



Brad Hazzard MP

Minister for Planning & Infrastructure

Minister assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

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Your say on the future of the Lower Hunter

Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Brad Hazzard said the Government had today released the Lower Hunter discussion paper for public comment.

“The NSW Government is anticipating that up to 130,000 extra residents will want to live in the Lower Hunter in the next 20 years and that means we will need about 75,000 new homes,” Mr Hazzard said.

“Lower Hunter residents are being encouraged to shape the future of their region and make plans for the expected growth.

“We know that the Lower Hunter is one of the most attractive places in NSW to live, work and play and now we want to know how to make it even better.

“We’ll be undertaking detailed consultation to ensure the community and stakeholders have their say before we create a new draft regional strategy.”

The discussion paper seeks feedback on some important issues, including how to:

- Renew town centres;
- Build on potential job opportunities from assets such as the Port of Newcastle, University of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport;
- Better co-ordinate planning with surrounding regions;
- Prioritise infrastructure improvements; and
- Protect the region’s natural environment.

Mr Hazzard said 35,000 residential lots in the Lower Hunter had been rezoned since 2006, however only 11,200 dwellings had been constructed over the following five years.

“Any new regional strategy will need to have a strong focus on housing production to help put downward pressure on housing costs,” Mr Hazzard said.

Feedback on the discussion paper will be used to create a draft regional strategy, which will also be exhibited. Details will soon be announced about consultation sessions in each of the region’s five council areas.

The discussion paper is on exhibition until 3 May 2013 and can be found at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/lowerhunter

Submissions can be lodged via:

- Online discussion forums – www.planning.nsw.gov.au/lowerhunter
- Email – lowerhunter@planning.nsw.gov.au
- Post – Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Newcastle Office, PO Box 1226, Newcastle NSW 2300

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