Strategy timeframe. There are significant development constraints which would preclude any change to existing land use in the short to medium term, including the uneconomic provision and unavailability of necessary services (especially water), presence of listed endangered ecological communities and threatened species in the vicinity, the presence of Belford National Park in the area, and the desirability of consolidating commercial and industrial development in centres such as Singleton or Mount Thorley. In addition, ribbon urbanisation along the highway would detract from the scenic eastern entry to Singleton and detract from the identity of the town.

The land use planning priorities for this corridor should be as follows:

1. Retain the existing land use and subdivision pattern along the New England Highway frontage and in the vicinity.
2. Limit further subdivision of land fronting the New England Highway, based on current planning controls.

3. Maintain safe traffic conditions and scenic amenity by preventing development other than existing permissible dwelling houses or agricultural activities.
4. Not provide water reticulation, or other services which will support development.
5. Support consolidation of urban land uses within or adjacent to existing towns.
6. Reduce car and road dependence of development by locating commercial and industrial areas in more central locations where alternative public transport is available.
7. Review of these planning priorities for the area following the completion of construction of the F3 Freeway extension, in the context of the implementation of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy.

The objectives, policies and strategic actions identified in this section should be read in conjunction with the Strategy proposals identified in Part 6 – Urban Settlement (especially Sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.6, 6.7, and 6.8).

Objectives – Branxton-Whittingham corridor development options

- Maintain safe traffic conditions and scenic amenity along the New England Highway by retaining existing rural zonings and planning provisions.
- Limit further subdivision of land fronting the New England Highway.

Policies – Branxton-Whittingham corridor development options

- Adopt the priorities identified above for land between Branxton and Whittingham.
- No additional urban land to be rezoned within Singleton LGA in the Branxton-Whittingham corridor, including Belford.

Strategic Actions – Branxton-Whittingham corridor development options

- Include provision in LEP for the F3 freeway extension by inclusion of an acquisition zone, with consideration being given to identification of a noise exclusion overlay.
- Reach agreement with Hunter Water Corporation in relation to future for land use zoning and service provision in the Branxton-Whittingham corridor, taking into account the objectives and provisions of the Strategy.

8.9 Central West Rural Lands Inquiry

In February 2007, the Minister for Planning appointed an Independent Panel to investigate, report and make recommendations on land use planning in the Central West region of the State, having particular regard to balancing the protection of agricultural lands with other competing interests including, but not limited to, subdivision and rural residential development. The Panel met with a stakeholder reference group established by the Minister and consulted with a broad range of stakeholders and received submissions from interested persons.

A key recommendation contained in the Independent Panel's report release in August 2007 is the introduction of a new SEPP for Rural Lands containing provisions to guide new planning controls. The new SEPP would:

- *Set out the Government's policy direction and principles for rural planning including social, environmental and economic principles;*
- *Provide separate controls, including zones and requirements for buffers where necessary for Rural Residential, Small Farms and General Rural Zones in accordance with land capability, demand for rural lifestyle lots, potential for land use conflicts etc.*
- *Identify a comprehensive range of permissible uses in rural zones that would reflect recent trends in rural industry related tourism, restaurants, bed and breakfasts etc.*
- *Allow intensive agriculture on land zoned specifically for this purpose or in General Rural zones on merit where appropriate buffers are provided within the allotment to be developed for the intensive agricultural purposes;*
- *Remove provisions for Concessional Allotments;*
- *Rename 'minimum allotment sizes' as 'Lot Size for a Dwelling Entitlement' to make the intent of the development standard clearer;*
- *Maintain the existing 'Lot Size for a Dwelling Entitlement' development standard in General Rural zones in the LGAs unless good cause can be shown why the allotment size should be varied.*
- *Require that where a Council seeks to vary the 'Lot Size for a Dwelling Entitlement' development control in the General Rural zone, the proposed new allotment size shall be determined based on local circumstances and actual trends including the existing pattern of farming, existing pattern of holdings, current pressure for subdivision/dwellings, current pressure for change, reasons for change etc. and in consultation with the Department of Planning as the lead government agency with other government agencies inputting in an advisory capacity;*
- *Include SEPP 1 like clause that allows variation of the 'Lot Size for a Dwelling Entitlement' development control in exceptional circumstances where recommended by the Regional IHAP (refer below);*

- *Allow farm adjustment by boundary adjustment/land amalgamation etc (but with no additional dwelling entitlements);*
- *Preserve dwelling entitlements on existing allotments with separate title; and*
- *Require that new LEPs contain provisions that recognise the changing face of agriculture e.g. smaller farms, share farming, leasing, farms that are not necessarily contiguous and may be made up of a number of holdings many kilometres apart etc.*

(pp 18-19 Review of Land Use Planning in the Central West, Central West Rural Lands Inquiry, August 2007.)

