North West Priority Growth Area

Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy

MARCH 2017
This North West Priority Growth Area Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy outlines plans for the growing North West Priority Growth Area and the infrastructure needed to support this growth.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This North West Priority Growth Area Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy outlines plans for the growing North West Priority Growth Area and the infrastructure needed to support this growth.

**Strategic Planning Context**

A Plan for Growing Sydney establishes the NSW Government’s vision for Sydney’s future as a ‘strong global city, a great place to live’. It makes it clear that as Sydney grows, it must be planned for in a strategic way so that Sydney is not only bigger but also better. This requires planning that puts the necessary infrastructure in place to support growing communities.

Since the Plan’s release in late 2014, new forecasts indicate that Sydney needs to provide 725,000 new homes and jobs for 1.74 million new residents by 2036. These new homes can be delivered through urban renewal, medium density development in existing areas, or new communities in land release areas. A proposed amendment to the Plan, Towards Our Greater Sydney 2056, envisions Greater Sydney as a metropolis of three cities: the established Eastern City centred on Sydney CBD, the developing Central City with Parramatta at its heart, and the emerging Western City that will evolve with the growth of the Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek.

Given this expected growth, land is required for new housing, workplaces and communities. The North West Priority Growth Area provides substantial land release areas for homes and jobs in Sydney’s northwest and is forecasted to contribute approximately 12% of the homes needed to meet demand over the next 20 years.

The North West Priority Growth Area is close to transport nodes, including the M7 Motorway with connections to the M4 Motorway and the new Western Sydney Airport. It is well located to capitalise on new infrastructure such as the Sydney Metro Northwest to Cudgegong Road Station, and a public transport corridor extension toward Marsden Park. Other opportunities include a growth corridor along Schofields Road between Rouse Hill and Marsden Park, to benefit from infrastructure investment.

This Strategy updates the planning framework for the North West Priority Growth Area in light of the extent of urban development and demand for housing that has occurred since the release of the North West Growth Centre Structure Plan 2006 (the Structure Plan). It identifies the opportunities for future urban growth and recommends a planning pathway to realise the area’s potential. The Strategy also builds on the framework set in the West and West Central District Plans released by the Greater Sydney Commission in late 2016. It recognises the growth of the area as part of the Western City, to allow the North West Priority Growth Area to grow its own centres for new communities that are supported by an infrastructure delivery program.

A review of market capacity and detailed analysis of opportunities and constraints form the basis of this Strategy and the framework for infrastructure delivery to support projected housing and employment growth. This framework guides a future urban structure, including new centres to support places for offices, shops, cafes and supermarkets, open space networks for recreation and connections with green space, and future road and passenger rail networks to connect future residents to the surrounding areas and beyond.

The framework will inform future precinct planning and rezoning across the North West Priority Growth Area. It will coordinate infrastructure provision to deliver community facilities, schools, open space and other infrastructure that will make these centres productive and pleasant places to live and work.

**Vision and Objectives**

The District Plans identify the vision, priorities and actions to shape the West and West Central District’s future, and to guide policy decisions. A focus on employment growth that supports local communities with a diverse range of housing to meet varying household needs underpins the framework for further detailed planning to occur in the North West Priority Growth Area. The District Plans recognise the importance of coordinating and prioritising the infrastructure and facilities required for new communities to develop. These areas will be further supported by improved transport links between diverse economic centres within the Priority Growth Area and areas such as Parramatta, Penrith, the Western Sydney Airport and the Sydney CBD, and new and improved connections to green corridors that support pedestrians and cyclists within and outside the Priority Growth Area.

Within the North West Priority Growth Area, new communities will progressively develop with access to schools, parks, community facilities, jobs, roads and public transport. Over the next ten years, 33,000 homes will be provided and the growth area will be home to around 92,400 people. The Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy provides a robust framework to grow new communities in line with the provision of infrastructure.
To meet this vision, the Strategy identifies clear objectives, which are further explored in Section 4 of this Strategy:

- **Plan for an additional 20,000 dwellings** than originally anticipated in Sydney’s North West in vibrant and liveable neighbourhoods, and facilitate the supply of 18,000 new homes by 2021 and 33,000 new homes by 2026.

- **Balance the needs of a growing population** with opportunities for employment and recreation by establishing minimum and maximum residential densities as a priority, in line with infrastructure provision.

- **Identify and coordinate the delivery of infrastructure** that will support housing and employment growth to ensure there is an ongoing supply of development-ready land in Sydney’s northwest.

**Executive Summary**

Explore new land uses along major infrastructure corridors to benefit from public investment in infrastructure such as Schofields Road, Richmond Road and Bandon Road, as well as the Sydney Metro Northwest and its transport corridor extension.

Improve transport accessibility and connectivity throughout the area to reduce car reliance and connect people to other parts of Sydney by providing opportunities for the integration of travel modes through detailed precinct planning.

Identify and enhance key biodiversity areas, open spaces, riparian corridors and culturally sensitive areas and identify additional open space to support a high-growth housing capacity scenario, as well as improved links to regional open space.

