

Social Impact Assessment

Planning Proposal – Amendment to
Clause 7.11B Cessnock LEP 2011

May 2024

Ref: 2022

**SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - PLANNING PROPOSAL – AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 7.11B
CESSNOCK LEP 2011**

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Date 12 May 2024

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This document has been registered with our solicitors along with a copy of all previous materials.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of report

Insite Planning Services Pty Ltd (Insite) has been engaged to prepare this Social Impact Assessment report on behalf of Wills Hill Holdings Pty Ltd (the client) to support a Planning Proposal to amend Clause 7.11B of the Cessnock LEP 2011. The purpose of the Planning Proposal will be to amend Clause 7.11B so that it does not apply to 49C Aberdare Road, Aberdare. This provision in the CLEP 2011 restricts the GFA for any food and drink premises proposal to 150m² on land zoned E1 Local Centre at Aberdare Road, Aberdare.

Given that the planning framework at the current time is for an amendment to the Cessnock LEP 2011 only, no specific design plans, nor impact assessments can be carried out – as the precise future use of the land is not known or certain. However, what we do know is that the Planning Proposal will remove restrictions on the establishment of a food and drink premises on the subject site, and that if the Planning Proposal is successful in amending the CLEP 2011 as proposed, the proponent intends to lodge a DA for food and drink premises with a floor area of between 250m² and 290m² on the site. It is in that context in which this report has been based.

Note that this information should be considered indicative only, and a formal and complete Social Impact Assessment will be completed at the Development Application stage (should Council consider it necessary).

This report has been prepared in accordance with *Chapter C8 of the Cessnock Development Control Plan 2010* which sets out Cessnock Council's requirements for Social Impact Assessment and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. Specific reference is also made to Council's *Social Impact Guidelines* which have also been followed in the preparation of this report.

The guidelines outline the requirements for conducting a Social Impact Assessment in Cessnock Council's jurisdiction. They detail the need to analyse the potential effects of a proposed development on the social fabric of the community. The guidelines emphasize considering demographic data, engaging with local stakeholders, and aligning with the council's policies. This social impact assessment addresses the Planning Proposal's impact on the community's well-being and provides recommendations for mitigating any negative effects.

1.2 Site Description

The site is located on the southern side of Aberdare Road, Cessnock approximately 200 metres east of Quarrybylong Street adjacent to the Aberdare Road / Brandis Street intersection. The site is titled Lot 32 DP 1288606, is addressed as 49C Aberdare Road, Aberdare and has an area of approximately 1,780 m². The site currently contains an overgrown bowling green from the former Cessnock City Bowling Club facility that occupied this and the adjoining property, 49B Aberdare Road.

Surrounding development to the site is as follows:

- East – Access and carpark for Turner Park (zoned RE1 Public Recreation) including amenities facility. Further east is the Cessnock Athletics field, and further east again is Cessnock High School.
- South – A cricket field that is used by the lower grades of the Piranha's Cricket Club, and the Cessnock Hornets soccer ground (zoned RE1 Public Recreation).
- West – Is the Cessnock tennis courts (zoned RE1 Public Recreation).

- North – Aberdare Road, Cessnock Public School, and residential properties to the east of Brandis Street (zoned R2 Low Density Residential).

The subject site was the location of the former Cessnock City Bowling Club. The former use was no longer viable and although it was transferred to the East Cessnock Bowling Club, the land was subsequently sold as it was surplus to needs of the community.

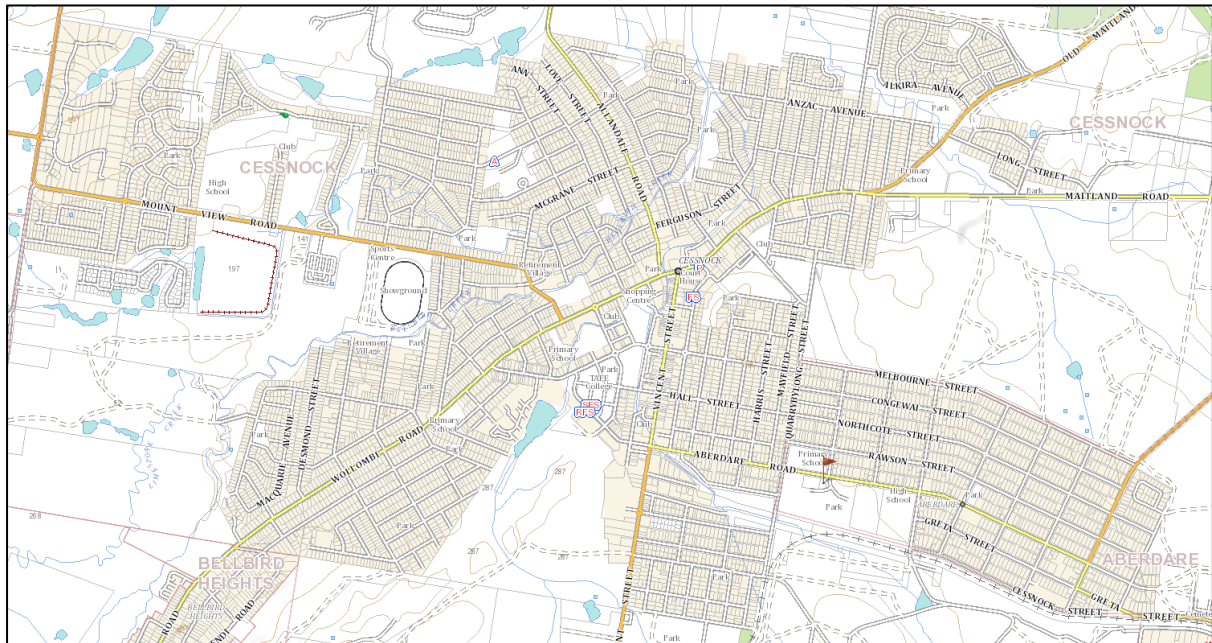


Figure 1: Site Location Plan



Figure 2: Site Location

1.3 Planning Proposal

The Planning Proposal seeks to amend Clause 7.11B of the CLEP 2011 as follows:

7.11B Food and drink premises at Aberdare Road, Aberdare

(1) This clause applies to ~~Lot 3, Sec 50, DP 758002~~ **Lot 31 DP1288606**, being land at 49B Aberdare Road, Aberdare.

(2) Development consent must not be granted for development for the purposes of food and drink premises on the land to which this clause applies unless the consent authority is satisfied that the gross floor area of each of the individual food and drink premises on that land will not exceed 150 square metres.

The implication of this proposed amendment is that Clause 7.11B will apply to what is now 49B Aberdare Road only, and not include 49C Aberdare Road. If the Planning proposal is successful this would mean that a *food and drink premises* with a floor area greater than 150m² could be developed on 49C Aberdare Road, subject to Council approval. These type of food and drink premises are referred to as Quick Service Food premises (QSF).

In reality the current GFA restriction limits the typical type of food and drink premises to a Subway, Domino's Pizza store or a Doughnut King style QSF operation whereas the Planning Proposal, by removing the GFA restriction on the site, will allow larger QSF food and drink premises. These QSF premises include restaurant style facilities that provide takeaway and dine in services and drive thru facilities including franchises such as McDonalds, KFC, Guzman and Gomez and Burger King. If the Planning Proposal is successful, the proponent intends to lodge a DA for a food and drink premises.

1.4 Potential Social Impacts from the Planning Proposal

As noted above, the Planning Proposal could lead to a larger style food and drink premises being located on the site, but not necessarily a bigger commercial development than is currently permitted, and certainly not a development that would have great potential social impacts. Based on the current site area of 49C Aberdare Road at 1,780m², up to four (4) small scale 150m² GFA QSF stores could be established on the site with a combined GFA of 600m². The E1 Local Centre also allows other forms of development such as a drive thru bottle shop and other retail premises which could be up to 800m² in GFA. The point here is that this Planning Proposal will not necessarily lead to a development on the site that will result in more negative social impacts than development currently permitted on the site.

In general terms, QSF providers can have various social impacts on individuals and communities. These impacts can be both positive and negative, and they often depend on factors such as the location, the level of consumption, and individual choices. Social impacts associated with QSF providers including the following:

Positive Social Impacts:

1. **Convenience:** QSF restaurants offer quick and easily accessible food options, which can be convenient for busy individuals and families. This convenience can be particularly helpful for people with hectic schedules.
2. **Employment Opportunities:** These restaurants provide jobs, including part-time and entry-level positions. This can be especially beneficial for young people and those seeking entry into the workforce and are valuable in providing experience for the hospitality sector of the local economy.

3. **Economic Contributions:** QSF businesses contribute to the local economy by paying taxes, leasing properties, and purchasing supplies. They can also attract tourists and visitors to stop in an area, stimulating economic growth.
4. **Community Gathering Spaces:** Some QSF establishments offer a place for people to gather, socialize, and dine together. This can foster a sense of community and provide a meeting place for friends and families.
5. **Innovation and Adaptation:** QSF providers often adapt their menus to meet changing consumer preferences and dietary trends. This can lead to the introduction of healthier options, accommodating various dietary needs.
6. **Support Local Community Groups and Sporting Clubs –** These businesses have a reputation for ‘giving back’ to local community groups and sporting clubs through financial support and sponsorship.