Advice from the Department of Planning indicates that release of the Draft SEPP is imminent. At such time as details become available it will be necessary for the Draft Strategy's directions in respect of rural areas in Singleton to be reviewed.

9 ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES AND CONSTRAINTS

Many areas within Singleton have important environmental values and/or are subject to constraints which may limit development opportunities and need to be taken into account in planning. These areas should be identified in LEP provisions, and may require specific development control guidelines.

Key land use planning issues for Singleton relating to environmental values and constraints were identified in the Situation Analysis as follows:

- Natural hazards
- Land capability
- Catchment health
- Biodiversity and natural ecosystems
- Maintaining rural character and scale

These issues are presented below.



9.1 Natural hazards

Natural hazards are accepted as constraints to land use in order to limit damage to life and property. Within the rural areas of Singleton, these are primarily flooding and bushfires. Policy for natural hazards is primarily determined by NSW Government guidelines. A summary of available information and references is included in the Situation Analysis.

Various parts of Singleton are subject to flooding, but little information exists for areas other than for urban areas of Singleton, or the villages of Broke and Jerrys Plains.

Existing residential areas are relatively isolated from bushfire prone land, although significant areas of bushfire prone land in the LGA will impact upon the location of rural residential areas and other rural development.

Objectives – Natural hazards

- Ensure that natural hazards are considered when making development decisions, and that hazards are minimised wherever possible.
- Maintain current and accurate flooding and development data that guides land use planning decisions to limit damage to life and property.
- Identify land with potential for bush fire hazard and implement systems to minimise danger to life and property.

Policies – Natural hazards

- Adopt a consistent flood standard for Singleton, in accordance with floodplain management studies. Refer to Section 6.9.
- Recognise the need to appropriately consider bushfire, flooding and salinity as natural hazards in LEP provisions.

Strategic Actions – Natural hazards

Upgrade and maintain spatial information systems on natural hazards for planning overlay maps to be included in proposed LEP provisions:

- Include current bushfire mapping as an overlay.
- Include land with flooding limitations or requiring further investigation as an overlay.

9.2 Land capability

Regional scale rural land capability mapping exists for the whole LGA and provides information on limits to land use potential and management issues. This primarily focuses on soil erosion and slope stability.

Objectives – Land capability

- Ensure that future subdivision of land has regard to the capability of the land for future use, and that boundaries are located appropriately having regard to water catchments and capability considerations

Policies – Land capability

- Take into account land capability limitations in planning controls and development proposals (e.g. construction of roads and subdivision).

Strategic Actions – Land capability

- Upgrade and maintain spatial information systems on land capability for planning overlay maps to be included in proposed LEP provisions:
 - Identify rural land capability as an overlay.
 - Identify areas of environmental sensitivity through overlays, including attributes such as slope, vegetation, fauna, and identified 'at risk' communities and species habitat.
 - Map areas with identified salinity problems through an overlay.

9.3 Catchment health

Water supply catchments in rural areas provide essential urban water supplies and the maintaining of important agricultural activities.

Objectives – Catchment health

- To protect the quality and security of urban water supplies, by preventing incompatible land uses within water catchment areas.

Policies – Catchment health

- Development within urban water supply catchments is to maintain or improve water flow and quality.
- The priorities and provisions of the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan are to be taken into account in making decisions relating to future land use.

Strategic Actions – Catchment health

- Consider LEP provisions to restrict incompatible land uses, limit subdivision or impose development criteria to protect water supply.
- Map catchment boundaries in LEP and establish development criteria within catchments through LEP/DCP.
- Implement performance-based controls on environmental evaluation of all development within water supply catchments.
- Discourage further residential, industrial and/or rural residential development within water catchments.
- Ensure rural dwellings have a high standard of waste disposal.
- Link subdivision potential in rural areas to water availability and licensing under the Water Management Act 2000.

9.4 Biodiversity

Important areas for biodiversity which potentially may be impacted upon by further development and land use change are around Jerrys Plains and Branxton. Areas subject to coal mining and potentially suitable for residential expansion and rural residential development are likely to have biodiversity values which would be impacted upon by development. The strategy needs to take biodiversity values and the potential land use constraints into account.

Objectives – Biodiversity and natural ecosystems

- Maintain the ecological values of conservation reserves, and recognise their other economic benefits, including their role in supporting tourism.

