

WORKING PAPER

Final March 2023

*"Valuing and protecting the
Metropolitan Rural Area"*

Western Sydney Planning Partnership

METROPOLITAN RURAL AREA REVIEW

WESTERN PARKLAND CITY

Acknowledgement of Country

The Western Sydney Planning Partnership acknowledges more than 60,000 years of continuous Aboriginal connection to the land that makes up NSW.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of Country within Western Sydney. As part of the world's oldest living culture, the traditional Aboriginal owners and custodians share a unique bond to the Country – a bond forged through thousands of years of travelling across lands and waterways for ceremony, religion, trading, and seasonal migration.

We acknowledge that Western Sydney is home to the highest number of Aboriginal people of any region in Australia and that the primary Aboriginal custodians with obligations for Country and connection to the place for many generations including the Dharug/Darug, Dharawal/Tharawal, Gundungurra/Gandangara, and Darkinjung people.

Western Sydney Planning Partnership partner organisations:

Blacktown City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, City Of Liverpool, Fairfield City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, Penrith City Council, Wollondilly Shire Council, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, Greater Cities Commission, Transport for New South Wales, and Sydney Water.

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**WESTERN PARKLAND CITY
METROPOLITAN RURAL AREA REVIEW
WORKING PAPER 1
(WSPP March 2023)**

Confidential Working Document

Prepared by WSPP staff for the WSPP MRA Review Project Working Group

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Summary

This working paper has been prepared by the Western Sydney Planning Partnership (WSPP), working with seven Councils in the Western Parkland City: Blue Mountains City Council, Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, Penrith City Council, Liverpool City Council and Wollondilly Shire Council¹.

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Greater Cities Commission's (GCC) 5-year review of the Western City District Plan, specifically its approach to the Metropolitan Rural Area (MRA) and Council's input into that process. It includes a review of local and regional strategic planning, and broader policy and emerging issues for the Western Parkland City's rural area, concluding with recommendations for further work to inform the District (Western Parkland City Plan) approach to the MRA.

The following are the key issues identified by the WSPP in the paper:

- 1. Definitions, urban planning issues and managing growth.**
- 2. Understanding and mapping the values of the MRA**
- 3. Economic Futures for the MRA**
- 4. Valuing nature, ecosystem services and ensuring a resilient city.**

The paper includes recommendations for next steps:

- *Definitions, urban planning issues and managing growth*, will be reviewed through ongoing discussions with GCC, DPE and Councils.
- *Spatial planning and mapping the different landscapes and values of the MRA at a City-wide scale*: Conversations are ongoing with the GCC re: resources for District- scale mapping to inform the District Plan Review
- *Economic futures for the WPC*: a professional consultancy is being commissioned for this work.
- *Nature, resilience, and ecosystem services*: a professional consultancy is being commissioned for this work.

¹ It is noted that Blacktown City Council and Fairfield City Council, whilst members of the WSPP no longer have significant remaining rural areas and have opted-out of direct involvement in the project.

1 INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, AND APPROACH

1.1 Introduction

This working paper has been prepared by the Western Sydney Planning Partnership (WSPP), working with seven Councils in the Western Parkland City: Blue Mountains City Council, Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, Penrith City Council, Liverpool City Council and Wollondilly Shire Council².

The working paper is intended to inform the Greater Cities Commission's (GCC) review of the District Plan, specifically its approach to the Metropolitan Rural Area (MRA) and Council's input into that process. It includes a review of local and regional strategic planning, and broader policy and emerging issues for the Western Parkland City's rural area, concluding with recommendations for further work to inform the District (Western Parkland City Plan) approach to the MRA.



Metropolitan Rural Area. Source: Campbelltown City Council

² It is noted that Blacktown City Council and Fairfield City Council, whilst members of the WSPP no longer have significant remaining rural areas and have opted-out of direct involvement in the project.

1.2 Project purpose and overview

The purpose of this project is to prepare a Review of the Metropolitan Rural Area (MRA) that informs the 5-year review of the Western City District Plan.

The initial stage develops a ‘basis for review’ and recommendations for targeted work to inform the policy approach to Metropolitan Rural Lands in the Western Parkland City (WPC).

In May 2022, the WSPP established a Project Working Group and commenced a background review to inform this first working paper, which will inform further stages of the project.

1.3 Collaboration Principles

Collaboration principles were prepared as a basis for the WSPPs and GCC’s ongoing work to review the Western City District Plan.

The proposed principles were endorsed by the WSPP Project Control Group (PCG) in April 2022 as the basis for collaboration. The WSPP also prepared and endorsed a list of ‘behaviours’ to guide the collaboration for strategic planning on a day-to-day basis in the Western Parkland City, given the challenges acknowledged by both parties in balancing the needs of local governance, trust and confidentiality.

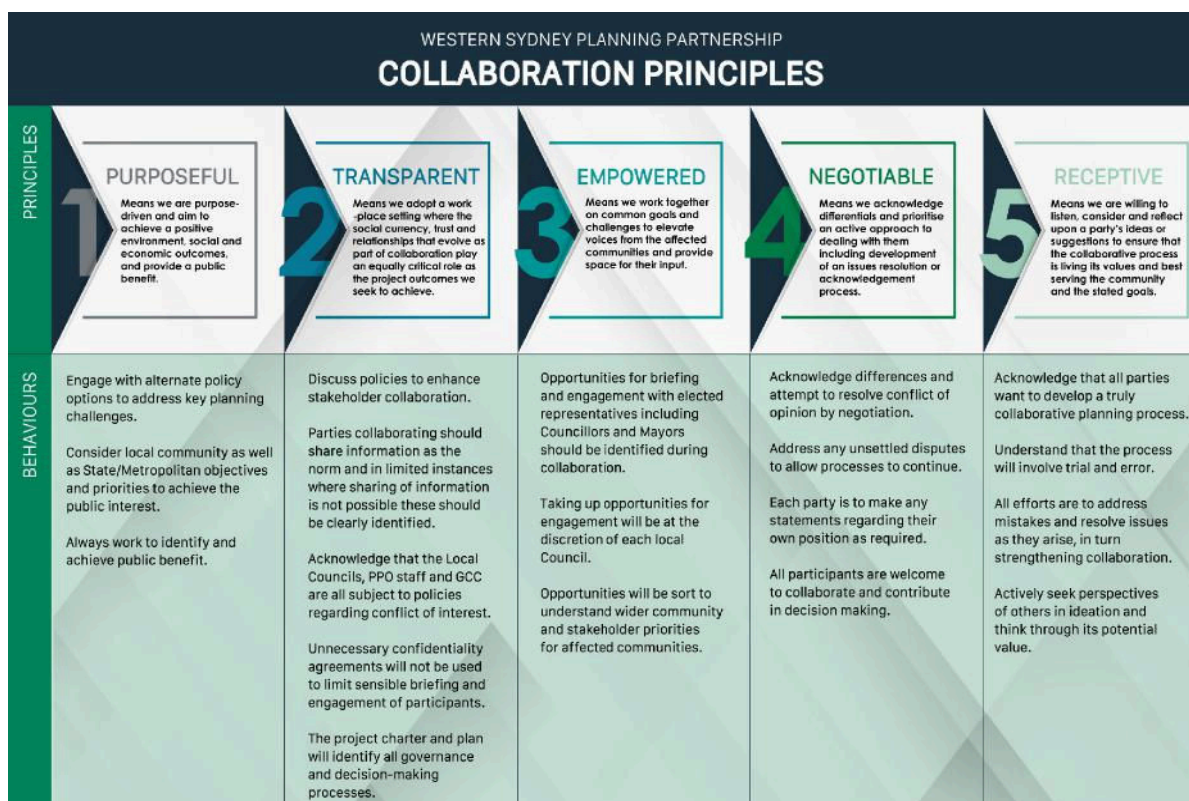


Figure 1: Western Sydney Planning Partnership and GCC- agreed Collaboration Principles

1.4 Approach

The following approach was adopted in the preparation of this working paper:

1. **Direct engagement with Local Council Planners** at Project Working Group sessions and review of responses to Greater Cities Commission survey of Council planners.
2. **Review of local strategic planning documents:** Local Strategic Planning Statements, Local Environmental Plan & Metropolitan Rural Area Strategies for each council in the Western Parkland City to identify vision, extent of MRA, key issues and policies/ proposed actions in relation to the MRA.
3. **Background Document Review** to determine the scope of and key implications for Western Parkland City & MRA.
4. **Summarising key issues and next steps for areas of focus** in the review of the MRA in Western District Plan.

1.5 Engagement overview

Project Working Group

Initial engagement on this draft working paper was via the Project Working Group, established by the WSPP, including seven Councils: Blue Mountains City Council, Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, Liverpool City Council, Penrith City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, and Wollondilly Shire Council. The two other Councils in the WSPP, Blacktown City Councils and Fairfield City Council, have elected not to participate in the project as these LGAs are largely developed and contain limited rural land. The GCC participated in working group sessions.

Three working group sessions were held on 11 May, 8 June, and 3 August 2022:

Project Working Group 1: Established the Project Working Group and discussed the purpose of the project and draft project charter. It included a presentation from the GCC on work underway to review the MRA approach & strategy and discussion on key issues.

Project Working Group 2: A discussion was held on emerging issues for the MRA. The GCC also gave an update on the MRA review and key findings from council surveys. The WSPP facilitated a 'Futures Triangle' exercise to explore the pushes, pulls and weights for the MRA (refer to section 5 of this paper).

Project Working Group 3: An update was provided on the working paper, including structure and an update on the findings of the review of local strategic planning. A discussion was held on work areas for future investigation for the MRA.

Interview Sessions with Project Sponsors: One- on- one sessions were held with project sponsors early in the project (executive-level representatives from Hawkesbury City Council, Blue Mountains City Council and Wollondilly Shire Council) in April 2022. Matters discussed included: scope, opportunities for the MRA, process & consultation.

Greater Cities Commission MRA Survey: The WSPP helped the GCC distribute a survey to the seven Councils asking key questions about the District Plan approach to the MRA. Whilst reviewed in detail by the GCC, the responses received on the survey have also been considered in preparing this paper.

2 THE METROPOLITAN RURAL AREA

2.1 The Metropolitan Rural Area - definition and description

The Metropolitan Rural Area (MRA) is one of four major landscape types described and mapped (Figure 51) in the Greater Sydney Region Plan. The others are Protected Natural Area, Urban Area, Coast and Harbours. The Plan notes that:

'The Metropolitan Rural Area has a diversity of farmland, mineral resources, and distinctive towns and villages in rural and bushland settings. It includes the floodplains of the Hawkesbury- Nepean Valley, and the hills and steep ridgelines of the Wollondilly Shire. There are areas of high biodiversity value including national parks and reserves as well as scenic and cultural landscapes.'

The MRA is also mapped, but not specifically defined in the Western City District Plan.

The definition of the Metropolitan Rural Area has evolved since the previous iteration of the *Sydney Region Plan: A Plan for Growing Sydney* (December 2014), where the MRA also encompassed protected natural areas, being initially defined as: *'that part of the Sydney Metropolitan Area which is generally outside the established urban area'*.³

A report by consultancy AgEconPlus, commissioned by the GCC to inform the Region Plan, notes that the MRA comprises:

- 'public land protected for conservation and other public values e.g., defence etc.
- peri-urban land used for a range of rural and rural lifestyle purposes; and
- rural towns and villages⁴.'

It is assumed in this report that natural protected areas (national parks and reserves and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area) are not part of the mapped MRA but have an important role in framing and contributing to the MRA and its values.

The Greater Sydney Metropolitan Rural Area - land uses and economic value.

The regions surrounding Australia's cities, known as peri-urban areas, are an economically important, yet contested area of agricultural production. The Metropolitan Rural Area is generally considered to be the boundary between the urban zones and rural zones in Greater Sydney.

³ NSW Government- Planning and Environment (2014), *A Plan for Growing Sydney*. https://gsc-public-1.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2014_12_a_plan_for_growing_sydney.pdf

⁴ AgEconPlus Consulting (2017), *Values of the Metropolitan Rural Area of the Greater Sydney Region*. [https://gsc-public-1.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Values_of_the_Metropolitan_Rural_Area_of_the_Greater_Sydney_Region_\(Ag_Econ_Plus\).pdf](https://gsc-public-1.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Values_of_the_Metropolitan_Rural_Area_of_the_Greater_Sydney_Region_(Ag_Econ_Plus).pdf)

The MRA is spread across all 3 cities in the Greater Sydney Region Plan and comprises 25% of the Greater Sydney Land area, yet the largest portion by far is within the Western Parkland City.

The majority of the privately owned MRA is peri-urban land outside of rural/urban villages, with minimal land use activity occurring on that land. Grazing modified pastures and native vegetation also make up a high proportion of land take, refer to Figure 3.

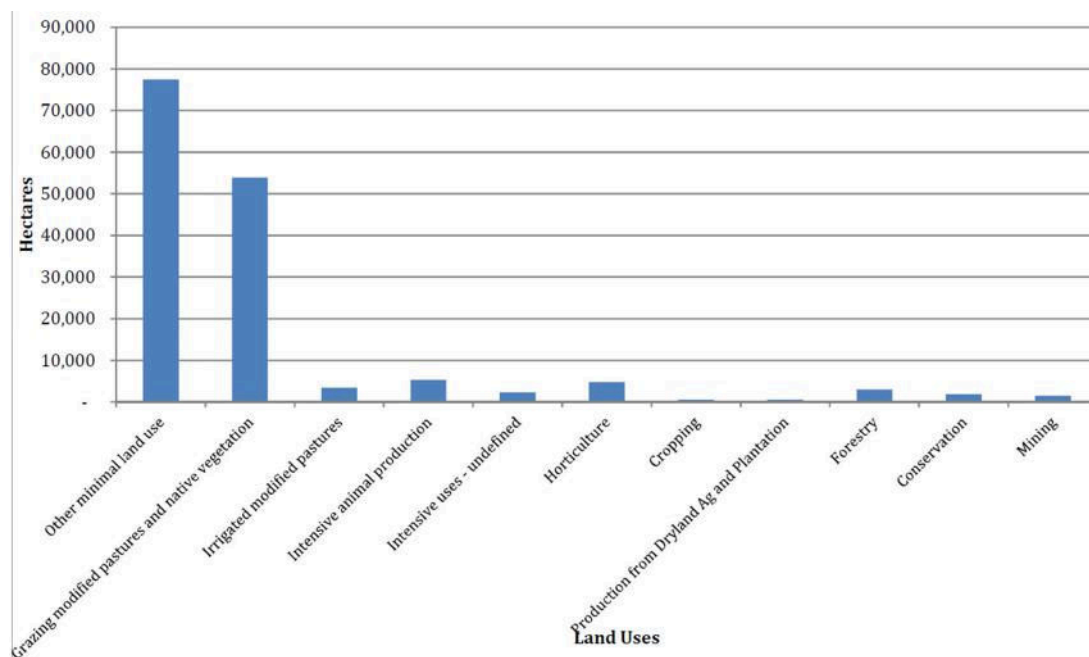


Figure 3: Land uses on Private Land (outside Rural Villages) in the MRA. Source: AgEcon Plus for GSC: Values of the Metropolitan Rural Area of the Greater Sydney.

