



C O N S U L T I N G

# Concept Masterplan & Strategic Planning Imperative

Cudgen Connection

Prepared for Centuria Healthcare & Digital Infratech

By Cottee Parker & Planit Consulting Pty Ltd

(v1.0) - December 2023

Job No: J7594

---

## Company Details

<b>Name</b>	Planit Consulting Pty Ltd
<b>ABN</b>	20 099 261 711
<b>Address</b>	Level 2, 11-13 Pearl Street, Kingscliff NSW 2487
<b>Mailing Address</b>	PO Box 1623, Kingscliff NSW 2487
<b>Telephone</b>	(02) 6674 5001
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:administration@planitconsulting.com.au">administration@planitconsulting.com.au</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.planitconsulting.com.au">www.planitconsulting.com.au</a>

## Document Control

<b>Document</b>	Concept Masterplan & Strategic Planning Imperative
<b>Project Name</b>	Cudgen Connection
<b>Client</b>	Centuria Healthcare & Digital Infratech
<b>Planit Reference</b>	J7594
<b>Revision Number</b>	(v1.0)

## Revision History

Revision	Date	Prepared By	Reviewed By	Approved By
A	23/11/2023	Josh Townsend	Rachel Heath	
1.0	01/12/2023	Josh Townsend		Client

---

## **Disclaimer**

The information within this document is and shall remain the property of Planit Consulting Pty Ltd ("Planit"), including drawings, plans and figures.

This document must be read as a whole and cannot be read or reproduced except in its entirety. The document supersedes all previous draft or interim documents, whether written or presented orally, before the date of this report. Any subsequent reports must be read in conjunction with this document.

This document has been prepared for the sole use of our client, Centuria Healthcare & Digital Infratech, for the particular brief and on the terms and conditions agreed. It may not be used or relied on (in whole or part) by anyone else, or for any other purpose or context without prior written agreement from Planit.

No unauthorised third party is entitled to use or rely on this document whatsoever. Planit accept no liability if any of the advice is used or relied on by the Client for any unauthorised purpose or by any unauthorised third party.

## Cudgen Connection: A Strategic Planning Imperative

Responding to Tweed's growing community and the opportunity to magnify the NSW State Government's new Tweed Valley Hospital (TVH) into a \$1+ billion health and education precinct, 'Cudgen Connection' comprises a best practice development proposal to facilitate a genuine, integrated health precinct closing key land use gaps. The Cudgen Connection site is located at 741 Cudgen Road, Cudgen, immediately adjoining the TVH and includes more than \$300 million of investment to provide facilities including, but not limited to:

- Private Hospital
- Private Mental Health Hospital
- Specialist Suites
- Community Hub
- Food & Drink Options
- High Speed Fibre Cable Network
- Bus Interchange
- Essential Worker Housing
- Medi-Hotel
- University Campus
- Shops
- Open Spaces and Plaza
- Childcare
- Undercroft & Street Parking

The Cudgen Connection Concept Masterplan displays the intended mixed-use urban outcome across multiple buildings with varied heights from 1 – 7x storeys. Approximately 25% of the site is proposed to provide key open space, environmental improvements, and public plaza spaces, supporting the wellbeing of an estimated 1,000+ site employees and 286x essential worker units.

### The need for Cudgen Connection is undeniable.

A Market Assessment into the health network has identified a gross undersupply of health services within the Tweed-Byron region, straining the public hospital system, and forcing the community to travel outside the subregion to access services. National and State ratios of private to public beds are 1.85:1 and 2.46:1 respectively, meanwhile the Tweed-Byron region currently has a 24.56:1 ratio. Accordingly, access to private beds in the local catchment is 1/10th of State and National rates, further, there are also no private psychiatric units in the Northern Rivers. The shortfall of services identifies a clear disconnect from the catchment's population, which has a similar private health insurance cover rate to State and National averages.

Review of the health network within the South East Queensland growth corridor identified no tangible 'oversupply' of beds to cater for the Tweed-Byron shortfall, or its community with services. Noting the rapid growth of the SEQ growth corridor and Tweed's identification as a 'Regional City' within the NSW North Coast, the alarming shortfall in health services is further emphasised.

Beyond the need for additional health services, housing concerns have been raised throughout the Tweed community, and particularly for the past 18+ months, regarding availability and cost for essential workers. Anecdotally, local business owners have advised that the inability to attract staff has forced their businesses to close. As identified within Council's Draft Growth Management and Housing Strategy Issues Paper and subsequent data releases, housing supply is lagging behind projections and a longstanding trend of limited housing diversity delivered has and continues to be experienced. In response, purchase and rental prices continue to rise (7.83% and 6.8% annual increases respectively) in the LGA and rental vacancy rates are below 1%. Accordingly, dedicated essential worker housing is identified as a necessity for the Shire.