- Zone conservation reserves appropriately in LEP.
- Minimise adverse impacts of development on land adjoining or affecting existing conservation reserves by establishing buffer areas and appropriate LEP provisions and development guidelines.
- Maintain or improve biodiversity values in Singleton. This includes protection and recovery of threatened species, communities and populations and their habitat, and endangered ecological communities.
- No net loss of native vegetation within the LGA.
- Consider opportunities to reverse the effect of Key Threatening Processes for threatened species, as identified under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, when determining planning provisions and development proposals.

Policies – Biodiversity and natural ecosystems

- The value of biodiversity in Singleton will be recognised where decisions are made about land use.
- Areas of high biodiversity value will be protected in a network of reserves with buffers between them and incompatible land uses or activities.

Strategic Actions – Biodiversity and natural ecosystems

Proposed LEP provisions:

- Appropriate zoning of existing conservation reserves (E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves using Standard LEP provisions).
- Matters of national environmental significance under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* are to be recognised in LEP provisions, including Ramsar wetlands, world heritage areas, migratory species, and Commonwealth-listed threatened species and threatened ecological communities. These matters should be identified on an LEP overlay map and be considered when determining zoning, permissible land uses in environmental protection zones, and buffer zone provisions.
- Consult with DECC as to whether any land should be reserved in the LEP for acquisition to be incorporated within existing reserves.
- Consult further with DECC in relation to suggested E2 and E3 zones. Investigate issues and management implications associated with recent mapping work and identified remnant areas of native vegetation.

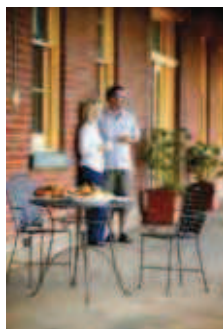
- Include appropriate zoning for proposed conservation reserve at Branxton South, as provided for in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy.

Additional actions:

- Seek updating of the *Synoptic Plan - Integrated Landscapes for Coal Mine Rehabilitation in the Hunter Valley* prepared by Department of Primary Industries (Minerals) to take into account biodiversity values.
- Consider introducing or encouraging use of financial incentives to support appropriate management of areas buffering conservation reserves.
- Consider identifying important regional, sub-regional and local wildlife and habitat corridors and incorporating these within an LEP overlay map, with appropriate provisions and/or environment zonings with suitable permissible and prohibited uses.
- Where significant natural values exist on private land, the Council will encourage the voluntary adoption of conservation agreements, the establishment of Private Protected Areas under the Natural Heritage Trust National Reserve System, Nature Conservation Trust Agreements and/or management plans. Consideration may be given to zoning land E2 Environmental Conservation.
- Request Department of Planning, Department of Environment and Climate Change and the Department of Environment and Water Resources to undertake or fund regional scale surveying and mapping of high quality native vegetation areas and the distribution of endangered ecological communities, for the purpose of including this information as an overlay map forming part of the LEP.
- Ensure consideration and implementation of appropriate threatened species legislation during determination of development applications (*Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*). Guidelines for the application of these provisions could be included in DCP provisions.
- Consider the incorporation of provisions within Development Control Plans to address and consider impacts upon threatened species, environmental conservation zone areas, wildlife corridors and areas of high quality native vegetation when applying for development consent. DCP provisions could include provisions for minimum ecological survey standards, and define local biodiversity values and policy to determine local interpretation of *maintaining or improving* biodiversity values.

- Prepare a policy or DCP provisions to identify mechanisms to be used to protect lands of conservation value (e.g. planning agreements or land dedication).
- Prepare and implement a policy framework for council acquisition of land requiring management for conservation purposes.

9.5 Maintaining heritage, rural character and scale



The Singleton rural area contains many sites of heritage significance. There are also landscapes with scenic and cultural values, which provide important social and economic benefits. Part of the protection of rural character relates to environmental amenity, including maintaining air quality and a quiet acoustic environment. Some scenic conservation areas have been identified by the National Trust of Australia, and planning measures could be considered for protecting these.



The need to conserve Singleton rural area's built heritage is important for tourism and maintaining identity and cultural history. There is a significant number of heritage items identified in the area and these are currently identified in the local environmental plan.

Singleton Council's Heritage Advisory Committee has reviewed and updated the schedule of heritage items and heritage conservation areas listed in the existing local environmental plan.

The Aboriginal Heritage Management System is maintained by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change, and is subject to confidentiality policies to protect sites. It identifies 2,654 sites of Aboriginal significance in Singleton LGA, most of which are in rural areas. There is also potential for many more to be identified.

Objectives – Maintaining heritage, rural character and scale

- Singleton will be a place where the rural landscape is valued as an important vista to the open, treed character of its urban neighbourhoods.
- European heritage is identified, protected and valued.
- Agencies will be encouraged to identify and protect Aboriginal heritage.