Whilst Greater Sydney land take for agricultural purposes is relatively low as an overall proportion, the value of agricultural production in Greater Sydney is significant- approximately \$645m (ABS 2015/16), averaging over \$15,000/ha, compared to \$245/ha for the rest of NSW.⁵

2.2 The Metro Rural Area in the Western Parkland City

The Western Parkland City (WPC) is unique in Greater Sydney, having significant undeveloped areas. Much of the land within the WPC is either protected (63%) or classified as metropolitan rural land (28%), with only 9% of the WPC comprising existing or future urban area, as shown in figure 2 below.

⁵ Department of Primary Industries (2020), *Agriculture Industry Snapshot for Planning, Greater Sydney Region*. https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1260488/Greater-Sydney-Snapshot.pdf

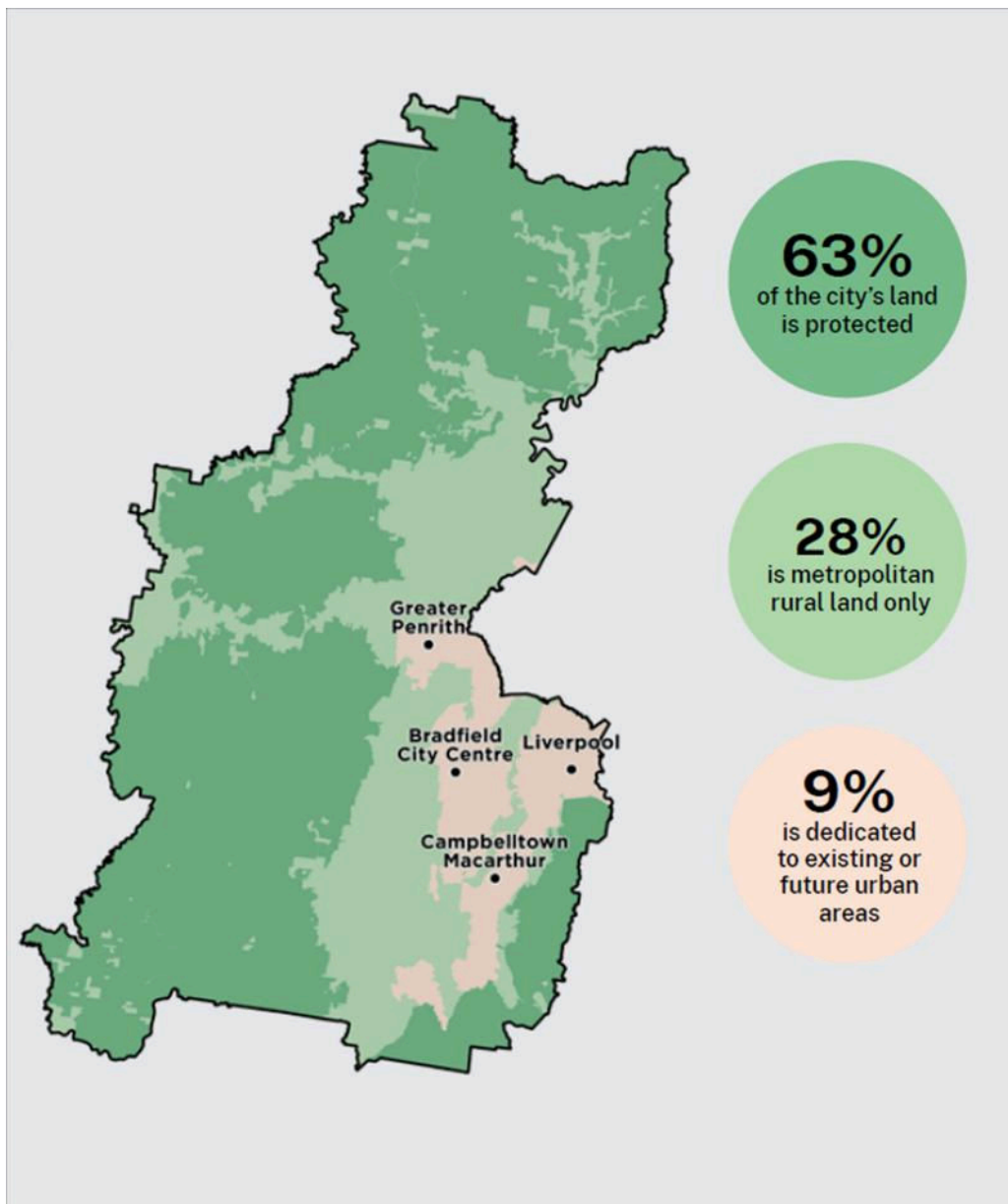


Figure 2: The Western Parkland City/Western City District, Source: Western Parkland City Draft Blueprint (WPCA 2022)

The value of agriculture to the economy varies across the Western Parkland City. According to the 2021-22 Agricultural Census, agriculture in the Western Parkland City added over \$591.6 million gross value to the economy.

Hawkesbury is the most economically productive of the LGAs in terms of agriculture, adding \$227 million gross value to the economy in 2021-22. This is followed by Penrith (approximately \$87.2 million), Wollondilly (approximately \$86.8 million) and Liverpool (approximately \$80.9 million)⁶.

⁶ ABS (2022), NSW Agricultural Census. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture/value-agricultural-commodities-produced-australia/2020-21>

Value of Agriculture 2021-22 in Western Parkland City Councils		
Council	Gross Value (\$)⁸	Local Value (\$)⁹
Blacktown	22,997,234	22,083,198
Blue Mountains	17,896,181	16,132,086
Camden	51,931,940	47,101,330
Campbelltown	7,388,612	6,739,026
Fairfield	9,667,855	8,711,965
Hawkesbury	226,905,394	209,550,801
Liverpool	80,854,857	74,346,907
Penrith	87,214,013	79,795,438
Wollondilly	86,789,812	80,448,852
Total- Western Parkland	\$591,645,898	\$544,909,603
NSW Total	\$18,009,519,169	\$16,680,207,515
Australia Total	\$70,856,911,397	\$65,830,496,829

Table 1: Gross and local value estimates by 2021 (ABS, 2020-21)

The gross value of Agriculture in NSW in 2021-22 was \$18 billion, an almost threefold increase in value from 2019-20 attributable to an ideal cropping season⁷.



Agricultural activity. Source: Fairfield City Council

⁷ ABS (2022), *NSW Agricultural Census*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture/value-agricultural-commodities-produced-australia/2020-21>

⁸ Gross value is the value of production at the point of sale (i.e., where it passes out of the Agriculture sector of the economy). Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014. *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/dossbytitle/F276A671BC2F9899CA256F0A007D8CB1>

⁹ Local (basic) value is the value of agricultural commodities at the point of production. Local value is derived by subtracting the marketing costs (costs of moving agricultural commodities from the point of production (farm) to the point of sale) from Gross value. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014. *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/dossbytitle/F276A671BC2F9899CA256F0A007D8CB1>

2.3 Values of the MRA

The Metropolitan Rural Area provides the Western Parkland City and Greater Sydney with a variety of services: social/cultural, economic, and environmental. A broad range of values can be attributed to the MRA, including inherent values, but also values based on the provision of services. Understanding and where possible measuring these values is seen as a key component of the MRA review process.

Objective 29 of the Western City District Plan requires that 'Environmental, social and economic values in rural areas are protected and enhanced.' It notes that the District's rural areas contribute to habitat and biodiversity, support productive agriculture, provide mineral and energy resources, and sustain local rural towns and villages.

Key values of the MRA are summarised in section 6 of this report: Key issues for the Western Parkland City MRA.



Richmond Park, Hawkesbury LGA. Source: WSPP

3 REVIEW OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING

3.1 Greater Sydney Region Plan- A Metropolis of Three Cities, 2018

Released in 2018, the Greater Sydney Region Plan is a 20-year plan with a 40-year vision that brings together land use, transport and infrastructure planning that establishes a polycentric structure of three cities: the Western Parkland City, the Central City River, and the Eastern Harbour City.

The Plan prepares for an increase in Greater Sydney's population from 4.7 million in 2016 to 6.4 million in 2036 and aims to supply homes to over 1.5 million people in the Western City District by 2056. It aims to connect people to great places that recognise local character, housing, transport, strategic centres, industrial and urban services, and health and education precincts. It seeks to protect and enhance Greater Sydney's unique environment, its waterways, biodiversity, bushland, rural lands, and green spaces, including Wianamatta South Creek as a cool green corridor through the Western Parkland City.

It plans to achieve 30-minute cities to bring jobs and services closer to where people live. It links the WSI Airport and associated Aerotropolis as key elements in supporting jobs growth to create the Western Parkland City.

The Plan's vision includes retaining the integrity of the MRA and Protected Natural Area. It restricts urban development in the MRA to protect its environmental, social, and economic values. It describes the MRA and its values, sets planning policy direction at a high level, and promotes place-based planning in the MRA.

The plan also includes the following:

- Maintaining the distinctive character of rural villages as a high priority, with any expansion only considered when linked to a growth management plan for the whole town or village and when it doesn't compromise rural and bushland values (Objective 23: Industrial and urban services land is planned, retained, and managed).
- The retention of local jobs for local communities in the MRA as an important outcome.
- The importance of the MRA for Agriculture and the need to retain and increase opportunities for agricultural and horticultural uses to keep fresh foods available locally (Objective 24. Economic sectors and targets for success).
- Protect and support agricultural production and mineral resources (e.g., construction materials) by preventing inappropriately dispersed urban activities in rural areas. (Strategy 24.3)
- Protect and enhance biodiversity, urban bushland, and remnant vegetation (objectives 25 and 27), including through:
 - supporting landscape-scale biodiversity conservation and the restoration of bushland corridor

- managing urban bushland and remnant vegetation as green infrastructure
- managing urban development and urban bushland to reduce edge-effect impacts.
- Providing incentives for landowners in MRA to protect and enhance environmental values and connect fragmented areas of bushland.
- Protect scenic and cultural landscapes, including views from the public realm.
- Place-based approaches for landscape units within the MRA will help manage its environmental, social, and economic values and maximise the productive use of the land (objective 29)
- Maintain/ enhance values of MRA using place-based planning to deliver targeted environmental, social, and economic outcomes (strategy 29.1)
- Limit urban development to within Urban Area except for investigation areas at Horsley Park, Orchard Hills and east of The Northern Road, Luddenham (Strategy 29.2)
- The Green Grid links parks, open spaces, bushland and walking and cycling paths, providing more viable areas of habitat and links to scenic rural landscapes (Objective 32)



Hawkesbury Freemans Reach & Cornwallis. Source: Hawkesbury City Council

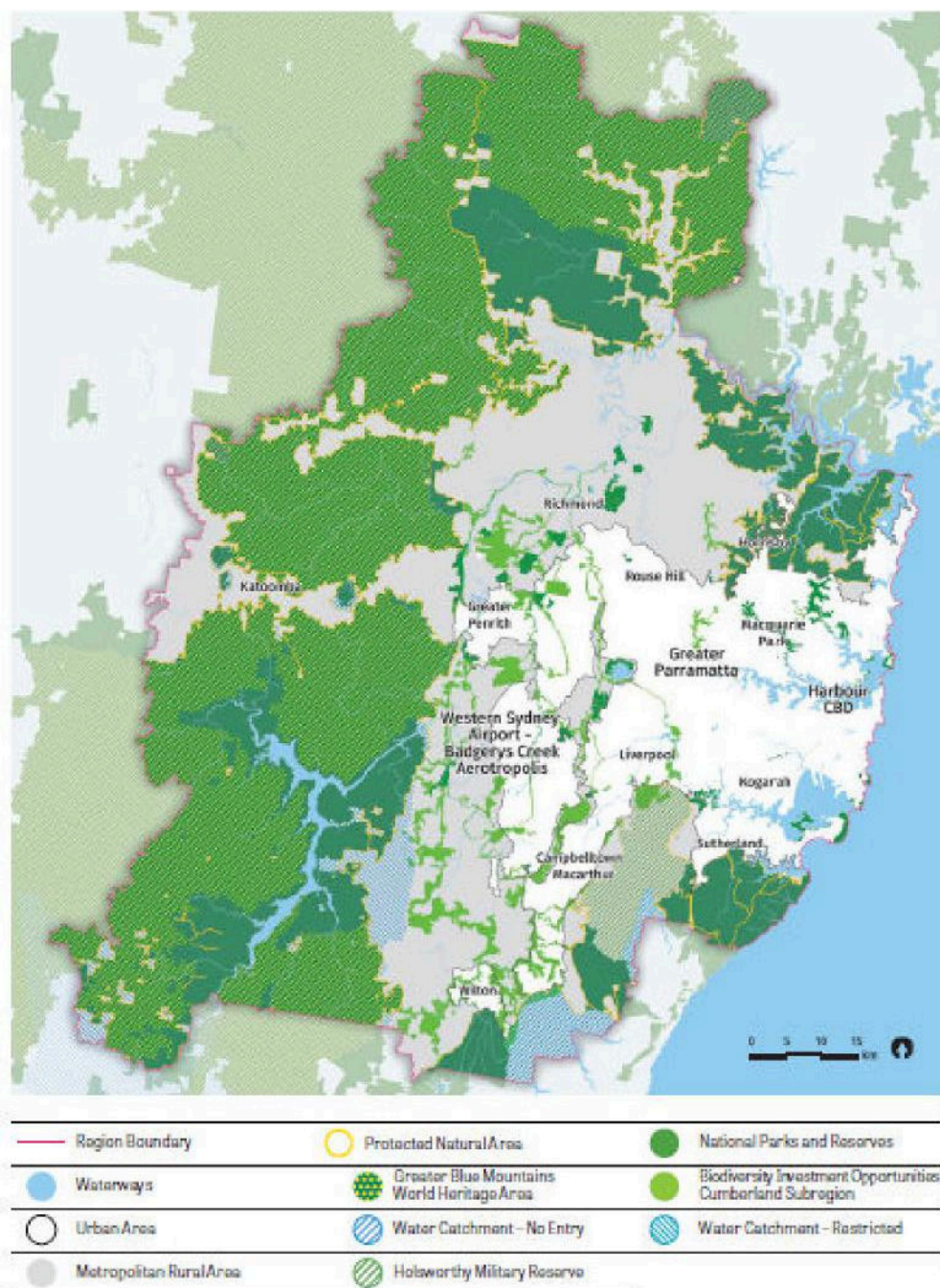


Figure 4: The Metropolitan Rural Area (in grey) and natural areas in the Greater Sydney Region Plan. Source: Great Cities Commission

3.2 Western City District Plan - 2018

Consistent with the Greater Sydney Region Plan, the Western City District Plan is a 20-year plan to manage growth and achieve the 40-year vision for Greater Sydney. It sets the framework for local strategic planning that supports the District's economic, social, and environmental context.