**About this Strategy**

Three-quarters of the North West Priority Growth Area has been rezoned for development since the release of the Structure Plan in 2006. Over the last ten years, the NSW Government has invested in new roads, public transport and utility infrastructure, as well as the protection of high conservation bushland within the Cumberland Plain. Recent monitoring of development activity has identified increasing residential lot production trends as essential utility infrastructure continues to be rolled out.

To date, land in the North West Priority Growth Area has been rezoned to support 53,150 dwellings. As shown in the diagram below, strong housing growth has emerged in Riverstone, Alex Avenue and Kellyville despite substantial land fragmentation. Keen market interest and the associated amalgamation of smaller properties coupled with the ongoing delivery of water, sewer and electricity services has led to a reliable housing supply in an area that has benefited from significant government investment in infrastructure.

**Dwelling Supply Forecast for the North West Priority Growth Area**
When fully developed, the North West Priority Growth Area will accommodate approximately 90,000 homes, 20,000 more than were forecast in 2006. This Strategy provides a framework to facilitate the delivery of over 33,000 of these homes over the next ten years and identifies the infrastructure needed to support this growth.

While recognising the extensive planning and infrastructure delivery that has occurred across the Priority Growth Area over the past 10 years, this Strategy also includes detailed analysis of regional flooding and riparian assessment; European and Aboriginal heritage; salinity; a housing market-needs assessment; and transport and infrastructure planning.

This Strategy balances urban development opportunities and environmental constraints to recommend an urban structure for the Priority Growth Area that will continue to support new homes and jobs.

The Strategy includes a schedule of infrastructure requirements to guide the work of the Department of Planning and Environment, councils and other relevant agencies. This notes the current NSW Government review of the existing Western Sydney Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC) schedule, which provides a funding framework for regional roads, schools and regional open space.

A monitoring program will be implemented to inform agencies tasked with delivering priority infrastructure, developers investing in greenfield sites and families wishing to live in the North West Priority Growth Area. Meanwhile, the Department will continue to plan for a housing supply pipeline to be sustained, as outlined in the delivery program below.

The Strategy proposes statutory reforms to planning controls to align planning in the Priority Growth Area with the standard local environmental plans and to consolidate existing precinct plans. This will reduce duplication and inconsistencies, improve the delivery of new development and will give councils greater control over local issues.

Proposed new density controls will balance level of permissible growth with the infrastructure that can be provided to support new homes. The statutory package is on exhibition and feedback is encouraged.
### Key Actions

The Strategy identifies key actions to support the delivery of homes and jobs in the North West Priority Growth Area. The Department will continue to monitor their completion through annual updates of the Strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION 1</th>
<th>Provide more land supply for new homes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Department will:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• exhibit rezoning proposals for the remaining North West Priority Growth Area Precincts that have the potential to deliver more homes and jobs</td>
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<td>• ensure that rezonings occur in line with the availability of essential service utilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• work with local councils to prepare development control plans and Section 94 Contributions plans that will ensure design quality and support growth in those areas.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION 5</th>
<th>Transfer more planning controls back to local councils</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Department will transfer planning controls from the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006 to local environmental plans through proposed amendments that will make development controls more consistent with the Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ACTION 2</th>
<th>Protect and plan for major transport corridors</th>
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<td>The Department will undertake a strategic land use review of the future public transport corridor between Rouse Hill and Marsden Park along Schofields Road. This will examine land uses adjacent to the corridor and review the suitability of land uses at Marsden Park, and identify strategies to improve the permeability of land adjacent to the corridor as well as enhance the connectivity along and across the transport corridor. Measures to mitigate constraints for surrounding homes and jobs will also be delineated as part of this review. The Department will also review the impact of the future Outer Sydney Orbital and Bells Line of Road Castlereagh corridor in areas such as Shanes Park Precinct and Vineyard Precinct.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ACTION 6</th>
<th>Simplify planning controls within the Blacktown precincts in the North West Priority Growth Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Department will consolidate the existing six Blacktown precinct plans within the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006 into a single precinct plan in order to offer ease of access to the controls that apply to rezoned land in the Blacktown precincts.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ACTION 3</th>
<th>Manage residential densities to align with infrastructure</th>
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<td>The Department will establish new density controls for residential land. The controls will set minimum and maximum residential densities for residential zoned land so that new communities are supported by adequate infrastructure and local councils can plan for the new population. The Department will work with local councils to implement the controls and will establish a system to monitor the delivery of homes.</td>
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<th>ACTION 7</th>
<th>Review work and accelerate funding for capital works</th>
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<td>The Department will revise the existing SIC schedule for the area. The SIC will assist in funding regional infrastructure upgrades identified in this Strategy to support growth over the next 10 years. The Department will coordinate and monitor the delivery of a capital works program for infrastructure items supported by the SIC fund to support housing delivery. These include regional roads, education, health, bus services, open space and conservation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ACTION 4</th>
<th>Protect assets and plan for evacuation</th>
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<td>The Department will work with Infrastructure NSW (INSW), Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and NSW State Emergency Service (SES) to review planning controls for land within the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley which includes land below the probable maximum flood (PMF) level. The Department will work with stakeholders to review the outcomes of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Review, and incorporate the findings of the Review into the planning for these areas.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ACTION 8</th>
<th>Improve pedestrian, cycle and green connectivity</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Department will review land that has been rezoned to improve pedestrian and cyclist facilities between key destinations within the North West Priority Growth Area and to regional open spaces outside of the growth area. This work will support the implementation of the Green Grid through the Eastern Creek regional open space corridor to connect to the Western Sydney Parklands, Wiannamatta Regional Park and Rouse Hill Regional Park. The Department will also address any shortfalls in open space provision for the projected growth following the review of planned open space in light of the projected housing growth for the Priority Growth Area.</td>
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The Department of Planning and Environment has prepared this North West Priority Growth Area Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy in consultation with Blacktown City Council, Hawkesbury City Council and The Hills Shire Council.

