



NEWS RELEASE
The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP
Member for Heffron
Minister for Planning
Minister for Redfern Waterloo

Tuesday 10 January, 2009

HUNTLEE NEW TOWN: \$1.8 BILLION INVESTMENT FOR LOWER HUNTER

The Lower Hunter will support **homes for up to 20,000 people and 3,000 new jobs** after the State Government approved the rezoning of a major new residential development at Huntlee New Town.

The approval will see nearly **5,900 hectares of conservation land** across the Hunter transferred into public ownership for permanent environmental protection.

The Huntlee New Town Site was declared a State significant site in January this year allowing for development to provide:

- Residential development covering up to 600 hectares to achieve 7,200 lots;
- Nearly 5,900 hectares of land for conservation purposes including 803 hectares on the site itself;
- Rural residential development covering up to 93 hectares to achieve 300 lots; and
- Commercial and employment lands covering up to 160 hectares.

Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally, said **the Huntlee New Town site, south of Branxton, will generate \$1.8 billion in investment, provide homes and jobs for thousands and is a win all round for the people of the Lower Hunter.**

“Huntlee’s ability to accommodate more than 7,000 homes is significant. It will make up over six percent of the total number of new homes which will be delivered in the Lower Hunter by the year 2031,” Ms Keneally said.

“As an added bonus, the protection of nearly 5,900 hectares of land for conservation will ensure the protection and preservation of several endangered ecological communities.

“More jobs and greater investment in housing, retail and infrastructure is encouraging and demonstrates the enormous potential the Hunter Region has to grow and develop.

“This approval confirms the Government’s commitment to provide the people of NSW with more affordable, sustainable and environmentally friendly housing.”

Ms Keneally said the rezoning approval includes environmental offset requirements which are important with any new development of this size.

The environmental offsets that formed part of an agreement between the State Government and Hardie Holdings include;

- 803 hectares of environmental land set aside within the Huntlee New Town site, including 17 hectares for conservation and targeted scientific research on the threatened *Persoonia pauciflora* species;
- 4,988 hectares of conservation land in other areas of the Lower Hunter including:

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- 2,287 hectares at Mt. Poppong and Pickle Bottle Creek
- 643 hectares at Pokolbin State Forest; and
- 499 hectares at Elderslie; and
- 65 hectares of endangered ecological communities including;
 - The Central Hunter Riparian Forest
 - Coastal warm temperature subtropical rainforest; and
 - Wollombi Redgum River Oak Forest

Ms Keneally said plans for adequate regional infrastructure will need to be in place before any subdivision of the land occurs.

“The up front provision of infrastructure such as parks, libraries and other important community facilities will mean that families will be moving into a functioning suburb,” Ms Keneally said.

A draft voluntary planning agreement (VPA) between the Minister and the Huntlee New Town landowners for the first residential stage (up to 2,300 dwellings) was placed on exhibition before Christmas.

The VPA outlines proposed contributions towards infrastructure such as regional road networks, road improvement works, dedication of land for local schools and a \$1 million contribution for the rehabilitation and ongoing management of conservation lands.

The developer is also negotiating local infrastructure provision with the local Councils.

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