The Plan recognises the District's natural landscape as a great asset and attractor, sustaining and supporting a unique, 'parkland city.' It leverages the transformative economic potential from the Western Sydney Airport and considers the transport, infrastructure, services, affordable housing, and open spaces that will be required as the population grows.

The importance of the MRA is set out in the vision statement, which refers to how the vision will be achieved by *'Protecting the environmental, social and economic values of the Metropolitan Rural Area.'* The plan notes that the *'District has an opportunity to develop a new city founded in the parkland setting of the Metropolitan Rural Area and surrounding bushland, centred on South Creek...It is a place where the city meets the country and national parks frame the city.'*

It aims to protect the District's natural landscapes, heritage and tourism assets, unique rural areas, and villages, and to protect the environmental, social, and economic values of the MRA, including primary production and resource extraction, tourism and recreation assets, towns, and villages.

The Plan acknowledges the various values and qualities of the MRA, such as tourism, agriculture and mineral resources, and their economic benefit, including to wider industries, for example construction. It notes the important role of rural towns and villages in serving surrounding communities and as popular tourist destinations.

The Plan requires future housing to be delivered only within the current boundary of Urban Areas, noting: *Urban development in the Metropolitan Rural Area will only be considered in the urban investigation areas identified in A Metropolis of Three Cities... where land use is integrated with major transport corridors (i.e., Orchard Hills) (p.126).*

A rural area- specific planning priority is included: *Planning Priority W17 – Better managing rural areas* under the Direction, *A city in its landscape*, discusses the issues relevant to rural land and its future development.

Planning Priority W17: Better managing rural areas.

(Delivers Objective 29: Environmental, social, and economic values in rural areas are protected and enhanced.)

The Western City District's rural areas contribute to habitat and biodiversity, support productive agriculture, provide mineral and energy resources, and sustain local rural towns and villages. They are part of the larger Metropolitan Rural Area.

The District's rural areas are framed by bushland and national parks to the west and cover 28 per cent of the District (refer to Figure 23). They include the floodplains along the Hawkesbury River, the historic Mulgoa Valley, the hills and steep ridgelines of Campbelltown and Wollondilly Shire, and areas of outstanding cultural heritage value.

Greater Sydney's agricultural production in 2015–16 was \$645 million – equal to five per cent of NSW's total agricultural value. Farmland in this District has supplied Greater Sydney's fresh food for over two centuries.

The District's rural areas include poultry, egg production and dairy activities, irrigated horticulture such as leaf vegetables and mushrooms, and nurseries for cut flowers and turf. The Western Sydney Airport will be a catalyst for agricultural export from the region.

There are extractive industries based on construction material resources through the District, with major concentrations of construction sand around Londonderry and the Hawkesbury River, as well as clay and shale resources for brick and tile manufacture, particularly around Horsley Park, Bringelly,

and Oran Park. Sourcing construction materials locally minimises transport requirements, and reduces cost, environmental footprint, and social impact of construction, supporting growth in the Greater Sydney Region.

Orderly development of rural land is discussed in the Plan:

- Action 78 states: Maintain or enhance the values of the Metropolitan Rural Area using place-based planning to deliver targeted environmental, social, and economic outcomes. (p.127)
- Action 79 states: Limit urban development to within the Urban Area, except for the investigation areas at Horsley Park, Orchard Hills, and east of The Northern Road, Luddenham. (p.127)

The District Plan also references Design-led place-based planning at the landscape unit scale as an example for managing environmental, social, and economic values of the MRA and a way to maximise the productive use of rural areas.

The important natural values of the MRA are recognised through directions for sustainability:

- Bushland in the District's rural areas will be protected and managed through place-based planning and incentivised as potential biodiversity offsets. (p.117)
- Action 72.c states: Protect and enhance biodiversity by... managing urban development and urban bushland to reduce edge-effect impacts. (p.117)
- Increased demand for biodiversity offset sites and limiting urban development in the Metropolitan Rural Area will help make it more attractive for landowners to protect biodiversity on private land through stewardship agreements. (p.127)

In relation to **rural towns and villages**, the Plan prioritises the maintenance and enhancement of the distinctive character of these areas over their future development for residential purposes, unless for limited growth with no adverse impact on the amenity of local area. The Plan specifies that *Rural and bushland towns and villages will not play a role in meeting regional or district scale demand for residential growth.*

Agricultural production and mineral resources are supported, with Action 35 requiring planning authorities to 'Protect and support agricultural production and mineral resources (in particular, construction materials) by preventing inappropriately dispersed urban activities in rural areas. '(p.77).

Economic opportunities outlined include those provided by the unique setting of the WPC to derive tourism benefits from natural, recreational, and agricultural assets. Planning Priority W8 aims to leverage industry opportunities from the Western Sydney Airport and the surrounding Aerotropolis, reinforcing the need to: plan for tourism and visitation activities and protect and support rural industries (p.73). The plan also refers to the need *to implement place-based initiatives to attract more visitors, improve visitor experiences and ensure connections to transport at key tourist attractions.* (p.77)

3.3 Western Parkland City Authority Blueprint – October 2022

The *Western Parkland City Draft Blueprint* and *Economic Development Roadmap* set out a vision for a ‘Green, Connected and Advanced Western Parkland City.’ The document sets out the infrastructure priorities that will deliver the Western Parkland City (WPC) vision.

The draft *Blueprint* notes that by 2036 WPC will be growing faster than any other part of NSW, with the largest corridor of greenfield development in Australia, requiring significant investment in infrastructure. It aims to move away from incremental planning, putting forward short to medium term priorities for the government to leverage the initial infrastructure investment for the WPC.

In relation to the MRA:

- Priority A8 proposes that local councils develop and implement rural land strategies to support agricultural production.
- Around 28% of the WPC is MRA, and there is a need to balance social, economic, and environmental outcomes including biodiversity protection and conservation of significant Koala habitat.
- The document identifies that in developing a ‘green city’ protecting rural areas is foundational to forming a unique and vibrant landscape.
- It supports continued protection of the MRA from urban development. It also proposes that further growth and new urban development be contained within existing towns and villages and be at a scale that enhances local character and amenity.
- It proposes that delivering a ‘connected city’ will require addressing blackspots and poor mobile coverage in parts of the MRA.
- It aims to facilitate agribusiness, including through developing an Intensive Integrated Production Hub (IIPH), a world-class, food production hub (refer to section 5).
- Road upgrade projects, for example the upgrade of Mulgoa Road and delivery of the Picton bypass, are also identified as important priorities.

4 REVIEW OF COMMUNITY & LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

This section of the paper looks specifically at local strategic planning undertaken by the Councils involved in the project. Starting with how communities consider the rural areas through the broader Community Strategic Plans, it then looks at how the MRA is represented in Local Strategic Planning Statements, Local Environmental Plans and specific Rural Area/MRA studies undertaken by the Councils.

4.1 Community Strategic Planning

A review of the Local Council's recently revised Community Strategic Plans (CSPs), and the engagement inputs from communities into the CSPs, has illustrated the importance of many of the values of WPC Metropolitan Rural Area to the community. The word cloud below illustrates the key issues raised by the communities when thinking about their LGAs futures, with values such as environmental protection, character, beautiful places, sustainability, and open space being considered important. Managing growth, local jobs, health, connectivity and connecting to country were also key concerns raised by the community.

Further information about the review can be found in the District Plan Working Paper.



Figure 5: Word cloud illustrating key issues raised in Community Strategic Plan consultations.

4.2 Local Strategic Planning Statements

A summary review of the Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPSs), with key elements relating to the Metropolitan Rural Area, is provided in Appendix 1.

The LSPSs include varying levels of detail about the MRA, however all have a clear focus on the importance of rural areas to the LGA. Many of them include reference to the rural areas in the LSPS vision, with statements such as:

Blue Mountains Council

- Better managing the rural areas
- Preserving the environmental value and amenity of the area

Camden Council

- Rural and natural assets are protected and celebrated.
- Local rural economy- leverage opportunities to export produce and promote fresh local food production.
- Capitalising on heritage and rural values to support a thriving tourism industry.

Campbelltown City Council

- Protecting and maintaining natural, environmental, and culturally important landscapes, places, and items
- Despite forecasted population growth, still need to protect natural environment setting and values.

Hawkesbury City Council

- Balance growth to ensure it doesn't detract from semi- rural characteristics and amenity.
- River, environment, and heritage to be protected and enhanced.
- Growing tourism opportunities focused on rural character, agriculture, and environmental assets.

Liverpool City Council

- Protect remaining rural and scenic lands from urban development.
- Clear boundaries between urban non- urban and scenic lands

Penrith City Council

- Planning guided by the green + blue grid- maintaining the open spaces and natural attributes.
- Protect its natural assets, key landscape, sustain a strong and connected green and blue grid.
- Defined urban footprint that preserves natural assets and landscape qualities.
- Strong commitment to environmental protection and enhancement.

- Define and reinforce rural edge to protect rural land from development.

Wollondilly Shire Council

- A quality lifestyle in a rural setting
- Prosperous towns and villages that maintain a rural character.

4.3 Local Environmental Plans

Preserving land to protect rural values, and balancing outcomes within rural areas relies on an integrated approach that uses land use zoning and planning controls enacted by Local Environmental Plans (LEPs).

The standard Instrument LEP includes specific zones relating to the rural area:

Rural Zones

- RU1 Primary Production
- RU2 Rural Landscape
- RU3 Forestry
- RU4 Primary Production Small Lots
- RU5 Village
- RU6 Transition

However, with the MRA definition including towns and villages and natural areas, the majority of land use zones are represented within the MRA in the Western Parkland City. The Standard Instrument includes a list of permissible uses for each zone, which Councils have some flexibility in applying.

A number of the LEPs within the Western Parkland City also contain relevant clauses specific to the protection of rural lands, as detailed in Table 1. These relate to agricultural, scenic, and environmental values and subdivision/lot size controls.

***Table 1: LEP clauses relating to Metropolitan Rural Areas**

Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015

Clause 6.28 requires Council to consider whether tourism development in rural and natural areas is low scale and does not adversely impact on the agricultural production, scenic or environmental values of the land.

Camden Local Environmental Plan 2010 LEP

1.2 Aims of Plan (2) to ensure the agricultural production potential of rural land and prevent the fragmentation of agricultural holdings. 18 Draft Working Paper 1 | MRA Review – Western Parkland City

Clause 4.2 provides flexibility in the application of standards for subdivision in rural zones to allow landowners a greater chance to achieve the objectives for development in the relevant zone.

Clause 4.2A minimises rural residential development and enables the replacement of lawfully erected dwelling houses in rural and environmental protection zones

Campbelltown Local Environmental Plan 2015

Clause 4.2A restricts residential development in rural and environmental protection zones to maintain the existing character and to recognise the contribution that development density in these zones makes to the landscape and environmental character of those places.

Clause 7.6 applies to land identified as “Escarpment Preservation Area” and “Scenic Preservation Area” on the Environmental Constraint Map and requires consideration for the environmental value, scenic value and character of the land prior to consent being granted.

Hawkesbury Local Environmental Plan 2012

Clause 4.1B requires that subdivision does not to have a significant impact on threatened species, populations or endangered ecological communities, regionally significant wetlands, waterways, ground water or agriculture.

Clauses 4.1C and 4.1E provide lot averaging provisions for subdivision to incentivise the protection of endangered ecological communities and regionally significant wetlands in certain zones/areas.

Clause 4.2A prohibits residential development on a lot resulting from the closure of a road and prohibits the erection of dwelling houses on certain land that is flood planning land and was subdivided for agricultural purposes in rural and environmental protection zones.

Liverpool Local Environmental Plan 2008

Clause 4.2 Rural subdivision

Clause 4.2A Boundary changes between lots in certain rural, residential and environment protection zones

Clause 5.16 requires Council to consider whether subdivision of land in rural and environmental zones will result in potential land use conflict between existing and proposed development on land in the rural, residential or conservation zones concerned (particularly between residential land uses and other rural land uses).

Clause 5.18 - Intensive livestock agriculture

Clause 7.10 contains minimum lot sizes for dual occupancies in rural zones to protect opportunities for productive rural and urban fringe uses by providing certainty about the land area required for two dwellings to be on a single lot in rural zones.

Clause 7.24 Dual occupancies in Zones RU1, RU2 and RU4

Clause 7.24A Erection of rural workers’ dwellings in Zones RU1 and RU4

Clause 7.39 Rural workers’ dwellings at Leppington Pastoral Company

Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010

Clause 7.5 applies to land identified as “Land with scenic and landscape values” on the Scenic and Landscape Values Map and requires the consent authority to be satisfied that measures will be taken, including in relation to the location and design of the development, to minimise the visual impact of the development from major roads and other public places.

Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011

Clause 7.9 applies to land identified as "Metropolitan Rural Area" on the Metropolitan Rural Area Map and requires the consent authority to consider whether development will protect and enhance environmental, social and economic values in metropolitan rural areas. See case study discussion below table

Table 2: Relevant LEP Clauses

Case study - Wollondilly LEP rural clauses

Wollondilly Council has recently undertaken an LEP Review Program to update its LEP to give effect to the Western City District Plan through upfront strategic planning. A stage 1 Planning proposal embedded the MRA in Local Strategic Planning. A stage 2 Planning proposal (being finalised) focuses on supporting the visitor economy in rural areas. Both provide useful case studies for consideration and possible application across the Western Parkland City.

Stage 1 Planning Proposal

The Stage 1 Planning Proposal included a broad range of amendments, including embedding the principle of the Metropolitan Rural Area into the local environmental plan and the consideration of health in land use planning and was gazetted on 26 March 2021. Much of the land in Wollondilly other than growth areas and protected natural areas is identified as Metropolitan Rural Area for its agricultural, environmental and scenic values with only 3% of land designated as an 'urban area'.