This Strategy updates the strategic framework for the Priority Growth Area that was initially established in the North West Structure Plan in 2006.

The North West Priority Growth Area is located in Sydney’s northwest, approximately 40 kilometres northwest of Sydney CBD and 30 kilometres northwest of Parramatta.

1.1 Overall Planning Context

The Strategy’s development is guided by the NSW Government’s 20-year metropolitan plan A Plan for Growing Sydney (Figure 1). The overall vision of the Plan is to make Sydney ‘a strong global city that is a great place to live’. Since the Plan’s release, updated forecasts predict that Sydney will need 725,000 new homes and new jobs needed for the predicted 1.74 million new residents by 2036.

One of the key actions of the Plan is to deliver greenfield housing supply in the North West and South West Priority Growth Areas (formerly the North West and South West Growth Centres).

To support this the NSW Government will:
- update the structure plans for the North West and South West Priority Growth Areas
- continue rezoning more land in the growth areas
- coordinate and deliver enabling infrastructure to support development.

A draft amendment to A Plan for Growing Sydney, titled Towards our Greater Sydney 2056, foreshadows the review of A Plan for Growing Sydney in 2017. The draft amendment sets out a longer-term vision for Greater Sydney as a metropolis of three cities, in which the North West Priority Growth Area would be an important growth area for both the developing Central City, with Greater Parramatta at its heart, and the emerging Western City based on the planned Western Sydney Airport, as shown in Figure 2.

The Strategy also responds to the draft West Central District Plan and draft West District Plan, released by the Greater Sydney Commission in November 2016.

These draft District Plans provide the District-level planning to connect the metropolitan planning mentioned above and local planning undertaken by councils. More detail on the draft District Plans is included in Section 2.

This Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy replaces the North West Structure Plan of 2006. It guides the direction for growth and development in the North West Priority Growth Area, which is underpinned by major and local infrastructure commitments and improved planning processes to help expedite the delivery of new homes and jobs in this region. In doing so, it:
- provides a revised long-term vision for the area
- introduces new delivery mechanisms
- outlines the coordination of infrastructure with housing and employment development.

The Strategy is an important component in helping to realise the growth expectations of A Plan for Growing Sydney and Towards our Greater Sydney 2056.
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF PRIORITY GROWTH AREAS

Source: A Plan for Growing Sydney, 2014, Department of Planning and Environment
1.2 Priority Growth Areas

Priority Growth Areas (formerly Growth Centres) were established by the NSW Government under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006 (Growth Centres SEPP) as a location for greenfield urban growth including housing, employment, shops, health and education facilities, parks, bushland, and new or upgraded infrastructure.

The NSW Government’s Land Release Program strategically plans these important areas and coordinates the delivery of infrastructure. The Program is based on collaboration with local councils and comprehensive community consultation.

The Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy sets the overarching strategic plan for the North West Priority Growth Area. In doing so, it guides the Precinct Planning and rezoning process that confirms land uses, street patterns, environmental and heritage protection, and detailed infrastructure requirements.

Since 2006, nearly two-thirds of the growth area have been rezoned with five project areas yet to be rezoned. Precinct planning is underway for three of these areas. This offers:

- the potential to deliver around 12% of Sydney’s new homes over the next 20 years
- zoned land for 53,150 homes and 43,000 jobs, enough to maintain supply for at least the next ten years
- an increasing rate of new home building, with more than 10,000 new homes in approval or construction stages
- new communities in locations that benefit from infrastructure and services like Kellyville, Box Hill, Schofields, Rouse Hill and Riverstone, with developers also delivering infrastructure and new homes in Marsden Park.