Negative Social Impacts:

1. **Health Concerns:** One of the most significant negative social impacts of fast food is its contribution to health problems, including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Consuming high-calorie, low-nutrient fast food regularly can lead to these health issues.
2. **Childhood Obesity:** QSF advertising often targets children and adolescents, which can influence their eating habits and contribute to the childhood obesity epidemic. This has long-term health and social consequences.
3. **Environmental Impact:** The production and distribution of fast food can have negative environmental effects, including excessive packaging waste, deforestation (for beef production), and high greenhouse gas emissions.
4. **Cultural Homogenization:** The spread of global QSF chains can contribute to the homogenization of local cultures and cuisines, potentially diminishing the diversity of traditional foods and culinary practices.
5. **Social Isolation:** The convenience of fast food can discourage people from preparing and sharing meals at home, potentially leading to social isolation and less family time.
6. **Food Deserts:** In some areas, QSF restaurants may dominate the food landscape, while healthier options are limited or non-existent. This can contribute to the existence of food deserts, where access to nutritious food is scarce.

It's important to note that the social impacts of fast food service providers can vary widely depending on local factors, regulations, and individual choices. Some communities may experience more pronounced negative impacts, while others may find that fast food provides essential services and economic benefits. Efforts to mitigate the negative social impacts often involve promoting healthier choices, implementing regulations, and supporting community education and initiatives related to nutrition and health.

2. COMMUNITY PROFILE

The following Community Profile provides a summary for the population affected by the Planning Proposal. The Community Profile includes matters such as:

- Current population and projected population estimate for the sites retail catchment.
- Analysis of the demographic profile for the affected community relevant to the Planning Proposal.
- A crime profile for the local area in which the Development is intended to be situated.

2.1 Population Projections

This section provides an estimate of the current population and projected population (or patronage) for the sites retail catchment. The sites retail catchment is the Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba Statistical Area as illustrated on figure 3 below:

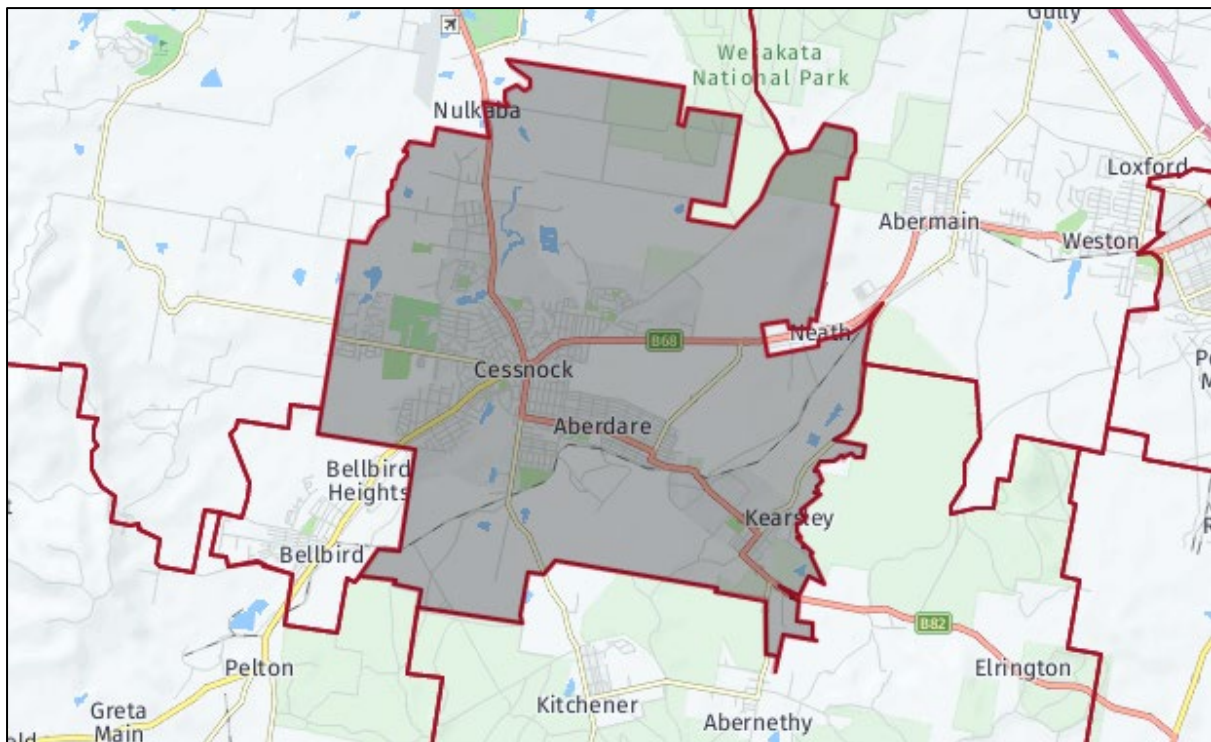


Figure 3: Retail Catchment

The population projection has been based on the following assumptions and ABS Census 2021 data. According to the ABS Census 2021, Cessnock is home to approximately 20,656 people.

In terms of population growth, Cessnock City Council has forecast a growth of 54.71% growth to 2041 meaning that the above catchment is likely to have a population in the order of some 31, 957.

The site is zoned E1 Local Centre. The Planning Proposal will potentially result in a food and drink premises that has a retail floor area between 250m² and 290m² and will therefore not affect population statistics but act to serve the growing community.

2.2 Demographic Profile

The relevant demographic profile of the Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba Statistical Area to this Planning Proposal is population data that impacts on retail activity and social impacts associated with food and drink premises. In that regard the following data is analysed.

Household size

- The Average Household size for New South Wales and Australia in 2021 is 2.6.
- The Average Household size for the Cessnock LGA in 2021 is 2.58
- The Average household size for the Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba Statistical Area is 2.43

Median Age

- The New South Wales Median Age in 2021 is 37.
- The Cessnock LGA Median age in 2021 is 37.
- The Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba Statistical Area Median age in 2021 is 39.

Median weekly household income

- The New South Wales Median weekly household income in 2021 is \$1,849.
- The Cessnock LGA Median weekly household income in 2021 is \$1,494.
- The Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba Statistical Area Median weekly household income in 2021 is \$1,235.

Unemployment

- The New South Wales Unemployment rate in 2021 is 4.9%.
- The Cessnock LGA Unemployment rate in 2021 is 5.6%.
- The Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba Statistical Area Unemployment rate in 2021 is 6.8%.

SEIFA Index of Disadvantage

- The New South Wales SEIFA Index of Disadvantage in 2021 is 1,000.
- The Cessnock LGA SEIFA Index of Disadvantage in 2021 is 939.
- The Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba Statistical Area SEIFA Index of Disadvantage in 2021 is 893.

The analysis of the *service age groups* in Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba in 2021 compared to Cessnock City reveals a notable difference in the age distribution of the population. Here are some key findings from the analysis:

1. **Lower Proportion of Younger Age Groups (0 to 17 years):** In Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba, only 21.2% of the population fell within the 0 to 17 years age group. This indicates a lower proportion of children and teenagers compared to Cessnock City, where the corresponding percentage was slightly higher at 23.7%. This could imply a relatively smaller number of families with young children or a potential trend of younger people moving away from this area.
2. **Higher Proportion of Older Age Groups (60+ years):** Conversely, Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba had a higher proportion of people aged 60 years and over, accounting for 26.1% of the population. In contrast, Cessnock City had a lower percentage of its population in this age group, at 23.2%. This suggests that Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba may have a larger population of senior citizens, possibly due to factors like retirement communities or older residents choosing to settle in this area.
3. **Overall Aging Population:** The data indicates an overall trend of population aging in Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba, with a smaller proportion of young people and a larger proportion of older individuals. This could have implications for the demand for various services, including healthcare, senior care, and recreational activities, as the population ages.

4. **Possible Implications:** The lower percentage of young people might suggest a need for initiatives to attract or retain younger families in the area, such as investments in education, childcare facilities, or youth-oriented recreational programs. Additionally, the higher percentage of seniors may require increased access to healthcare services and infrastructure catering to their needs.
5. **Regional Variations:** These demographic differences may also reflect broader regional trends and factors influencing population distribution. Economic opportunities, housing availability, and lifestyle preferences can all impact the age composition of an area's population.

In summary, the analysis indicates that the Cessnock - Kearsley - Nulkaba statistical area had a lower proportion of young individuals and a higher proportion of seniors in 2021 compared to Cessnock City. It is unlikely that the Planning Proposal will have either a negative or positive effect on these demographic factors. However, the Planning Proposal will provide more opportunities for employment, especially among young people who have a higher unemployment rate (17%).

Health factors – While the Cessnock LGA has a lower percentage of young people who are considered overweight (16.2%) compared to the NSW average (17%), Childhood obesity is a concern in many regions, including Cessnock LGA. Health authorities often monitor the prevalence of childhood obesity, as it can lead to various health issues later in life. Public health programs and initiatives need to focus on promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity among young people.

2.3 Crime Profile

This section examines several crime statistic indicators for the Cessnock LGA compared to NSW. The LGA is the smallest scale for which much of this data is available.

