ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Upper Hunter Land Use Strategy has been prepared for the Upper Hunter Shire Council by Worley Parsons incorporating Planning Workshop Australia in association with Land and Environment Planning.

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Thanks are extended to everyone who has been consulted for information or advice during the compilation of the Land Use Strategy.

The Upper Hunter Land Use Strategy is published by Worley Parsons incorporating Planning Workshop Australia, April 2011.
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The Upper Hunter Land Use Strategy has been prepared for Upper Hunter Shire Council.

The Strategy outlines key land use policies and principles for the Upper Hunter local government area (LGA), and provides the planning context for the preparation of local environmental plan (LEP) provisions. The Strategy has a time frame of approximately 25 years, to 2032.

The intent of the Strategy is to:

- Recommend actions for achieving the Upper Hunter community’s land use objectives, consistent with the Council’s vision for the future of the LGA.
- Recommend changes to the 3 current LEPs applying within the LGA to reflect the Council’s and community’s vision and land use objectives, in a manner consistent with the NSW Government’s planning requirements, including the Standard LEP provisions.

The Strategy develops land use planning objectives and strategies to guide growth and change and identifies where growth and change are expected to occur. 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 provided 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 involved the following key steps:

1. Review of 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 the Upper Hunter 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 LEP. A summary of the information in the Situation Analysis has been included in relevant sections of the Strategy. Map 1.1 shows the location and topography of the LGA.
2 VISION

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

The proposed vision for the Strategy is to achieve:

   **a quality rural lifestyle - in a caring and thriving community**

This is based on the statement outlined in Upper Hunter Shire Council’s Management Plan. The Strategy takes into account the objects of Section 5(a) 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 LEPs.
3 STRATEGY STRUCTURE

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 focussed on those issues that are within the scope of LEP provisions.

The Situation Analysis report also includes detailed information on the characteristics of the LGA. A background summary is presented in Part 4 of the Strategy, focusing on key settlement constraints including infrastructure, natural ecosystems, and land and water constraints.

Key land use planning issues for the Strategy were identified in the Situation Analysis. Themes used in structuring the Strategy take into account the key land use planning issues, and are as follows:

- Urban settlement
- Villages, large lot residential and rural small holdings development
- Rural areas
- Environmental values and constraints.

Strategic objectives, policies and actions for each of the key planning issues are outlined in Sections 6 to 9 of this document. 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.

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 LEP. 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 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 the 8 planning areas, which have been selected to enable the identification of local differences for individual towns and villages. This information is based on the Situation Analysis report, and more detailed information is included in that report.

The Upper Hunter is a large LGA with an area of 8,100 km², comprising 26% of the Hunter Region. It had a population of 13,205 persons in 2001 and 12,976 in 2006. The overall population level is relatively stable, however Scone and Aberdeen have experienced steady growth in recent years. Key employment and industry sectors are:

- Agricultural production and grazing, including beef, viticulture, and dairying
- Equine industry
- Mining (coal and other minerals)
- Tourism

Important demographic and economic characteristics of the Upper Hunter LGA which will influence future land use are summarised below. These show that the Upper Hunter LGA is a relatively prosperous area with a diverse economic and natural resource base. These important characteristics are as follows:

- Main land uses are grazing, cropping and national parks. There are also some areas of State Forest and a small area of existing underground coal mining, with some potential for more coal mining.
- The LGA has a diverse and prosperous economy and good employment opportunities (high dependence on agriculture and equine industry). In 2001, over 25% of the workforce (1,606 people) was employed directly in the agricultural sector, in addition to significant off farm employment.
- Population growth and development within the LGA is primarily concentrated around Scone and Aberdeen. Rural areas and villages have stable or declining populations and have the fewest young people.
- Reasonable urban water and sewer infrastructure, and adequate provision for infrastructure maintenance (in existing service areas) exists in the LGA.
- New residential development of 50 to 80 dwellings per year needs to be accommodated in the LGA, with about 60% in urban areas and the balance rural/rural residential areas.

- The LGA has significant locational and transport advantages through its location on the New England Highway, Golden Highway and Main Northern Railway Line. Increasing traffic flows are evident (mainly New England Highway). Rural road infrastructure improvement and maintenance pressures are emerging.

- The LGA has relatively poor public transport accessibility within towns and to regional service centres.

- The LGA has a significant agricultural sector. Agriculture occupies around 82% of the land area of the LGA. Significant areas are identified as prime agricultural land. The Upper Hunter LGA contains 50% of the agricultural area, 25% of the number of farms, and over 30% of the agricultural production value of the Hunter Region as a whole.

- Average farm sizes have increased over the last 20 years, with the 2001 average farm in the LGA having an area of approximately 1,000 hectares.

- The property holdings analysis shows that rural holdings of less than 45 hectares account for about 2% of total rural land area in the LGA, but 49% of the total number of holdings. The overall average area for all holdings is 261 hectares, averaging 4 lots per holding.

- Demand for additional industrial land exists in Scone, with some deficiency in supply apparent in Aberdeen, Merriwa and Murrurundi.

- Water supply delivery is an issue in Scone and Aberdeen. Water supply availability is limited at the regional level.

- A significant area of land in the LGA is subject to natural hazards (flooding and bushfires).

Population distribution within the Upper Hunter LGA is shown on Map 4.1, as are the planning areas used for the demographic analysis. The planning areas were identified in the Situation Analysis for the purpose of analysing population and development trends across the LGA, with boundaries based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census collection districts. These planning areas can be used to differentiate between areas, and the analysis shows differences in demographic characteristics, especially between urban and rural areas.

There are significant variations in the characteristics of each planning area, and land use issues vary between the areas, as summarised in Table 1.
Table 1: Upper Hunter LGA planning areas and key land use issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning area name</th>
<th>Description and key land use issues (e.g. growth expectations, land use constraints)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>Population in 2001 was 1,710 and 1,790 in 2006. Area is subject to growth and development pressure as a result of proximity to Muswellbrook and coal mining developments. Current service provision reasonably adequate, although Council proposal for water supply upgrading, and upgrading of sewer system is required. An important issue is the future of large industrial/agricultural processing sites and employment opportunities, specifically on the old abattoir site. Provision of rural residential land near town needs consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merriwa</td>
<td>Population in 2001 was 987 and 943 in 2006. Rural service town on Golden Highway. Provision for some new residential, industrial and rural residential development required. Retention of services is an important issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrurundi</td>
<td>Population in 2001 was 791 and 804 in 2006. New England Highway frontage, with commercial and tourism opportunities. Population is relatively aged compared with NSW average. Retention of services, and provision of secure water supply, are important issues, as well as provision for additional residential and industrial development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone</td>
<td>Population in 2001 was 4,962 and 5,085 in 2006. Scone town accounts for the majority of new residential development in the LGA. Current service provision reasonably adequate, although there is a Council proposal for water supply upgrading. Additional residential and rural residential land required if demand is to be met. Other long term issues are the provision of a heavy vehicle alternative route for the town and additional commercial and industrial land requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages, rural residential and other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blandford</td>
<td>Population in 2001 was 134 and 121 in 2006. Some potential for infill development, but minimum area for onsite wastewater management needs consideration. No significant population change expected. Village servicing is an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassilis</td>
<td>Population in 2001 was 113 and 87 in 2006. Adequate reticulated water supply. No significant population change or development expected. Minimum lot size for onsite effluent disposal requirements is important (lot sizes should be at least 2,000m²).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wingen</td>
<td>Population in 2001 was 166 and 170 in 2006. Some potential for infill development, but minimum area for onsite wastewater management needs consideration. No significant population change expected. Village servicing is an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural balance</td>
<td>Population in 2001 was 4,342 and 3,995 in 2006. Rural roads and accessibility are a key issue. Projected decline in population, and significant ageing. Increasing absentee landownership expected. Anticipated demand for further rural residential and lifestyle development in rural areas, primarily around Scone. Rural lot sizes and minimum dwelling entitlements for dwelling houses are important planning issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAP 4.1: PLANNING AREAS AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

UPPER HUNTER LAND USE STRATEGY
Projected or anticipated changes, trends or pressures for the next 25 years which should be taken into account are summarised as follows:

- Pressure for extension of existing urban infrastructure (especially water service areas)
- Potential for additional coal mining production and housing demand likely to increase from mining development occurring in adjoining and nearby LGAs
- Small increase in overall population. Growth in towns and immediate environs, and continuing decline in predominantly rural areas
- Significant ageing of population with increasing inadequacy of existing housing stock suitable for aged population. Also, reduced number of persons per dwelling (possible mismatch in housing supply and demand). This is creating a need for additional and varied housing stock
- Population and employment growth projected for the mid to lower Hunter likely to have flow on effects in the Upper Hunter LGA
- Increasing cost pressures for services (provision of roads and service infrastructure in rural/rural residential areas, transport costs)
- Increasing demand for maintaining environment and amenity and the ‘tree change’ lifestyle
- Possible extension of the F3 Freeway from Sydney to Branxton (subject to funding) will make the LGA more accessible by road to Sydney and Newcastle, and provide attractive opportunities for population and employment growth
- Reduced population in the 0 to 24 years age group, requiring measures to maintain population and skills
- Legislative requirements to protect biodiversity and maintain native vegetation
- Climate change leading to more variability in climate and reduced water security
- Continued development and expansion of the equine industry with strong employment and service industry opportunities
- Opportunities for the development of alternative energy production (including wind and solar power generation) and marketing of the clean green image of the LGA

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, the retention of young people (mainly between the ages of 15 to 25 years), and the attraction of new residents to the Upper Hunter. This will necessitate provision and maintenance of high quality key infrastructure (transport, water and urban), community services (especially education and health), and amenity (landscape and environment) at a reasonable cost.
4.1 Growth trends

Although the resident population of the Upper Hunter LGA has experienced decline in some localities over recent years, this decline has been largely the result of a disproportionately high level of seniors in the area. As a result, housing demand has not diminished, but increased as a greater number of dwellings are required to house a similar number of residents. This consideration, together with:

- emerging growth trends likely to flow from significant employment growth in the mid to Lower Hunter;
- the possible extension of the F3 Freeway to Branxton (subject to funding);
- coal mining expansion in adjoining and nearby LGAs;
- further tourism interest in the Upper Hunter;
- ongoing ‘tree change’ migration to the area; and
- expansion of the equine industry;

will inevitably lead to steady population increases in the LGA over the next 25 years.

Accordingly, for the purposes of this Strategy, it is projected that the resident population of the LGA will increase between 0.25% to 0.5% annually over the next 25 years. This would result in a population of between 13,880 and 14,270 by 2021 and between 14,600 and 15,400 by 2032. It is expected that most planning areas in the LGA will see some increases in their resident population. Growth is expected to substantially result from in-migration and will be focussed on Scone, primarily for lifestyle reasons. Dwelling requirements are expected to grow faster than population growth, based on the lower dwelling occupancy rate trends. A significant proportion of the workforce will continue to be employed in agriculture.

These trends are based on 2006 ABS Census data and take into account population projections from the Department of Planning, Hunter Valley Research Foundation, and local growth and development trends.

As mentioned above, the increasingly ageing population structure reflects regional and national trends and contributes to a reduction in dwelling occupancy rates which are expected to contribute to additional demand for housing. An increasing proportion of the population is expected to live in urban areas, with about 70% of population growth expected in urban areas.