The inclusion of key worker housing within the Concept Masterplan directly responds to community feedback obtained. The majority of the housing will be managed and maintained for key worker housing via a legislated additional local provision.

Further, additional supporting land uses are illustrated within the Concept Masterplan, such as retail, child care and a community hub. These land uses close gaps currently identified within the precinct, support its efficiency and mitigate traffic and carparking pressure of 2,330+ employees of the precinct, who are otherwise likely to drive to the Kingscliff Town Centre to access basic services.

---

## **Cudgen Connection provides a genuine catalyst opportunity.**

The potential \$1+ billion investment into Tweed's largest and fastest growing economic sector provides a genuine once in a generation, catalyst opportunity for the LGA. The economic impact of Cudgen Connection alone is identified to generate \$160.2m in total value add benefits each year through its operation representing approximately 4% of Tweed's Gross Regional Product from 1x site alone. This economic output dramatically exceeds the site's current economic potential through primary production (which is identified as ranging between \$4,941 and \$34,998 per annum). In addition, Cudgen Connection will improve job containment within the LGA, and improve economic diversity and resilience. Whilst the LGA has had and will continue to have larger capital investment value projects, Cudgen Connection uniquely prioritises investment into 1,000+ job creation within the LGAs main economic engine, in contrast to housing-led projects with supporting retail investment.

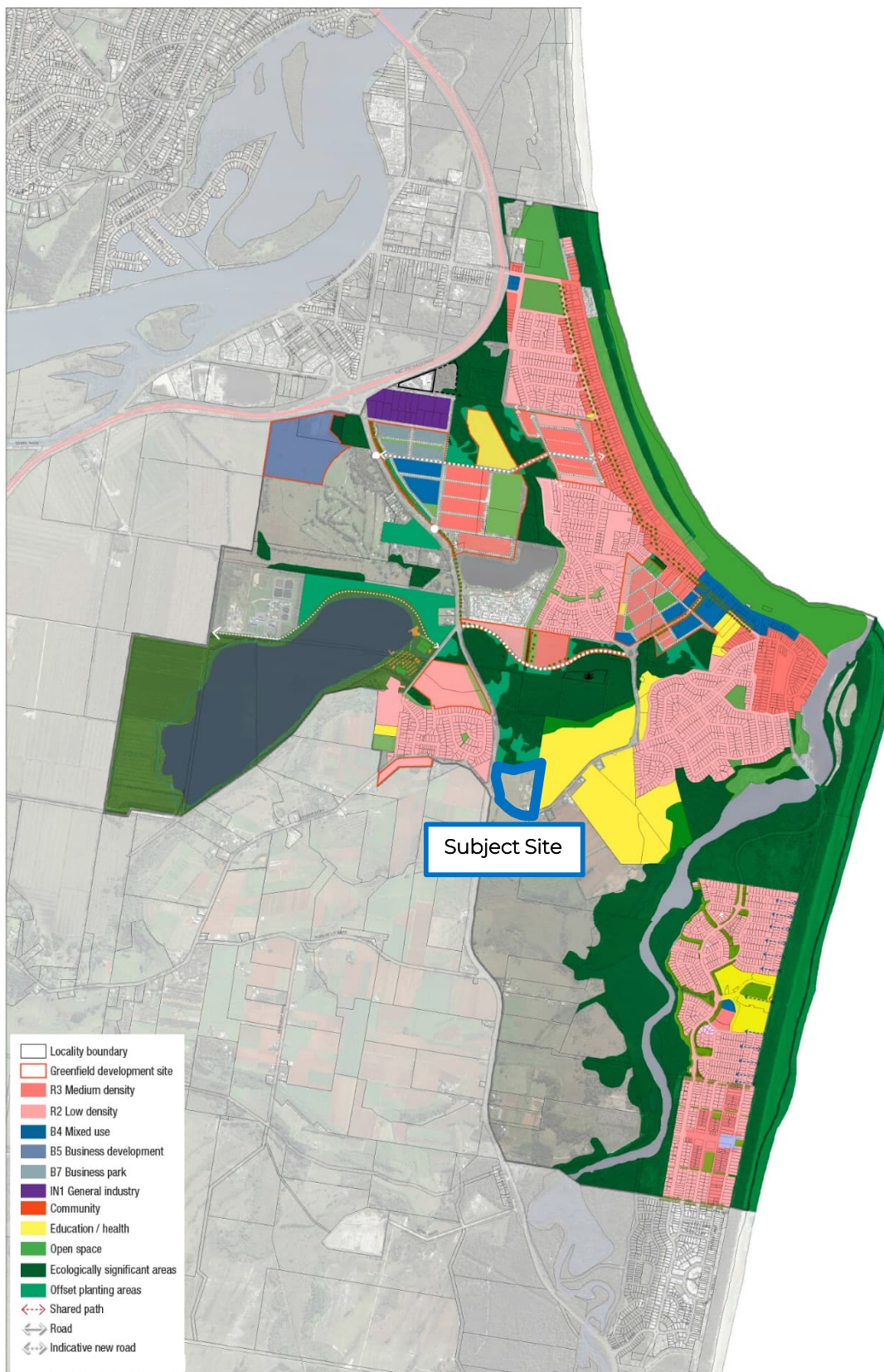
The 'greenfield' placement of the TVH above the floodplain also presents a rare opportunity to strategically plan for a best practice health precinct with limited site or land tenure constraints. Numerous State and local Government policies advocate for the preparation of a health precinct masterplan for the TVH health anchor. In the 5+ year void of these strategies, Cudgen Connection has advanced the evidence base required and formally provides this delivery mechanism.