There are thirteen selected indicators of crime for the Cessnock LGA and NSW. In summary the data shows:

- In 2021 the Cessnock LGA was above the NSW average on ten of thirteen crime indicators.
- Crime indicators in the Cessnock LGA were significantly above the NSW average in 2021 for:
 - Motor vehicle theft – 2.70 incidents for every 1 incident in NSW (based on a per 100,000 population rate)
 - Break and enter non-dwelling – 1.81 incidents
 - Sexual touching, sexual act, and other sexual offences – 1.79
 - Other stealing offences – 1.77 incidents
 - Malicious damage to property – 1.42 incidents
 - Sexual assault – 1.34 incidents
 - Non-domestic violence related assault – 1.29 incidents
 - Steal from motor vehicle – 1.26 incidents
 - Domestic violence related assault – 1.25
 - Break and enter dwelling – 1.12 incidents
- In 2021 the Cessnock LGA was highly ranked against other NSW LGAs in the following crime indicators:
 - Motor Vehicle Theft 8th highest ranking out of 128 LGAs in NSW
 - Other Stealing Offences 17th
 - Steal from Motor Vehicle 33rd
 - Non-domestic violence related assault 40th
 - Break and enter non-dwelling 40th

- Sexual Assault 42nd
- Robbery 44th
- Malicious damage to property 46th
- In 2021 the 5 most common types of crime in the Cessnock LGA were:
 - Malicious Damage to Property 525 incidents in 2021
 - Other stealing offences 474
 - Domestic violence related assault 301
 - Non-domestic violence related assault 273
 - Steal from motor vehicles 212.
- Between 2016 and 2021 the incidence of crimes in the following categories generally declined:
 - Break and enter dwelling.
 - Steal from motor vehicle.
 - Break and enter non-dwelling.
 - Motor vehicle theft
 - Steal from retail store.
 - Malicious damage to property
 - Other stealing offences
 - Domestic violence related assault
- Between 2016 and 2021 the incidence of crimes in the following categories generally increased:
 - Sexual touching, sexual act, and other sexual offences

2.4 Crime Hotspot Analysis

With reference to the Cessnock – Aberdare area, some incidences of reported crime and anti-social behaviour have been mapped in the Local Government Crime Hotspot Maps (2023) by BOSCAR. This allows for some comparative analysis to be made for the suburb, the specific development site, and surrounding suburbs. In particular, it allows analysis to determine if the higher crime rates for the Cessnock LGA generally are a reality for the development site itself. Those crimes relevant to the Planning Proposal and site that have been analysed for hotspot activities are as follows:

- Sexual assault (no HOTSPOT analysis available)
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Steal from motor vehicle
- Non-domestic assault
- Malicious damage to property
- Break and enter non-dwelling
- Robbery
- Arson (no HOTSPOT analysis available)

2.4.1 Motor Vehicle Theft

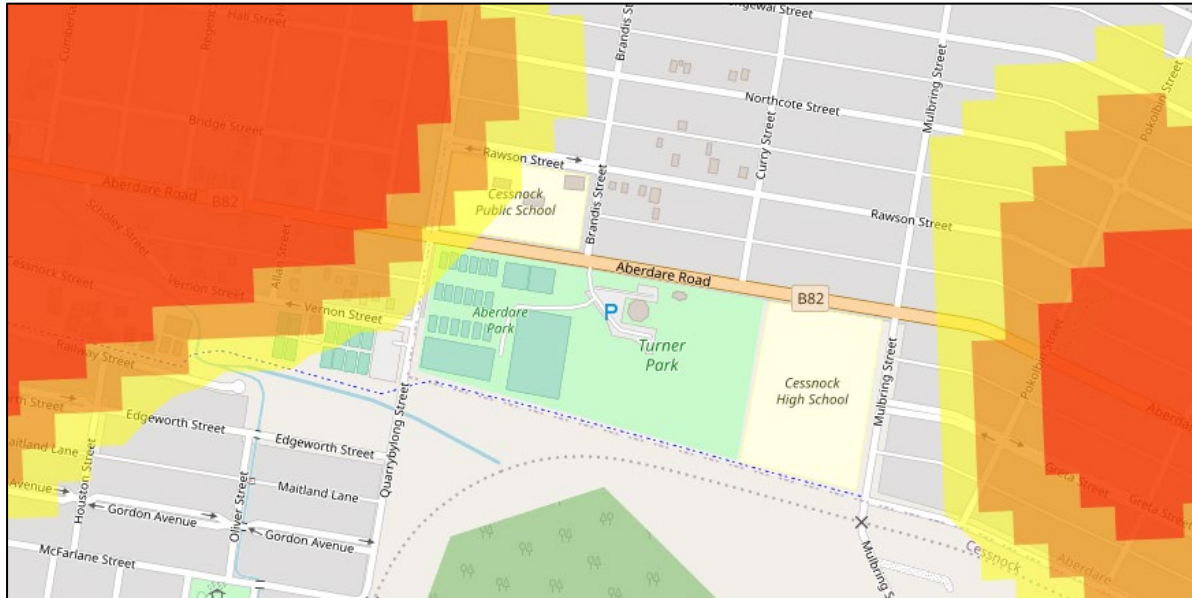


Figure 4. Motor Vehicle Theft - Hotspot Mapping

Planning Comment: Hotspot analysis indicates motor vehicle theft activity within the Cessnock CBD and to the east of the site, but not in or around the Turner Park area. This is most likely due to the high visibility and activity within this general area.

2.4.2 Theft from a Motor Vehicle

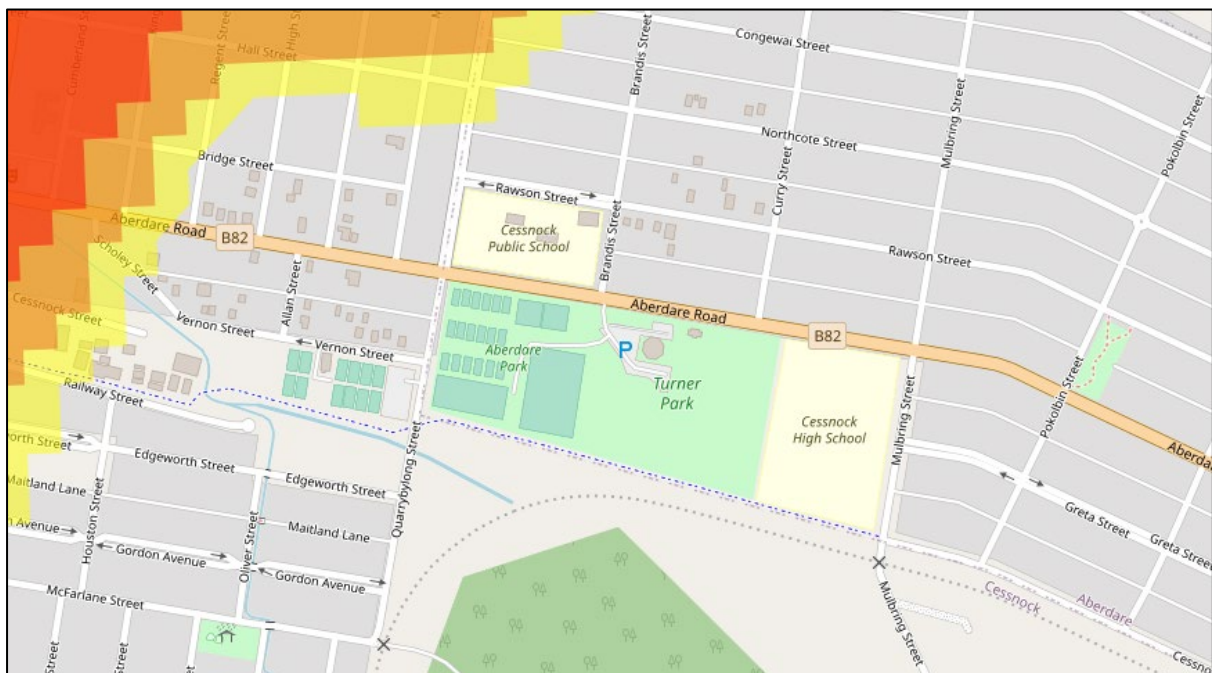


Figure 5. Theft from a Motor Vehicle - Hotspot Mapping

Planning Comment: Hotspot analysis indicates theft from a motor vehicle activity within the Cessnock CBD, but not in or around the Turner Park area. This is most likely due to the high visibility and activity within this general area.