Family homes still make up the majority of housing in greenfield areas, but there is growing demand for more diverse housing types like terraces, apartments and studios. Land sizes and house sizes are decreasing as housing affordability becomes increasingly important. This is leading to more diverse communities and will help support public transport services, shops and local businesses. Higher densities also require planning for a larger population by ensuring that infrastructure has enough capacity to support new communities.
1.3 Aims
Coordinating infrastructure provision is essential to support growth with community facilities, schools, green open space, and other public spaces, and to make these centres attractive and pleasant places to live and work. The Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy sets out a clear vision and objectives (see Section 4). To achieve these, this Strategy aims to:
• define the vision for the North West Priority Growth Area in the context of new growth directions and infrastructure investment
• confirm areas for growth and urban structure based on a detailed analysis of opportunities and constraints
• prepare an infrastructure strategy to guide investment over the next ten years and beyond
• implement the vision by requiring rezoning and development to be consistent with the Strategy

1.4 The Investigation Process
The Department of Planning and Environment has worked with Blacktown City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, The Hills Shire Council and State agencies as part of the Strategy's preparation. The investigation process is outlined in Figure 3.
2.1 Description of the Priority Growth Area

The North West Priority Growth Area is approximately 10,200 hectares and located within the West and West Central Districts in northwestern Sydney, approximately 30 kilometres from Parramatta. Its boundary includes land bordering South Creek to the west and north, Rouse Hill Town Centre to the east, and the M7 Motorway to the south, as shown in Figure 4.

The growth area boundary predominantly includes land within the Blacktown City Council local government area (LGA), Hawkesbury LGA and The Hills Shire LGA.

The Priority Growth Area is supported by an existing transport network that is in various stages of being constructed and/or upgraded.

It is close to a number of key transport nodes and established areas of employment including:

- Rouse Hill and Norwest Business Park
- state and regional road network connections, including Windsor Road, Richmond Road, The Northern Road and M7 Motorway, providing connections to the M4 Motorway to Blacktown, Penrith and Parramatta
- Sydney Metro Northwest connecting the North West Priority Growth Area to Chatswood via Epping with the construction of eight new stations
- the town centres of Rouse Hill, Blacktown, Penrith and Castle Hill to the southwest and east which provide retail, commercial and industrial uses, and associated employment
- a public transport corridor from the Sydney Metro Northwest towards Marsden Park.
2.1.1 Surrounding Land Uses
The Priority Growth Area is surrounded by existing residential suburbs such as Kings Park, Quakers Hill and Marayong. New urban areas are establishing at The Ponds, while communities in Stanhope Gardens, Beaumont Hills and Rouse Hill will benefit from the Sydney Metro Northwest. The Priority Growth Area forms an urban boundary to Sydney’s northwest before the less densely populated towns of Windsor and Richmond in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley.

The Western Sydney Parklands to the Priority Growth Area’s south provide access to one of the State’s largest open space corridors, featuring picnic areas, nature reserves, sport facilities and walking tracks.

Thirty kilometres to the south is the planned Western Sydney Airport, which will be a significant employment and infrastructure catalyst for Western Sydney to support growth in knowledge-intensive jobs in a vast number of industries and provide a greater diversity of employment opportunities.

2.1.2 Existing Uses
The area was historically used for rural purposes and comprises a range of small parcels of land comprising two to three hectares to much larger properties in some parts.

With recent and ongoing delivery of essential infrastructure, urban development is underway in parts of Marsden Park, Riverstone, The Ponds, Schofields, Rouse Hill, Box Hill and Kellyville.

2.2 Statutory and Strategic Context
2.2.1 Precinct Planning
The Growth Centres SEPP is the primary statutory plan governing the release and rezoning of land in the North West Priority Growth Area and establishes the broad planning controls required to oversee the development. The aims of the SEPP are:

- to coordinate the release of land for residential, employment and other urban development in the North West and South West Growth Centres in the Sydney region
- to enable the Minister from time to time to designate land in those growth centres as ready for release for development
- to provide for comprehensive planning for those growth centres
- to enable the establishment of vibrant, sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods that provide for community well-being and high quality local amenity
- to provide controls for the sustainability of land in those growth centres that have conservation value
- to provide for the orderly and economic provision of infrastructure in and to those growth centres
- to provide development controls in order to protect the health of the waterways in those growth centres
- to protect and enhance land with natural and cultural heritage value
- to provide land use and development controls that will contribute to the conservation of biodiversity.

Further, the Growth Centres SEPP outlines development controls for:

- determining development applications prior to and after the finalisation of the precinct planning process
- flood prone and major creeks land
- clearing native vegetation
- cultural heritage landscape areas.

Precincts are rezoned following a Precinct Planning process. This process includes the development of an indicative layout plan (ILP) to guide the future urban structure, and a development control plan (DCP) that details planning controls to enable defined development outcomes. The Growth Centres SEPP is amended upon the rezoning of land to include the zones, densities, lot sizes, and other environmental and heritage controls related to the ILP. Five project areas are yet to be rezoned as mapped in Figure 5.
2.2.2 District Plans

In November 2016 the Greater Sydney Commission released draft District Plans for each of Greater Sydney’s six Districts. The draft District Plans outline the opportunities, priorities and actions to implement *A Plan for Growing Sydney* at a local level. *A Plan for Growing Sydney* recognises the distinct character and opportunities to enhance each of the three cities, being:

- the Eastern City encompassing Sydney City and economic corridors to its north through to Macquarie Park and south through Sydney Airport, as well as Port Botany to Kogarah
- the Central City centred on the Parramatta region which is forecast to undergo significant urban transformation over the next 10 to 15 years as an administrative and business centre; health and education precinct; and an economic centre with strong transport connections to the adjacent Eastern City and Western City
- the Western City highlighted by the Western Sydney Airport, and strengthened by emerging housing supply and a priority to deliver transport, social infrastructure and jobs.