Analysis of best practice health precincts has identified the importance of co-locating 'core' health precinct land uses within a comfortable, walkable catchment, being <1km. The Cudgen Connection site immediately adjoins the TVH site and provides unrivalled opportunity for connection and integration between the land uses. The clustering of public and private health, tertiary education, and supporting health, retail and food services allows doctors, specialists, carers, and students to walk throughout a campus-like precinct without disruption or traffic impediment. The co-location of anchor uses within Tweed's largest employment industry promotes active and public transport mode shares, and improves access, mobility and equity across the Tweed community. Whilst other land parcels within 1km of the TVH hold opportunity to further support the delivery of a health precinct, by virtue of their site attributes, these parcels cannot offer the extent of potential of the Cudgen Connection site.

A key benefit of the Cudgen Connection site is its position above the floodplain. The subject site is located above the Design Flood Level (DFL) and the majority of the site is also above the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) level. Land above the DFL and PMF which is suitable for development is a rare commodity in the Tweed LGA. Further, the co-location of Cudgen Connection alongside the TVH and NSW TAFE Kingscliff Campus, which is the locality's identified evacuation centre, magnifies its importance. In upholding Council's floodplain risk management policies and delivering 'core' health precinct land uses as per best practice, Cudgen Connection creates a genuine catalyst opportunity to drive economic growth, depth and diversity, along with community wellbeing and resilience.

## **Cudgen Connection integrates into the wider settlement pattern and is matched with infrastructure.**

The 5.7ha subject site is located at the confluence of Tweed Coast Road and Cudgen Road, a primary intersection for the Tweed Coast. Cudgen Road broadly forms the urban-rural interface of the Kingscliff and Cudgen localities, with land north of Cudgen Road identified for urban use, and south identified for primary production and rural landscape. As identified in Figure 1, Cudgen Connection is the only parcel of land located on the northeastern side of the Tweed Coast Road and Cudgen Road intersection which is not zoned or identified for urban or environmental conservation purposes.



**Figure 1 Kingscliff 2036 Source: Kingscliff Locality Plan**



As displayed in Figure 1, Cudgen Connection is joined on its east and western boundaries by urban development and forms a 'hole' within the wider land use structure of the locality. As discussed previously, best practice directs 'core' health precinct land uses to co-locate within a walkable catchment of the hospital anchor. Augmenting the connected 'satellite' settlement pattern that has arisen through the TVH and NSW TAFE land uses assists reducing pressure within the immediate coastal environments of Kingscliff. Accordingly, the Town Centre can continue to flourish as a low-set, lifestyle, tourism and culinary hot spot on the Tweed Coast, whilst immediate residential character areas are not unduly affected by demand to facilitate increased medical and commercial land use.

The subject site benefits from 2x road frontages. Traffic conditions for both Tweed Coast Road and Cudgen Road will evolve into the future in accordance with Council's adopted Tweed Road Development Strategy 2017 and Kingscliff Locality Plan, which identify road widening and 2x new additional 'east-west' connection initiatives to improve the road network. All essential services are present and available along the frontages of the site, which is also located within Council's Development Servicing Plan (DSP) for sewer and water capacity and infrastructure augmentation has been confirmed. The site is located above the DFL, and stormwater treatment review has confirmed appropriate water quality and quantity can be achieved.

## **Cudgen Connection is not on 'the wrong site'.**

Since the launch of Cudgen Connection, positive feedback for the intended outcomes has been largely universal, however ongoing concern has been raised that the subject site is not appropriate. This feedback has primarily involved statements that Cudgen Connection should not be located on land identified as 'State Significant Farmland' (SSF).

The key focus of the SSF classification within the Northern Rivers Farmland Protection Project 2005 was to protect contiguous, 500ha+ areas of high soil quality from urban development to facilitate future food and fibre production. The Cudgen Plateau is the only SSF area in the Tweed LGA and covers a 570ha extent.