2.4.3 Break and enter non-dwelling:

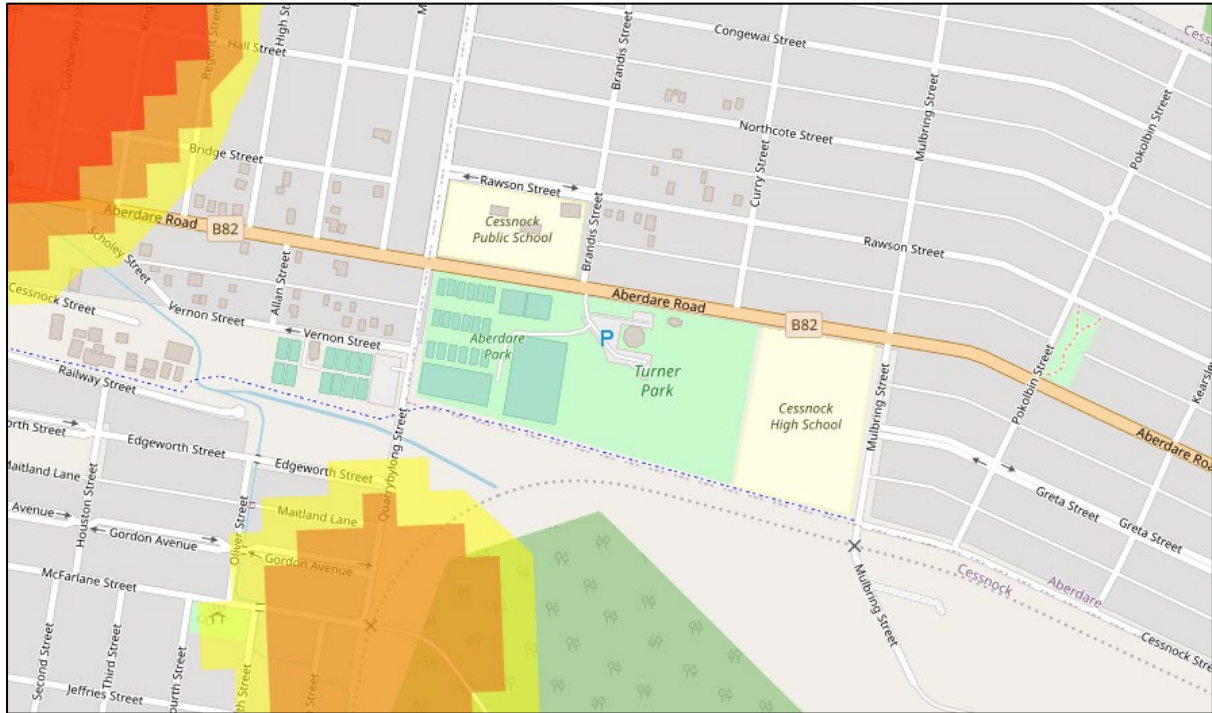


Figure 6. Break and enter non-dwelling - Hotspot Mapping

Planning Comment: Hotspot Analysis indicates no instances of break and enter non-dwelling within the vicinity of Turner Park site. This is a positive as schools and sporting clubs and businesses, all of which are near the site have not had any reported incidents in respect to this type of crime.

2.4.4 Non-domestic assault

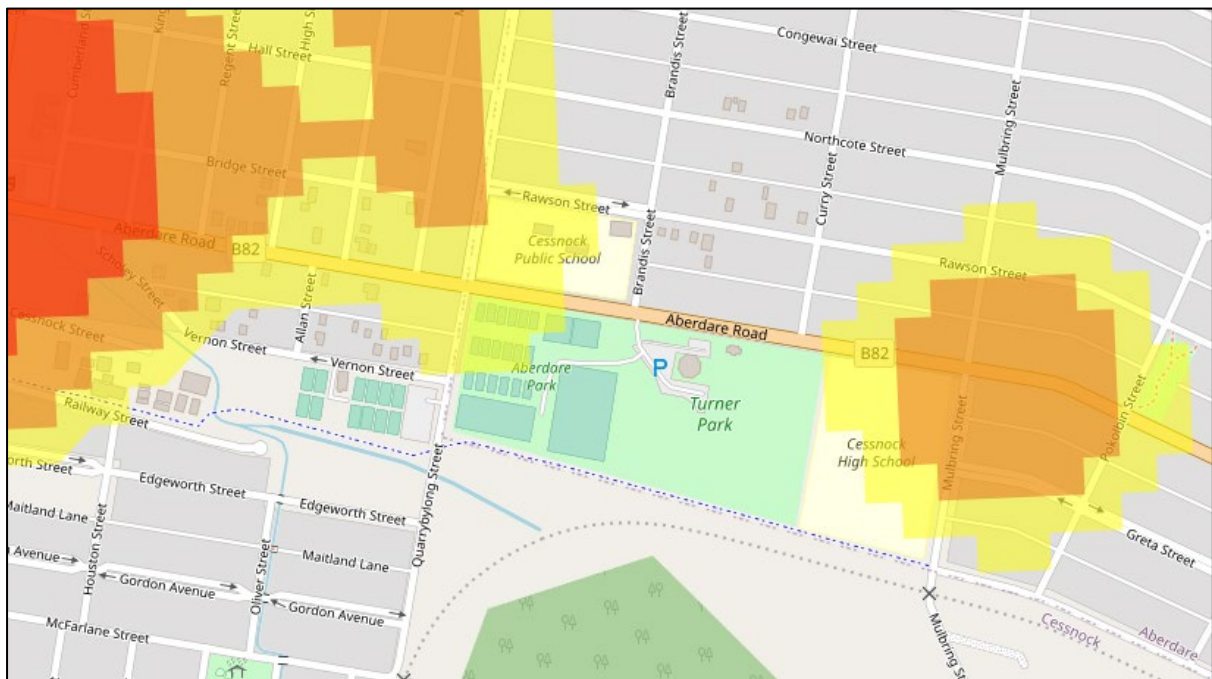


Figure 7. Non-domestic assault - Hotspot Mapping

Planning Comment: Hotspot Analysis indicates isolated incidents of non-domestic assault in the vicinity of the site adjacent to the high school and the tennis courts, but nothing at Turner Park itself.

2.4.5 Malicious Damage to Property

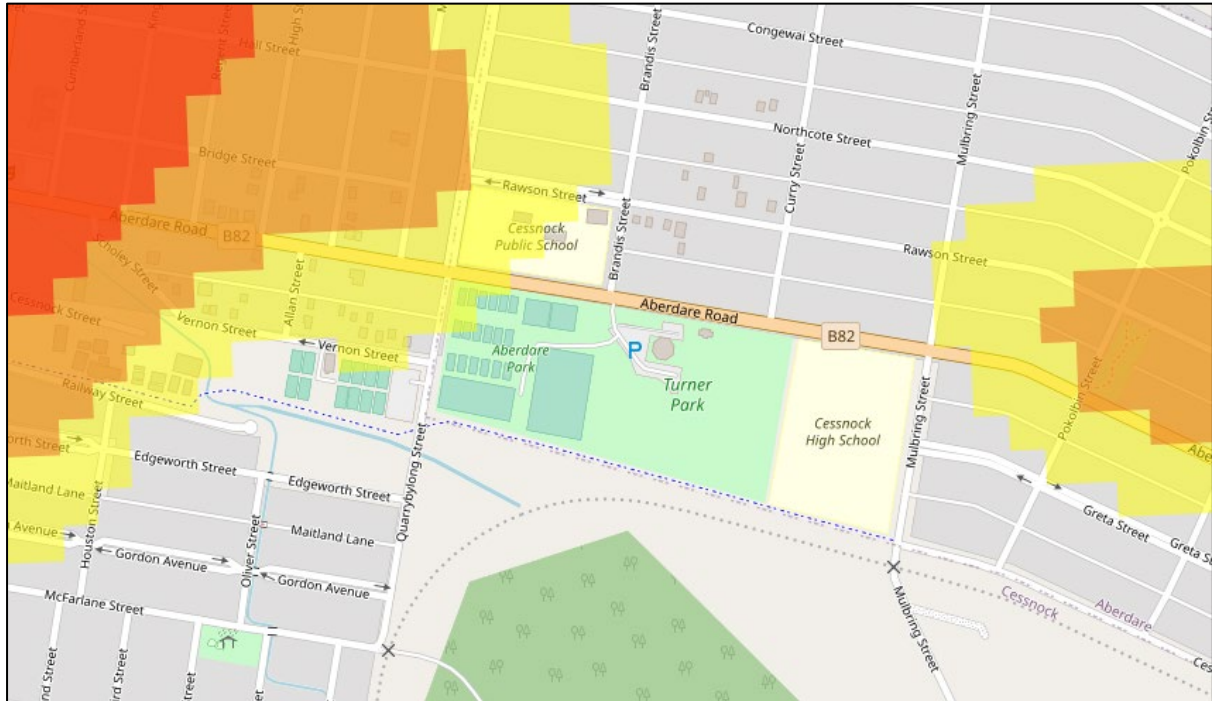


Figure 8. Malicious Damage to Property – Hotspot Mapping

Planning Comment: Hotspot Analysis indicates minor activity in respect to Malicious Damage to Property in the vicinity of the site to the east and west of the site, but nothing at Turner Park itself.