The District Plans recognise the need to plan for the varying scale of centres that provide a range of jobs, facilities, industries and services for a growing city. The economic, social and environmental integration of a metropolis of three cities will be strengthened by developing productive and liveable centres within each District that are well connected and contain the services and facilities to support future residents.

The North West Priority Growth Area falls within the West Central District and the West District as described below:

- The West Central District is a district of rapidly growing retail and employment centres that service vibrant multicultural communities located close to a rich network of regional parks, waterways and scenic rural beauty
- The West District is a growing, thriving district containing natural features such as the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains, seven national parks, and the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system.
The draft plans establish five-year housing targets for each local government area from 2016 to 2021, as outlined below in Table 1 and Table 2. These targets demonstrate the regional growth envisaged for the Western City which the North West Priority Growth Area lies within, and further highlights the importance of implementing an integrated planning and infrastructure strategy for the area.

### TABLE 1. WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT’S FIVE-YEAR HOUSING TARGETS BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (2016-2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Area</th>
<th>2016-2021 Housing Target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacktown</td>
<td>13,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>9,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>21,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hills</td>
<td>8,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Central District Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53,500</strong></td>
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### TABLE 2. WEST DISTRICT’S FIVE-YEAR HOUSING TARGETS BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (2016-2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Area</th>
<th>2016-2021 Housing Target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Mountains</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
<td>1,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith</td>
<td>6,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West District Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,400</strong></td>
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The North West Priority Growth Area is identified in the District Plans as a key location to assist in achieving the housing targets outlined above and is being planned to contribute dwellings towards these targets.

The draft District Plans also set a 5 to 10% target for affordable rental housing for low and very low income households in all new development in new urban renewal and greenfield areas across Greater Sydney. A target of 5 to 10% of new floor space will be considered at the rezoning stage in the North West Priority Growth Area subject to feasibility, so that it can be factored into development.

The District Plans and the draft Towards our Greater Sydney 2056 identify a new approach to centres in A Plan for Growing Sydney. A new hierarchy of centres is proposed, which defines three types of centres: strategic, district and local.

These centres vary in terms of scale and contribution to Greater Sydney’s job growth and productivity as well as service provision to local communities. In brief:

- **strategic centres**, including transport gateways, have the scale, industries and location needed to specifically support a city with smart jobs and the success of the Eastern, Central and Western Cities
- **district centres** have jobs, facilities and services that support district populations
- **local centres** have a range of local jobs and services for local catchments.

In this regard, the draft West Central District Plan identifies Rouse Hill and Marsden Park as district centres, updating their designation from strategic centres to better reflect their role from a metropolitan planning perspective.

2.2.3 Western Sydney Special Infrastructure Contribution Scheme

A SIC scheme applies to development within the North West Priority Growth Area to contribute to the funding of regional infrastructure. The Western Sydney SIC scheme is being reviewed by the NSW Government, and is proposed to be updated to identify priority infrastructure items that align with the North West Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy.

2.2.4 Infrastructure delivery in the North West Priority Growth Area

A number of traffic and transport commitments have been delivered within the North West Priority Growth Area to improve the transport links within the Priority Growth Area and to surrounding key destinations, such as Parramatta and Penrith. Further planning and investment by the NSW Government continues to occur to ensure that the future communities in the Priority Growth Area are well connected to key employment nodes, the Western Sydney Airport and major retail centres.

To date, the following initiatives have been commenced and/or completed:

- the planning and/or upgrade of existing road infrastructure such as Windsor Road, Richmond Road, Schofields Road and Bandon Road
- the delivery of priority rail infrastructure such as the Sydney Metro Northwest, duplication of the T1 Western Line (Richmond to Sydney CBD) between Quakers Hill Station and Schofields Station, and relocation of Schofields Station, along
with ongoing planning for bus and rail infrastructure. Additionally, local councils are delivering drainage facilities, playing fields, local parks and community facilities to enable the development of land and provide services for incoming residents. Through the detailed precinct planning undertaken for rezoned precincts in the North West Priority Growth Area, specific areas have been identified for acquisition by local councils, and constructed to provide facilities such as:

- local open space encompassing playing fields, passive parks and riparian corridors
- community centres
- drainage basins and bioretention areas.

The delivery of these facilities is funded through Contribution Plans established under Section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Section 6 of the Strategy discusses additional infrastructure required to support the projected increase in population to the area.

2.3 The existing community and housing supply

The North West Priority Growth Area contains a mix of older homes and more recent development. Prior to 1997 the population size was relatively stable – around 3,000 people living on lots comprised of broader subdivisions and rural residences. While there was some natural population growth between 1996 and 2006, since 2006 there has been a 14 per cent increase in population, indicating further growth in household sizes as shown in Figure 6.

Since 2011, there has been an 18 per cent increase in the population, with the steepest increases seen in the final year to 2015. These increases are a mix of both established households growing in size and incoming families moving into new housing supply.