Important demographic characteristics of the Upper Hunter LGA are shown in Table 2. Additional detailed analysis and data is presented in the Situation Analysis report.
Table 2: Upper Hunter LGA - Summary of important demographic characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>Estimated to be 12,976 persons (at August 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA population growth</td>
<td>The population of the combined 3 former LGAs decreased by 258 people during 1991 to 2006. During this period, the population in Scone increased by 158 people, Merriwa declined by 44 people, and Murrurundi declined by 335 people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Key characteristics of Upper Hunter LGA 2006 population | A lower proportion of households were in the higher income bracket than the Hunter and NSW averages.  
Between 2001 and 2006 the proportion of people over 65 has increased from 13.8% to 15.5% (NSW 13.1% to 13.8%). In the same period, the proportion of people aged under 15 has decreased from 21.8% to 20.3% (NSW 20.8% to 19.8%).  
Natural increase in the population (number of births less deaths) approximately balances net migration out of the LGA. |
| Spatial variation in population characteristics 2006 | Murmurundi and Merriwa have a much higher proportion of older persons than the LGA as a whole. Murmurundi also has the lowest proportion of persons under 15 years of age.  
The Wingen planning area had the lowest proportion of households with an income of under $400 per week and highest proportion with higher incomes. |
| Dwellings                                           | The total number of occupied dwellings in the LGA in 2006 was 5,195 and the dwelling occupancy rate was 2.5 persons per dwelling.                          |
| Age dependency 2001                                 | The ‘dependency ratio’ of the former LGAs of Murmurundi and Scone was about the same as the Hunter Region at 55. The ratio for Merriwa was 59, meaning that there were more young and old persons compared to the working age population. |
| Population mobility                                 | Almost one fifth of people in the LGA were living at a different address 1 year prior to the 2001 Census, while almost 40% were at a different address 5 years prior to the 2001 Census.  
Population mobility was generally lower in rural areas. |
| Workforce                                           | The total workforce was 6,055 and has been relatively stable. Between 1991 and 2001 the former Shires of Merriwa and Murmurundi recorded falls in the workforce while the Shire of Scone increased. |
| Employment by industry sector                        | In 2001, the agricultural sector accounted for 26.5% of the workforce, retail 11.4%, health and community services 8.1%, manufacturing 6.4% and the mining sector accounted for 4.9% of the workforce. |
| Changes in employment by industry sector 1996 to 2001 | Employment in each industry sector was relatively stable from 1991 to 2001. The industry sector with the largest proportional workforce growth in the LGA was wholesale trade. The largest decline was in manufacturing (possibly related to agricultural processing). |
| Unemployment                                         | In December 2005, the unemployment rate for the former LGAs was 4.1% for Meriwa, 5.4% for Murmurundi and 3.7% for Scone. This has fallen between 2% and 3% since the 1991 Census.  
The planning precinct with the highest unemployment in 2001 was Murmurundi at 13.3%, followed by Aberdeen at 10.5%. The lowest unemployment rate was in the rural balance at 4.6%. |

Sources: ABS Census 2001 and 2006, Community Portrait of the Upper Hunter Shire Council (Micromex 2004)
4.2 Planning framework

State, regional and local planning documents taken into account in the preparation of this Strategy are outlined in the Situation Analysis. The Upper Hunter LGA’s existing planning framework is outlined in the Situation Analysis. There are 3 existing principal LEPs and a range of development control plans. The existing LEPs are proposed to be replaced by one new planning instrument, informed by this Land Use Strategy.

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

Preparation of the Strategy has taken into account regional plans and strategies, especially the Hunter Regional Environmental Plan 1989 which continues to provide the statutory regional planning framework for plan making and development assessment under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. This Strategy is consistent with the broad strategic directions of the regional plan.

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

Other plans and strategies affecting land use that will need to be taken into account in conjunction with this Strategy are any LEPs prepared subsequent to the Strategy, and catchment action plans prepared by catchment management authorities.

4.3 Infrastructure and settlement structure

The Situation Analysis reviewed key infrastructure and settlement structure issues within the Upper Hunter LGA. This provided a summary of agricultural land use characteristics, mining and extractive industries, forestry, employment land, tourism, housing, access and transport, utilities, community and social infrastructure, and climate.

Agriculture and the equine industry are expected to continue to be the dominant economic activities within the LGA, together with the service and retail sectors. While future coal mining proposals are anticipated within Upper Hunter LGA, it is expected that regional mining employment will be relatively stable into the future, and possibly decline over a 15 to 30 year period. Areas of coal mining potential are relatively small, and were reviewed by the NSW Department of Planning (2005) in Coal Mining Potential in the Upper Hunter Valley - Strategic Assessment. This identifies areas with known mining potential in the short term (e.g. Bickham), and where further exploration is required to confirm resources.

The present position in relation to key infrastructure provision is summarised in Table 3. Key infrastructure includes roads and transport, and water and sewer services. These are shown on Maps 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6. Policies and strategy actions are outlined in later sections of the Strategy.
### Table 3: Summary of key infrastructure issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WATER SUPPLY</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen and Scone</td>
<td>The towns of Aberdeen and Scone currently have a water supply provided from the Hunter River at Aberdeen. All existing dwellings in the town areas are supplied with filtered but untreated water. The water supply is subject to supply limits in dry conditions and requires augmentation. Proposals have been developed for a direct pipeline to service the towns from Glenbawn Dam, including a water treatment plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merriwa</td>
<td>Merriwa has an adequate water supply provided from sub-artesian bore sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mururundi</td>
<td>Mururundi has a water supply provided from an off stream dam from the Pages River. This is subject to supply limits in dry conditions and requires augmentation. A range of options are available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassilis</td>
<td>Cassilis has an adequate water supply provided from sub-artesian bore sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other villages and rural residential areas</td>
<td>These areas are supplied by rainwater tanks and/or have an untreated supply pumped from bores, rivers and creeks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SEWER</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>Sewer is connected to all dwellings within the town boundaries where economically feasible, and only a small number of properties are not connected. There is a sewage treatment plant at Abercaimney Terrace providing tertiary treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merriwa</td>
<td>Sewer is connected to all dwellings within the town boundaries where economically feasible, and only a small number of properties are not connected. There is a sewage treatment plant at Hall Road providing tertiary treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mururundi</td>
<td>Sewer is connected to all dwellings within the town boundaries where economically feasible, and only a small number of properties are not connected. There is a sewage treatment plant adjacent to the New England Highway providing tertiary treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone</td>
<td>Sewer is connected to all dwellings within the town boundaries where economically feasible, and only a small number of properties are not connected. There is a sewage treatment plant adjacent to Bill Rose Sports Complex providing tertiary treatment. Effluent reuse on commercial and community land is an integral part of the treatment and disposal process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ROADS</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>The New England Highway is a National Highway maintained by the Roads and Traffic Authority with Commonwealth funding. The Golden Highway in the west of the LGA is a State Highway. The total length of highways through the LGA is 145.52km.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban roads</td>
<td>Urban roads are generally adequate for existing traffic volumes, but the cost of works needed to maintain these to a satisfactory standard is an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural roads (sealed)</td>
<td>Sealed rural roads comprise a total of 957.37km of local roads, plus 241.63km of regional roads. The existing local road network is adequate to cater for expected demand, and current Council policy is not to extend the current network of sealed local roads unless paid for by individual development proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural roads (unsealed)</td>
<td>The Council is responsible for 957.37km of unsealed rural roads.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 3: Continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STORMWATER</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WASTE MANAGEMENT</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole LGA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BUSHFIRE FACILITIES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole LGA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Important issues identified in the Situation Analysis report which will significantly affect future land use and development opportunities within Upper Hunter Shire are the consequences of projected climate change and future coal mining potential. Coal mining titles and the Mine Subsidence District are shown on Map 4.7.

Climate change has potentially significant implications for water supply, agriculture and rural land use generally. It is anticipated that within Upper Hunter LGA there is a likelihood of greater frequency of extreme events (e.g. storms, bushfires and droughts), increasing temperatures and evaporation, fewer frosts, and potential changes in seasonal patterns. Activities with the highest sensitivity to change include urban infrastructure, cropping, and irrigated agriculture.

Policy and strategy actions related to these and other settlement structure issues are discussed in later sections of the Strategy.
4.4 Biodiversity and Natural Ecosystems

The Upper Hunter LGA supports a diverse range of native flora and fauna species and ecosystems as a result of its topography, geology and climate. It includes parts of the Sydney Basin, Brigalow Belt South, and NSW North Coast Bioregions. Some small areas in the north and north east are within the Nandewar and New England Bioregions. The Situation Analysis outlines the characteristics of these regions and their biodiversity and conservation significance.

Large proportions of some vegetation communities have been cleared, with the result that much of the remaining native vegetation is significant. Although approximately 7.5% of the total area of the Upper Hunter LGA is included within dedicated conservation reserves (mainly in Goulburn River, Barrington Tops, Towarri, and Coolah Tops National Parks), this protects only a limited range of the vegetation types and ecosystems occurring within the area. The distribution of conservation reserves is shown on Map 4.8.

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

- 41 fauna species, and 16 flora species listed as threatened under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1997 (NSW).
- Barrington Tops National Park has World Heritage listing as part of the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves.
- One listed threatened ecological community and 45 flora and fauna species listed as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth). The White Box - Yellow Box - Blakeley's Red Gum Grassy Woodland is the listed endangered ecological community, and occurred naturally throughout extensive areas in the centre and west of the LGA.

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 proposals are required by State and Commonwealth legislation to take into account environmental impacts on biodiversity, including threatened species and endangered ecological communities.
4.5 Land and Water

The Situation Analysis reviewed key land and water issues within the Upper Hunter LGA. This summarised information relating to topography and geology, land capability and degradation, water resources, flooding, bushfire and contaminated land.

The ability of a landscape to sustain land use is a function of its physical characteristics and biological features, and is related to steepness, rockiness, soil depth and nutrients, drainage and vegetation. Rural land capability in the LGA is shown on Map 4.9. This shows that, excluding conservation reserves and Glenbawn Dam catchment foreshores, approximately 19% of the LGA is suitable for regular cultivation; about 39% is able to be used for grazing with occasional cultivation; and 32% comprises land with low agricultural value and high erosion potential best retained with natural vegetation.

Surface and groundwater resources are extremely important in sustaining natural landscapes, urban development and agricultural production within the LGA and significantly affect future land use. The general characteristics of the water resources within the LGA are summarised in the Situation Analysis report. Significant impacts on the condition of the rivers in the LGA include changes to river channel structure, loss of riparian vegetation and growth of weed species. Most of the original floodplain vegetation has been cleared, and there have been changed stream flows resulting from water extraction and flow regulation. Nutrients in the river originate primarily from diffuse sources. Significant land use impacts on the condition of the river systems include high water extraction from some unregulated rivers; proliferation of hillside dams which reduce run-off to streams; high levels of groundwater use in some alluvial aquifers; and discharge from effluent treatment systems which may lead to groundwater contamination. Salinity and aquifers are shown on Map 4.10.

Other key land and water issues to be taken into account are flooding and bushfire hazards. Current information for these is included in the Situation Analysis report, and policy and strategy actions related to these and other land and water issues are discussed in later sections of the Strategy. Bushfire constraints are shown on Map 4.11.
MAP 4.10: SALINITY AND AQUIFERS
MAP 4.11: BUSHFIRE PRONE VEGETATION
4.6 Design Issues

The Situation Analysis reviewed design issues which need to be taken into account in the preparation of the Land Use Strategy and draft LEP for the LGA. These issues include European and Indigenous heritage protection, air quality, acoustic environment, and landscape.

Important matters that need to be considered in the LEP are heritage conservation and landscape issues. Heritage conservation areas are shown on Map 4.12. These and other design issues primarily relate to the identification of future areas for urban expansion, rural residential development, and the manner in which individual development proposals are carried out within the framework provided by the LEP.
5 GENERAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

General aims and objectives for land use within the Upper Hunter 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's general aims and objectives are outlined below. These take into account existing LEP provisions, key issues identified in the Situation Analysis report, and relevant State and Regional planning provisions. The general aims and objectives have been prepared in a form to enable them to be incorporated into subsequent LEP provisions and are as follows:

a) to provide a framework for controlling and co-ordinating development within the Upper Hunter LGA

b) to encourage appropriate and efficient use, development and management of land and natural resources by protecting, enhancing or conserving:
   i) prime crop and pasture land, and important agricultural resources
   ii) timber, minerals, soil, water and other natural resources, and
   iii) the environmental, scenic and cultural heritage of the LGA

c) to consolidate and update the existing planning controls within the Upper Hunter LGA

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 encourage adoption of land management practices which are sustainable over long periods of time without degradation of natural environmental systems

g) to provide adequate protection and minimise risk for the community (as far as possible) from environmental hazards, including flooding, soil erosion, bushfires and pollution

h) to enable public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment

i) to progress development in an orderly and economic manner

j) to consider and plan for anticipated climate changes.