2.4.6 Robbery

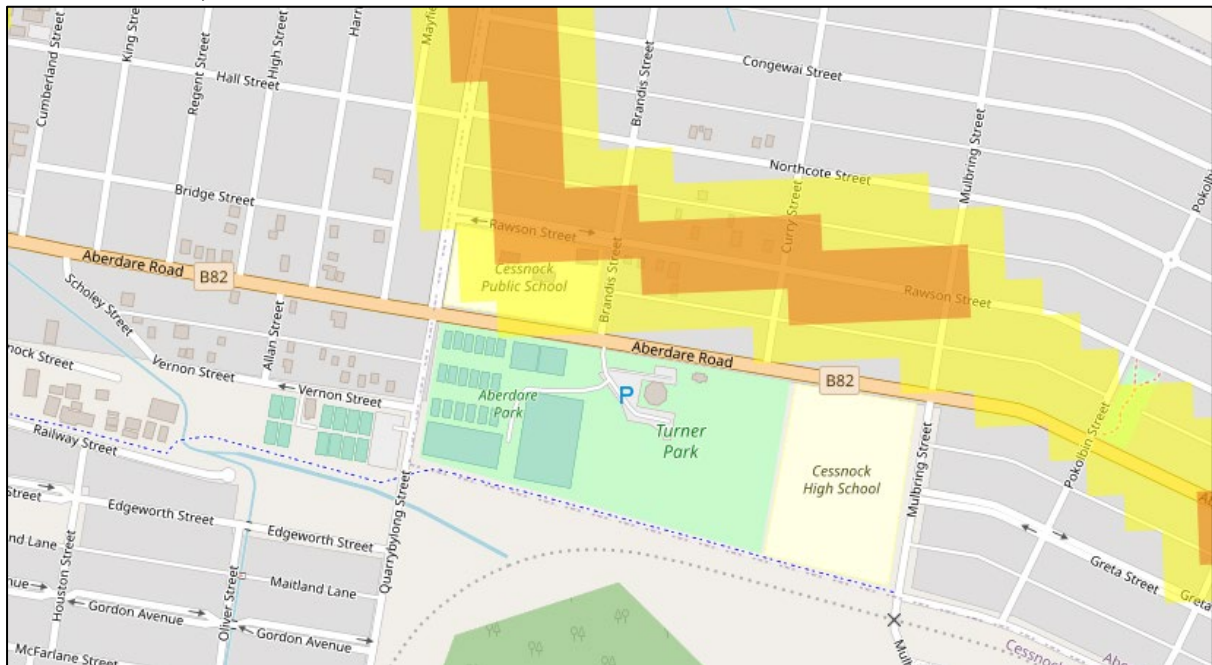


Figure 9. Robbery – Hotspot Mapping

Planning Comment: Hotspot Analysis indicates activity in respect to robbery in the vicinity of the site to the north and west of the site, but nothing at Turner Park itself.

2.4.7 Conclusion of Crime Analysis

There is no particular hot spot activity in the immediate vicinity of the site. However, we can use the hot spot analysis to get an understanding of the crime risks associated with the Cessnock/Aberdare area.

There is a distinction between the crime rate activity occurring in the Cessnock town centre and around activity nodes and the residential areas of Cessnock, with the former having higher rates of activity.

Potential crime risks in-and-around the proposed site for a food and drink premises are as follows:

Table 1 – Crime Risks

Crime Type	Site Risk
Common assault	Customers and staff being assaulted; includes domestic violence
Robbery	The unlawful taking of property and motor vehicles being stolen from the carpark, personal items being stolen from motor vehicles parked on site, theft from the store, break and enter, customers and staff having personal goods stolen from them while working or visiting the store.
Harassment, threatening behaviour and private nuisance.	Actions that harass or are intended to harass, threaten, invade the privacy of an individual, not amounting to an assault, sexual assault, blackmail or intimidation.
Sexual assault	Customers and staff being sexually assaulted either in the store or carpark areas of the site.
Malicious damage to property	This includes graffiti and general damage to property or individuals working at or visiting the store.
Arson	Destroying property either owned by Petsolo or individuals working at or visiting the store.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The following Community engagement methodology is set out in accordance with the Cessnock DCP Part C; Chapter 8 General Guidelines.

The following is an extract from the guidelines with commentary provided specifically in regard to the Proposal.

Involving people via a consultation process will assist in exploring how the Development impacts on affected communities. Communities that could be affected as result of the Development have an important role in identifying and discussing the potential impacts. Council requires some form of community consultation that engages the affected community in social issue identification prior to the lodgement of the Development Application. Please Note: Community engagement should not be seen as a process for gaining consent from the affected community.

Section 3.1 identifies those areas of the community that may need to be consulted in relation to the Planning Proposal.

In short, the key area of the community in need of address are user groups associated with the various sporting groups of Turner Park, the two adjoining schools and local residents. The Planning Proposal is not expected to have any impact on any existing or future potential businesses in the vicinity of the site.

3.1 Communities that need to be consulted

3.1.1 Those who live or work nearby to the Development.

Nearby potentially sensitive receivers have been consulted via letterbox drops (LBD) and face-to-face delivery of consultation letters. The following sites were consulted for comment/feedback:

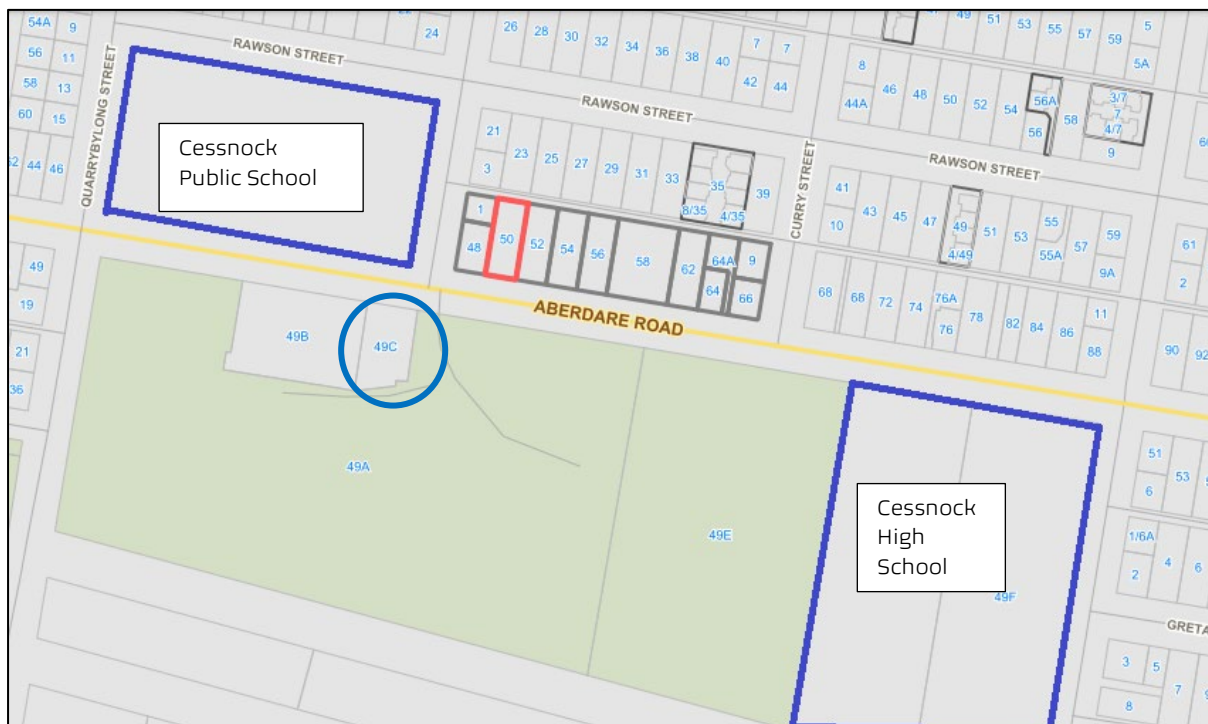


Figure 10. Community consultation map

3.1.2 Those who will hear, smell, or see the Development or its impacts.

Consideration has been given to potential amenity impacts discussed in section 4 below. Those who will potentially hear, smell or see a food and drink premises on the site are the users of Turner Park, residential properties in Aberdare Road, and adjoining schools.

3.1.3 Those who have an interest in the Proposal but may not live in close proximity, for example, a local committee or association, local service providers, etc.

As well as Councils Recreation Manager responsible for Turner Park, the following user groups of Turner Park potentially have an interest in the Planning Proposal:

- Cessnock Tennis Club
- Cessnock Hornets Soccer Club
- Piranha's Cricket Club
- CYCOS
- Cessnock Little Athletics
- Cessnock Athletics club

Other groups identified as also having a potential interest are as follows:

- Goodstart Early Learning Centre on Aberdare Road
- Cessnock Chamber of Commerce.
- Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council

Cessnock Public School and Cessnock High School also have a potential interest in the Planning Proposal.

3.1.4 Those who may normally use the land/space where the Development is to be located.

The land is vacant having previously been used as a bowling green associated with the Cessnock City Bowling Club. The East Cessnock Bowling Club purchased the site when the previous club experienced financial operating difficulties, however after a fire that burnt the clubhouse down, the ECBC sold the site to the current owner as it was surplus to their needs. Consequently, there is nobody who currently uses or has an interest in using the space.

3.2 Community Consultation Methodology

Councils Principal Community Planner was consulted on the groups and people to be consulted and the agreed consultation methodology was as follows:

- Letterbox drop – residential properties fronting Aberdare Road between Brandis and Curry Streets.
- An email to the adjoining landowner of 49B Aberdare Road.

Letters were emailed to the following groups seeking their comments on the Planning Proposal to amend Clause 7.11B of the CLEP 2011:

- Cessnock Public School and Cessnock High School.
- Turner Park – Councils Recreation Manager.
- Turner Park user groups:
 - Cessnock Tennis Club
 - Cessnock Hornets Soccer Club

- Piranha's Cricket Club
- CYCOS
- Cessnock Little Athletics
- Cessnock Athletics club
- Goodstart Early Learning Centre on Aberdare Road
- Cessnock Chamber of Commerce.
- Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council

3.3 Responses to Consultation

➤ **Response to Letter Box drop – NIL Response.**

To date, no written or verbal objections or enquiries have been received from the letterbox drop community consultation undertaken in association with the preparation of the Planning Proposal. It is anticipated that public exhibition of the Planning Proposal by Cessnock City Council will elicit a reasonable response from the local community.