The Planning Proposal was prepared to ensure the values of the MRA were protected and enhanced and to achieve the objectives for Greater Sydney.

Stage 2 Planning Proposal

The Stage 2 planning proposal is in the finalisation stages and is focused on developing the visitor experience and economy in Wollondilly to establish the land use planning framework necessary to enable the visitor economy to be established into the future.

Wollondilly's natural and rural areas underpin the vision to develop the visitor experience and economy, with walking trails and tours, biking experiences, wellness activities and function and conference centres. Quality agriculture and horticulture provide opportunities for agritourism, expanded farm-based tourism and generating income streams. The planning proposal also implements a recommendation from the draft Employment Land Strategy to update the permissibility of uses to provide further clarity and distinction between land use zones.



Bike riding in Wollondilly. Source: Wollondilly Shire Council

4.4 Rural Area Strategies

Six of the Councils in the WPC have final or draft Rural Area Strategies; detailed studies or strategies that provide a better understanding of the MRA, local objectives and actions for better planning rural areas. They include maps of the various zoning applying to the rural lands and other information such as mineral resources, land valued for biodiversity and farming land. These are listed below, with a summary of each document at Appendix 1.

Council and Name of Rural Area Strategy or Study	Date adopted/Status
Blue Mountains City Council: Blue Mountains Rural Lands Planning Study (Bushland Conservation Zone Report)	Final Draft September 2012
Camden Council: Camden Council Rural Lands Strategy Camden Council Rural Lands Study	Adopted November 2018 Published November 2016
Hawkesbury City Council: Hawkesbury Rural Lands Strategy	Adopted March 2021
Liverpool City Council: Liverpool Rural Lands Study	Final April 2020
Penrith City Council: Rural Lands Strategy	Adopted September 2022
Wollondilly Shire Council: Wollondilly Rural Lands Strategy	Adopted September 2021

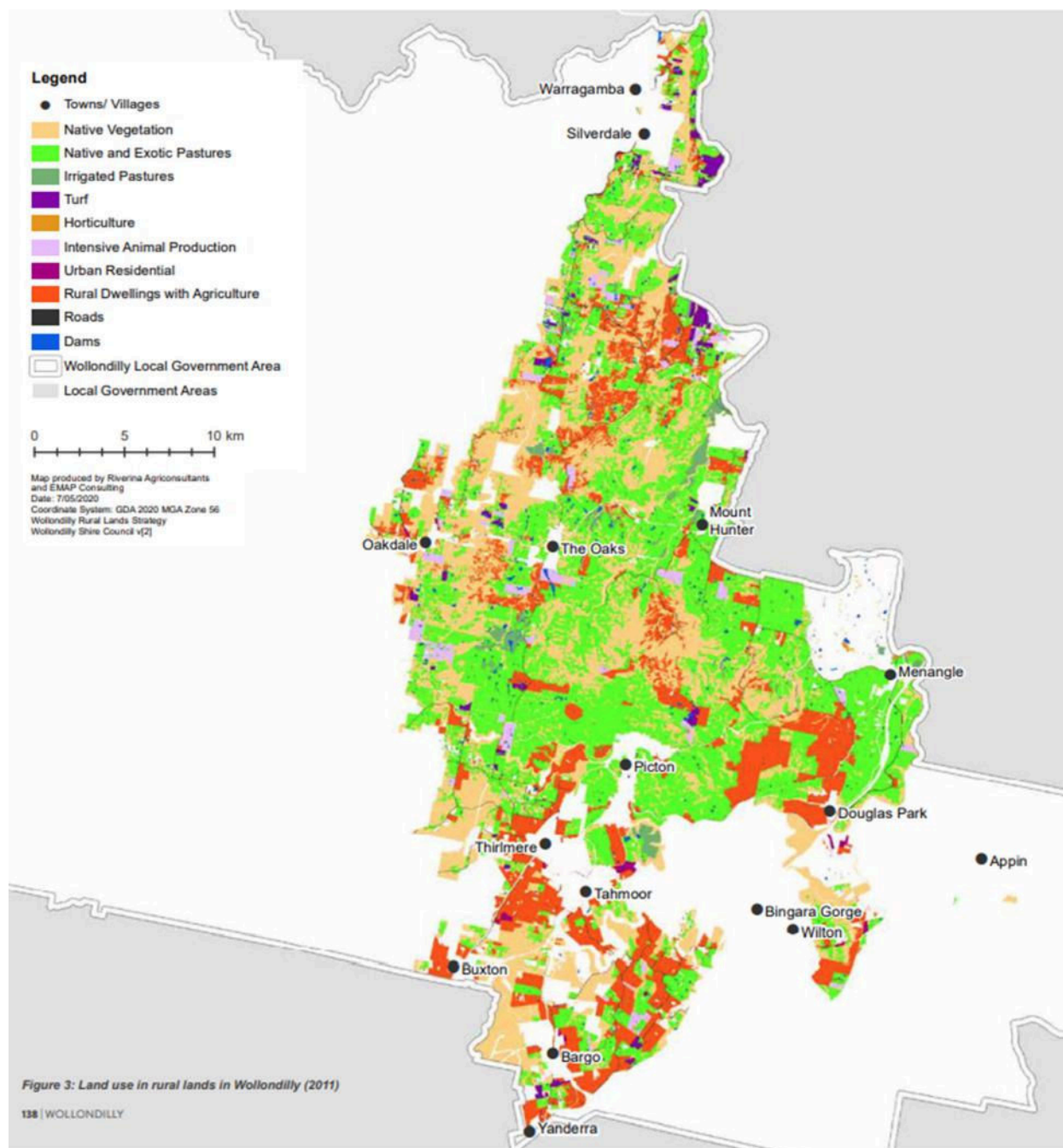


Figure 6: Example map from Wollondilly Rural Lands Strategy illustrating different landuse types. Source: Wollondilly Shire Council

5 FUTURES FOR THE (WPC) METROPOLITAN RURAL AREA



Penrith Lakes recreation area. Source: Penrith City Council

5.1 What is driving possible futures in the MRA?

In the second Project Working Group, a collaborative exercise using the ‘futures triangle’ tool was undertaken to help develop an understanding of possible futures for the MRA. The exercise considered the following questions:

Weights of history

- What is holding us back or getting in our way?
- What are the barriers to change? For example, geographic, legislative, structural
- What are the deep structures/ ideas that resist change?

Pushes of the present

- What trends/ drivers are pushing us towards particular futures?

- What quantitative (for example, demographic) drivers and trends are changing the future? *Note: When thinking of drivers, the STEEPLE framework is useful (social, technological, environmental, economic, political, legal, ethical).*

Pulls of the future

- What signals and ideas pull us towards particular futures? Both positive and negative
- What are the compelling images/ hopes and visions of the futures? Nightmares?
- Are there competing images of the future?

The exercise, illustrated in Figure 7 below, shows that plausible futures for the MRA in the Western Parkland City are influenced by historical factors that can weigh ‘us’ down. These include a reactive approach to planning the rural areas, rather than proactive. Past land-use decisions allowing fragmentation of land, and an inflexible planning system, also encourage this reactive approach.

Current pressures, with the pushes of the present including impacts from COVID, the possibilities afforded by the Western Sydney Airport in supporting agribusiness, responding to climate changes including recent flooding, and a lack of infrastructure and concerns over water security.

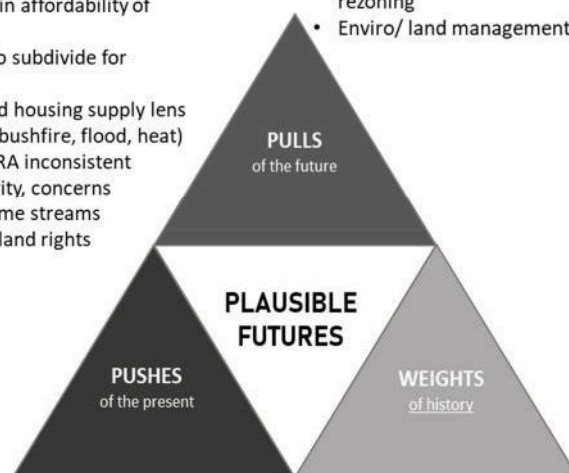
Pulling us into the future are a range of ideas and images. These include the emergence of regenerative agriculture, the valuing of land for its wider ecosystem role, and the need to build back better after natural disaster. Opportunities for affordable housing (e.g., medium density in established towns and villages) and open space and shifting our mindset regarding green assets are also ideas pushing us forward. An alternative negative view of the future is to continue with what was described by one participant as the current ‘nightmare of rolling land development and proponent led rezoning.’

PUSHES of the present

- Less land needed for 'new' agriculture/tech, but increased investment needed
- Increase in tree-changers, remote working; rural lifestyle land during COVID
- Farming methods changed- from broad hectare to intensive agribusiness
- Strong legal protections for natural areas, but poor for peri-urban areas
- Desire to retain rural village character & value of open space increased
- Airport and Aerotropolis- access to markets, freight for agribusiness
- Rapidly rising land values; decline in affordability of housing
- Existing farmers ageing; wanting to subdivide for children
- Land valued through economic and housing supply lens
- Natural disaster risk and impacts (bushfire, flood, heat)
- State Government approach to MRA inconsistent
- Lack of infrastructure; water security, concerns
- Farmers looking for alternate income streams
- Caring for Aboriginal Country and land rights

PULLS of the future

- Regenerative agriculture
- Increase in migration to peri-urban area
- Possible role in meeting affordable housing
- Infrastructure demands require reimagining
- Technology investment in high value agribusiness
- Increase open space/parkland in Western Sydney
- Rebuild after potential catastrophic natural disaster
- Shifting the mindset around green assets for the MRA
- World heritage as core of wider ecosystem service role for MRA
- Renewable energy, carbon sequestration/offsetting opportunities
- Long-term future of agriculture in Sydney basin- Sydney's food bowl?
- MRA values of heritage, sustainability, scenic value, food production increase
- Peri-urban lands as defining green, productive asset for Western Parkland City
- A continued nightmare of rolling land development and proponent led rezoning
- Enviro/ land management - climate change, heat, loss of biodiversity



WEIGHTS of history

- Land banking
- Existing land uses
- Viability of Agriculture
- Landowner expectations
- Inflexible planning system
- Unclear role for urban boundary
- Mixed messaging at a state level
- Unclear policy for land management
- MRA values poorly understood by community
- Lack of infrastructure for metro edge development
- Reactive (stop development) rather than proactive focus
- Past decisions to rezone land, (rural- resi & small subdivision)

Figure 7: What is driving possible futures in the MRA? A Futures Triangle for Western Parkland City's Metropolitan Rural Areas

6 KEY ISSUES FOR THE (WPC) METROPOLITAN RURAL AREA

6.1 Introduction

The Metropolitan Rural Area in the WPC

The Metropolitan Rural Area in the Western Parkland City varies greatly- from bushland rural residential living and natural areas in the Blue Mountains to turf farms along the Nepean River, to smallholdings and larger agricultural enterprises in Wollondilly. The MRA supports a diverse rural economy encompassing towns and villages, tourism and visitor destinations, and agricultural enterprises of varying scale and intensity.

However, the MRA also plays an important ecological, social, and cultural role, and an increasingly important role in building resilience for the WPC in the face of threats such as climate change, extreme weather, and biodiversity loss. Traditionally these values have been under-represented in planning and decision-making, with the MRA often narrowly seen in terms of its future urban-land property value or agricultural value. The cultural and social importance of the MRA to Aboriginal people needs greater recognition, with past approaches focused on heritage and history rather than the active connection that Aboriginal people have to Country today. There are also significant landholdings owned by Local Aboriginal Land Councils in the MRA which offer economic and social opportunities to Aboriginal communities.

Consultation has suggested that councils are generally supportive of the approach to the MRA, however, it is seen as a relatively blunt planning instrument/approach with the opportunity to develop a more nuanced policy approach in the District Plan. Issues include: the stifling of economic development and the need to maintain viability for towns and villages in the MRA; problems with statutory interpretation (such as the previous exclusion of the MRA from the Seniors Housing SEPP); and a planning gap between the District-level policies and local policies.

As part of this engagement, Council planners suggested that a more place-based and bottom-up approach to planning in the MRA was suitable, however, with clearer direction to help avoid speculative planning proposals for urban development within the MRA. Developing a stronger understanding of the relationship with the proposed WSI airport and the opportunities presented by the Aerotropolis, and its Agribusiness Precinct were also identified.

6.2 Issue 1: Definitions, urban planning issues and managing growth.

What is the issue?

The expansion of Sydney's urban footprint has incrementally pushed farming out of some areas, in some cases making it difficult for remaining agricultural producers to operate. When additional land is not available for expansion, producers are often forced to intensify operations, which can increase impacts on nearby non-agricultural land uses or require significant capital investment and for mitigating impacts^{10,11}.

Historically, rural land in peri-urban areas generally around cities hasn't been strategically valued and protected by planning policy, instead it is often seen as 'urban land in waiting.' Landowners in many locations have an expectation that they will be able to sell agricultural land on Sydney's edges for new urban development.

Land use conflicts in metropolitan areas are common. Rural planning provisions often allow incompatible development and subdivision that affect farm amalgamations, expansion or intensification plans and restrict a farmer's ability to be sustainable and commercially viable.

The MRA designation in the District Plan is helping to protect the MRA from rezoning of land for urban growth, however, it can be enhanced and better defined with further development of the strategy set out in the District Plan. This then needs to be provisioned in statutory plans.

