

Ms Elizabeth Richardson
The General Manager
Hawkesbury City Council
C/- The Planning Portal

sunehla.bala@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

Attention: Sunehla Bala

Planning Proposal PP-2024-1780 - Rezoning - Kemsley Park - 322 Grose Vale Road, Grose Vale

Dear Ms Richardson

Thank you for referring Planning Proposal PP-2024-1780 via the planning portal on 29 May 2025.

Agriculture plays a vital role in supporting state, regional, and local economies, as well as strengthening the social bonds and character of rural communities. The NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Agriculture and Biosecurity (the Department) collaborates and partners with our stakeholders to protect and enhance the productive and sustainable use and resilience of agricultural resources and the environment.

The Department's advice is guided by section 4.15(1) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and Sections 1.3(a) and (b) of the EP&A Act, which emphasises the facilitation of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) in land use decision-making. This includes promoting responsible resource management that benefits present and future generations and underpins the objective of the orderly and economic development of land.

We understand the proposal's intended outcome is to provide for residential development comprising approximately 300-350 lots, offering a range of housing options.

The proposal seeks to amend the Hawkesbury Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 by:

- Rezoning the subject site from RU4 Primary Production Small Lots to part R5 Large Lot Residential, part R2 Low Density Residential and part RE1 Public Recreation.
- Amend the Minimum Lot Size (MLS) map to apply a 375m² MLS for the R2 zone and 1,500m² MLS for the R5 zone.
- Amend the Urban Release Area Map to include the subject site within the Redbank Urban Release Area.
- Amend Schedule 1 of the LEP to provide for an Additional Permitted Use (APU) to permit dual occupancies, provided lot requirements are met.

Our strategic assessment reveals that the proposal is inconsistent with the overarching strategic plans, specifically the A Metropolis of Three Cities – Greater Sydney Regional Plan (GSRP) and the Western City District Plan (WCDP), as the subject site is located within the Metropolitan Rural Area (MRA). These documents emphasise the protection of the MRA and agricultural lands and do not support rezoning agricultural land for residential purposes. Urban development within the MRA, under the GSRP and WCDP, is limited to identified urban investigation areas to avoid ad hoc planning outcomes from site-specific proposals.

The subject site has not been identified in a strategy endorsed by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), noting Council does not have an endorsed strategy listed on the DPHI website.

The Department understands that the Hawkesbury Residential Land Strategy 2011 identified the subject site for further investigation. However, the site was not included in the original rezoning for the Redbank precinct.

The subject site's land is classified by the Land and Soil Capability Assessment Scheme (LSC) (Second Approximation) as Class 6 and Class 7. The LSC evaluates land according to eight biophysical features. The most limiting factor determines the final LSC Class.

Although the LSC mapping appears to suggest limited agricultural capability, the biophysical characteristics are influenced by the site's topography. A closer analysis of the data reveals that six of the eight biophysical characteristics are rated Class 4 or higher. The site also exhibits moderate to moderately high Estimated Inherent Soil Fertility (EISF), with red podzolic soils mapped across the area. These factors suggest that the site has agricultural potential, which aligns with its historical use and the broader agricultural character of the local area.

The Department recognises the importance of preserving productive agricultural land in line with the strategic framework. However, in this case, the proposed development is not expected to contribute to further fragmentation of agriculturally capable rural land in the immediate area due to the adjoining residential development within Redbank Precinct that surrounds the subject site, as well as the presence of significantly vegetated lots on the opposite side of Grose Vale Road.

Should you require clarification on any of the information contained in this response, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at landuse.ag@dpird.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely



Helen Willis

Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer
Soils and Water | Agricultural Land Use Planning
Greater Sydney Region

25 June 2025