➤ **Response to consultation with adjoining schools – NIL Response.**

Neither the Cessnock Public School nor the Cessnock High School responded to our letter providing opportunity to have an input into the Planning Proposal.

➤ **Response to consultation with sporting groups – NIL Response.**

None of the sporting groups who use Turner Park responded to our letter consultation letter.

➤ **Response to consultation with other potential stakeholders – NIL Response.**

There was also no response from the Goodstart Early Learning Centre, the Cessnock Chamber of Commerce or the Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council.

➤ **Response from Council Recreation Department**

The only feedback provided was from Cessnock Councils Recreation Department who provided the following comments with our response provided:

"Potential impacts this decision could have on neighbouring open space & community facility asset Turner Park could include:

- *Conflict of Space. Turner Park is a well utilised Regional Sportsground with large crowds regularly attending sporting events on site. Consideration would need to be given to pedestrian and vehicle access to and from the site to ensure safety of users.*

Response: Pedestrian and vehicle access to and from the site will not be impacted by removing a GFA restriction and won't necessarily result in additional traffic. In any case, these are issues dealt with at the DA stage of the planning process.

- *The additional food and drink premises within this precinct could potentially attract customers who would normally purchase products from kiosks/canteens operated by not-for-profit sporting clubs within the precinct. Income generated through kiosks/canteens are often the only sustainable method of fundraising for sporting clubs and associations – this should be addressed in the social impact assessment and economic impact assessment.*

Response: This is a likely outcome anyway as the site is zoned to permit food and drink premises, and Council has already consented to a convenience store and three (3) retail premises on 49B Aberdare Road that will likely be tenanted by one or more food and drink premises. As also set out in section 1.4 of this report, the site can already be developed for up to four (4) QSF style outlets with a combined GFA of 600m², which would have a more significant impact on local sporting club kiosks.

In this case, it should be noted that the proponents are already financially supporting local sporting clubs that use Turner Park.

- *Demonstrated evidence that the floor space restriction applicable to the site is no longer appropriate."*

Response: Refer to section 4.11 of this report.

4. IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CRIME ISSUES

The following section highlights the potential social & economic impacts of the development – positive and negative in respect to a future food and drink premises being located at 49C Aberdare Road, Aberdare with a floor area increased from 150m² to 250m² to 290m². This summary analysis primarily focuses on the following social impact themes:

- Localised crime and safety impacts
- Future amenity impacts
- Health impacts
- Local employment impacts

It is noted that the social impacts of this proposal are localised, and unlikely to affect the broader community of the Cessnock LGA. It is also noted that the potential social impacts from the Planning Proposal will be experienced differently by different parts of the community. Key affected communities include:

- Local residents:
 - The primary potential impact areas are the existing residents opposite the site on Aberdare Road between Brandis and Curry Streets.
 - The secondary potential impact areas are adjoining residential areas.
- Turner Park User Groups identified in section 3 of this report.
- Adjoining Cessnock Public School and Cessnock High School.
- Adjoining commercial landowners and businesses.
- Users of the site once developed, including:
 - Employees at a potential future food and drink premises
 - Users of the future food and drink premises on the site

All of the above have been consulted in preparation of this SIA – refer to section 3 of this report.

4.1 Economic Impacts / Issues discussion and mitigation strategies

A Social Impact Assessment is required to identify and provide an analysis for both the positive and potentially detrimental social impacts. Therefore, given the proposal reduces restrictions on a potential commercial land use with implications relating to food and beverage provision, a wider socio-economic discussion is presented below, with possible issues highlighted and commentary provided on mitigation strategies.

4.1.1 Demand and Supply of Food and Beverage Providers

This requires an examination of the justification that there is sufficient demand (or insufficient supply) for a food and drink premises in the locality.

The impetus for this Planning Proposal in which the GFA restrictions applying to 49C Aberdare Road are being sought to be removed, is to enable the establishment of a food and drink premises on the site. There is an existing food and drink premises located at 226 – 230 Wollombi Road, Cessnock, and this opened in 2019. That store is 'over trading', meaning that the store does not have capacity to cater for existing consumer demand. The best indicator of this is the que lengths occurring during peak periods that often bank back out of the drive thru facility and onto Wollombi Road. Given that there is extensive que length available through that site at the food and drink premises on Wollombi Road is a good indication of the

over trading issue the store is experiencing, and the need for another store in another location. This situation will only worsen as the population of the Cessnock area grows as set out in section 2.1 of this report.

A new food and drink premises in this location will effectively allow the Cessnock retail catchment for the food and drink premises to be split into two areas with the existing store servicing areas generally north of Wollombi Road and residential areas out to Bellbird and through to East Cessnock, while this site location will cater to the population in Cessnock and surrounding villages and rural areas generally residing south of Wollombi Road.

McDonald's have approval for a second store on the corner of Snape Street and Vincent Street, Cessnock (DA 8/2021/22142/1), and other food and drink premises such as Hungry Jacks, Guzman and Gomez and Carl Jr are investigating locations for new stores in Cessnock but have been unsuccessful to date.

The existing restriction that this Planning Proposal seeks to remove in respect to the subject site is effectively providing a restraint to trade and competition. If this Planning Proposal does not proceed, it is likely that the site will continue to remain vacant which represents an inefficient use of commercially zoned land.

4.1.2 Impacts on local businesses

The primary impact of locating another food and drink premises on the site will be the impact on other similar QSF businesses, and if a food and drink premises is located at the site, as is the intention, then the new store will reduce trade at the existing store and remove the over trading issue mentioned above. The population of Cessnock has grown significantly over the last decade and is expected to continue to grow by another 54.71% to over 30,000 people by 2041, so there is certainly capacity in the market for further suitable sites for food and drink premises.

Further commentary on this issue is also covered under the section below.

4.1.3 Consistency with Commercial Hierarchy

In the Cessnock LGA, the primary commercial centre is the Cessnock CBD itself, which performs as a sub-regional centre, with Kurri Kurri and Branxton in the supporting role as secondary centres servicing local catchments. Surrounding the Cessnock CBD and these local centres is a mixed use zone of business, light industrial, residential, and other land uses that rely on fringe commercial locations. The remaining villages/clusters of commercial activity serve purely neighbourhood needs.

The *Local Strategic Planning Statement* (June 2022) (LSPS) identified that it is important to maintain a commercial hierarchy (Planning Priority 11). A clear and definable hierarchy provides certainty to stakeholders including Council, developers, traders, and the community in general. The hierarchy defines the level and type of service provision and is a tool to assist the planning process by identifying the levels of service to be provided in different size centres across the LGA. Co-locating major retailing and commercial activities strengthens the critical mass of the primary centre, centralises the major service provisions in the area of the highest population base and optimises the use of existing infrastructure. Maintaining a hierarchy of service provision prevents the duplication of services and the dilution of this critical mass.

In June 2018, the subject site was rezoned from the RE2 Private Recreation zone to the B2 Local Centre Zone (now the E1 Local Centre zone). As part of that rezoning a restriction was placed on the size of any food and drink premises being limited to a GFA of 150m².

The LSPS (Planning Priority 11) identifies a commercial hierarchy for the LGA as surmised as:

Classification	Description	LGA Centres	Zoning
Sub Regional	Principal centre for commercial development in the LGA. Concentration of business, higher order retailing, employment, professional services and civic functions and facilities.	Cessnock (Strategic Centre)	B3 (now E2 Commercial Centre)
Local Centre	Service the surrounding district with opportunities for shopping and business, including health and professional services.	Kurri Kurri (Strategic Centre) Huntlee (Emerging Centre) Branxton	B2 (now E1 Local Centre)
Neighbourhood Centre	Comprises a small strip or cluster of shops in a mostly residential area to meet the day to day needs for local residents and workers.	Weston, Bellbird (Future Emerging Centre), Greta, Abermain Pelaw Main Heddon Greta	B1 (now E1 Neighbourhood Centre)
Village Centre	A neighbourhood centre on a smaller scale. Services available may be limited to a pub or general store.	Abernethy, Wollombi, Kearsley, Paxton, Kitchener, Ellalong, Millfield, Mulbring, Nulkaba	RU5

The proposal is also consistent with *Local Planning Direction - Direction 5.1 Integrating Land Use and Transport* (incorporating 'The Right Place for Business and Services) that provides guidance to future lands uses. Specifically the proposal is consistent with the Policy elements as it is accessible on a main arterial road, on the fringe of the Cessnock town centre and adjacent to the main residential areas of South Cessnock and Aberdare. The site also adds to the nature of the immediate localities character, which is one that could be described as *vibrant, accessible mixed use centres which is accessible by to public transport, walking and cycling*.

The Cessnock Commercial Core is defined as that area zoned E2 Commercial Core. An important consideration is that commercial zoning and subsequent development of the subject site does not adversely impact on the Cessnock CBD. This flows from the principles established in *Fabcot Pty Ltd v Hawkesbury City Council*. In *Fabcot* it was argued that a proposed supermarket was likely to have an adverse economic impact on existing and planned retail supermarkets within the local government area and should thus be refused. It was further argued that the proposed supermarket would cause a 10 to 15% decline in non-supermarket trading in the Windsor CBD. These grounds were dismissed as grounds for refusal; however the Court refused the supermarket on the basis of the broader impact it would have on the other shops in the Windsor town centre. The supermarket v supermarket argument is a case of direct competition and is not a relevant town planning consideration as these matters are appropriately dealt with via the Trade Practices Act. However the broader impact on the Windsor town centre was a public interest issue and was a relevant economic impact consideration.