During the project working groups, a discussion was held with Councils about the utility of the MRA designation in the District Plan and how well it works as a planning tool in their LGAs. The discussion is summarised in the following table:

Is the MRA designation working in your LGA?	
Blue Mountains	• Yes, as the designation serves to reinforce fundamentals within the BM LEP and strategic planning intent, such as: the contained urban footprint, significant environmental setting and sensitivities, limited opportunity for new development and dominance of low density, which fed into the agreed housing targets from the DPE (and endorsed in the Blue Mountains Local Housing Strategy). • No, the MRA appeared to be drawn on by the DPE for statutory planning in an ad hoc way, particularly in relation to Seniors Housing. As the BMTS is entirely MRA, the Seniors Housing SEPP no longer applied to the LGA. This was done with no consultation, and this land use has now been reinstated through the Housing SEPP.
Camden	• MRA is outside of growth areas and urban areas • Clearly defined/ no overlap • Covers some of the rural villages

¹⁰ Department of Primary Industries (August 2020) *Agriculture Industry Snapshot for Planning, Greater Sydney Region*

¹¹ NSW Department of Primary Industries (December 2015)- *NSW Right to Farm Policy*

Campbelltown	• MRA works okay. It's less of an issue given the Greater Macarthur release area resolved contestable areas of Campbelltown that might have otherwise formed the MRA. • Many areas that are significantly constrained by bushland tend not to form a rural purpose but lifestyle bushland lots. • Only area of contestability for the MRA sits in scenic hills area, between the southwest growth area in Camden and Ed Park/ East Leppington precincts of that growth area
Hawkesbury	• Yes and No. Being able to nuance the MRA is important. On what basis is it applied? What's its purpose? Issues to resolve include where and how does it apply?
Liverpool	• MRA is novel concept- land owners don't even know they are in MRA. • Yes- allows push back on speculative rezoning proposals, as Council does not want to rezone land in MRA
Penrith	• Generally, yes. Useful to have a State defined boundary for our rural lands that we could base our LSPS on- helped respond to calls from certain parts of the community for rezoning of rural areas during exhibition of our LSPS. • There are, however, some (generally minor) parts of the MRA that we would like amended- as explained in rural lands strategy Priority 1 – Secure the Rural Edge.
Wollondilly	• On the one hand it's working and is clear: ○ Councillors and planning reports speak to MRA. Keen to leverage from that. ○ Embedded MRA in LEP • Where it's not clear: ○ Uncertainty on how it applies to towns and villages; developers think it's a mistake that towns and villages are in MRA. ○ Need better messaging in terms of what it means for towns and villages.

Key Council concerns

Concerns raised by the Councils in discussion include:

- A need to better define the MRA in the District Plan and expand the definition to statutory planning controls, e.g., S9.1 Local Planning Direction, SEPPs, and the Standard Instrument LEP. A definition and supporting criteria could be contained within a Ministerial Direction.
- There needs to be better alignment between the District Plan aspirations and strategic planning for the MRA and LEPs, SEPPs and DPE/Ministerial guidance.
- The District Plan should identify and clarify the boundary between urban and rural lands to secure the rural edge, with consideration given to rural towns and villages (currently considered as MRA). It should provide greater clarity on the extent of rural residential development that could be considered as limited growth.
- Consideration should be given to how to allow small scale economic growth of towns and villages in the MRA whilst retaining character and limiting sprawl.
- Concern that land use conflict between rural residential/urban and agricultural land results in change of use of agricultural land and sale of farms
- How to address increasing pressures from population and employment growth in WPC and the impacts and how to manage this growth pressure on the MRA.

- There are limited infrastructure and services in the MRA, limiting land uses and also capacity for councils to fund upgrades, including for visitor infrastructure.
- Land fragmentation is potentially reducing future agricultural productivity.
- There is land use conflict/competition between Western Sydney Airport, infrastructure, residential development, and agricultural land.
- The importance of the visual/aesthetic and landscape values of the MRA should be explored and mechanisms for protecting these important MRA values should be embedded in future planning for the Greater Sydney Region and the Western Parkland City.

Issue 1 recommendations: Definitions, urban planning issues and managing growth

- 1) A clear link between the strategic intent of the Region and District Plan policies and other plans and policies (including SEPPs and LEPs) and DPE guidance is required. Further engagement between GCC, DPE and Councils is required to ensure alignment and that an appropriate planning policy and statutory context is in place for the MRA that ensure its protection and enhancement.
- 2) Ongoing discussions are held between the GCC and WPC Councils and via the PWG to resolve the definition, refinement and strengthening of the policy approach for the MRA in the 6 Cities Region Plan and District (City) Plan, especially in relation to securing the rural edge and boundary of MRA, how it relates to towns and villages, visual and landscapes values and managing the pressures of urban growth.
- 3) Further consideration should be given to 'Place Based Planning' for the MRA, which is an issue of relevance for the 6 cities region. Further discussions should be held with the GCC and DPE about pathways for introducing place-based planning, including incentives and possible guidelines.

6.3 Issue 2: Understanding and mapping the values of the MRA.

What is the issue?

The Region Plan and District Plans recognise that the MRA has multiple values which need protection. This is acknowledged in the District Plan vision: '*Protecting the environmental, social and economic values of the Metropolitan Rural Area.*' The detailed AgEconPLus report commissioned for the Region plan provides research into the wide variety of values and land uses in the MRA.

The values of the MRA include:

- **Economic values:** agricultural/production, tourism and events, mineral, extractive and construction industries, towns and villages, energy resources, possible future residential or commercial development, land banking, education facilities, and employment.

- **Environmental/ecosystem services values:** biodiversity/habitat, flood mitigation, stormwater management, protecting water quality, air quality, carbon sequestration, urban heat mitigation, soil quality, slope protection, and natural hazard risk protection.
- **Social and cultural values:** Aboriginal heritage and caring for Country, European heritage, towns and villages, recreation and open space, mental health and wellbeing, creative value/ inspiration, scenic landscape/aesthetic values, housing, rural lifestyle/living, scientific research purposes, food production, and waste management.

Whilst there is recognition of the different values, including social, economic, and environmental, these are not represented graphically in map-form, with the implication that the MRA is a blanket mapped control that doesn't consider the nuances across the rural area. More detailed mapping could help inform the District Plan, DPE and DPI policies and guidance and the next round of local strategic planning, contributing to a better understanding of the spatial component of different values. It would also provide a higher level of visibility for the lesser known, or considered, values of the MRA (for example the cultural value of Country).

Key Council concerns

Key concerns raised by the Councils include:

- A need to better define (including spatially) the values of the MRA in the District Plan, as the basis for more nuanced strategy
- Need for better visual communication to be readily available for Councils and the public to inform planning initiatives, particularly when there are overlaps with other layers (i.e., CPCP, Biodiversity)
- Aboriginal connection to Country and cultural sites is not reflected well in planning for MRA; consider how to engage with the community on this.
- Heritage and landscape values are under-appreciated in the MRA approach.
- We need to map and protect open space, natural beauty, cultural connections, scenic values, views, and vistas at a City-wide scale.
- Visually sensitive areas and landscapes need to be identified, mapped, and protected.
- There should be a focus on retaining and enhancing blue/green grids across the entire MRA.
- A need for better promoting the economic benefits of the MRA.
- Difficulty managing areas with competing values/ priorities (economic, cultural, scenic)
- It would be useful for any spatial data which informs MRA outcomes to include extractive industries and important mineral resources.

- Need to focus on investigating the economic value of agricultural production vs. economic value of urban development (urban sprawl)

Issue 2 recommendations: Understanding and mapping the values of the MRA

- 1) Commence a project to map the different landscapes and values of the MRA at a City-wide scale, to inform the review of the District Plan and ongoing planning work for the MRA. The Project should:
 - a) be informed by GIS spatial layers
 - b) be presented in a legible and user-friendly way, using a graphics program such as Illustrator
 - c) amalgamate the different local - level maps and diagrams from Council's local strategic planning, with regional and other data held by state government, and
 - d) identify data gaps, in terms of MRA values that are not currently mapped and develop a method for obtaining and mapping this data. Further engagement would be needed with first nations communities before considering any mapping of Aboriginal values, heritage and Country.

6.4 Issue 3: Economic Futures for the MRA

What is the issue?

Economic activity in the MRA is derived from a range of activities, including agricultural production, extractive industries, tourism and recreation, and town and village economies.

The Western Sydney International Airport will provide an opportunity for transformation in the MRA in the Western Parkland City, whilst also placing pressure on the rural areas through increased visitation and increasing demand for new urban development.

Planning for the MRA must be futures-focused, considering the changing role of agricultural industries and opportunities presented by the WSIA, the importance of evolution in the towns and villages, and an increasing role for low-impact tourism and visitation uses.

Agricultural industry change

Feeding 25 million people and contributing \$73 billion to the economy, Australia's agricultural sector is critical to our prosperity and health. It is also a key agricultural player globally, contributing to global food security through export¹².

The rural areas of the Western Parkland City are a significant contributor to agriculture in NSW, contributing over \$591.6 million Gross Value from agricultural production in 2021-22 and helping meet Sydney's growing food demand.

The industry is experiencing significant change, with a drive towards intensive agribusiness¹³ in urban areas and more recently a recognition of the need to move towards a more sustainable and resilient industry in the face of the climate and biodiversity crisis. Regenerative agriculture, circular economy businesses and intensive urban vertical farms are part of an emerging movement to reduce emissions and play a greater role in food security.

¹² PWC/ Macdoch Foundation (2022). [Farming for the future. www.pwc.com.au](https://www.pwc.com.au)

¹³ The term agribusiness is used increasingly to describe business related to farming and associated commercial activities. It includes commodities like crops, livestock, and biofuels. Other non-commercial forms of agriculture excluded from the definition include cooperatives and community-supported agriculture.

Despite its increasing importance to resilience and food security, agricultural land in peri-urban areas, including in the WPC, is increasingly under threat from urban development.

Recent research undertaken by Western Sydney University quantified the loss of primary production land in Greater Western Sydney between 2011 and 2016 as over 193,000 hectares, a 66 percent reduction over the 5-year period¹⁴. With the additional urban development planned for and occurring in urban growth areas since this time, this loss will escalate.

The viability of traditional farming has declined in recent years, in large part due to climate variability, a situation likely to continue. Recent flooding, bushfires and extreme heat and drought exacerbated by climate change, have had a major impact on agriculture in the WPC, leading to some food shortages and an increase in fruit and vegetable prices¹⁵.

In peri-urban areas the value of land for farming is often pitted against the value of land for alternative uses, with land zoned for primary production comparing unfavourably when compared to potential residential uses¹⁶.

Another challenge is an increase in biosecurity risk, due to climate change, biodiversity loss, urbanisation, growing trade and international travel¹⁷. Recent examples include the incidence of foot and mouth disease in Indonesia and varroa mite, which has impacted beehives and pollinator-dependent agriculture in Sydney's peri-urban areas.



Persimmon harvest at Cedar Creek Orchard, Thirlmere. Source: Wollondilly Shire Council

¹⁴ Morrison, N and Lawton, A (2022) *The loss of peri-urban agricultural land and the state-local tensions in managing its demise: The case of Greater Western Sydney, Australia*. In Land Use Policy 120 (2022).

¹⁵ Frugl's Grocery Price Index for June 2022 revealed fruit and vegetable prices increased 13 per cent over 12 months – well ahead of usual inflation. [Ukraine, La Nina, Negative Indian Ocean Dipole could make food shortage worse | news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au/ukraine-la-nina-negative-indian-ocean-dipole-could-make-food-shortage-worse/news-com-au)

¹⁶ For further research, refer to Morrison, N and Lawton, A (2022) *The loss of peri-urban agricultural land and the state-local tensions in managing its demise: The case of Greater Western Sydney, Australia*. In Land Use Policy 120 (2022).

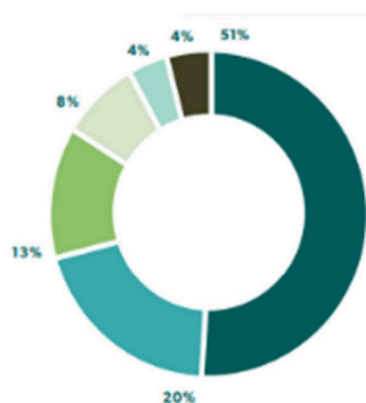
¹⁷ CSIRO, *Australia's Biosecurity Future*

Agribusiness at Western Sydney International Airport

Western Sydney Airport provides an opportunity for existing and new rural production in the WPC, including access to new markets for the export of fresh produce overseas. Priority A7 of the Draft Economic Blueprint includes support for expanding these markets.

The area surrounding and including the airport already has a strong agricultural presence. A report commissioned by the Western Parkland City Authority refers to the four SA2 regions that make up the broader Aerotropolis and surrounding areas: Mulgoa – Luddenham – Orchard Hills; Horsley Park – Kemps Creek; Badgerys Creek – Greendale; and Cobbitty – Leppington. The Gross Value Production (GVP) of these SA2 regions is \$169 million or 25.7% of the Greater Sydney region (~1.3% of the total state value). Badgerys Creek- Greendale has the highest GVP of these areas, however, will be the most displaced by the Aerotropolis.

In these 4 SA2 areas, the largest agriculture sector in terms of economic value is livestock and poultry (51% of GVP). Other important sectors include vegetables (20% GVP), eggs (13%), nurseries, cut flowers and turf (8%), livestock products – milk (4%) and other (4%)¹⁸.



GVP by commodity type

FIGURE 4

- 51% Livestock & Poultry
- 20% Vegetables
- 13% Eggs
- 8% Nurseries, cut flowers and cultivated turf
- 4% Livestock products – Milk
- 4% Other



GVP by SA2 region

FIGURE 5

- 49% Badgerys Creek – Greendale
- 25% Cobbitty – Leppington
- 21% Horsley Park – Kemps Creek
- 5% Mulgoa Luddenham – Orchard Hills

Figure 8: Gross Value of production by commodity type and by sub-region in the Aerotropolis and surrounding areas.
Source: Agrology 2018, *Production Possibilities- Western Sydney Airport Agribusiness Precinct*.

The Blueprint aims to facilitate agribusiness through developing an Intensive Integrated Production Hub (IIPH), a world-class, food production hub incorporating protected cropping horticulture, energy production systems, efficient use of water, waste, heat and CO₂. It is intended to enable delivery from farm gate to the international consumer's plate within 36 hours¹⁹.

¹⁸ Agrology 2018, *Production Possibilities- Western Sydney Airport Agribusiness Precinct*.

¹⁹ KPMG 2019, *World-class intensive integrated production hub in the Western Sydney Aerotropolis- NSW Government's Agribusiness Precinct 'A pre-feasibility study for the NSW Department of Industry'*

Key Council concerns

- Agricultural land uses being replaced with urban development.
- The provision of 'suitable development' within the MRA. This is important as without clearly defined options and pathways for landowners the land will continue to degrade and stagnate. Focus on agribusiness surrounding aerotropolis, but further review of the potential of WSIA for the wider MRA is required, including lifestyle/tourism aspects.
- How food production can be encouraged as a viable use for the MRA, improving resilience and self-sufficiency
- Clarity is needed to scope out what is economically viable in the future (e.g., traditional farming methods, green-housing, renewable energy, industrial processes, associated industries for agribusiness etc.

Visitor Economy

The visitor economy is well developed in parts of the Western Parkland City and emerging in others. The WSIA provides an opportunity to expand the visitor economy, attracting international visitors to the city, increasing expenditure on tourism, recreation, and events. However, it will place additional pressure on sensitive parts of the WPC, including the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area and smaller towns and villages.

Ares of potential growth include agri-tourism (including farm-gate enterprises, farm-stay accommodation), eco-tourism, conferences, indigenous tourism experiences, and adventure tourism.