Recognising that agricultural production may not be suitable on some small pockets of mapped SSF due to non-biophysical factors that make the land more suited to other uses, an additional policy layer was introduced by State Government to guide strategic planning. In 2017, the North Coast Regional Plan 2036, as well as its 2022 successor, the North Coast Regional Plan 2041, provided variation criteria/principles to facilitate a review of such circumstances. Pertinent to the subject site:

- The TVH is located to the immediate east. Further east of the hospital is residential land.
- Environmental and passive uses are located to the immediate north, inclusive of coastal wetlands and Threatened Ecological Communities. Further north of this environmental land is future and existing residential land.
- Land to the west and south are separated by 2x high order, 4x lane roads servicing the Tweed Coast and its largest settlement, Kingscliff.
  - Tweed Coast Road adjoins the site to west. Residential land is located west of Tweed Coast Road.
  - Cudgen Road adjoins the site to the south. Farmland is located to the south of this roadway.
- No other land parcel is identified within the Cudgen Plateau that shares these attributes.

Cudgen Connection is also supported by an Agricultural Capability Assessment (ACA) and an Agricultural Land Assessment (ALA) for the subject site. These 2x assessments consider the land's capacity and capabilities to facilitate sustainable agricultural production. The ACA identifies significant limitations to the farming potential of the subject site. These limitations include the site's immediate proximity to urban uses and environmental land, the land's slope, the lack of rural infrastructure and fragmentation from contiguous farmland. Acknowledging these limitations, the project economic output of the site from farming is identified as ranging between \$4,941 and \$34,998 per annum and production quantity value within the Northern Rivers per crop type of between 0 – 6%.

The ALA includes a detailed Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA), which considers existing literature, planning framework, consultation with adjoining land, as well as noise, dust and chemical spray drift. The LUCRA prescribes spatial and biological buffers to mitigate land use conflict with surrounding farmland, which can be readily accommodated on the site, as displayed on the Concept Masterplan prepared.

In summary, these 2x assessments identify the limited agricultural production and theoretical contribution of the subject site. The assessments do not identify any value-adding networks which assist or rely on the subject site. Further, it is evident that the site can be utilised for more intensive urban purposes without inhibiting farmland to the south and southwest. Acknowledging the Urban Growth Area boundary touches the subject site on 2x sides, and ability to mitigate land use conflict, a minor 'rounding off' of the Urban Growth Area to include the subject site is identified as justified.

Whilst it is understood that a minor portion of the community (15 – 25% based on Insightfully polling results) do not support the use of the site for purposes other than primary production, the evidence base presented confirms that:

- Cudgen Connection will not result in the Cudgen Plateau land area dropping below 500ha, and therefore will not erode the locality's SSF status.
- The subject site is unprecedented within the Cudgen Plateau. No other parcel is identified as being fronted by 2x major roads, directly connected to the Urban Growth Area, of minor land size for agricultural production and entirely disconnected from adjoining farmland.
- The combination of applicable site attributes and ability to provide land use conflict buffers ensures an unplanned 'domino effect' does not arise.
- Loss of the subject site from the primary production land pool will have a negligible impact on the competitiveness, diversity, employment, and economic output of the locale and wider LGA for agriculture.

In addition to the above, alternative sites have been reviewed, including an external review by NSW Department of Planning and Environment's Planning Concierge. These reviews have failed to identify an alternate site which satisfies the following fundamental criteria:

- Developable land area above the PMF
- Developable land area within a comfortable, 15min walking distance of the Tweed Valley Hospital (notionally 1km), as per best practice.
- Developable land area of the site and walkable precinct sufficiently sized to accommodate the integrated delivery of best practice health precinct attributes.

Assessment of strategic and site-specific merit concludes that there are no genuine alternative sites that facilitate best practice outcomes and provide the necessary resilience and benefits for the community. Any alternative to Cudgen Connection would limit land use synergies, care, education and transport integration opportunities, sustainability and prolong the delivery timeline for supporting health, education, community, and residential services. Biodiversity, bushfire, engineering, heritage, traffic and social and community need assessments have verified the suitability of the site for development and its ability to integrate into current and planned infrastructure provision.

Whilst a historically valued designation within the community, the SSF context of the subject site has evolved to the point that it no longer serves a function of state significance. When discounting the SSF designation, which is no-longer tenable, Cudgen Connection is considered consistent with all relevant strategic policies, State Environmental Planning Policies and Ministerial Directions and possesses multiple public, social and economic benefits. Accordingly, support and progression of Cudgen Connection by way of a positive Gateway Determination from NSW Department of Planning & Environment is encouraged at the earliest opportunity.



# Cudgen Connection Concept Masterplan



