

Monday, 27 May 2013

Photo competition and survey to help chart Lower Hunter's future

Lower Hunter residents were today encouraged to take photographs of the places they want to protect or change and fill out a survey which lists their top priorities for the region.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure is seeking feedback to help develop a new strategy for how the Lower Hunter region will grow over the next 20 years.

Department Hunter and Central Coast regional director Michael Leavey said innovative feedback tools were being used to help residents contribute to the region's long-term future.

Mr Leavey said the department had created a Facebook page where people could upload photographs they had taken within the region.

"This is an opportunity for people to share photos of all sorts of things such as a public space in the Lower Hunter that they want to make more liveable, or one that they think already works really well," Mr Leavey said.

"Photographs will help the government better understand what people love about their region and want to protect and also what they want to change.

"As they say, a picture is often worth more than a thousand words.

"Therefore, for some people, a simple photograph may be a more effective way to communicate their views than writing a long submission."

Separately, Lower Hunter residents are being encouraged to complete an online survey about their priorities for the region, including for housing, employment, infrastructure, transport and the environment.

"The survey is another innovative tool designed to get feedback from people who may not want to write a submission," he said.

"With less than two weeks before the deadline of formal submissions on our Lower Hunter discussion paper, we urge people to take every opportunity to have their say."

The photograph competition and survey will run until June 30. To encourage entries, three prizes of \$1,000 are being made available for the photograph competition, including:

- Best planning idea – to be judged by the Department of Planning & Infrastructure
- Public choice – to be judged by public voters
- Best photograph – to be judged by the Newcastle Herald.

To take the survey or find out more about the photo competition, visit www.planning.nsw.gov.au/lowerhunter

Entries in the photograph competition will be made available at www.facebook.com/NSWPlanning

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