Analysis shows the following characteristics about the people and households of the North West Priority Growth Area:

- residents are relatively young, with the highest number of people within the age groups of 0-14 and 30-44; by 2006 the largest population group (by age) was 0-4 year olds; by 2011, the overall numbers of 0-4 year olds had declined largely due to the slowdown in new housing supply over the period and ageing of the children; by 2015, the 10-14 year age cohort had increased in numbers, with their parents reaching early middle age (the spike in 40-44 year olds)
- 80% of household types are families
- the rate of household ownership and houses owned outright has fallen from around 40% in 2001 to just under 30% in 2011. In contrast, the proportion of homes owned with a mortgage has risen over the same period, around 37% in 2001 to 48% in 2011
- housing costs are more than 35% of household income
- the standalone house is the most common type of home, although this is declining.
CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

3.1 Overview

Community and stakeholder input is an important part of planning for the future of the Priority Growth Area. The Department has worked closely with Blacktown City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, the Hills Shire Council, State agencies, utility providers and stakeholders to prepare the Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy.

As noted earlier, the Strategy will be updated annually, and each update will provide opportunities for additional stakeholder and community engagement.

As part of this Strategy, the Department is exhibiting statutory changes to the Growth Centres SEPP to allow delivery of the Strategy’s actions. This provides community members with an additional opportunity to be included in the planning for their area.

Key consultation activities include:

- Website: A dedicated webpage is available on the Department’s website to provide an overview of the investigation process that underpins this Strategy and allows people to register for project updates. The webpage is updated as planning progresses.
- Council briefings: The Department worked with councils during the investigation process and sought input on the proposed vision and preliminary Land Use Strategy.
- Stakeholder and community briefings: The Department has held regular briefings with local communities in areas that have been rezoned or are in the precinct planning process. There will be future opportunities for additional stakeholder and community briefings as precinct planning continues.

The information gathered through consultation has shaped the Strategy’s development, with feedback making it clear that:

- Access to public transport is a high priority
- A green network should be established along key road links
- The transition of existing agricultural uses to urban uses should be addressed through planning
- Rezoning of land should align with infrastructure delivery.

3.2 Engagement Strategy

To ensure the community is informed about the Strategy a range of communication tools will be used to seek community and stakeholder involvement. A summary of the consultation program is provided in Figure 7.
New communities will progressively develop across the North West Priority Growth Area with access to schools, parks, community facilities, jobs, roads and public transport. Over the next ten years, 33,000 homes will be built in the growth area, accommodating around 92,400 people. The Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy provides a robust framework to grow new communities in line with the provision of infrastructure. The objectives set out below clarify the priorities for the Priority Growth Area in order to achieve these dwelling targets.

4.1 Objectives for the North West Priority Growth Area

- **To plan for an increased population in Sydney’s North West in vibrant and liveable neighbourhoods**
  
  The Strategy identifies a low and high growth housing capacity scenario based on a clear understanding of how the housing market is influencing lot size and housing diversity in the North West. The Strategy anticipates increases in residential densities at key transport nodes and future centres. Diverse housing choices will meet the needs of people of different ages, incomes and cultural backgrounds. Under the Strategy, the Priority Growth Area could ultimately provide up to an additional 20,000 dwellings than was originally anticipated. The Strategy seeks to facilitate the supply of 18,000 new homes by 2021 and 33,000 new homes by 2026.

- **To balance the needs of a growing population with opportunities for employment and recreation**
  
  The Strategy proposes to establish new density controls (minimum and maximum) for residential land so that new communities are supported by adequate infrastructure and local councils can plan for the new population. The Department will work with local councils to implement the controls and will establish a system to monitor the delivery of homes.

- **Improve transport accessibility and connectivity throughout the area**
  
  The Strategy seeks to improve access and mobility throughout the Priority Growth area to connect homes, jobs and local facilities. An indicative road, rail and active transport strategy will link new homes to employment, shops, and services, including Rouse Hill, Norwest, Blacktown and Penrith. Public transport, pedestrian and cycle paths will reduce the reliance on cars for local trips, and will connect people to other parts of Sydney.
SECTION 4: VISION FOR THE NORTH WEST PRIORITY GROWTH AREA

To facilitate the delivery of infrastructure that will support housing and employment growth

The Strategy identifies the infrastructure needs to support growth and prioritises the forward funding or delivery of infrastructure to meet higher capacity growth projections. Communities will be supported by infrastructure that is planned and delivered to meet the needs of new residents.

Identify and enhance key biodiversity areas, open spaces, riparian corridors and culturally sensitive areas

The Strategy identifies additional open space requirements needed to support new communities, based on a high-growth housing capacity scenario. It also identifies the opportunity to establish a new green space corridor along Eastern Creek to provide new open space and better green connections to where people will live.

Bushland will be protected and connected through a Green Grid across the North West Priority Growth Area and beyond, linking growing suburbs, rehabilitating waterways, and providing places for recreation and community events.

Areas of sensitive heritage significance in precincts yet to be rezoned will be considered as part of detailed planning for those areas.