Of particular interest is the potential to tie-in the protection of agricultural land with increased opportunities for income-generation for farmers, through events, farm-stay accommodation, plate-to-paddock experiences, and other low-impact uses.

This has been recognised by the NSW Government, who in December 2022 introduced agritourism planning reforms. These include planning reform to the Standard Instrument Codes SEPP and the opportunities for Councils to opt in to agritourism optional clauses for Farm Stay Accommodation and Farm Gate Premises which will come into effect in Feb 2023.

Key Council concerns

- The need to encourage sustainable tourism/visitation in the MRA.
- How to manage the impacts of increased tourism, in sensitive areas, scenic areas and towns and villages once the WSIBlueA is operational.
- How to manage conflicts between rural lifestyle expectations and the diversification of agriculture to include tourism uses (e.g., events, weddings, farm-gate, pick-your-own experiences)
- How do you limit the scale and intensity of tourism uses using the planning framework?

Town and village economies

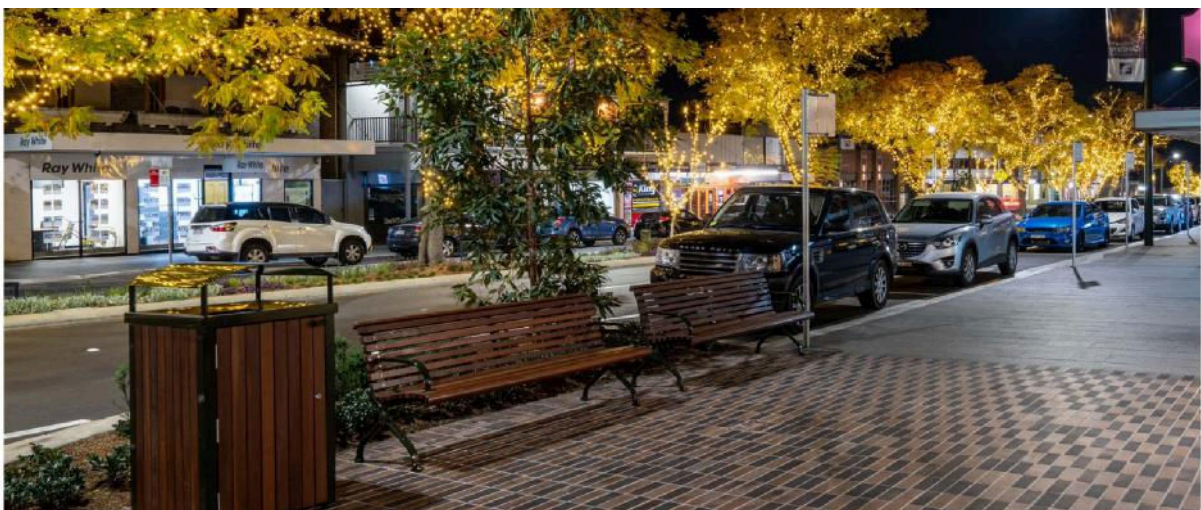
Within the MRA there are many towns and villages with distinct character and appeal for tourism, however their role within the MRA and relationship to the rural areas isn't clearly articulated. The towns and villages, including a number of strategic centres such as Katoomba, Richmond-Windsor and Picton, are included within the MRA boundary, despite some having substantial urban areas.

The COVID-19 pandemic and recent extreme weather events have had both positive and negative impact on town and village economies. In parts of the WPC, increased home working has created a greater demand for local services, but others have suffered from a lack of tourism income (especially from international tourists). There is a need to develop a clear narrative on the changing role for centres in the WPC in light of these impacts.

Exploring possible economic futures for the towns and villages and how they can evolve over time is important to ensuring their ongoing viability and understanding their relationship to the MRA and wider Western Parkland City.

Key Council concerns

- A need to maintain economic viability for towns and villages in the MRA, with some viewing current planning controls as stifling economic development.
- A different nuanced approach to planning in the town and village areas of the MRA is needed.
- Need to retain the distinct local character of towns and villages.
- Need more clarity around what is meant by 'local growth' in towns & villages.
- The need to meet an increased demand for local jobs.
- In recent years, a constrained ability to provide seniors housing in towns and villages due to the Seniors Housing SEPP excluding the MRA (this has since been amended with introduction of the Housing SEPP)
- How can the opportunities presented by the WSIA, especially for the visitor economy and agriculture, be spatially distributed across the WPC to benefit towns and villages?



Camden Argyle Street. Source: Camden Council

Issue 3 recommendations: Economic Futures for the MRA

- 1) Engage professional consulting services to undertake an economic futures study, focusing on agriculture, the visitor economy and the towns and villages in the MRA. The work should include:
 - a) describe and quantify the nature of the agricultural and resource industries, visitor economy, and towns and villages in the WPC.
 - b) consider impacts of COVID-19
 - c) explore trends in agriculture and the visitor economy in the WPC and elsewhere, e.g., agribusiness, agri-tourism, regenerative agriculture, and circular economy agriculture.
 - d) provide case studies of how planning frameworks have encouraged sustainable agriculture and visitor economy in peri-urban areas.
 - e) develop a framework for the economic role of towns and villages in the MRA and how they might evolve over time, including possible land use change.
 - f) explore opportunities provided by the WSIA for the MRA across the Western Parkland City, and
 - g) explore existing planning frameworks in relation to the above issues and establish the case for change. Refine a planning framework approach for planning in the Metropolitan Rural Area to address the three areas of economic activity.

6.5 Issue 4. Valuing nature, ecosystem services and ensuring a resilient city.

What is the issue?

Environmental protection in the rural areas is essential for a broad range of purposes: including biodiversity protection and providing habitat, watershed management, flood risk mitigation, carbon sequestration, air quality, drought- resilience and urban cooling. There are also key social benefits from maintaining natural protected areas and the Metropolitan Rural Area, such as its use for recreation and visitation/tourism, cultural values, scientific, education and research value, and enhanced health and well-being benefits to the community from having access to the MRA. These environmental and social values are becoming increasingly important to the WPC community, as evidenced through recent Community Strategic Plan consultations.

Such services are essential to the resilience of the WPC, especially in light of recent extreme weather events and climate change. For example, improving watershed management and slope stabilisation can reduce flood and drought impacts. The rural areas also have great potential to help reduce the carbon footprint of the WPC, for example through investing in reforestation and regenerative agriculture that will enhance carbon capture in our soils, or through installing renewable energy.

Traditionally the environmental and social services of rural areas have been undervalued, particularly when land is seen as potential future housing or industrial land. Yet in 2019, the World Economic Forum (WEF) estimated that \$44 trillion of global economic value

generation, more than 50% of global Gross Domestic Product, is moderately or highly dependent on nature.²⁰

Natural capital and ecosystem services

The NSW government recently released the Draft NSW Natural Capital Statement of Intent, which ‘sets the ambition for, and approach to sustainably managing natural capital in NSW,’ as part of the government’s low carbon, sustainable economic agenda. By natural capital, it is referring to ‘natural assets, and the services that flow from them, which include geology, soil, air, water, and all living things’ (p6). The Statement of Intent sets out the NSW Government’s role in land stewardship, its support for research and development and explores opportunities to embed natural capital considerations in NSW government decision making.

It notes that conventional economic models and financial markets don’t account for environmental degradation, so don’t provide a holistic picture of economic growth and prosperity. As a consequence, we ‘create significant social and economic costs.’ The document highlights the importance of NSW understanding its natural capital assets and how they interact with NSW’s economy and social benefits, noting that ‘Innovative ways that engage landholders and Government to manage our natural resources and effectively manage biodiversity must continue to be identified.’



Stormwater management, Wentworth Falls Lake, Blue Mountains LGA. Source: WSPP

²⁰ World Economic Forum (2019) in NSW Government (2022) Consultation Draft NSW Natural Capital Statement of Intent

Defining Natural Capital (NSW Natural Capital Statement of Intent, 2022)

Natural capital refers to the world's stocks of natural assets, and the services that flow from them, which include geology, soil, air, water, and all living things. It is from this natural capital that humans derive a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible. The most obvious ecosystem services include food, water, plant materials used for fuel, building materials and medicines (Convention for Biological Diversity 2021). Capital has traditionally been thought of as money or any resource or asset that stores or provides value to people and the economy. Natural capital is a way of thinking about nature in much the same way as traditional capital – if we invest in it, it creates value, and if we degrade it, we limit its value.

Key Council concerns

- Economic values are often over-emphasised, to the detriment of social and environmental values of MRA (e.g., values for health and wellbeing, ecological services, air, and water quality etc.)
- The MRA plays a key role in resilience within the WPC, with its role becoming more important in recent years with climate change impacts increasing and the increased need for recreational space during the pandemic.
- Some landowners within the MRA see the value of their land purely in terms of its use for urban development and are often not interested in further capital investment to improve value for food production or ecosystem services.
- There is a need to protect land in the MRA for a range of future values and uses that are wider than residential or industrial use. This is particularly so given the growth in population and increased visitation with the Western Sydney International Airport (WSIA) which will increase pressure on the MRA.
- Input is required from SES, RFS and Recovery NSW to implement mitigation strategies for natural disasters including flooding and bushfires.
- MRA's relationship to adopted Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan needs considering, particularly for Strategic Conservation Areas and the opportunities for achieving environmental outcomes.
- Further work could be undertaken to investigate ways to improve access to nature and significant landscapes to improve tourism value in the MRA.
- A need for a strategic approach to better managing water supply for droughts, including for agriculture.

Issue 3 recommendations: Valuing nature, ecosystem services and ensuring a resilient city

1) Engage professional consulting services to:

- a) Document and explore the ecosystem services provided by the MRA and natural areas in the WPC, including its role in climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- b) Using ecosystem services and social benefit accounting, quantify, in broad terms, the economic value of ecosystem services provided by MRA and the value to the WPC and wider City-region, including ecological and social services.
- c) Make recommendations regarding how the MRA could be protected and enhanced to further increase its potential for ecosystem services provision.
- d) Explore the role of the MRA in providing greater resilience in the WPC to the impacts of climate change, pandemics, food security and other future challenges.
- e) Explore the potential for implementation of existing government schemes such as the Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program in the WPC.

7 NEXT STEPS

In consultation with the Project Working Group, the recommendations for the four areas of work identified in section 6 will be actioned. The first area: *Definitions, urban planning issues and managing growth*, will be discussed through ongoing discussions with GCC, DPE and Councils.

The three other issues are being further scoped as follows:

- *Spatial planning and mapping the different landscapes and values of the MRA at a City-wide scale*: Conversations are ongoing with the GCC re: resources for District-scale mapping to inform the District Plan Review
- *Economic futures for the WPC*: a consultancy brief has been prepared to engage further professional expertise in this area. Subject to successful commissioning, work will commence in late 2022- early 2023.
- *Resilience and ecosystem services*: a consultancy brief has been prepared to engage further professional expertise in this area. Subject to successful commissioning, work will commence in late 2022- early 2023.

These projects will be initiated in late 2022- early 2023, with draft findings available in early- mid 2023. The Project Working Group will be regularly briefed on progress.



Recreational walking trail: Source: Liverpool City Council

METROPOLITAN RURAL AREA REVIEW WORKING PAPER APPENDICES

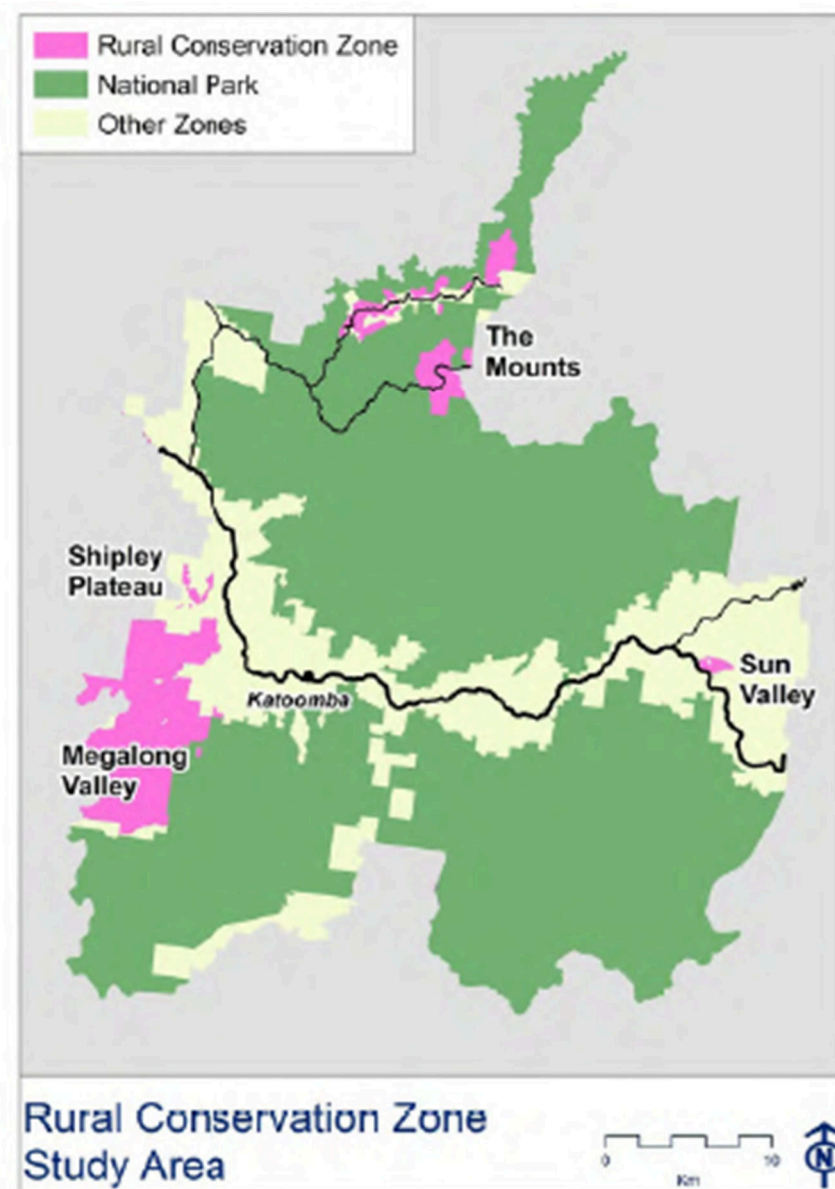
Appendix 1- Summary of Local Strategic Planning- Metropolitan Rural Area