The threshold test is - will the Planning Proposal to remove the 150m² GFA restriction from applying to 49C Aberdare Road lead to a detrimental impact on the commercial core of the Cessnock town centre. The answer is no, and for obvious logical reasons. For the development of this site to draw retail trade and activity out of the Cessnock town centre the site would have to be substantially large enough to attract an anchor tenant like a major supermarket. The Planning Proposal does not change the zone or landuses, and the site at 1,800m² in area is simply not large enough to attract an anchor tenant or big enough to attract retail shops.

The proposal is consistent with the commercial hierarchy as outlined in the LSPS as it proposes to reinforce a Local Centre area on Aberdare Road, Aberdare and within a mixed use precinct that includes recreational, educational, retail, and residential land uses. It is a relatively minor change where the practical outcome is an increase in GFA for a food and drink premises from 150m² to between 250m² and 290m². This will not threaten the commercial hierarchy that is sought to be protected and reinforced through the LSPS.

4.1.4 Impacts on Employment, income levels, cost of living

This consideration of social impact takes into consideration income levels, property values and cost of living are impacts, employment and workforce impacts, and whether the availability of goods and services are impacted.

The proposed development would involve the creation of additional employment opportunities associated with the construction and operation of a new food and drink premises. The proprietor of the existing food and drink premises has informed Insite Planning Services that they currently employ 94 managers and staff at the existing store.

It can be anticipated that further flow on effects on employment are created in the broader economy as a result of the potential income and employment generated. Using a conservative employment multiplier of 1.9 (as recommended by the Australian National Accounts guidelines), there could be the potential flow on effect of 178.6 additional ongoing jobs throughout the economy.

It is also noted that the proposed development would support and sustain employment outside the operation of the proposed take away food and drink restaurants, most notably within the construction industry. The development cost of the project has been estimated at \$4.5m. Based on the Australian National Accounts Input – Output Tables (ABS, Cat. No. 5209.0) one direct job year is created in the construction industry per \$160,000 of construction investment. So, for each \$1 million of construction investment the development has the potential to create approximately 6.25 job years over the construction period. In addition to direct employment ABS National Accounts Data indicates that a multiplier of 2.6 applies to direct construction employment.

Based then on an estimated capital cost for the development of \$4.5m:

- 28.125 job years would be directly created during construction.
- An additional 73.125 job years could potentially be created through the wider community.

In summary, the consequence of the Planning Proposal is a future development of the site that could result in the following employment opportunities:

- ~28 job years would be directly created during construction.
- An additional ~70 job years would be created through the wider community from construction activity on site.
- The development of the site would generate an est. 70 direct new jobs.
- These new 70 jobs would have a multiplier effect with a further ~130 jobs being created in the broader community.
- In total the proposal will generate ~100 job years through construction activities on site and ~200 new jobs associated with the operation of the new commercial facilities.

There is also potential that a new food and drink premises will impact on the trade of other similar facilities within the local market, and this could result in a loss of jobs at those stores. It could also lead to an overall growth in the Quick Service Food (QSF) market share. The local population is growing and the introduction of another QSF facility will provide another option to that market, so even though there may be job losses at other premises as a result of this new facility, it is likely to grow the overall QSF market share.

The employment information identified in relation to the Cessnock by this Assessment indicate that in recent times Cessnock has experienced significant improvements in relation to its unemployment rate, however that unemployment rate remains above the State and Regional State averages. Providing and supporting local employment opportunities therefore should remain a priority for local and regional authorities, particularly in relation to youth employment which is viewed as a Nationally significant issue with the national youth unemployment rate of 8.3% (July 2023), over double that of the overall unemployment rate.

It is well established that a large proportion of casual staff positions associated with QSF businesses are generally occupied by younger employees. 85% of the workforce of the existing food and drink premises operating at the existing Cessnock store are youths or young adults.

In addition to providing employment opportunities for younger residents, employment within the QSF industry provides important training and career development opportunities for individuals who may wish to enter the hospitality industry, an industry well established in the Cessnock Wine Region.

The future development of the site for a QSF operator is not expected to have any impacts on the cost of living but will increase overall wages levels in the Cessnock area.

4.2 Social Impacts / Issues discussion and mitigation strategies

4.2.1 Population Implications

Population characteristics are important to identify if and how the proposed development will impact on the community. Developments such as residential subdivisions, or aged care facilities are more likely to bring about changes to communities and the impacts (demand for services etc) therefore need to be identified.

The Planning Proposal that this report supports does not involve a form of development referenced above and is accordingly not anticipated to have significant implications in terms of changes to the population size or demographic makeup. It is noted that as the Planning Proposal may involve the establishment of a food and drink premises that it would generate additional employment opportunities within the Cessnock Community, however it is anticipated that the majority of the workforce would be sourced locally and thereby the proposal is not expected to alter the population composition or demographic characteristics. Any future development would however generate additional employment opportunities for the existing population base and is therefore expected to reduce the level of unemployment and have positive implications for individual and household incomes.

4.2.2 Community Structure, Character, Values and Beliefs

The community structure, character and beliefs relate to the impacts that may arise regarding relationships between people due to their customs, beliefs, attitudes, and even religious beliefs. The resulting development from the Planning Proposal is unlikely to impact on the community structure, character, make up or core belief values.

4.2.3 Social Cohesion

The issue of Social Cohesion refers to changes to the lifestyle for existing residents, conflict of space between existing and new population, and where development disadvantages particular social groups. The Planning Proposal implications are not anticipated to have any significant implications in terms of these considerations.

4.2.4 Sense of Place and Community

Issues to consider in terms of the social impacts of a development in respect to sense of place and community issues related changes to the aesthetic environment, whether the proposed development is complementary to existing neighbourhood character, and items of social and cultural heritage are preserved. In terms of the Planning Proposals relationship with the pre-existing built environment, and the associated social implications in terms of its location and physical construction the following is observed.

The site subject to this Planning Proposal is vacant land that went through an extensive rezoning process from the previous RE2 Private Recreation zone to the current E1 Local Centre zone between 2013 and 2018. The current Planning Proposal is likely to result in the establishment of a new purpose built food and drink premises. Consequently it is viewed that there is an existing community expectation of the parameters of the sites commercial purpose as a 'desired future character', and that a future development will involve the redevelopment of a vacant and dilapidated use (being a former bowling green).

The practical outcome of the Planning Proposal will not be to make a food and drink premises on the site permissible, as it is already permissible, but to remove the GFA restriction effectively allowing an increase in potential GFA from 150m² to between 250m² and 290m². Accordingly the proposal will not introduce any foreign forms of development into the locality not already permitted or significantly adversely impacting a pre-existing sense of place.

The proponents are lifelong residents and active members of the Cessnock community and actively support on an ongoing basis numerous community groups and sporting organisations including the following:

- Stomp Festival 2022
- Piranhas Cricket Club
- Cessnock City Hornets Soccer Club
- Kurri Kurri rugby League
- Cessnock Rugby League
- Mt View High School Awards Day
- Mt View High School Scholarship
- Cessnock High School Awards Day
- Cessnock High School Scholarship
- Cessnock High School F1 in Schools program
- Kurri Kurri High School Scholarship
- Kurri Kurri High School Sports Sponsorship
- Cessnock Walks Kawama
- Australian Postie Bike Grand Prix
- Cessnock Volunteer Rescue Association

Further to this throughout the year the proponents make numerous smaller donations of cash and or food to other events and fundraisers as requested.

4.2.5 Housing

Issues to consider in terms of housing include need for increased housing options, loss of affordable housing stock as a result of the Development, and availability of housing for people with a disability. The Planning Proposal will have no implications or social impacts in regard to these considerations. As discussed under previous headings the proposal is not anticipated to have any significant implications in terms of population growth and population characteristics.

4.2.6 Health Implications and Access to Services

This potential social impact consideration takes into account issues like the demand for health services (including ancillary services such as community health care, dental services), access to and the requirements for human and social services, impacts on the health of the community, including perceptions of health, and the need for healthy infrastructure, e.g. walkways, bicycle pathways.

As noted with Council's Economic Development Strategy, in comparison to both NSW and Regional NSW, Cessnock LGA performs poor to very poor on all health indicators, except the number of residential care places. Poor health is a significant constraint to workforce participation. The following Table provides a summary of key health indications taken from the 2019 Social Health Atlas of Australia.