In addition to the general aims and objectives outlined above, LEPs are required to have specific objectives for each land use zone identified within the scope provided by the NSW Government’s standard LEP provisions.
While the overall population of the Upper Hunter LGA is expected to increase by up to 0.5% p.a. in the Strategy time frame (25 years), there will be variability in trends between different locations. In addition, housing and settlement requirements are expected to change. The approach taken in the Strategy will affect the distribution of urban development, and the long term settlement structure of towns and villages.

Growth will be influenced by national and Sydney metropolitan trends, as well as growth in local and regional employment and work commuting patterns. As family sizes decline and the population ages, it is likely that higher demand for smaller sized dwellings will occur, including single storey dwellings for aged persons.

Demand for new dwellings is projected to range from 50 to 80 per year in the LGA, of which 35 to 55 dwellings would be in urban areas, mostly in Scone. Residential land release in urban areas is expected to reflect this projected dwelling demand, although this will depend on the extent of rural residential demand, and the proportion of dwellings in multi-unit housing.

There is currently reasonable provision of urban infrastructure and services (e.g. roads, electricity, water and sewer) for the towns in the Upper Hunter LGA. 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 the Upper Hunter LGA, although the trend for increasing centralisation of many specialist services means that these are located in the Lower Hunter, and transport must be available to access these. Housing affordability and providing adequate suitable seniors accommodation are expected to continue to be significant issues over the life of the Strategy.

A number of maps are provided within this Strategy which identify areas for potential urban expansion throughout the life of the Strategy. A key method for identifying the amount of land required for short term rezoning is the establishment of a coordinated land monitoring system to track the construction of new dwellings and commercial/industrial developments, and the creation of new allotments across the LGA. This system would extend from medium density and infill housing to fringe urban development, commercial, industrial, rural small holdings and general rural areas. It would assist in measuring the take up of existing zoned or serviced land, identifying market and development trends, and in determining the staging of future land releases and rezonings to maintain adequate land supply.

The following estimates in Table 4 are adopted for the purposes of the Strategy. These estimates are based on the demographic information and expected trends outlined in the Situation Analysis report. 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 Upper Hunter LGA projections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy forecast</th>
<th>Estimate (25 years to 2032)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population change</td>
<td>Estimated 0.25% to 0.5% per annum growth. Range from 14,600 to 15,400 by 2032</td>
<td>Population growth would primarily result from in-migration of new residents to the area, mainly in and around Scone. General decline in the rural population is expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling occupancy rate</td>
<td>Decline from 2.5 persons per dwelling to 2.1 persons per dwelling</td>
<td>Ongoing decline in occupancy rate creates demand for an additional 50 dwellings per annum (with no population growth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of new dwellings required</td>
<td>Average 50 to 80 new dwellings per year</td>
<td>Depends substantially on dwelling occupancy rate and dwelling type availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in type of dwellings required</td>
<td>Increase in small single dwellings, seniors accommodation (especially single storey), and units/townhouses</td>
<td>Lower demand for large houses (i.e. 3 to 4 bedrooms) likely in long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban/rural split</td>
<td>By 2032, urban areas in Upper Hunter are expected to have about 70% of the population with about 4,140 persons in rural areas</td>
<td>It is anticipated that 60% of additional dwellings to 2032 will be in urban areas, of which about 75% will be in Scone, 20% in Aberdeen, and about 5% shared between Merriwa and Murrurundi. Villages and rural areas are expected to account for about 30% of new dwellings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- Projected population change and housing demand
- Identification of areas for future urban expansion around Scone and Aberdeen (and road networks)
- Adequacy of land for industry and commerce, and requirements for additional land and services (primarily Scone)
- Town infill development opportunities and constraints (e.g. heritage and infrastructure)
- Water and sewerage capacity and service areas
- Development guidelines for Scone Airport and surrounding land
- Development guidelines for urban highway frontage land
- Industrial land issues in Murrurundi and Merriwa.

Information on these issues is presented below, together with objectives, policies and strategic actions.
6.1 Projected population change and housing demand

As outlined above, the main population issues that need to be addressed over the life of the Strategy are the projected ageing of the population, with lower dwelling occupancies, a requirement for smaller dwellings close to services, and provision of seniors’ accommodation.

As the largest centre, Scone is expected to experience pressure for population growth, and will account for the majority of new development. Although some growth is expected in Aberdeen, the populations of Merriwa and Murrurundi are expected to remain stable.

The Situation Analysis report identified a range of housing issues in the LGA, highlighting particular sectors of the population in housing stress, relative house prices, and the need to provide for medium density and low income housing for certain groups. There is scope in the Strategy to influence these issues through provision of appropriately zoned land, services, and detailed LEP provisions.

A key objective of the Land Use Strategy is to provide for additional residential development in the urban area of Scone. Growth projections reflect steady growth which can be accommodated relatively easily within the current urban form, and with some limited additional urban areas.

Existing residential areas within Scone typically consist of single dwelling houses situated on relatively large allotments (often in excess of 1,000m²), with streetscapes characterised by wide local roads and generous areas of open space. Given the rural setting of Scone; the previous settlement pattern; and the desire by existing and future residents for a rural lifestyle, it is likely that this form of low density residential development will continue. The Council envisions that the character of the town will continue to be defined by large residential allotments with access to services, wide tree lined roads, generous parks and open space (including extra wide road reserves and landscaped areas) and large stormwater management areas, based on the principles of water sensitive urban design. The provision of generally large minimum lot sizes, along with the availability of smaller lots through infill development and zoning for medium density development, will ensure that housing choice is maximised.

In regard to the availability of already zoned land Upper Hunter Council has provided the following information:

- Aberdeen – area available is 76 ha which equates to 400 lots and
- Scone – area available 78 ha which equates to 390 lots eliminating a natural drainage area that would not be suitable for development.

Objectives - Projected population change and housing demand

- Ensure Upper Hunter LGA has urban land that is zoned and serviced to meet projected housing needs up to 2032.
- Identify long term strategic urban growth options for Scone for 50+ years.
- Facilitate provision of housing to meet changing household formations and the needs of an ageing population (e.g. varying size and form).
Policies - Projected population change and housing demand

- Provide adequate zoned residential land in Scone to meet anticipated requirements for between 5 and 10 years supply (250 lots minimum to 500 lots maximum).
- Provide residential zoned land in at least 2 ownerships to provide competition and alternative development options.
- Encourage seniors' accommodation in suitable locations and access to services.
- Support the provision of affordable housing requirements by maintaining adequate residential land.
- Facilitate medium density housing 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 seniors accommodation).
- Recognise the need to cater for different sectors (youth, seniors and single persons).
- Provide a greater range of residential lot sizes especially in the 500 to 1000m² range, and support attached and medium density dwellings in appropriate locations.
- Design residential development to promote potential public transport accessibility, and enable provision of shopping and other facilities within walking distance where practical.

Strategic Actions - Projected population change and housing demand

- Establish a land monitor to review residential supply and demand, dwelling and subdivision approvals.
- Prepare Section 94 Contributions Plans prior to gazettal of LEP providing additional residential zoned land.
- Review the current village zoning for Murrurundi and replace with appropriate urban zones using Standard LEP provisions.

6.2 Identification of areas for future urban expansion around Scone and Aberdeen (and road networks)

It is essential to meet the long term urban expansion opportunities for Scone and Aberdeen, and to ensure that these are not prejudiced by short term development. This section focuses on the future urban structure of the towns of Scone and Aberdeen, 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.

Anticipated demand for urban land has been identified in Section 6.1. Scone LEP 1986 provides for an urban population of around 6,000 persons in Scone and Aberdeen, and was reviewed in the Scone Urban Study (Hilltop Planners 1996).
However, the 2006 population for Scone and Aberdeen of around 6,330 persons requires greater land area than previously anticipated, largely as a result of recent lower density development and lower dwelling occupancy rates. This means that additional land needs to be provided for urban expansion.

The Scone Urban Study recommended that the appropriate level of vacant land supply should equate to at least one years building demand, and preferably 2 years. It identified a need for additional zoned land, and provided the following strategies:

- residential development in Scone to be restricted to the current northern limit
- rationalise zoning of residential and industrial land to the east of the town
- undertake a review of the eastern boundary of development, minimum lot sizes on steeper land, and DCP guidelines.

The proposals in the Scone Urban Study remain generally appropriate, however a land bank equivalent to around 5 years supply is now recommended. These are shown on Map 6.1, which should form the basis of future urban zoning to 2032. The proposed urban structure provides medium term expansion opportunities for Scone and does not prejudice long term growth options for the town which are conceptually indicated on Map 6.1 and in Table 5.

**Table 5: Summary of long term future urban expansion options for Scone**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scone North</td>
<td>Land zoned part Special Uses and part Intensive Agriculture in current LEP. Consider providing for additional industrial use in short to medium term. Potential for 25 to 30 ha of industrial use in short to medium term. Potential for 25 to 30 ha of industrial zoned land with light/general industrial uses. Alternative potential road access to industrial area available from north via Common Road. Retain existing abattoir/saleyards/landfill site as special activities or similar zone. Review zone options in draft LEP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone South East</td>
<td>Part of proposed St Aubins development. Subject to further investigation for short to medium term residential use. Approximately 100 ha of land with potential for 500 to 900 lots (800 to 1,500m² lots). Applicant also proposes 4 ha for lifestyle village catering for seniors living. Would require new access to New England Highway in the long term. Potential environmental constraints require investigation, including likelihood of occurrence of endangered ecological community and groundwater salinity. Review Area currently zoned for rural residential purposes but not developed (Area H). Consider appropriate subdivision minimum areas having regard to environmental constraints and the potential for water and sewer servicing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone South tourism/commercial/light industrial</td>
<td>An investigation zone of approximately 10 ha of land for a mix of tourism or commercial and light industrial purposes has been identified by Council. Development along the highway should have regard to development guidelines prepared for urban highway frontage land (e.g. in a development control plan. Refer to Section 6.7 of this Strategy). Also investigate zoning of 1 ha on north east side of road (Scone Toyota) for commercial purposes. Prominent gateway location at entrance to Scone with need for special consideration of visual and traffic implications. Consider zoning options for B2 Local Centre, B5 Business Development or IN2 Light Industrial. Consider appropriate zoning options for employment uses. Zoning provisions should limit commercial activities to avoid any adverse affect on Scone CBD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently there is adequate zoned residential zoned land in Aberdeen to meet demand. While the long term development options for Aberdeen proposed in the Scone Environmental Study (Planning Workshop 1982) remain reasonable, it is unlikely that these areas will be required in the foreseeable future. Existing zonings should be rationalised and/or supplemented with DCP provisions to provide for improved urban structure, staging of release areas and to recognise anticipated demand estimates. There is also a mismatch between residential and commercial zonings in Aberdeen which should be reviewed. Map 6.2 shows the urban structure and future expansion areas proposed for Aberdeen.
### Table 6: Summary of long term future urban expansion options for Aberdeen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former Aberdeen abattoir site</td>
<td>Former meatworks site currently zoned special uses, with an area of 90 ha. Potential for change to industrial use and employment development in short term. Further investigate options for light/general industrial use and review proposed LEP zoning. Consider part zoning for special activities and/or adjoining rural zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen East</td>
<td>Recognised in the past as a potential future area for medium term residential extension. An area of approximately 30 ha is currently zoned part residential and open space. Investigate appropriate future land use options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Aberdeen residential</td>
<td>Investigate changing 15 ha of current industrial and special uses zoned land to residential zone to facilitate future urban development of South Aberdeen and prevent future incompatible land uses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Water, sewerage and servicing are key issues requiring further investigation, future access requirements and locations of commercial and industrial land also need to be taken into consideration. Within the period of this Strategy, future servicing should be investigated, and no land use decisions (e.g. subdivision, rural residential development or rezoning) should be made which will prevent the implementation of the long term urban expansion concept.
Objectives - Identification of areas for future urban expansion around Scone and Aberdeen

➤ Identify land which should be investigated for long term future expansion and zone this appropriately to prevent subdivision and inappropriate land use.

➤ Limit the exposure of the towns to major flood events, by preventing additional land being developed for residential purposes on the floodplain.