Blue Mountains City Council

BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020		
Vision relating to MRA - Better managing the rural areas - Preserving the environmental values and amenity of the area.	MRA description 8,571HA Rural Land - Soil in LGA is unsuitable for most agricultural pursuits beyond small dairy, vegetable and poultry farming. Megalong and Kanimbla Valleys have mixed farming and the grazing of sheep and cattle. - Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine, Mount Tomah and Shipley Plateau have- orchards and horticulture.	MRA Issues Infrastructure is limited in rural lands, limiting the ability to cater for larger numbers of visitors
Policies/ planning priorities/actions <u>Local Planning Priority 5</u>- Conserving and enhancing heritage, character, and liveability 5.1 Council will continue to pursue a Residential Character zone or alternative planning solution within the Local Environmental Plan to retain and enhance the residential character of the Blue Mountains 5.7 Council will seek an exemption from the Low-Rise Medium Density Housing Code in SEPP (Exempt and Complying Codes) 2008 to ensure local controls are maintained to protect the character of the Blue Mountains <u>Local Planning Priority 7</u>- Sustaining a healthy local economy including a focus on Katoomba as our strategic centre - Economic role and opportunity for diverse agri- business <u>Local Planning Priority 8</u>- Leading destination management and sustainable tourism - Diversification of visitor experience- draw visitors and encourage spending		

Blue Mountains City Council Final Draft Rural Lands Planning Study (Bushland Conservation Zone Report), 2012			
Vision and objectives	Nature of MRA, extent	Key issues	Key findings, principles and actions
- Maintain bush, protect World Heritage environment, and enhance biodiversity - Rural Lands managed responsibly to protect water quality and drinking water catchment	67% of properties are rural residential 25% are native vegetation 2,501ha of Bushland Conservation Zone	- Biodiversity protection, water quality management, heritage conservation and bushfire hazard management - Urban expansion - Meeting housing and social needs	- Limiting Urban Expansion - Identifying limits to extent of potential urban footprint in Blue Mountains, based on Sustainable Development Threshold (SDT), restrict subdivision and dual occupancy development in Bushland Conservation areas. - Managing the Environment - Form and location of development controlled to prevent/ minimise impact on natural environment - Meeting Housing and Social Needs - Provide opportunities for housing choice in the urban zones

• Local economy is supported through Rural Lands use activities • Rural Lands managed to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage			○ In Bushland Conservation Zone- allow community buildings and recreation areas • Protecting Town and Residential Character ○ Identifying and conserving locally significant character and heritage elements, items, and areas ○ Ensuring the form of new development responds to recognised character and heritage values. • Promoting Local Employment ○ Promote employment generating activities that are compatible with the sensitive natural context and lifestyle preferences of the community
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Camden Council

CAMDEN COUNCIL- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020		
Vision relating to MRA. - Rural and natural assets are protected and celebrated. - Local rural economy- leverage opportunities to export produce and promote fresh local food production. - Capitalising on heritage and rural values to support a thriving tourism industry.	MRA description MRA encompasses the western edge of the LGA through Bringelly, the Cobbitty Hills (including Cobbitty Rural Village), through to Razorback. The Scenic Hills on the eastern boundary also form part of the MRA.	MRA Issues - Need to minimize and manage rural conflicts. - Protection of agricultural land and food production - Role of agribusiness precincts in Aerotropolis - Destination management
Policies/ planning priorities/actions <u>Local Priority S3</u> (Protecting Camden's rural land) 101. Council will continue to implement the recommendations and actions within the Camden Rural Lands Strategy. 102. Council will review existing planning instruments to minimize and manage rural land conflicts 103. Council will work with Wollondilly Council and the SPUN to explore options to protect agricultural land and encourage food production. <u>Local Priority L1</u> (Providing housing choice and affordability for Camden's growing and changing population) - Urban development in MRA will only be considered in urban investigation areas identified in region plan. <u>Local Priority P6</u> (Leveraging Camden's natural and cultural assets to promote local agricultural production and increase tourism) 78. Council will continue to implement the actions in the Rural Lands Strategy 79. Council will review how Camden's rural lands relate to future agribusiness precincts within the Aerotropolis 80. Council will work to implement the recommendations in the Macarthur Destination Management Plan and Camden Destination Management Plan 81. Council will investigate the appropriate types of visitor accommodation for Camden and identify the appropriate location for future accommodation		

Camden Council Camden Council Rural Lands Study 2016, and Strategy 2018			
Vision and objectives	Nature of MRA, extent	Key issues	Key findings, principles, and actions
- Maximizing opportunities from growth and retaining valued aspect of <u>rural</u> and <u>country heritage and landscape</u>. - Growth should be managed to ensure rural heritage values are maintained.	- Agricultural land use is 50% of LGA. - Eventual development in South-West Growth Area will reduce rural land area to 1/3 of LGA. - Supporting rural economy, containing native vegetation, scenic and cultural landscape, visual and cultural heritage values.	- A number of emerging pressures that have the potential to have significant impact on Camden's rural lands including the Western Sydney Airport and Outer Sydney Orbital. - Land use conflict, i.e., urban development and growth in residential population result in displacement of rural industries. - Flooding and bushfire	Key Planning Principles - P1. Protect Camden's remaining rural lands - Provide an advocacy role that the preferred M9 corridor option minimises impact on rural zoned land. - Investigate the potential introduction of appropriate zones within the South West Growth Area to provide a buffer between rural land uses and urban development. - Work with Wollondilly Council to explore options to protect agricultural land and encourage food production. - P2. Retain Camden's valued scenic and cultural landscapes - Undertake a detailed visual study of Camden's rural lands (excluding the South West Growth Area) in conjunction with key stakeholders. - Investigate options to incorporate scenic protection controls in Camden Local Environmental Plan 2010. - Review existing development controls to provide additional guidance on scenic protection. - P3. Provide certainty and avoid rural land fragmentation - Retain the existing 40ha minimum lot size (Camden LEP 2010) for rural land to avoid further land ownership fragmentation. - P4. Minimize and manage rural land conflict - Review existing development controls to provide additional guidance on land use conflict. - Investigate the potential introduction of appropriate zones within the South West Growth Area to provide a buffer between rural land uses and transition urban development. - Prepare informative / educational material for the community about farming impacts and conflicts. - P5. Enhance Camden's Rural Economy - Investigate potential activities to support and promote viable and sustainable agriculture. - Work with the University of Sydney to investigate innovative opportunities for the Camden Campus. - P6. Minimize unplanned non- agricultural development - Monitor the implementation of the criteria for planning proposals seeking rezonings on rural land (excluding SWPGA). - P7. Maximize opportunities for relocation of rural enterprises - Retain the 40ha minimum lot size for rural land.

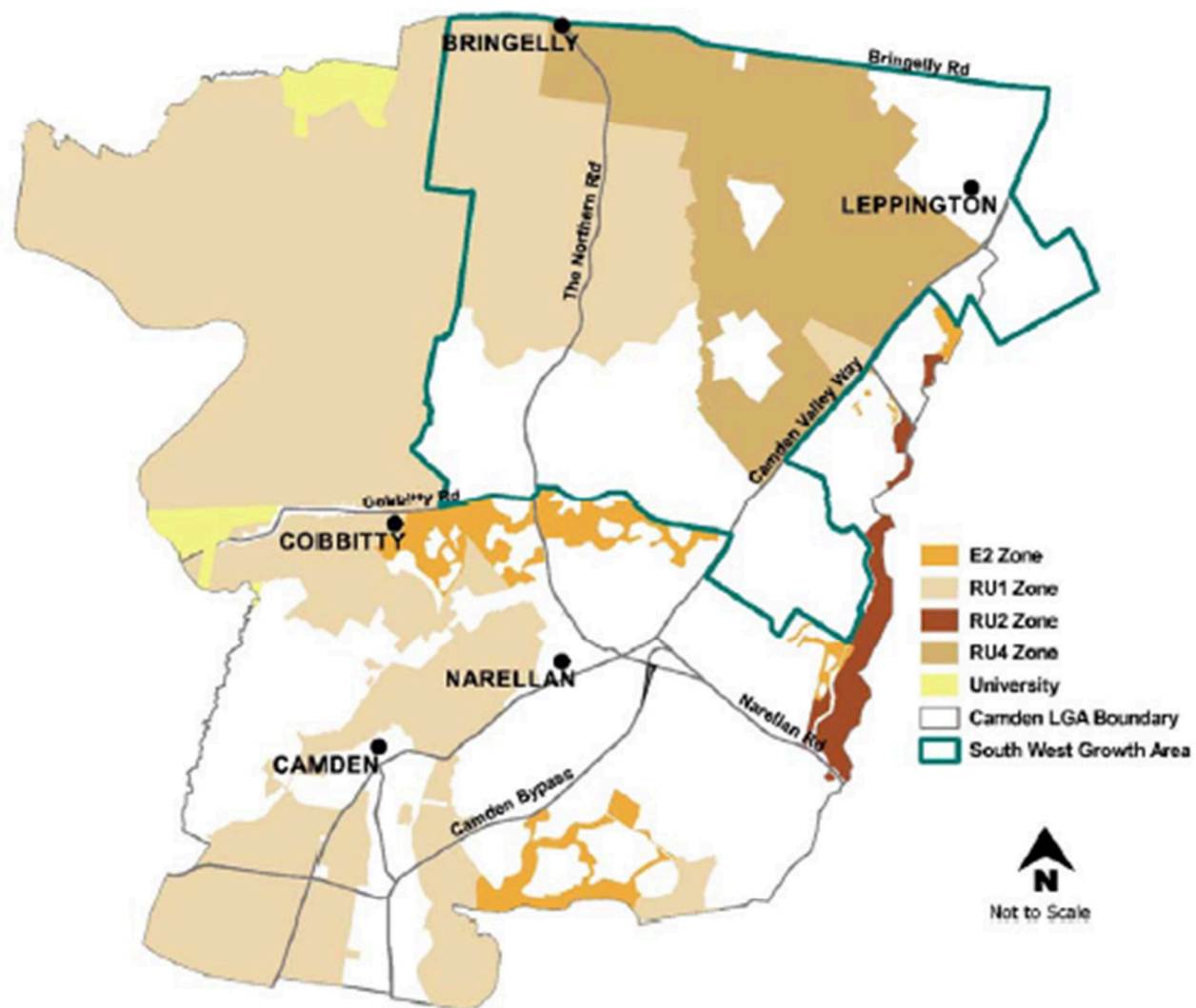


Figure 4 – Camden's Rural Land & South West Growth Area

Campbelltown City Council

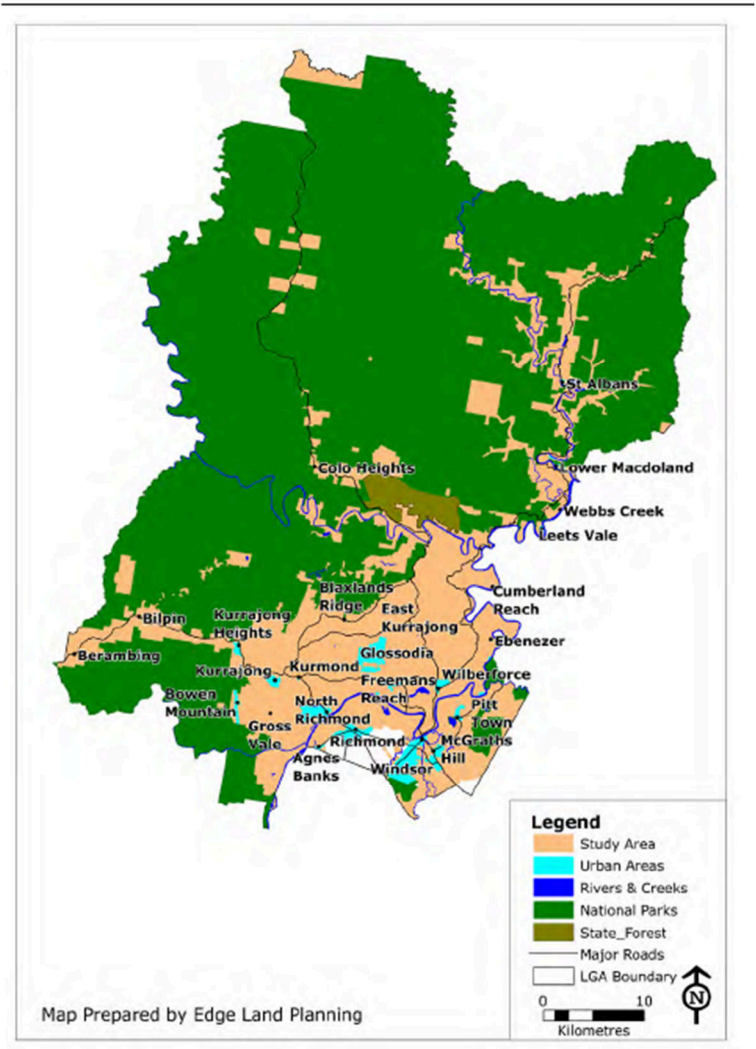
CAMPBELLTOWN CITY COUNCIL- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020		
Vision relating to MRA	MRA description	MRA Issues
- Protecting and maintaining natural, environmental and culturally important landscapes, places and items - Despite forecasted population growth, still need to protect natural environment setting and values	2,400 hectares zoned rural 6,545 hectares land in environmental zones, (almost 2,000 hectares of National Park) - LGA within Sydney Basin Bioregion: one of the most species- diverse regions in NSW	- Conserving environmental and built heritage - Protection of scenic and cultural landscapes - Protected areas - Containing urban development
Policies/ planning priorities/actions <u>Planning Priority 2</u>- Creating high quality, diverse housing 2.5 Contain urban development to existing urban areas and within growth and urban investigation areas to protect MRA <u>Planning Priority 3</u>- Embracing our heritage and cultural identity 3.6 Identify and promote the conservation of environmental heritage and sensitive environmental areas including the Georges River Corridor Landscape, Scenic Hills and Wedderburn <u>Planning Priority 5</u>- Embracing our unique landscape setting 5.8 Retain and protect significant heritage plantings that denote landscape features, heritage properties and important view corridors 5.10 Ensure development is undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation to preserve and/ or enhance scenic and cultural landscapes 5.11 Promote community management of scenic and cultural landscapes in the LGA <u>Planning Priority 6</u>- Respecting and protecting our natural assets 6.2 Develop and implement a Protected Area Network Policy to achieve long term conservation of natural and cultural values		

Hawkesbury City Council

HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL- Amended Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020		
Vision relating to MRA - Balance growth to ensure it doesn't detract from semi- rural characteristics and amenity. - River, environment and heritage to be protected and enhanced. - Growing tourism opportunities focused on rural character, agriculture and environmental assets	MRA description - Hawkesbury straddles divides urban metropolitan councils to east and rural councils to west - District's rural areas are framed by bushland and national parks to west	MRA Issues - Rural land use conflict - Enhance heritage character, towns and villages - Balanced growth
Policies/ planning priorities/actions 1. <u>Planning Priority 5.</u> Managing rural lands 5.1 Take measures to limit land use conflict 5.2 Prepare and implement a Rural Lands Strategy 5.3 Map and categorise all prime agricultural land within the Hawkesbury LGA. 2. <u>Planning Priority 6.</u> Manage, enhance, and celebrate the distinctive heritage character of our towns, villages, and naturally landscaped environment. 6.1 - Implement the Vibrant Towns and Villages Master Plan to enhance the distinctive heritage character of Hawkesbury's towns and villages. 6.2 - Retain and preserve the natural environment in its natural form to meet the objectives of the Metropolitan Rural Area. 3. <u>Planning Priority 11.</u> Protect our rivers, creeks and areas of high biodiversity and environmental values 11.1 Protect and enhance natural assets and ensure the biodiversity of the Hawkesbury is identifies and preserved. 11.2 Ensure development at the interface of areas of significant biodiversity has minimal environmental impact.		