Table 2- Cessnock LGA Health Indicators

HEALTH INDICATORS	CESSNOCK LGA	NSW	REGIONAL NSW
Fertility Rate	2.1	1.9	2.1
Low Birth Rate	5.4%	5.2%	5.2%
Smoking During Pregnancy	22.8%	9.8%	17.7%
Infant Deaths (2011-2015)	4.5%	3.5%	4%
Children Fully Immunised 5yrs	97.2%	94.6%	95.8%
Youth Mortality Rate (15 – 24) Per 100k	79.7	33.3	48
Chronic Disease – Type 2 Diabetes	5.4%	4.4%	4.6%
Chronic Disease – High Blood Cholesterol	31.4	32.4%	32.6%
Chronic Disease – Circulatory System Diseases	21.5%	18.6%	20.1%
Chronic Disease – Heart Stroke, & Vascular Disease	5.3%	4.8%	5.2%
Chronic Disease – Respiratory Diseases	30.7	30.2%	32.7%
Chronic Disease – Muscular Skeletal Diseases	34.3	29.8%	31.8%
Current Smokers 18+yrs (est) - ASR	22.2%	16%	20%
Alcohol Consumption High Risk 18+yrs (est) - ASR	20.4%	16.7%	20.4%
Obese Persons 18+yrs - ASR	40.2%	28.2%	34.8%
Premature Mortality 0-74yrs, ratio	317	239.8	275.9
Premature Mortality – All cancers	122.6	102.2	113.9
Avoidable Mortality 0-74yrs ASR	163.9	118.7	140.3
Private Health Insurance ASR	34.1	51.5	43.3
HACC – Total Clients Per 1k	97.1	61.2	70
Residential Aged Care Places per 1k >70	108.4	83.4	82.4

Source: Social Health Atlas, 2019

The Strategy notes that Cessnock LGA's poor ratings are likely to have developed over an extended period of time as a result of a combination of interrelated workplace, education and income factors including:

- I. Poor health due to long-term industrial environments of the past – mining, smelter, etc.
- II. Low wage environments for un-skilled workers.
- III. Manufacturing factories closing down – Bonds, other textile factories, Hydro – leaving unskilled workers without jobs and without the financial ability to relocate.
- IV. Generational family unemployment, often resulting in a cycle of poverty, depression, and hopelessness.
- V. High levels of smoking, alcohol and other drugs, lack of healthy food and exercise, etc.
- VI. Lack of ability for governments and/or business to be able to respond quickly at time of downturn of industry to enable ongoing support and employment.

It is noted that the obesity and over-weight associated health related factors such as heart-disease figures compiled by [Adelaide University's Public Health Information Development Unit](#) found that Cessnock had the 6th highest rate of obesity of any local government area across Australia at 23.86%.

There are no known planning policies relating to the correlation of health (obesity related) and proposed development. The lack of a specific policy framework notes that the potential health (obesity) issue is considered as part of a broader social impact assessment identifying the issues and potential mitigation options. The specific health impacts will need to be further considered at the development approval stage.

Take away food restaurants, or Quick Service Food (QSF) outlets, are an affordable and convenient food source, especially those that are time poor. It is well documented that regularly eating QSF can damage health. Coupled with low nutritional value, the high fat, calorie, and sodium content of these foods can lead to a variety of health problems. With statistical associations to weight gain, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and all-cause mortality.

The Planning Proposal will enable a larger food and drink premises to be established on the site which is expected to increase the size of the overall QSF market in the area and have an impact on the turn over from direct competitors.

In the short term it can be expected that a new food and drink premises will increase the QSF market in Cessnock and this will have corresponding impacts on health within the community. However, as population also increases these short term negative impacts would be expected to balance out. On this basis the development could have some minor indirect demand on health services, but such impact would not be expected to place a strain on such services to the broader community.

4.2.7 Impacts on surrounding residents - amenity issues, noise issues, vehicle noise and pedestrian traffic

The site is located within a formal open space setting (Turner Park) with two schools located adjacent to the site and fronting a busy regional road being Aberdare Road. There are sensitive receivers in the form of residential properties located opposite the site on the northern side of Aberdare Road

If the site is ultimately developed as a food and drink premises, the closing time is 10pm. It would not be a late night trading venue likely to impact on nearby sensitive receivers.

4.3 Crime Risk & Management

4.3.1 Location Crime Factors

Sections 2.3 and 2.4 of this report concluded that in terms of the area surrounding the subject site, there is low crime activity. The inclusion of a potential new food and drink premises on the site would increase natural surveillance in the general area up to when the store would close at 10pm. The primary risk would be the adjoining Turner Park car park becoming an area for people to gather and create anti-social crime related issues.

4.3.2 General Crime Risks

In a general sense, Crime risks associated with fast food restaurants can vary depending on factors such as location, local crime rates, and security measures in place. Some common crime risks and security concerns that can be associated with fast food restaurants include:

1. **Robbery:** Fast food restaurants are often targets for robberies due to their cash handling and late-night hours. Employees may be at risk during closing or opening shifts, and cash registers can be prime targets.

2. **Employee Theft:** Employee theft can occur in fast food establishments, involving theft of cash, food, or supplies. Adequate training, supervision, and internal controls can help prevent and detect employee theft.
3. **Burglary:** Burglary can happen during non-operational hours when the restaurant is closed. Burglars may target cash registers, safes, or valuable equipment, and businesses should invest in security systems to deter such incidents.
4. **Vandalism:** Vandalism, such as graffiti, broken windows, or property damage, can disrupt business operations and incur repair costs. Adequate lighting and security measures can help deter vandals.
5. **Customer Altercations:** Altercations between customers or between customers and employees can occur, leading to disturbances, violence, or property damage. Training staff in conflict resolution and having clear security protocols can help manage these situations.
6. **Drug and Alcohol-Related Incidents:** Some fast food restaurants may be located in areas where drug or alcohol-related incidents are more common, however this is not the case with this site. This can lead to loitering, disturbances, and illegal activities near the establishment.
7. **Drive-Thru Risks:** Drive-thru lanes can be targets for crimes such as theft, assault, or vandalism, especially during late hours. Proper lighting, security cameras, and employee training can help mitigate these risks.
8. **Food Tampering:** Although rare, incidents of food tampering can occur, leading to safety concerns and potential legal issues. Strict quality control and monitoring of food preparation can help prevent this.

To mitigate these crime risks, fast food restaurant owners and managers often implement various security measures, including surveillance cameras, alarm systems, well-lit parking lots, employee training in safety and conflict resolution, and collaboration with the police. Regular risk assessments and adapting security measures to changing circumstances are essential for maintaining a safe environment for customers and employees. A Plan of Management would accompany the DA which would include crime risk prevention strategies.

5. Conclusion

This Social Impact Assessment supports a Planning Proposal to amend Clause 7.11B of the Cessnock LEP 2011 so that it does not apply to 49C Aberdare Road, Aberdare. This provision in the CLEP 2011 restricts the GFA for any food and drink premises proposal to 150m² on land zoned E1 Local Centre at Aberdare Road, Aberdare. If the Planning Proposal is successful in amending the CLEP 2011 as proposed, the proponent intends to lodge a DA for food and drink premises with a floor area of between 250m² and 290m² on the site.

This report has been prepared in accordance with *Chapter C8 of the Cessnock Development Control Plan 2010* which sets out Cessnock Council's requirements for Social Impact Assessment and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. Specific reference is also made to Council's *Social Impact Guidelines* which have also been followed in the preparation of this report.

The need for this Planning Proposal is a result of trading conditions with the relatively new food and drink premises located on Wollombi Road. It is already 'over-trading' due to significant population growth in Cessnock over the last five (5) years. This site will service the areas south of Wollombi Road, and in particular the residential areas of South Cessnock and Aberdare, consistent with the Hunter Region Plan objective of creating 15-minute neighbourhoods and Council's LSDPS objectives of achieving compact urban centres and supporting existing commercial zones.

While the implication of the Planning Proposal is that a larger style food and drink premises is likely to be located on the site, it would not necessarily result in a bigger commercial development than is currently permitted on the site, and certainly not a development that would necessarily have greater negative social impacts. Based on the current site area of 49C Aberdare Road at 1,780m², it is our view that up to four (4) small scale 150m² GFA QSF stores could be established on the site with a combined GFA of 600m². The E1 Local Centre also allows other forms of development such as a drive thru bottle shop and other retail premises which could be up to 800m² in GFA. The conclusion therefore is that the Planning Proposal will not necessarily lead to a development on the site that will result in more negative social impacts than development currently permitted on the site.

It is considered that the Planning Proposal will result in significant potential positive social impacts including up to an additional 94 full-time and part-time jobs, and a continuing training ground for young people to work in the hospitality industry that serves the tourist industry of the region.

One of the main issues raised by Council relates to health impacts, and as noted above, the current planning provisions applying to the site permit up to four (4) small scale QSF stores on the site which may or may not have greater health related implications. Notwithstanding, in respect to obesity and over-weight associated health factors such as heart-disease, Cessnock has the 6th highest rate of obesity of any local government area across Australia, so it is a significant public health issue for the local community. However, there are no planning policies relating to the correlation of health (obesity related) and proposed development.

In the short term it can be expected that a new food and drink premises on the site will increase the QSF market in Cessnock, and this will have corresponding impacts on health within the community. However, as population also increases, these short term negative impacts would be expected to balance out. On this basis, any such future development could have some minor indirect demand on health services, but such impact would not be expected to place a strain on such services to the broader community.

In summary, the development is consistent with certain regional and local policy objectives in terms of supporting the 15-minute neighbourhood, compact urban settlement objectives and existing commercial centres. Given the relatively minor nature of the outcome of the Planning Proposal, being an increase in GFA of a QSF restaurant on the site of between 100m² and 140m², any enduring negative effects are likely to be relatively negligible in practice.

In the context of relatively constrained land supply for QSF restaurants in the retail catchment being targeted, it is submitted that the use of the site represents an efficient use of land, for the purposes of addressing current demand. The site is particularly compatible with the proposed use on the basis of its zoning and favourable location, which is emphasised by existing similar uses recently approved on the adjoining site. On balance, it is concluded that the outcome of the Planning Proposal would contribute positively to the future development of the LGA community and economy and is generally appropriate in the circumstances.