➤ Consolidate existing urban areas and increase the density within existing environmental, heritage and infrastructure capacity constraints.

Policies - Identification of areas for future urban expansion around Scone and Aberdeen

• Maintain a minimum of 5 years supply of zoned residential land to meet projected demand in each town.

• Adopt areas to be investigated for potential urban expansion in Scone as shown on Map 6.1 and listed in Table 5.

• Adopt areas to be investigated for potential urban expansion in Aberdeen as shown on Map 6.2 and listed in Table 6.

• 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
  - Good aspect and neighbourhood amenity.

• Direct urban growth to areas where effective use could be made of existing urban infrastructure/reserve where capacity is available.

• Maintain a minimum of 2 development fronts in separate ownership in each town to maintain market place competition.

• Prevent further subdivision or non-reversible land use within the identified preferred investigation areas for future urban expansion.

• Ensure potential public transport accessibility for all residential development, and provision of shopping and other facilities within walking distance where practical.

• Consider urban sustainability issues in the determination of new areas for urban expansion (e.g. servicing limits to allow future water recycling, protection of biodiversity values, road and subdivision layout to provide optimum orientation for solar access).
Strategic Actions - Identification of areas for future urban expansion around Scone and Aberdeen

- Make detailed investigations of each of the potential urban expansion areas shown on Maps 6.1 and 6.2 and listed in Tables 5 and 6 by 2016.
- 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.
- Facilitate LEP amendments to supply a minimum of 5 years of residential development potential through zoning based on demand and supply analysis.
- Ensure land take up is scrutinised and incorporated into an established land monitor, in order to identify the need for future rezonings.
- Ensure demand and supply analysis also considers available infill opportunities.
- Implement zoning consistent with Standard LEP recommended zones.
- Incorporate future climate change adaptation and responses in future planning instruments and documents, including water saving, solar lot orientation, water reuse, etc.

6.3 Adequacy of land for industry and commerce, and requirements for additional land and services (primarily Scone)

It is important to have enough land available within the LGA for employment generating activities, particularly industrial land. The main pressures for commercial land are expected to occur in Scone, and to relate to either redevelopment of existing commercial premises or development of larger sites for supermarket or bulky goods retail development. Maintaining the CBD integrity is important in Scone. Existing commercial zoning is generally adequate but the aim of this strategy is to keep a compact commercial core. There is potential for a mixed use zone along the highway frontage to provide for ancillary commercial business and tourist activities. A DCP will be developed in order to guide this development.

A deficiency of industrial land has been previously identified in Scone, but this situation will be assisted by the additional land zoned industrial under recent amendments to the Scone LEP. There is no land set aside for heavy industrial uses. There is currently a lack of data on which to accurately base estimated industrial land use requirements.

Existing industrial zoned land and potential areas for investigation for future industrial use in Scone are shown on Map 6.1. Industrial land issues and zonings in Merriwa and Murrurundi are reviewed in Section 6.8.
Objectives - Adequacy of land for industry and commerce, and requirements for additional land and services

➢ Provide adequate industrial land to meet demand for development and facilitate employment opportunities.
➢ Provide adequate land for commercial development in Scone and Aberdeen in suitable locations, while maintaining compact, walkable centres.

Policies - Adequacy of land for industry and commerce, and requirements for additional land and services

- Maintain existing commercial zoned land, and strengthen the integrity of the CBD by adopting planning controls that consolidate commercial development in the CBD.
- Provide adequate industrial zoned land to meet demand for development and to facilitate employment opportunities. Adopt areas to be investigated for potential industrial use as shown on Maps 6.1 and 6.2 and listed in Table 7.
- Ensure planning provisions for industrial areas discourage inappropriate commercial development in areas set aside for industrial land uses (e.g. bulky goods retailing).

Strategic Actions - Adequacy of land for industry and commerce, and requirements for additional land and services

- Provide for light industrial zonings (refer to Standard LEP).
- Permit intensive/industrial agriculture uses in industrial zones.
- Ensure that available zoned land is not in single ownership, by enabling at least 2 development fronts.
- Ensure that, where possible, access to industrial areas avoids traversing residential areas and that the areas are accessible by public transport (if available).
- Review CBD boundaries to ensure commercial areas are appropriately zoned and to avoid oversupply of commercial zoned land.
- Consider ‘core’ and ‘peripheral/supporting’ commercial zones subject to Standard LEP template.
- Ensure the permissibility of community and cultural facilities in commercial and industrial zones.
- Encourage a compact town through infill and mixed use developments.
- Recognise the current mismatch between residential and commercial zonings in Aberdeen, and introduce appropriate zones which recognise existing land use.
• Ensure land take up is scrutinised and incorporated into an established land monitor, in order to identify the need for future rezonings.
Table 7: Potential areas for further investigation - industrial land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scone North industrial</td>
<td>Land zoned part Special Uses and part Intensive Agriculture in current LEP. Consider providing for additional industrial use in short to medium term. Potential for 25 to 30 ha of industrial zoned land with light/general industrial uses. Alternative potential road access to industrial area available from north via Common Road. Retain existing abattoir/saleyards/landfill site as special activities or similar zone. Review zone options in draft LEP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone South tourism/commercial/light industrial</td>
<td>Rezoning of approximately 10 ha of land for a mix of tourism, commercial and industrial purposes has been supported by Council. Short to medium term development option which would provide around 10 lots. Also investigate zoning of 1 ha on north east side of road (Scone Toyota) for commercial purposes. Prominent gateway location on entrance to Scone with need for regard to visual and traffic implications. Consider zoning options including B2 Local Centre, B5 Business Development, or IN2 Light Industrial. Zoning provisions to limit commercial activities which will adversely affect Scone CBD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Aberdeen abattoir site</td>
<td>Former meatworks site currently zoned special uses with an area of 90 ha. Potential for change to industrial use in short term. Further investigate options for light/general industrial use and review proposed LEP zoning. Consider part zoning for special activities and/or adjoining rural zone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 Town infill development opportunities and constraints (e.g. heritage and infrastructure)

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

- Urban design and development scale (especially for 2 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.

It is important to determine an appropriate minimum lot size for subdivision in existing urban areas, and to have LEP provisions which promote flexible housing types, including single storey developments for seniors. The provision of a variety of lot sizes through infill development, as well as Greenfield development, will be encouraged and facilitated through LEP provisions, the DCP and other Council policies, thereby maximising housing choice within the LGA.
Planning provisions in Merriwa should be reviewed to consider potential expansion of the zoned commercial area to reflect existing land use. Heritage conservation requirements should be reviewed, since a substantial proportion of the town is within the current conservation area boundary.

Map 6.1a provides an indication of the vacant/ unoccupied residential zoned land in Scone in 2008 (derived from the unoccupied properties waste charge, accurate to July 2008). This land provides potential for future infill development.

Objectives - Town infill development opportunities and constraints

- 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 - Town infill development opportunities and constraints

- Residential infill development will be encouraged in addition to further Greenfield development outside the existing urban area.
- Residential infill development will be subject to ensuring that the number of dwellings subject to flooding potential will not be increased, and 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.

Strategic Actions - Town infill development opportunities and constraints

- As part of any proposed infill development, ensure that servicing capacities are assessed and are adequate, particularly water supply, sewerage and stormwater drainage.
- Review and update zoning of land currently zoned 2(d) Residential (Release Area) which has already been developed.
- Consider planning provisions for existing Residential 2(b) and 2(c) zones in light of Standard LEP zones.
- Undertake a review of infill potential and identify constraints to infill development (e.g. flooding, heritage).
- Review minimum lot sizes and DCP controls for infill development to ensure the protection of urban character and residential amenity.
In the town of Merriwa, review commercial zoning boundaries to reflect existing land use, and review the current heritage conservation area.

Ensure land take up is scrutinised and incorporated into an established land monitor, in order to identify the need for future rezonings.

6.5 Water and sewerage capacity and service areas

All towns currently have water available, although Murrurundi is subject to supply limits in dry conditions and Scone is close to supply limits and requires augmentation. Current water supply, pumping and storage infrastructure in Scone needs to be taken into account in planning for projected residential development. Upper Hunter Council has a proposal for augmenting the Scone and Aberdeen water supply by sourcing water directly from Glenbawn Dam which will proceed in the medium term if State Government funding becomes available. There is also a potential requirement for augmenting the water supply for Murrurundi.

Sewerage capacity in all towns is currently adequate and sufficient to provide for projected population changes. The sewerage capacity in Scone can service 7,000 equivalent persons (EP) and Aberdeen has capacity for 4,000 EP. Village areas are not serviced with sewer and provision of this service is considered uneconomic, and limits the urban growth of these areas.

Water and sewer service areas are shown on Maps 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 and provide for limits to future urban development and rural residential development opportunities. Extension to existing service areas would be funded by developers of land requiring additional servicing.

Objectives – Water and sewer capacity and service areas

➤ Provide for a secure, high quality water supply for all towns in the LGA.
➤ Provide a suitable sewerage system for all towns in the LGA.

Policies – Water and sewer capacity and service areas

• Limit expansion of water infrastructure to existing service areas, and areas identified in the Strategy for future urban and rural residential expansion, subject to determination of Private Irrigation District proposal. Other extensions may be considered if fully paid for by users or developers.
• Limit expansion of sewer infrastructure to existing service areas, and areas identified in the Strategy for future urban expansion.
• Recover the cost of provision of water and sewer services from urban developments through appropriate levies and contributions as provided for under relevant legislation.

Strategic Actions – Water and sewer capacity and service areas

• Monitor adequacy and security of water supplies.
Include LEP provision requiring that appropriate arrangements in all residential and village areas must exist to provide adequate water and wastewater supplies before any new development is approved.

Investigate future LEP zoning provisions for land in Scone to provide for new water infrastructure requirements, including a future water treatment plant, high tower and balance tank.

Ensure that future residential and rural residential zoned land is not located above the height limit which cannot be serviced by reticulated water.

6.6 Development guidelines for Scone Airport and surrounding land

Scone Airport represents an important part of the local transport infrastructure, and may facilitate future economic development opportunities. Provision should be made to protect this infrastructure from urban encroachment and adverse environmental impacts, and to provide adequate adjacent land to encourage airport related development and activities. This may require restrictions on uses within an appropriate buffer zone and a specific zoning to facilitate appropriate opportunities.

The map showing the obstacle limit surface for Scone Airport is shown in the Situation Analysis report. This limits the height of surface developments or structures in the vicinity of the airport, such as buildings, towers or trees, to provide for safe airport operations.

Objectives - Development guidelines for Scone Airport and surrounding land

Provide for the continued operation of Scone Airport and facilitate airport related employment generation.

Policies - Development guidelines for Scone Airport and surrounding land

- Introduce suitable LEP zones for the airport and surrounding buffer lands to limit development on adjacent land which may be adversely affected by airport related noise, or may impact on airport operations.

- Investigate suitable zoning of buffer land in an appropriate location to enable airport related employment generating development.

Strategic Actions - Development guidelines for Scone Airport and surrounding land

- Zone Scone Airport and buffer in accordance with Standard LEP requirements (either SP1 Special Activities or SP2 Infrastructure).

- Identify noise exposure forecast (NEF) contours around the airport as an overlay to the LEP map.

- Insert a local LEP clause to ensure that the airport obstacle limit surface is taken into account in development proposals and complied with when determining development applications.
• Ensure that infrastructure zoned land permits existing dwellings and allows dwellings associated with airport use, but restricts further subdivision potential.
• Apply a minimum 100m buffer around the airport to prevent new noise sensitive development.
• Apply and enforce private access restrictions to lots adjoining the airport.

6.7 Development guidelines for urban highway frontage land

There has been progressive land use change on highway frontage land within the LGA, especially in towns on the New England Highway, 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 which accommodate adverse environmental and amenity impacts from highway traffic. The Golden Highway at Merriwa has significantly lower traffic volumes than the New England Highway, although volumes are increasing.

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

Consideration should be given to developing guidelines (e.g. in a development control plan) for commercial and residential development in Aberdeen, Scone and Murrurundi adjacent to the New England Highway, and for villages with highway frontage.

Objectives - Development guidelines for urban highway frontage land

➢ Maintain the level of safety and service required of the National Highway, by encouraging new development to minimise direct highway access.