Explore new land uses along major infrastructure corridors to maximise public investment in infrastructure

The Strategy incorporates infrastructure commitments across the North West Priority Growth Area and recommends that further investigation be undertaken to leverage the opportunities along key corridors, such as significant road upgrades - Schofields Road, Richmond Road and Bandon Road - and public transport - Sydney Metro Northwest and its transport corridor extension. The Western Sydney Rail Needs Scoping Study will help to identify future transit corridors in the North West.

Corridor preservation projects such as the Outer Sydney Orbital and Bells Line of Road will influence the land uses in the area and are incorporated into the Strategy and will be considered as planning progresses in the North West Priority Growth Area.
4.2 What’s new in the Strategy?

Figure 8 illustrates changes over the ten years since the Structure Plan was first released.

The Strategy:

- updates the alignment of the Sydney Metro Northwest rail line, which is under construction now and due for completion to Cudgegong Road Station in 2019
- identifies a public transport corridor extending from Cudgegong Road Station to the Marsden Park Strategic Centre
- maximises land use opportunities adjacent to major roads like Schofields Road, Richmond Road, Bandon Road and Garfield Road
- identifies potential for jobs and urban development around the Outer Sydney Orbital and Bells Line of Road (Castlereagh) corridors
- recognises the role and function of Marsden Park and Rouse Hill
- identifies infrastructure services to unlock land and enable housing growth for the next 20 years
- establishes the Schofields town centre around the interchange between two public transport corridors
- protects biodiversity under the Growth Centres Biodiversity Certification and Strategic Assessment
- maps areas of flood risk with greater accuracy
- promotes a green grid to provide breaks in the urban environment and connect with the Western Sydney Parklands and Wianamatta Regional Park.

FIGURE 8: WHAT’S NEW IN THE STRATEGY SINCE 2006

- Sydney Metro Northwest rail line is being built now and will be complete to Cudgegong Road Station in 2019.
- Schofields town centre will grow around the interchange between two public transport corridors.
- Public transport services will extend from Cudgegong Road Station to Marsden Park.
- Significant vegetation will continue to be protected under the Growth Centres Biodiversity Certification and Strategic Assessment.
- Planning, design and delivery programs will improve major roads like Schofields Road, Richmond Road, Bandon Road and Garfield Road. There will be opportunities for jobs and new development around the Outer Sydney Orbital and Bells Line of Road (Castlereagh) Extension.
- Areas at risk of floods will be identified and mapped with greater accuracy.
- Marsden Park will grow into a major place for jobs and services for a wider area.
- A green grid will provide breaks in the urban environment and will connect with the Western Sydney Parklands and Wianamatta Regional Park.
- Urban areas will support around 90,000 new homes.
SECTION 5: KEY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Planning and Development in the Growth Area

The 2006 Structure Plan (Figure 9) provided a planning framework for the North West Priority Growth Area.

It has informed the rezoning of two-thirds of the Priority Growth Area over the past ten years, supporting Sydney’s housing supply and providing a range of employment near the broader regional road and public transport networks. It identified flood-prone land and provided for conservation and open space to support new communities. The Structure Plan supported a planning for 67,750 dwellings and considered the following key elements:

- dwelling and population targets for each Precinct
- diverse types of housing and housing densities
- guiding principles for a hierarchy of retail centres
- industrial areas primarily at Box Hill, Riverstone/Vineyard and Marsden Park
- mixed use employment corridors of various commercial and industrial uses to take advantage of high levels of passing trade (Garfield Road East near Riverstone, Schofields Road near Alex Avenue, and Richmond Road at Marsden Park)
- major road improvements to accommodate bus priority measures and regional and local bus routes
- public transport upgrades including the duplication of the Richmond rail line between Quakers Hill and Vineyard, with the first stage to be between Quakers Hill and Schofields, and an indicative route for the Sydney Metro Northwest, which was originally proposed from Rouse Hill to Vineyard
- the protection of areas of vegetation significance
- protection of European heritage including Rouse Hill House, Clydesdale and Box Hill House.

FIGURE 9: NORTH WEST GROWTH CENTRE STRUCTURE PLAN 2006
The majority of the growth area is now rezoned with five projects to be completed (Table 3). A number of assumptions will be considered as part of the rezoning of the rest of the Priority Growth Area, including:

- flood risks and evacuation in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley
- land use opportunities adjacent to the Outer Sydney Orbital
- local infrastructure requirements, such as schools and open space
- local and regional connectivity with respect to bike paths, pedestrian paths and the Green Grid.