Policies – Maintaining heritage, rural character and scale

- Heritage and landscape will be taken into account by implementing standard LEP provisions and DCP guidelines.
- Where there is lack of information on these issues, further investigation will be required prior to zoning amendments or development consent.

Strategic Actions – Maintaining heritage, rural character and scale

- Implement Standard LEP clauses.
- Identify conservation areas and heritage items with overlays. Overlay maps will provide a trigger for further investigations.
- Separately distinguish built heritage from sensitive environmental areas through overlays.
- Consider using Standard Instrument rural landscapes zone, and/or include a map of scenic areas as an LEP map overlay.

10 PLANNING ADMINISTRATION AND STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 Implementation

The Strategy will be implemented by the Council through its normal administrative and planning processes. The following strategic actions relate to planning administration and implementation:

- It is desirable to prepare an LEP with common provisions to implement the Land Use Strategy in a consistent and uniform manner across Singleton.
- Ensure future service demands are integrated with Council financial and infrastructure planning.
- A combined land monitor for Singleton to be developed by the Council, particularly for residential, rural residential and industrial land.
- Clarify CMA role in determination of development proposals (especially in relation to native vegetation clearing and water entitlements), consistent with Standard LEP provisions.

The Land Use Strategy provides a land use structure and policy framework for Singleton. It closely relates to a range of other formal and informal plans and documents, such as council management plans, LEPs in adjoining LGAs, catchment action plans, road and utility infrastructure planning, tourism development, state of the environment reporting programs, etc. Key plans and documents are shown in table 15.

Table 15: Strategy relationship with other plans and programs

Plan or program	Relationship to strategy	Comment
Council management plan	Identifies council visions and priorities, and administrative framework	Council management plan must complement the Land Use Strategy
Council 2030 Strategy	Sets long term administrative and social objectives for LGA	Complements the Singleton Land Use Strategy.
Local environmental plans	Key instrument for regulating land use and implementing Strategy	Development control plans may be made by the council to identify land use guidelines for matters not included in LEP provisions
Catchment action plans	CAPs identify investment priorities for catchment management authority funding, but	Relationship with LEP is not clear

Plan or program	Relationship to strategy	Comment
State of the environment report (SoE)	Enables monitoring of achievement of strategy objectives and environmental indicators	Information from the Situation Analysis may be included and updated in SoE

Implementing the Strategy requires the preparation of draft LEP provisions under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. This provides the regulatory framework for land use, and where possible should not duplicate other approval processes (e.g. native vegetation clearing, water use, etc).

Strategy implementation also requires further strategic land use analysis of some issues and the preparation of land use guidelines through the preparation of development control plans (DCPs). DCPs are considered in the assessment of development proposals for which consent is required by a LEP. Table 16 shows the scope of future strategic work program priorities. It is anticipated that the program can be built upon with subsequent studies and information.

Table 16: Future strategic work program priorities

Issue	Proposed action
Preparation of development control plans	DCP provisions should be prepared for the following where required: • Infill residential subdivision, development and urban sustainability guidelines • Industrial development guidelines • Rural residential subdivision and development guidelines
Strategic biodiversity review of proposed development areas	Undertake further review of biodiversity information for the Sub-region and detailed assessment of issues relating to proposed development areas. Investigate opportunities for biodiversity certification of LEP and flora and development fauna survey requirements
Contributions plans	Update contributions plans based on the strategy and LEP provisions, and prepare guidelines for use of planning agreements within Singleton

10.2 Monitoring and Review

The Singleton Land Use Strategy outlines the key land use policies and directions for the LGA. It provides the planning context for the preparation of a Shire wide local environmental plan. The Strategy has a time frame of 25 years, to 2032, but also provides a broad planning framework for the long term future of the LGA to 50 years plus.

Singleton Council will monitor the implementation of the Strategy in its annual State of the Environment Report, prepared under the Local Government Act 1993. This monitoring and review of the Strategy will be closely undertaken with the Department of Planning and other relevant agencies. Importantly, also, the assumptions on housing demand, population growth, industrial land demand, and economic development affecting the LGA, generally, will be the subject of a major review undertaken jointly every 3 years by the Council and the Department of Planning. The major reviews will also be undertaken to update as necessary the Strategy's Objectives, Policies and Strategic Actions. The LEP and other documents, such as the DCP and Section 94 Plans, will then be appropriately amended. In this way, the Singleton Land Use Strategy will become a dynamic document, able to be refined and updated over time, but able to always maintain its fundamental strategic planning direction in guiding the future growth and change of the LGA.