➢ Provide for new development requiring high visibility sites on highway frontage land, subject to criteria which limit traffic impacts and maintain urban amenity.

➢ Promote tourism by enabling appropriate use of highway frontage (e.g. signage and tourist facilities) and retaining visual amenity for visitors.

Policies - Development guidelines for urban highway frontage land

• Investigate route options for a heavy vehicle alternative route to Kelly St, Scone.

• Maintain scale and character of existing highway frontage land and development by applying appropriate criteria.
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).

Minimise additional highway accesses.

Consult with Roads and Traffic Authority in relation to new development proposals that do not meet the criteria.

Traffic generating uses such as bulky goods retailing or shopping centres should not have direct highway access, and should ensure safe highway access by separate access roads.

### Strategic Actions - Development guidelines for urban highway frontage land

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

- Apply suitable LEP zonings using Standard LEP provisions.

- Ensure land take up is scrutinised and incorporated into an established land monitor, in order to identify the need for future rezonings.

### 6.8 Industrial land issues in Murrurundi and Merriwa

Provision of suitable industrial land in Murrurundi and Merriwa has been identified as an important consideration in the preparation of a new LEP. Consideration also should be given to the extent to which industrial uses should be permissible within village zones, and the permissibility and restrictions applicable to home based businesses, since these impact the provision of suitable land for employment generation. In Merriwa, a limited supply of suitable land exists for light industrial development, while the village zone in Murrurundi provides opportunities for industrial development. It would be preferable to provide some certainty for future locations for this type of development in both towns through appropriate zoning.

Murrurundi currently has a village zoning and no identified industrial or commercial land. It is appropriate to identify an industrial area, taking into account existing land uses. Industrial land options in Merriwa are limited due to current zoning provisions. Appropriate alternative locations for industrial development in each town are reviewed in Table 8 and Maps 6.3 and 6.4. A maximum zoned area of between 2 and 5 hectares is required to cater for anticipated needs over the life of the Strategy. This 2-5 hectare area will be selected from the investigation areas identified in Maps 6.3 and 6.4.
Table 8: Options for industrial land in Murrurundi and Merriwa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERRIWA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial area expansion</td>
<td>Approximately 25 ha of land adjacent to existing industrial area with potential for future industrial development. Undertake further investigation of suitability and development constraints. Zoning would be the same as for existing industrial area. Selected areas will comprise part of the 2-5 hectares of industrial land required for Merriwa and Murrurundi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MURRURUNDI</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrurundi South East industrial</td>
<td>Approximately 10 ha of land south east of Murrurundi with potential for future light industrial development. Undertake further investigation of suitability and development constraints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrurundi South West industrial</td>
<td>Approximately 10 ha of land south west of Murrurundi with potential for future light industrial development. Undertake further investigation of suitability and development constraints. Selected areas will comprise part of the 2-5 hectares of industrial land required for Merriwa and Murrurundi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives - Industrial land issues in Murrurundi and Merriwa

- Provide adequate industrial land in Murrurundi and Merriwa to meet demand for development and enable employment opportunities.

Policies - Industrial land issues in Murrurundi and Merriwa

- Adopt areas to be investigated for potential industrial zoning as shown on Maps 6.3 and 6.4.
- Review current urban zoning in Merriwa, and consider identifying specific commercial and industrial zones in LEP.
- Review current urban zoning in Murrurundi, and identify specific commercial and industrial zones in LEP.
- 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.
- Provide between 2 and 5 hectares of vacant or underutilised zoned industrial land to provide for future industrial development opportunities.

Strategic Actions - Industrial land issues in Murrurundi and Merriwa

- Provide for additional light industrial LEP zonings with suitable provisions in Merriwa, and new industrial zoning in Murrurundi.
- Permit intensive/industrial agriculture uses in industrial zones.
• Ensure that available zoned land is not in single ownership, by enabling at least 2 development fronts.

• Ensure that, where possible, access to industrial areas avoids traversing residential areas and the areas are potentially accessible by public transport in the future.

• Ensure land take up is scrutinised and incorporated into an established land monitor, in order to identify the need for future rezonings.
MAP 6.3: MERRIWA - EXISTING ZONINGS AND INVESTIGATION AREAS
7 VILLAGE AND RURAL SMALL HOLDINGS DEVELOPMENT

There are currently 7 zoned villages within Upper Hunter LGA: Parkville, Moonan Flat, Wingen, Bunnan, Gundy, Cassilis and Blandford. There are also 2 existing areas zoned for large lot residential and rural small holdings development. It is projected that to 2032 around 30% of new dwellings in the LGA will be in villages and on large lot residential and small holdings areas. It is estimated that villages, large lot residential and rural small holdings currently comprise between 5 and 10% of the total population of the LGA.

Large lot residential and rural small holdings development opportunities and requirements were considered in the Scone Rural Lands Study (Carey Young 1997) which commented as follows:

As with most attractive rural areas relatively close to major population centres, Scone does and will continue to face pressure for the provision of rural lifestyle allotments. Such development has considerable potential to contribute to the diversity of housing opportunities, to help revitalise rural communities and add positively to the local economy. As mentioned above, there is also potential for some occupants to contribute to the agricultural production of the region. At the same time however, rural residential development brings with it the potential to contribute to the loss and/or fragmentation of agricultural land, environmental damage, land use conflict with agriculture and the generation of unreasonable demands on services. Given these potential issues, and the apparent demand for some level of this form of development, it would seem appropriate and reasonable to provide opportunities for small and medium sized holdings where the potential environmental and agricultural downside can be eliminated or at least controlled.

The Scone Rural Lands Study proposed the following responses in relation to demand for large lot residential and rural small holdings:

- Differentiate between intensive agricultural areas and extensive agricultural areas
- Direct large lot residential and rural small holding development to the existing identified areas (1997)
- Identify candidate areas where medium sized rural holding development (about 5 to 20 hectares) may be permitted subject to detailed environmental investigation and the capacity to sustain development without adverse impact to water supply or quality
- Further expansion of village zones should include adequate provision of water supply and waste water treatment
- Development within the (1997) small holdings zones should be subject to detailed consideration of water supply and waste water treatment, and not result in any adverse effects.

Harper Somers O’Sullivan’s Rural Residential Land Study (2003) estimated demand and supply and proposed additional areas to be rezoned, with some existing zoned areas being changed to General Rural. However, the study appears to have underestimated demand for rural small holding development.
Under the current LEPs applying within the LGA, there is provision for a range of subdivisions for the purpose of large lot residential and rural small holdings. However, there is variation between the provisions of the existing LEPs, and also inconsistency with the Standard LEP provisions prepared by the NSW Department of Planning. Table 9 shows the existing LEP provisions. In addition, all 3 existing LEPs have a village zone which includes minimum subdivision areas of 750m² in Merriwa and 800m² in Murrurundi.

### Table 9: Large lot residential and rural small holding provisions in existing LEPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing planning instrument and zoning</th>
<th>Minimum subdivision requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merriwa LEP 1992 Zone No 1 (c) Rural Small Holdings Zone</td>
<td>1 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merriwa LEP 1992 Zone No 1 (d) Rural Retreat Holdings Zone</td>
<td>5 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrurundi LEP 1993 Zone No 1 (c)—Rural Small Holdings ‘C’ Zone</td>
<td>4000m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone LEP 1986 Zone No 1 (c) (Rural Small Holdings Zone)</td>
<td>4000m² for onsite effluent disposal or 2000m² for common sewage disposal system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone LEP 1986 Zone No 1 (c1) (Small Holdings Zone)</td>
<td>10 ha average; 5 hectare minimum - or larger if required for water supply or effluent disposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from villages created as part of historic subdivision patterns, demand exists for 3 broad types of large lot residential and rural small holding development:

- **Urban fringe**, generally in estates adjacent to an urban area with services such as sealed roads, water and reticulated sewer, and lot sizes of 4,000m² to 2 hectares
- **Rural lots of 2 hectares to 10 hectares**, comprising residential use within a rural environment, generally close to a town and with some services. This also includes isolated ‘concessional’ lots of less than 40 hectares
- **Rural lots of 10 hectares to 40 hectares** which are primarily residential in use, but where small scale agricultural activities are also carried out.

The results of a demand survey for land are presented in the Situation Analysis report. This provides an indication of relative demand for different types of land available for new development in the LGA, and is summarised in Table 10. This indicative estimate shows that around 30 to 40% of demand is for vacant rural lots, however there is considerable overlap between the different types. The estimates will change over time.
Large lot residential and rural small holding development is a key land use planning issue in the Upper Hunter LGA. Large lot residential and rural small holding subdivision and land use can result in conflict with commercial agriculture, and separation from agriculture is normally desirable. There are also important considerations relating to the provision of services and infrastructure, environmental impacts, water availability, traffic, and biodiversity. Historically in Scone, some large lot residential development has occurred within residential zones, and this offers an alternative to small holdings in rural areas.

Demand for subdivision is primarily from current land owners, and there is evidence that lot demand is substantially driven by supply (and the characteristics of the land). Purchasers are seeking lifestyle rather than productive land, and are generally relying on employment in the Upper Hunter and adjoining LGAs.

As outlined in Section 6, for planning purposes it is anticipated that around 30% of new dwellings to 2032 will be in rural areas (around 15 to 25 per year), but this proportion is substantially dependent on the provision of land for large lot residential and rural small holding development. The current indications are that demand for large lot residential and rural small holdings will exceed supply in the short term, even though further subdivision potential remains available under the current Scone LEP provisions. The demand identified in the Strategy is higher than the 4 to 5 rural residential dwellings per year anticipated by Harper Somers O’Sullivan (2003).

Relevantly, key land use planning issues were identified in the Situation Analysis as follows:

- Provision of additional land for large lot residential and rural small holding development in suitable locations
• Future subdivision and development of land within villages, subject to service provision (including roads, water, sewer, groundwater and surface water runoff).

Information on these issues is presented below, together with objectives, policies and strategic actions.

Appropriate zoning provisions and standards 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).

7.1 Provision of adequate land for large lot residential and rural small holding development in suitable locations

It is important to provide for certainty in relation to the location of large lot residential and rural small holding development to prevent adverse impacts on primary production land and the 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 this form of land use, and provides the framework for:

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

There are a number of areas zoned for large lot residential and rural small holding purposes around Scone and Aberdeen which are currently undeveloped and require review. Existing villages, large lot residential and rural small holding areas in the vicinity of Scone are shown on Map 7.1, together with additional proposed investigation areas that may be suitable for future development. Existing village, large lot residential and rural small holding zoned areas throughout the LGA are shown on Map 7.2, together with proposed investigation areas. The Strategy identifies additional areas could be rezoned and the preferred staging and infrastructure servicing requirements for these areas. These are shown on Map 7.1. The objectives, policies and strategic actions for large lot residential and rural small holding development in the Upper Hunter LGA are outlined below. This section also includes infrastructure provision guidelines.
Table 12 shows the existing large lot residential and rural small holding zoned land, and proposed investigation areas. This indicates the limited supply of vacant rural lots around Scone, with adequate zoned land around Merriwa and Murrurundi. There is limited potential around Aberdeen, primarily confined to existing residential zoned land. Some existing zoned areas should be reviewed having regard to the potential for future land use conflict. The table also shows proposed investigation areas which would provide for around 75 lots around Scone in the short to medium term, representing about 5 years supply over and above existing zoned land.

**Objectives - Provision of adequate land for large lot residential and rural small holdings development in suitable locations**

- Provide opportunities for additional large lot residential and rural small holdings subdivision and development in suitable locations, and enable a range of different lot sizes.
- Ensure that adequate services are available for large lot residential and rural small holdings.
- Ensure that the supply of large lot residential and rural small holdings is adequate.
- Balance the provision of new large lot residential and rural small holdings against the need to preserve areas of high agricultural, scenic or environmental value.
- Identify appropriate development controls for future large lot residential and rural small holdings through DCP provisions.