**TABLE 3. PROJECTS IN THE NORTH WEST PRIORITY GROWTH AREA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>Anticipated Dwellings</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marsden Park North</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>Planning is currently underway for Marsden Park North Precinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vineyard (Stage 1)</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>Planning is currently underway for the first stage of Vineyard Precinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverstone East</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>Stage 1 and 2 of the Precinct were rezoned in August 2016. Stage 3 of the Precinct will be rezoned when infrastructure is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Schofields</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>The southern part of the Precinct is currently in planning and the Department is working with the developer to prepare new plans for the area. The northern part of the Precinct has not yet been released for urban planning, however planning for the area has commenced jointly with the southern part of the precinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanes Park</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Shanes Park Precinct has not yet been released for planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Strategy reviews the infrastructure requirements to satisfy this additional demand, in line with the projected housing growth, to a potential 90,000 dwellings. This Strategy explores opportunities to maximise the efficiency of the infrastructure commitments made to date and concentrate growth in areas best serviced by planned infrastructure, subject to further technical investigations.

The Department has worked closely with the State agencies and councils to align land use planning for the Priority Growth Area with infrastructure commitments. Planning to date has:

- capitalised on upgrades to major roads and proximity to the Richmond rail line to improve access and amenity for future residents and concentrate residential densities in areas best placed to benefit from these works
- integrated public transport commitments such as the Sydney Metro Northwest, associated Sydney Metro Trains Facility in Riverstone, and proposed transport corridor to Marsden Park
- incorporated measures to protect Aboriginal and European heritage through land use zones and protection mechanisms
- facilitated the delivery of road and utility infrastructure to rezoned land with $475 million from the Housing Acceleration Fund to support over 160,000 homes and 1,200 hectares of employment land
- considered the outcomes from the $77.6 million Local Infrastructure Growth Scheme which has to date provided $60.6 million to councils to help keep housing affordable and fund local infrastructure plans
- supported the accelerated planning and/or rezoning of land in Marsden Park, Marsden Park Industrial and Marsden Park North, enabling additional land to be serviced ahead of the NSW Government’s program
- benefited from the $18 million funded by the SIC in the protection of high conservation bushland within the Cumberland Plain
- collected $76.628 million via the SIC with just under $102 million issued in works-in-kind credits for the North West and South West Priority Growth Areas combined.
5.2 Technical Investigations

The results of a number of specialist studies undertaken to balance the planning for additional housing and infrastructure requirements are set out below. This evidence base has set a framework for actions that will maximise the efficiency of infrastructure commitments and concentrate growth in particular areas, as set out in Section 6.

This work has focused on reviewing the land use planning undertaken to date against an analysis of development trends to identify areas that would benefit from further public investment. This analysis has considered housing affordability, the size and distribution of retail centres and employment, essential open space and social infrastructure to support new communities, and heritage and vegetation conservation. Figure 10 identifies some of the key opportunities and constraints relating to the growth area.
### 5.2.1 Housing analysis

**Housing projections**

AEC Group’s 2015 economic and property market analysis identified that, based on marked demand and housing need, land zoned for development and future unzoned Precincts have the latent potential to accommodate a greater number of homes than previously anticipated. The theoretical capacity of the Priority Growth Area for new homes has increased from 70,000 to 90,000 (a population of approximately 250,000 people), and it is anticipated that around 33,000 dwellings will be delivered within the next ten years.

The investigation acknowledged the core fundamentals underpinning Sydney’s strong residential market, including strong population growth, low interest rates, relatively low unemployment rates and historic levels of demand. Table 4 below identifies the market demand-based housing estimates for each Precinct.

#### TABLE 4. MARKET DEMAND-BASED HOUSING ESTIMATES (SOURCE: AEC GROUP, 2015)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Area</th>
<th>Development Area (ha)</th>
<th>Potential new homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacktown (including the suburbs of Marsden Park, Schofields, Colebee, Riverstone, Rouse Hill and part of Vineyard)</td>
<td>3,270</td>
<td>60,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkesbury (including part of the suburb of Vineyard)</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>2,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hills (including the suburbs of Box Hill and Kellyville)</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>21,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,519</strong></td>
<td><strong>84,511</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Projections are based on market analysis*

**Development progress and market activity**

Development activity in the North West Priority Growth Area has varied between precincts depending on service availability and site assembly. Approximately 4,909 homes have been delivered in the North West Priority Growth Area since 2011. The rate of housing delivery has dramatically increased in recent years with more than 5,000 new lots now ready for housing in places like Kellyville, Riverstone, Marsden Park and Schofields. Additionally, at least another 1,000 lots are currently proposed in development applications (pre-approval stage). This extent of market activity is the result of the investment made by the NSW Government in road upgrades and the delivery of water, sewer and electricity services since planning for the North West Priority Growth Area commenced in 2006.

Since 2011, the greatest growth in dwelling completions has occurred in the southern part of Riverstone and Kellyville, and more recently, Marsden Park, reflecting the earlier delivery of water, sewer and electricity to these areas. These areas are projected to continue to supply housing, while Schofields is also emerging as an area of concentrated housing growth.

Areas such as Rouse Hill around Cudgegong Road Station, Box Hill and Marsden Park are expected to support housing growth over the next five years. With the continued investment in infrastructure delivery, the majority of rezoned land in the North West Priority Growth Area will result in a steady pipeline of housing supply up to and beyond 2025, with a peak predicted around 2021 as more services are brought online. A sustained housing pipeline will then continue toward 2031 with a steady trend projected to 2056. These trends are reflected in Figure 11.