



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

Friday 6 March, 2009

GROWTH FOR MID NORTH COAST AND NEW CITY CENTRE PLAN FOR COFFS HARBOUR

The NSW Government today released the final Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, which plans for **48,500 new jobs and 59,600 new dwellings by the year 2031.**

Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally, said the 25-year strategy will help the State Government and local councils in the area to meet the challenges of projected growth.

“The Mid North Coast is one of NSW’s most popular areas, and for good reason. Its stunning natural beauty and thriving towns make it a great place to live and work,” Ms Keneally said.

“By the year 2031, an extra 94,000 people are expected to call the Mid North Coast home. The challenge for the Government and councils is to plan now to make sure this growth is delivered in a way that maintains the things people love about the region.

“The final strategy I’m releasing today does just that. It will guide sustainable growth predominantly **in existing centres such as Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Grafton and Taree** while protecting valuable agricultural land and sensitive natural environments.

“This pattern of growth will make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure and services, and ensure the character of rural areas is not lost to inappropriate development.”

The strategy was produced in consultation with local councils and communities and applies to eight local government areas: **Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Greater Taree and Great Lakes.**

“The strategy identifies sufficient supplies of well-located housing to help make houses more affordable and make available a wide choice of housing type,” Ms Keneally said.

“This is a strategy for growth, and will streamline the planning system within the targeted areas. DA’s outside of coastal areas that would require a rezoning will of course still be considered and assessed by councils as long as they meet sustainability criteria in the regional strategy.

“Importantly, new land releases in the coastal area east of the proposed final Pacific Highway alignment will be limited to growth areas, which will maintain long-term green breaks between coastal settlements.” These green breaks include the:

- Estuary, wetlands and sugar cane growing areas of the lower Clarence Valley.
- Green belts between coastal villages such as between Scotts Head and Stuarts Point.
- Natural scenery around Wallis Lake and Smiths Lake.

“This will help create a long-term green corridor from the Queensland border to the Central Coast, linking equivalent protected areas in the Far North Coast and Lower Hunter regions,” Ms Keneally said.



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“At the same time, the strategy also identifies significant amounts of additional employment land across the region to deliver not only more jobs, but more jobs closer to home for local residents.

“An **additional 442 hectares of industrial and commercial land** will be required on the Mid North Coast by 2031. This will be predominantly located near the region’s four major towns, as well as some additional areas in Kempsey and Nambucca Heads.

Ms Keneally said the strategy is supported by farmland maps which identify areas of farmland to be protected from urban and rural residential development. The majority of farmland to be protected, covering about 8% of the region, is located on floodplains, upstream river valleys and volcanic country.

Coffs Harbour to get new planning vision for vibrant and prosperous future

Ms Keneally also announced that, in keeping with Coffs Harbour’s status as a major regional centre in the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, the NSW Government will work with Coffs Harbour City Council to revitalise the town’s CBD and boost job-creating investment.

The Department of Planning’s *Cities Taskforce* will oversee the preparation of a new City Centre Plan for Coffs Harbour, outlining how the town will attract and accommodate new jobs and housing to create a thriving business hub for the region.

Coffs Harbour is only the second major centre in New South Wales outside of the Greater Metropolitan Region to be the subject of this strategic city-planning approach – an indication of its economic and social importance to both the Mid North Coast and the State as a whole.

The final City Centre Plan for Coffs Harbour will consist of four strategic documents:

- **City Centre Vision** – that sets out a non-statutory vision for the town’s future economic, social, environmental and cultural growth;
- **Local Environmental Plan (LEP)** – that establishes broad statutory planning controls such as zonings, heights and densities;
- **Development Control Plan** – that provides more fine-grained site-specific planning controls; and
- **Civic Improvement Plan** – that outlines proposed upgrades to the town’s public domain areas, including new cultural, social and community facilities.

Further detail of the *Cities Taskforce* work is expected to be available around the middle of the year.

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