**Policies - Provision of adequate land for large lot residential and rural small holdings development in suitable locations**

- Provide for a supply in the range 15 to 25 large lot residential and rural small holdings per year in identified candidate areas. These areas are to be subject to further investigation.
- Zone adequate land for 5 years supply (i.e. up to 85 lots around Scone, 25 lots around Aberdeen, and 12 lots around Merriwa), with review of land supply being undertaken every 3 years.
- New large lot residential and rural small holding areas must relate to the long term preferred settlement structure (i.e. not located on land with potential for urban development in the long term (+50 year time frame)), and provide adequate accessibility to towns and employment areas.
- Consolidate further rural small holding development in only 2 locations for each town within the LGA, so that further services are economically provided in the long term if sufficient demand exists (i.e. do not disperse areas).
- Propose further LEP objectives for large lot residential and rural small holding development, in addition to the proposed zoning under the Standard LEP provisions.
• No rezonings for large lot residential and rural small holdings to be considered in identified constraint areas (use map layers as an overlay for LEP).
• Smaller lots (4,000m² or less) shall have both reticulated water and sewerage provided.
• Criteria will be applied for determining the suitability of future large lot residential and rural small holding proposals which have not been considered in the Strategy (see below).
• Subdivision for the purposes of large lot residential and rural small holdings should be undertaken in a manner that will not increase the potential for water extraction from streams or groundwater.

The following criteria (provided in Table 11 below) should be used to identify large lot residential and rural small holdings land. These should be used for the purpose of identifying preferred land suitable for subdivision, and for reacting to development proposals which might arise over the period within which the Strategy applies. It is desirable to provide a choice in the size and characteristics of rural land to be able to cater for the wide range of demand that exists for rural land.

Table 11: Criteria for identifying land suitable for large lot residential and rural small holdings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Location Criteria</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distance from town</td>
<td>Land should be within reasonable travelling distance/time from the centre of an urban area (e.g. less than 10km or 10 minutes from Scone, Aberdeen, or Merriwa).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of services</td>
<td>Provide reticulated water, electricity, telecommunications, bushfire services and sealed road access, plus reticulated sewer for small lots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Avoid ‘stand-alone’ large lot residential and rural small holding development unless it is a logical extension of an existing large lot residential or small holdings area that will contribute to achieving a critical mass to support the provision of basic services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for onsite water storage</td>
<td>Onsite tank storage shall be encouraged for large lot residential and larger rural small holdings that do not have a reticulated water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal impact on existing infrastructure</td>
<td>Sufficient reserve capacity should exist in power, school bus and telecommunications, and other services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good sealed road access</td>
<td>Efficient use needs to be made of the existing road network. In general, existing road services are adequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid prime agricultural land, or adjoining land</td>
<td>Impacts on nearby agricultural land and activities need to be considered. Prime agricultural land (suitability classes 1 to 3) is not to be zoned for large lot residential or rural small holdings, unless there are adjoining areas with advantageous locational attributes for this type of development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude environmentally sensitive land</td>
<td>Sought after large lot residential and rural small holding areas often have good visual outlook, vegetation and privacy. Avoid rural areas with potentially high visual impact (e.g. along highways or tourist routes, along or adjacent to ridges).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude areas of high bushfire hazard</td>
<td>Avoid locating large lot residential and rural small holdings in areas of high bushfire hazard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude known mineral and extractive resources</td>
<td>Ensure appropriate buffers to mines, extractive industries and other non-compatible land uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Location Criteria</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude areas near non-compatible land uses</td>
<td>Provide appropriate buffers to uses such as sewage treatment works, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude water supply catchment land</td>
<td>Locate small holding development to avoid contamination from onsite treatment systems. May also relate to water access rights and usage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid areas with threatened species or endangered ecological communities</td>
<td>Vegetated rural land is often preferred for amenity and privacy. However, this land is also likely to have high biodiversity values, and presence of endangered ecological communities and threatened species. Ensure that these values are taken into account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid areas with unsuitable soils, and land with slopes greater than 18 degrees</td>
<td>Avoid large lot residential and rural small holding development on steep land, as well as land with unsuitable soil characteristics to minimise land erosion and land slip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid contaminated land</td>
<td>Review previous land uses and undertake investigation of areas with potential contamination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid saline land and areas with soils unsuitable for onsite effluent disposal</td>
<td>Although not an absolute constraint, development of these lands would require alternative treatment systems and building design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid flood prone land</td>
<td>Acceptable only if flood free access, building sites and waste disposal areas are available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Aboriginal and European heritage areas and sites</td>
<td>Examples include the curtilage surrounding historic dwellings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid areas with high groundwater tables or shallow soils</td>
<td>Land capability limitations may result in problems with onsite waste disposal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Areas to be investigated for potential large lot residential and rural small holding development are shown on Map 7.1 and listed in Table 12.
MAP 7.1: LARGE LOT RESIDENTIAL AND RURAL SMALL HOLDINGS OPTIONS AND INVESTIGATION AREAS
Strategic Actions - Provision of adequate land for large lot residential and rural small holdings in suitable locations

- Development around Scone and Aberdeen must ensure that future urban growth options are not constrained by large lot residential and rural small holding development, and that the road hierarchy allows flexibility for future growth of the town (e.g. maintains options for highway bypass and link roads).

- Adopt criteria for considering further applications for large lot residential and rural small holdings that are not in the currently identified candidate areas (as outlined in Table 12).

- Prepare Section 94 Contributions Plans prior to gazettal of LEP, providing for additional large lot residential and rural small holdings.

- Ensure land take up is scrutinised and incorporated into an established land monitor to review rural land supply and demand, dwelling and subdivision approvals, in order to establish the need for future rezonings.

- Consider sunset clause provisions for land zoned for large lot residential and rural small holdings (e.g. 5 year limit). 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.

- Consider the provision of both minimum and average lot size (and possibly maximum) as a provision in the LEP. Allows for more flexible design to reflect environmental and planning constraints. Guidelines for the design of rural residential areas should be provided in a DCP.

- Carefully assess the means of wastewater treatment where reticulated town water is available.

- Ensure appropriate minimum areas for onsite disposal depending on soil type, slope, proximity to watercourse, and amount of effluent likely to be generated. Undertake an additional study of villages in former Memiwa and Murunundi LGAs as per previous study.

- 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location &amp; map reference</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXISTING ZONED LAND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrurundi North (A)</td>
<td>150 ha</td>
<td>Minimal development of the existing zoned land has occurred. Adequate land is available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blandford South (B)</td>
<td>30 ha</td>
<td>Minimal development of the existing zoned land has occurred. Adequate land is available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullong Road (C)</td>
<td>150 ha</td>
<td>Developed. No change to development potential or large lot residential or rural small holding zoning proposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clifton Hill (D)</td>
<td>355 ha</td>
<td>Subdivided (No water and sewer provided). No change to development potential or large lot residential or rural small holding zoning proposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone West (E)</td>
<td>33 ha</td>
<td>Not Developed. No change to development potential or large lot residential or rural small holding zoning proposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moobi Road (F)</td>
<td>160 ha</td>
<td>Majority of existing zoned land in this area has been developed or subdivision has been approved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone South (G)</td>
<td>9 ha</td>
<td>Minimal development. Review future use, future servicing and appropriateness of zoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gundy Road (H)</td>
<td>210 ha</td>
<td>Investigate future or currently zoned area for rural small holding purposes but not developed. Consider suitability of this land for this purpose, and potential for water and sewer servicing. Retain as Small Rural Holdings zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trig Point (I)</td>
<td>52 ha</td>
<td>Fully developed with no further development potential. Propose changing to surrounding rural zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouchel Road (J)</td>
<td>222 ha</td>
<td>Land currently zoned for large lot residential and rural small holding purposes, but currently used primarily for equine industry. Investigate changing zoning to limit development potential to prevent future land use conflict, by introducing zoning consistent with surrounding land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merriwa South (K)</td>
<td>180 ha</td>
<td>Limited development of the existing zoned land has occurred. Adequate land is available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merriwa North (L)</td>
<td>107 ha</td>
<td>Limited development of the existing zoned land has occurred. Adequate land is available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 12: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location &amp; map reference</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROPOSED LAND TO BE REZONED</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone South East</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>(St Aubins Stage I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROPOSED INVESTIGATION AREAS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: These areas have been identified to provide an indication of the future settlement patterns for the Upper Hunter Shire should the need arise.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scone North West</strong></td>
<td>Area approx 120 ha</td>
<td>Area adjacent to existing large lot residential and rural small holding zoned land with potential for similar development. Potential for larger rural holdings, such as minimum 2 ha and average 4 ha. Has access to sealed road and requires further investigation into provision of internal road access and future servicing. Potential yield of around 30 lots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scone West Rural</strong></td>
<td>Area approx 300 ha</td>
<td>The majority (around 60 to 70%) of existing zoned land west of Scone has been developed or subdivision has been approved. Potential for further large lot residential and rural small holding in this location with a range of lot sizes, minimum 4 ha, and average 10 ha. Potential exists for reticulated water to be provided but no sewer. Further investigation of approximately 300 ha of land, subject to alternate secure water supply being available. Would yield around 30 lots. Short to medium term development subject to water availability and suitable water supply arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satur North/West</strong></td>
<td>Area approx 80 - 100 ha</td>
<td>Additional Lands adjoining existing zoned area E and F. Opportunities to “round off” existing large lot residential and rural small holdings areas which have been developed. Potential for a yield of 50 plus lots depending on water supply and effluent disposal arrangements. Important to consider proximity to airport and related noise impact issues. Refer to Section 6.6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parkville East</strong></td>
<td>Area approx 15 ha</td>
<td>Land east of railway line, with an area of approximately 10 to 15 ha has potential for large residential and rural small holding development. Currently no town water is available, but is foreseeable in medium term. Lot sizes need to be large enough to cater for onsite effluent disposal, potentially 1 ha minimum lot size to yield 10 to 15 lots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merriwa East</strong></td>
<td>Area approx 70 ha</td>
<td>Area of approximately 70 ha east of Merriwa with potential for large lot residential and rural small holding development for 10 to 20 lots. Adequate land is currently zoned in Merriwa and this land should only be considered as a long term option.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Areas are approximate only, and include roads.
7.2 Future use and development of villages and service provision

This section addresses the development potential and future zoning of rural villages. There are 7 separate areas currently zoned village, namely Bunnan, Cassilis, Gundy, Parkville, Moonan Flat, Wingen and Blandford.

The 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. An analysis undertaken of lot availability and demand shows that there is relatively low demand for additional development within existing villages. This confirms the conclusions of the Scone Village Study (Hilltop Planners 1995).

The infrastructure capacity and maintenance of services in the rural villages is an important issue for future land use planning. In general, existing villages have minimal services other than roads (with the exception of Cassilis with a reticulated water supply), and are subject to constraints in relation to onsite effluent disposal.

The Standard LEP prepared by the Department of Planning includes the RU5 Village zone. This zone provides potentially flexible planning provisions, including maintaining the permissibility of some commercial development. An important matter for consideration is whether residential zoning may be more appropriate.

The situation for each of the existing zoned areas is summarised in Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location name</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parkville</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Sufficient land exists to meet demand. Some expansion beyond current village boundary possible, but consolidation should occur within existing boundaries for the foreseeable future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonan Flat</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Sufficient land exists within village zone to meet expanded demand to 2021.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wingen</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Growth should occur within village boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunnan</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Growth should occur within village boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gundy</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Sufficient land exists within village zoning to meet expected demand over next 10 years. Some potential for village expansion in longer term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassilis</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Growth should occur within the village boundary. Small lots and septic tank effluent disposal are important issues which should be addressed in future planning. Unsuitable soil types and steep slopes limit development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the Situation Analysis report, the following objectives, policies and strategic actions will guide future development of the villages. Strategic directions for issues are presented in the sections below. Future LEP provisions (including zoning) are proposed for existing villages.
Objectives – Future use and development of villages

➤ Retain existing village zonings and boundaries, within the framework provided by the Standard LEP.

➤ No additional provision of urban services within villages (e.g. water, and waste), except where growth pressures are identified and services can be economically provided.

Policies – Future use and development of villages

• Review options for consolidating additional subdivision and development within existing zones to facilitate more efficient infrastructure utilisation.

• Reticulated water is provided to Cassilis, but not other villages.

• 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 onsite wastewater disposal requirements.

• 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.

• Establish strong controls on incompatible land uses in village, large lot residential and rural small holding zones, including the use of supplementary objectives.

• Minimum lot sizes for each village are to take into account existing lots, character requirements, onsite wastewater servicing requirements, and separation distances from existing dwellings.

Strategic Actions – Future use and development of villages

• Maintain current level of development potential in LEP provisions for all villages and retain current zone boundaries.

• Introduce a special clause requiring appropriate infrastructure servicing when determining development applications.

• Determine minimum lot sizes for subdivision and potential zones, substantially based on effluent disposal requirements.

• Apply RU5 Village zone in accordance with the Standard LEP provisions to the existing village areas.

• Review permissible uses within the Standard LEP Village zone to reflect existing village characteristics, and consider additional local provisions to ensure traffic generating developments are compatible with highway frontage locations.

• Update development control plans to reflect updated LEP provisions.

• Ensure land take up is scrutinised and incorporated into an established land monitor, in order to identify the need for future rezonings.
8 RURAL AREAS

Agriculture is one of the main rural land uses within the Upper Hunter LGA and is the major contributor to local economic activity. It occupies around 82% of the LGA’s land area and a significant part is identified as prime agricultural land. The main agricultural pursuits are equine activities, beef cattle grazing, dairying, viticulture and horticulture.

The LGA is very significant in terms of regional agriculture. Upper Hunter LGA contains half the Hunter Region’s agricultural area, a quarter of the number of farms, and a third of the agricultural production value of the Hunter Region as a whole.

The 2001 ABS agricultural census indicates that the economic value of agriculture for the year was about $120 million and there were around 750 commercial producers. In 2001, over one quarter of the workforce (1,606 people) was employed directly in the agricultural sector, in addition to significant off farm employment. Average commercial farm size for the Upper Hunter LGA in 2001 was estimated at approximately 1,000 hectares and has increased in size over the last 20 years. This does not take into account small holdings on which there is limited agricultural production.

Analysis of rural holding sizes shows that holdings of less than 45 hectares account for about 2% of rural land area, but 49% of rural holdings. The most common rural holding size ranges are 100 to 400 hectares, 5 to 45 hectares, and less than 2 hectares, which together account for over 60% of the total number of holdings. The analysis shows the average area for all holdings is 261 hectares with an average of 4.5 lots per holding, giving an average lot size of 58 hectares. The most frequent holding size is in the range 100 to 400 hectares.

A small proportion of the LGA has potential for coal mining. There are land use issues related to the impact coal transport and road access, as well as mining impacts on surrounding land and the need for appropriate buffers. There is potential for increased coal mining production and employment within the LGA during the period of the Strategy.

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

- Minimum rural subdivision size (including minimum area for rural dwelling entitlement)
- Protection of agricultural land and viability
- Climate change implications for land use
- Rural water quality and availability and protection of catchments
- Areas of coal mining potential and buffer land
- Rural servicing costs and requirements

Information on these issues is presented below, together with objectives, policies and strategic actions. These take into account the existing local and regional planning framework, the relevant objectives from the Scone Environmental Study (1982), and the proposals in Scone Rural Lands Study (1997).
8.1 Minimum rural subdivision size

Upper Hunter Shire Council has a significant regulatory influence over future rural land use through controls on the subdivision of rural land, as well as minimum area requirements for a rural dwelling entitlement. The Strategy and subsequent LEP identify the requirements that will apply to future rural subdivision and rural dwellings. 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.

On 9 May 2008 the State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008 was gazetted. It provides a State wide framework in regard to rural residential development while allowing local councils some flexibility in local policy and decision making. The SEPP allows Councils to continue to implement minimum lot sizes as endorsed in their Local Environment Plan, however on review of the LEP Council will need to consider the Rural Subdivision Principles (clause 8) as outlined in the SEPP. The SEPP does change concessional lot provisions by removing this type of subdivision altogether.

Under the current LEPs applying within the LGA, there are a range of minimum areas for subdivisions which will allow a dwelling to be erected, and there is flexibility for smaller lots to be created for agriculture. There is considerable variability in existing LEP requirements and those of adjoining LGAs, and also inconsistency with the Standard LEP provisions prepared by the NSW Department of Planning. Table 14 shows the existing LEP provisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Rural Zones</th>
<th>Minimum subdivision requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merviwa LEP 1992 Zone No. 1(a) General Rural Zone</td>
<td>100 ha or 10 ha for agriculture or less than 100 ha for uses other than agriculture, forestry, dual occupancy or a dwelling house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mururundi LEP 1993 Zone No. 1(a) Rural ‘A’ Zone</td>
<td>400 ha or 10ha for agriculture or less than 40ha for uses other than agriculture, forestry, a dual occupancy building or a dwelling house. One 2 ha minimum concessional lot per existing holding (of holding size min 10ha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone LEP 1986 Zone No. 1(e) (General Agricultural Zone)</td>
<td>400 ha or no minimum for agriculture with Property Management Plan (PMP), or no minimum for purposes other than agriculture, intensive agriculture or a dwelling house or 10 ha for one concessional lot for dwelling house from a 100 ha minimum holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone No. 1(d) (Rural Holdings Zone) This zone is located within about 10 to 20km radius of the town of Scone</td>
<td>120 ha or no minimum for agriculture with PMP or no minimum for purposes other than agriculture, intensive agriculture or a dwelling house or 10 ha for one concessional lot for dwelling house from a 100 ha min holding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 14: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing planning instrument and zoning</th>
<th>Minimum subdivision requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zone No. 1(i) (Intensive Agricultural Zone) Limited designated areas</td>
<td>40 ha or no minimum for agriculture with PMP or no minimum for purposes other than agriculture, intensive agriculture or a dwelling house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone No. 1(s) (Small Farm Zone) within 10km radius of Scone</td>
<td>40 ha or no minimum for agriculture with PMP or no minimum for purposes other than agriculture, intensive agriculture or a dwelling house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that the gazettal of SEPP (Rural Lands) 2008 on the 9 May 2008 has removed concessional allotment subdivision provisions from the Murrurundi LEP 1993 and Scone LEP 1986.

It would be preferable for minimum rural lot sizes to be more consistent across the entire LGA.

As mentioned above, a review of the rural holdings sizes within the LGA shows that the average size of rural holdings is 261 hectares, and the overall average lot size is 58 hectares, with the most common lot size on which agricultural activities are conducted ranging from 100 to 400 hectares. There does not appear to be a clear common holding size that indicates what a viable (or suitable) holding size in the district is for agricultural production. Holdings with areas below 100 hectares average between 1 to 2 lots per holding, indicating that smaller lots are not large enough for the predominant types of commercial agriculture (i.e. grazing). Around 25% of all rural holdings have non local (or absentee) landowners. This compares with an average commercial farm size estimated at about 1,000 hectares by the ABS Agricultural Census in 2001.

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 subdivision sizes will generally reflect the existing rural character, and have the objective of ensuring that LEP subdivision provisions will be unlikely to change land use significantly.

Council approvals data shows an average total of 15 subdivision applications per year for the whole LGA over the period 1996 to 2005, including both urban and rural areas. This shows that the total number of rural subdivisions is relatively small when compared to the total number of rural lots, which exceeds 11,800. When combined with evidence from the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) review that average holding sizes in practice are increasing, this suggests that the current minimum subdivision areas are not creating major difficulties.

The Standard LEP provisions include a primary production zone (zone RU1), within which a range of minimum lot sizes can apply. The Minister for Planning has gazetted a new ‘Rural Lands SEPP’ which aims to provide further clarity and direction for rural councils on this issue. The SEPP includes a range of planning and subdivision principles which must be addressed when a new LEP is being drafted.
Having regard to the new SEPP a general minimum subdivision size of 400 hectares is proposed in the “Rural Planning Area” of the Upper Hunter LGA. It is also proposed that a minimum of 100 hectares be applied in those areas of the LGA where this holding size already predominates. These provisions substantially reflect the existing minimum subdivision provisions and approach within the current Scone LEP 1986.

Options for consideration are proposed in Table 15, and reflect the existing provisions in Scone LEP and have regard to the provisions applying in the other current planning instruments.

**Table 15: Proposed rural zoning and minimum lot size options**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Minimum area for subdivision</th>
<th>Minimum area with approved property management plan (PMP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RU1 Primary Production</td>
<td>400 ha</td>
<td>100 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 ha within 20km radius of towns</td>
<td>40 ha within 20km radius of towns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RU2 Rural Landscape</td>
<td>As for RU1 option</td>
<td>As for RU1 option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RU4 Rural Small Holdings</td>
<td>40 ha</td>
<td>10 ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The RU1 and RU2 zones are relatively comparable in terms of permissible and prohibited uses, and the main issue relates to minimum subdivision requirements. In addition, the insertion of additional local objectives for each zone to reflect important local planning issues should be considered (e.g. coal mine rehabilitation, facilitation of the equine industry, Scone Private Irrigation District, and maintaining water quality and availability). Alternative minimum areas for subdivision may be specified by reference to a minimum areas map. Given the pattern of land use and size of land holdings around smaller towns and villages it may be desirable to reduce the lower subdivision area to a radius of 10km from Merriwa and Murrurundi rather than 20km. All minimum subdivision areas would enable a dwelling entitlement.

**Objectives – Minimum rural subdivision size**

- Minimum rural subdivision sizes within the Upper Hunter 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.
- LEP provisions will address the provisions of the ‘Rural Lands SEPP’ introduced on 9 May 2008.
• 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).

• Retention of ‘concessional allotments’ (currently available under Murrurundi and Scone LEPs), allowing subdivision of land less than the general minimum area, is inconsistent with the new Rural Lands SEPP.

• 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 and reviewing rural subdivision proposals.

**Strategic Actions – Minimum rural subdivision size**

• Consider the following minimum rural lot sizes:
  - General minimum area of 400 hectares throughout rural areas of the LGA, with a provision enabling 100 hectares minimum subject to property management plan preparation and specific matters for consideration (reflecting current Scone LEP 1986 clause 10(5)).
  - Rural small holdings zone with a minimum area of 40 hectares to apply to land to be used for horticulture or intensive agriculture with appropriate land capability and having adequate water entitlements (such as the proposed Scone private irrigation district, or PID) and within a radius of 10km from Scone, Merriwa and Murrurundi.
  - Minimum rural subdivision area of 100 ha in a radius of approximately 10km of Merriwa and Murrurundi to reflect the existing provisions and approach within Scone LEP 1986.
  - Existing patterns of land use will apply within 20kms of Scone

• Include clause 20 of the Standard Instrument provisions to allow rural subdivisions without a dwelling entitlement, and to facilitate farm adjustments.

• Allow consolidation of rural properties by facilitating boundary adjustments without creating additional dwelling rights (e.g. clause 10A of Scone LEP 1986).

• Include a provision in the LEP of 5 years to maintain dwelling entitlements for lawfully created subdivisions under previously applying LEP provisions. There are approximately 20 of these lots (e.g. the former provisions applying in the former Merriwa LGA).
8.2 Protection of agricultural land and viability

Significant employment in the LGA is generated by agriculture and related activities. 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.

The Strategy and LEP should recognise that agricultural land within the LGA is a limited resource of local, regional and state significance. While production systems and activities will vary over time, there is a fundamental need to preserve land in a size, subdivision pattern and condition that will provide for its continued use and adaptation to other forms of agricultural production over time.

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), permissble uses within the zone, and exempt and complying development.

The Standard LEP provisions provide for 3 possible rural zones in LEPs (RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape, and E3 Environmental Management zones). There is potential for conflicting land use objectives in the primary production zone where coal mining potential exists. The effectiveness of the 3 zones will vary depending on the permissble uses and additional objectives included within the LEP.

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 Upper Hunter 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).

- Tourist activities which will not adversely affect agricultural land use will be facilitated.
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.
- Ensure that large lot residential and rural small holding areas are 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 Standard LEP provisions). Ensure that provisions proposed to allow reduced minimum subdivision areas require a specific agricultural study or plan. Review the preferred zones, additional objectives and proposed provisions.
- Ensure that water supply for non-residential rural development is appropriately considered, including necessary water licences and appropriateness of ground water usage.
- Ensure through LEP provisions that incompatible land uses and activities in agricultural zones are not permitted.
- Implement performance-based outcomes for the quality of water being discharged.
- Require farm and property management plans to address water quality and availability.
- Develop policies for dwellings erected in conjunction with intensive agricultural production.
- Include a specific objective in all rural zones supporting horse studs and the equine industry.

8.3 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 bushfires and flooding), increasing temperatures, evaporation, and potential changes in seasonal patterns.

Climate change is expected to have implications for agricultural viability. The 3 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 land use**

- Take into account the best available information on climate change scenarios for the Upper Hunter LGA in making strategic land use decisions, especially for uses that are sensitive to climate change.

**Policies – Climate change implications for 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 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 bushfires 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.

**8.4 Rural water quality and availability and protection of catchments**

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 LEP requirements may be desirable.

Protection of urban water supply catchments is a priority. Measures to identify and protect urban water supplies in the LGA may be implemented through an LEP overlay or other provisions.
**Objectives - Rural water quality and availability and protection of catchments**

- 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 are recognised in land use decision-making.

**Policies - Rural water quality and availability and protection of catchments**

- Recognise Department of Environment and Climate Change’s water sharing plan provisions for sub-catchments in land use decision-making.
- Require rural rezoning or subdivision proposals 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 and availability and protection of catchments**

- Consider water implications of development as a general LEP objective.
- Include specific water quality and use objectives for rural zones (e.g. reference to Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan, and water sharing plans).
- 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.
- Consider LEP zoning and requirements in Glenbawn Dam catchment area and foreshores.

**8.5 Areas of coal mining potential**

In the Upper Hunter Shire, mining (primarily coal) directly employed about 298 persons in 2001 and these employees comprised 4.9% of the workforce. Mining has a range of social and environmental impacts which have the potential to lead to conflict between land uses.

There is some potential for coal mining to expand into the Upper Hunter Shire. The Coal Mining Potential in the Upper Hunter Valley - Strategic Assessment (Department of Planning 2005) reviewed the coal mining potential of about 5,000 square kilometres to the north, north east and north west of Scone. The assessment identified six coal resource domains, two of which have been...
identified as having mining potential within the next 15 years (Domains A and B). The Strategic Assessment also suggests that two other domains (Domain C and D) have been identified as areas with possible coal resource potential. Existing coal mining titles and the Mine Subsidence District within the LGA are shown on Figure 4.7.

While Upper Hunter Shire Council recognises that there is some limited coal mining potential, it generally maintains the position that the Upper Hunter Shire is a rural area where agriculture and related land uses are the main economic activity. Accordingly, land uses within the LGA should be primarily related to the protection of agricultural land. This Strategy seeks to acknowledge agriculture as the dominant land use and ensure it is not compromised by other land uses within the Upper Hunter Shire. Where mining is proposed, each case will be subject to an individual project/development application and environmental assessment. An environmental assessment and the consent authority must have regard to the matters contained in Part 3 of SEPP (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007 and each application will be determined on its merits.

The LEP provisions have the ability to affect the potential for mining, and specific objectives should be included in zonings of land with mining potential to protect prime agricultural land and to ensure that future land use conflicts associated with mining are minimised. The LEP should reflect that agricultural land with mining potential should be treated the same as other rural land of similar agricultural land suitability and capability. The LEP should not limit the potential of approximately 32,500 hectares of prime Upper Hunter agricultural land asset.

Objectives - Areas of coal mining potential

- Acknowledge that there is limited coal mining potential in the Upper Hunter Shire.
- Recognise that the dominant land use in the Shire is agriculture.
- Ensure that where coal mining occurs there is minimal impact on the agricultural and environmental values of the Shire.
- Ensure that adequate consideration is given to rehabilitation of mined land, including filling of any final voids or surface disturbance left following mining.

Policies - Areas of coal mining potential

- Environmental impact of new coal mining developments is fully assessed including the planning context and regional scale impacts (especially in relations to infrastructure and transport, rural amenity, water, soil contamination, air quality and biodiversity).
- LEP to zone areas of mining potential RU1 Primary Production, and include specific zone objectives for coal mining to minimise potential conflicts with and impacts on agricultural land uses, water resources, and the biophysical environment.
• Not support any coal mining proposals unless all production is transported by rail, or alternative non public road transport.
• Prevention of mining of aquifers or in areas affecting aquifers.

**Strategic actions - Areas of coal mining potential**

• Council seek further discussions with the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Planning to outline its position and policies in relation to coal mining within the LGA, with the objective of determining appropriate provisions on coal mining in the LEP.
• Council seek an updating of the Upper Hunter Valley – Strategic Assessment (Department of Planning 2005) within the Upper Hunter Shire, including rehabilitation, infrastructure and land use options.

**8.6 Rural servicing costs and requirements**

Important rural servicing requirements include telecommunications, roads, electricity, garbage services, bushfire services, and mail delivery. While these are generally 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 Upper Hunter Shire 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, especially through the application of Section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

**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 development control plan 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 be responsible for the full capital costs attributable to their development in upgrading all necessary services required by Council policy.
• Develop contribution plans or planning agreements to provide for necessary upgrading to rural infrastructure and services.

• Requirements be prepared 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.
ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES AND CONSTRAINTS

Many areas within the Upper Hunter have important environmental values and/or are subject to constraints which may limit development opportunities and therefore 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 the Upper Hunter LGA relating to environmental values and constraints were identified in the Situation Analysis as follows:

- Natural hazards
- Land capability (including salinity)
- Biodiversity and natural ecosystems
- Heritage issues, scenic and cultural landscapes

Information on these issues is presented below, together with objectives, policies and strategic actions.

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 the Upper Hunter LGA, these are predominantly 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 the Upper Hunter LGA are subject to flooding, but little information exists other than for some urban areas, including Scone, Aberdeen, Murrurundi and the village of Blandford.

Existing residential areas are relatively isolated from bushfire prone land, although significant areas of bushfire prone land in the LGA have potential to 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 bushfire hazard and implement systems to minimise danger to life and property.
Policies - Natural hazards

- Adopt a consistent flood standard for the Upper Hunter LGA, in accordance with floodplain management studies.
- 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 LEP overlay map.
- Include land with flooding limitations or requiring further investigation as an LEP overlay map.
- Prepare a comprehensive floodplain management plan for the LGA, and integrate with planning controls through development control plan provisions.

9.2 Land capability (including salinity)

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.

Other important natural resource issues that desirably should be reflected in LEP provisions are lands affected by salinity, and groundwater resources (particularly floodplain aquifers) requiring protection or consideration in development proposals.

Objectives - Land capability (including salinity)

- 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 (including salinity)

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

Strategic Actions - Land capability (including salinity)

- 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 LEP overlay map.
- Map areas with identified salinity problems through an LEP overlay map.
9.3 **Biodiversity and natural ecosystems**

The Strategy needs to take biodiversity values and the potential land use constraints into account. Conservation of biodiversity is a key principle underpinning the concept of ecologically sustainable development.

The major matters relating to biodiversity and natural ecosystems that are considered in the Strategy relate to appropriate zonings and protection for conservation reserves, biodiversity impacts of proposed new urban and rural residential areas, and potential adverse impacts from coal mining developments.

The relatively poor vegetation information for the LGA and extensive clearing and widespread former distribution of the nationally listed endangered ecological community (White Box – Yellow Box – Blakeley’s Red Gum Grassy Woodland) means that development or rezoning proposals potentially affecting native vegetation require appropriate investigation. The objectives and provisions of the Native Vegetation Act 2003 also need to be taken into account in the determination of opportunities for future development.

### 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 the 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 the Upper Hunter. This includes protection and recovery of threatened species, communities and populations and their habitat, and endangered ecological communities.
- 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.
- Undertake further strategic local area studies of biodiversity values and planning responses in parts of the LGA expected to be subject to further pressure for urban expansion, large lot residential and rural small holding development.
Policies - Biodiversity and natural ecosystems

- The value of biodiversity in the Upper Hunter LGA 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).
- Consult with the Department of Environment and Climate Change over whether any land should be reserved in the LEP for acquisition to be incorporated within existing 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 the NSW Department of Planning, NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change and Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage to undertake or fund 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.
- Incorporate provisions within DCP 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 minimum ecological survey standards, and could define local biodiversity values to determine the local interpretation of ‘maintaining or improving biodiversity values’.
9.4 Heritage issues, scenic and cultural landscapes

The Upper Hunter LGA’s 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.

The need to conserve the Upper Hunter rural area’s built heritage is important for tourism and maintaining identity and cultural history. There are a significant number of heritage items identified in the area and these are currently identified in the LEP. A total of 30 heritage items are listed under existing LEP provisions, plus 2 heritage conservation areas and 4 scenic landscapes (Wingen/Scone, Lower Dartbrook, Momberoi and Sedgenhoe/Rouchel). The Hunter Regional Environmental Plan 1989 (Heritage) identifies 67 items plus 4 heritage conservation areas. Current listings within the LGA need to be updated and consolidated within a new LEP.

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 488 sites of Aboriginal significance in Upper Hunter LGA, most of which are in rural areas. There is also potential for many more to be identified.

Objectives - Heritage issues, scenic and cultural landscapes

➤ Agencies will be encouraged to identify and protect Aboriginal heritage.
➤ European heritage is identified, protected and valued.

Policies - Heritage issues, scenic and cultural landscapes

• Current listings will be reviewed and updated for inclusion in the updated, consolidated LEP list.
• Heritage and landscape will be taken into account by implementing Standard LEP provisions and development control plan guidelines.
• Where there is lack of information on these issues, further investigation will be required prior to zoning amendments or development consent.

Strategic Actions - Heritage issues, scenic and cultural landscapes

• 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 (including scenic protection areas) through overlays.
10 PLANNING ADMINISTRATION AND STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Upper Hunter Land Use Strategy will be implemented by the Council through its normal administrative and planning processes. The following strategic actions are proposed relating to planning administration and implementation:

- Prepare the LEP with provisions reflecting the Land Use Strategy so as to implement the Strategy in a consistent and uniform manner across the Upper Hunter LGA.
- Ensure future service demands are integrated with Council financial and infrastructure planning.
- Develop a combined land monitor for the Upper Hunter LGA (to be developed by the Council), particularly for residential, rural residential and industrial land.
- Clarify the CMA’s 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 the Upper Hunter LGA. 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, and state of the environment reporting programs. Key plans and documents are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Strategy relationship with other plans and programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan or program</th>
<th>Relationship to strategy</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council management plans</td>
<td>Identifies council visions and priorities, and administrative framework</td>
<td>Council management plans must complement the Land Use Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local environmental plans</td>
<td>Key instrument for regulating land use and implementing Strategy</td>
<td>Development control plans may be made by the Council to identify land use guidelines for matters not included in LEP provisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catchment action plans</td>
<td>CAPs identify investment priorities for catchment management authority funding</td>
<td>Relationship with LEP is not clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of the environment report (SoE)</td>
<td>Enables monitoring of strategy achievements, objectives and environmental indicators</td>
<td>Information from the Situation Analysis may be included and updated in SoE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implementing the Upper Hunter Land Use 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 or water use).
Strategy implementation also requires further strategic land use analysis of some issues and the preparation of development control plans. DCPs are considered in the assessment of development proposals for which consent is required by a LEP. Table 16 shows the scope of the anticipated program that can be built upon with subsequent studies and information.

Table 16: Future strategic work program priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Proposed action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of DCP</td>
<td>DCP provisions should be prepared for the following, where required:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Infill residential subdivision, development and urban sustainability guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Industrial development guidelines</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Large lot residential and rural small holdings subdivision and development guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic biodiversity review of proposed</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions plans</td>
<td>Update Section 94 contributions plans based on the Strategy and LEP provisions, and prepare guidelines for use of planning agreements within Upper Hunter LGA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.1 Monitoring and Review

The Upper Hunter Land Use Strategy outlines the key land use policies and principles 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.

The Upper Hunter Shire 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 5 years by the Council and the Department of Planning. Each major review will take place upon the release of ABS Census of Population and Housing data. The major 5 year 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 Upper Hunter 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.
REFERENCES