Hawkesbury City Council Hawkesbury Rural Lands Strategy, 2021			
Vision and objectives	Nature of MRA, extent	Key issues	Key findings, principles and actions
- Finding balance between competing desires for rural lands (growth management) economic development and preservation of rural/agricultural land. - Land use planning strategies to deliver balanced growth.	- Rural residential is 86.1% of total land use, with 18.8% of rural residential use in rural fringe category. - Rural land is highly fragmented with average lot size of 6.2ha (62.3% of lots are less than 3ha). - Urban/rural population split is: 57.6% urban 42.4% rural - Rural land use zones are: - RU1 Primary Production - RU2 Rural Landscape - Number of people living in rural residential lots of 2, 10, 40 ha increased.	- Current land use zones do not support the best use of land: - intensive agriculture uses are in rural landscape zone, - Rural residential uses are in Primary Production zone, - RU4 Primary Production Small Lot Zone includes mostly rural residential use and minimal intensive agricultures. - Land use conflict between rural residential/urban development and agricultural land results in change of use of agricultural land and sale of farms. - Farmers are price takers, not price makers due to high price of remaining agricultural land. - Environmental concerns: - Biodiversity - Water quality - Natural hazards - bushfires and flooding.	- Preserve agricultural activities, scenic rural landscapes, native vegetation, biodiversity corridors and areas for rural living. - The following land uses/development opportunities are nominated as levers for improving rural economy. - Horticulture, Aquaculture, Poultry - Nurseries, Turf - Horse sector (i.e., horse studs, polo clubs, recreational riding) - Tourist (incl. agritourism) and commercial uses (i.e., farmers market) - Resources - Productive agriculture - Industry - The definition of the following land uses in the LEP need to be reviewed and amended, if necessary, to support rural economy: - Rural Tourist Cabins - Roadside Sales - Protected Cropping - Rural Workers Dwellings - Growth Management - Urban expansion into surrounding rural landscape can only occur in accordance with Hawkesbury Housing Strategy. - Rural Lands Preservation should be through: - Encourage and promote agricultural sector and farmers of LGA (i.e., sell from farm gate) - Adopt let 'the farmers farm' land use conflict concept. - Establishment of 'Protected Cropping' sector in LGA. - Necessary DCP and LEP amendments to implement the proposed strategies.

Hawkesbury Draft Rural Lands Strategy



Map 1.1: Study Area

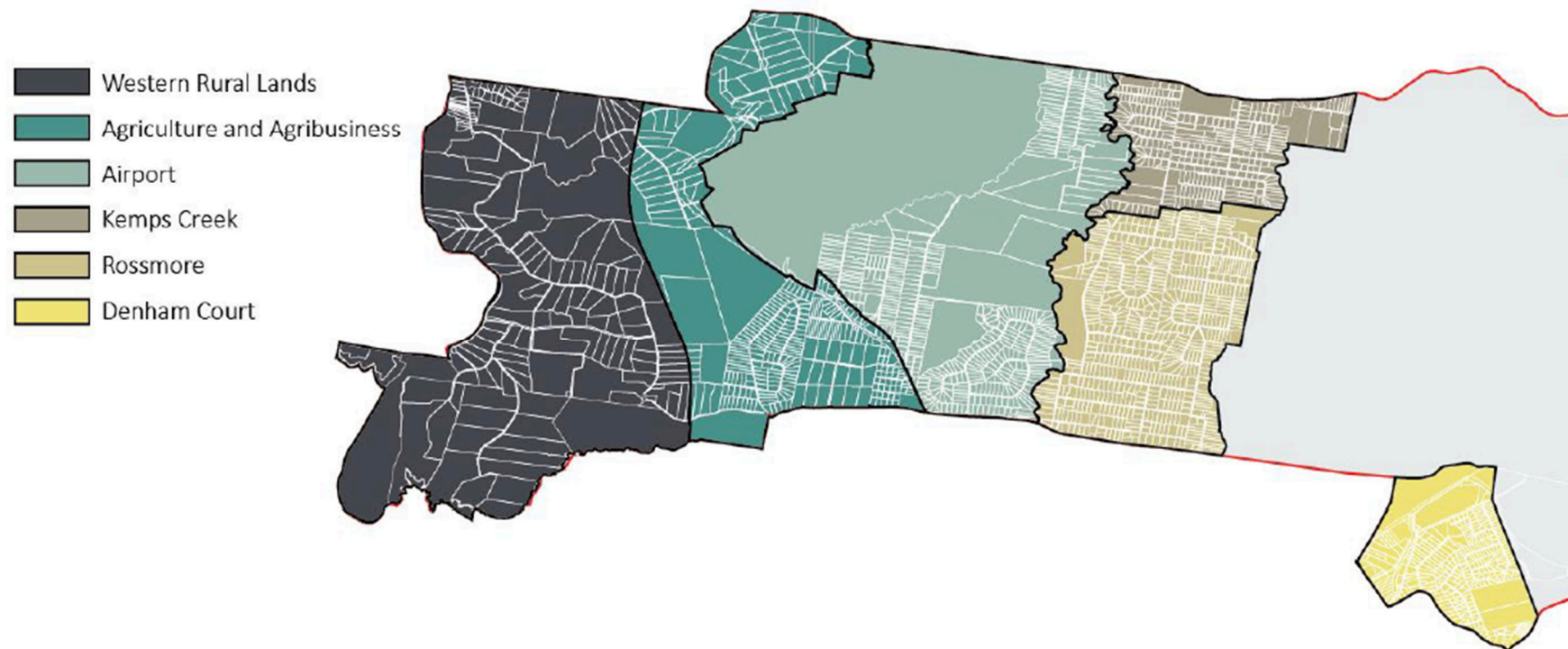
Liverpool City Council

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020		
Vision relating to MRA	MRA description	MRA Issues
- Protect remaining rural and scenic lands from urban development - Clear boundaries between urban non- urban and scenic lands	- Value of agriculture \$86m a year 23% Sydney's poultry production 15% Sydney's vegetable production	- Existing productive lands threatened by conflicting uses- encroachment of residential - Defining boundaries for MRA - Supporting agriculture and maximising opportunities from of Airport
Policies/ planning priorities/actions 1. <u>Planning Priority 16</u> - Rural Lands are protected and enhanced 16.1 Develop Rural Lands Strategy and review LEP to ensure alignment. 16.2 Investigate placemaking opportunities in Wallacia and Luddenham, including addressing transition of development controls from Liverpool LGA to Penrith LGA and Camden LGA 16.3 Review the Rural Lands Strategy every four years to ensure land use standards reflect trends in agriculture and can support the sensible growth of an agriculture industry to support opportunities provided by Western Sydney International Airport and to protect natural landforms and rural lifestyles		

Liverpool City Council Liverpool Rural Lands Study, 2020			
Vision and objectives	Nature of MRA, extent	Key issues	Key findings, principles, and actions
- References District Plan principles, strategies and actions - Understand effects of WSA on local agricultural productivity. - Protect the District's natural landscapes, heritage & tourism assets, unique rural areas & villages. - Protect environmental, social and economic values of MRA - Leverage industry opportunities from WSA and Aerotropolis. - Protect and support agricultural production &	- Only 25% of original vegetation cover remains - Rural landscape precincts: - Western Rural Lands - Agriculture and Agribusiness - Airport - Kemps Creek - Rossmore - Denham Court	LEP permits non-agricultural uses which allow for intensification of residential uses and further conflict. - Denham Court: Potential for further subdivision and environmentally significant land along creek lines. - Kemps Creek: Land use conflict- rural areas & agricultural; rural residential development driving land use change; Fragmented land ownership.	- Planning Principles: - Exercise caution - Where future land uses are not clear in the various precincts (particular non-initial development precincts), caution regarding the nomination of permissible and non-permissible land uses should be applied. - Provide sufficient flexibility - Flexibility should be retained in currently productive rural land uses where development opportunities are considered medium to long term. - Ensure clear visions for non- agricultural precincts - Complement the function of industries that form part of agribusiness precinct, as part of the wider area's value chain. - Retain a 'domestic'/local focus within their existing rural character, with a focus on local markets. - Retain long term flexibility to adapt to the maturation of the Agribusiness Precinct, and the area's wider population growth, through retention of their current character and land use zoning. - Reinforce their role and purpose as agricultural areas. - Be able to adapt to potential future displacement in the Agribusiness precinct for those industries that require a Sydney location.

mineral resources by preventing inappropriate dispersed activities • Maintain or enhance the values of the MRA using place-based planning to deliver environmental, social and economic outcomes. • Limit urban development to the Urban Area, except for investigation areas. • Provide clear vision and timeframe for non-agribusiness precincts.		• Rossmore: Similar to the above precinct. • Airport Precinct : Land use conflict/competition between airport, infrastructure, residential development and agricultural land. • Large proportion of land affected by ANEF noise contours. • Agriculture and Agribusiness precinct - Similar to the above precincts. • Western rural lands	○ Provide a clear timeframe for non-agribusiness precincts ○ Ensure green and blue grid networks are supported ○ Consider the wider role of Liverpool in the agribusiness industry ○ Examine ways that tourism opportunities could be leveraged while addressing actions from the Liverpool LSPS. ○ Establish a clear review and monitoring process • Place-based planning, acknowledging and protecting environment for its value and qualities, also to enhance sense of place ○ Precincts: - Denham Court • Land fragmentation discouraged - Minimum lot sizes of 40-120ha (Camden Rd), and 1-2ha in south and east should be applied. - Kemps Creek • Business and mixed-use employment precinct. No residential uses proposed. Retain current zoning until more detailed precinct plan. ○ Rossmore • limit further subdivision. ○ Airport Precinct • high agricultural capability, no support for rezoning. ○ Agriculture and Agribusiness precinct • Luddenham village: contain town in R2 and investigate expanding R5. • retain RU4 zoning and agricultural potential along Nepean River. • provide long- term retention and growth of agribusiness. ○ Western rural lands • limit development potential, retain large minimum lot size to protect agricultural land use and extractive industry activities.
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FIGURE 58: RURAL PRECINCTS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, based on Liverpool City Council, 2019.

Penrith City Council

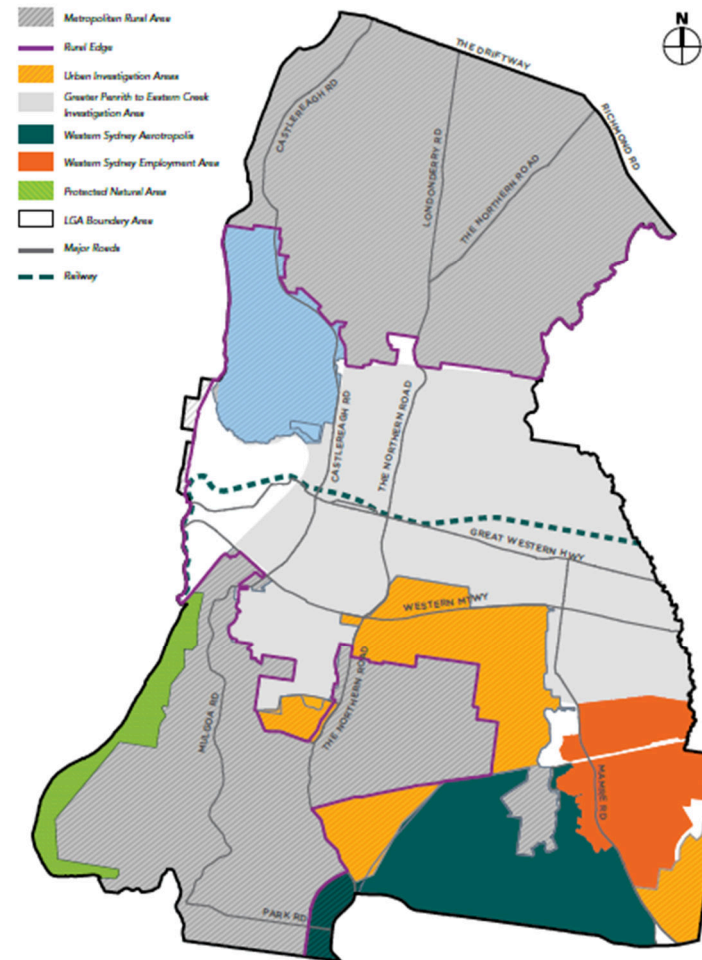
PENRITH CITY COUNCIL- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020		
Vision relating to MRA - Rural areas are fundamental to achieving vision of a region with 'harmony of urban and rural qualities with a strong commitment to environmental protection and enhancement' - Planning guided by the green + blue grid- maintaining the open spaces and natural attributes - Protect its natural assets, key landscape, sustain a strong and connected green and blue grid - defined urban footprint that preserves natural assets and landscape qualities - Define and reinforce rural edge to protect rural land from development	MRA description - App 70% of City is Rural 8000ha (20%) of City is zoned for nature reserves or national park - App 10% of Penrith's population lives in rural areas	MRA Issues - Significant growth and land use change will increase pressure on rural areas and the role they play - Aligning infrastructure with population growth - Retaining local identity with balanced growth, preserving rural landscapes. - City needs better public transport connections, particularly for rural areas.
Policies/ planning priorities/actions <u>Planning Priority 16.</u> Protect and enhance our high value environment lands. 16.6 Review mapping and planning and development controls for land with scenic and landscape values to protect and enhance identifies high value landscapes. <u>Planning Priority 17.</u> Define and protect the values and opportunities within the Metropolitan Rural Area 17.1 Complete the Rural Lands and Villages Study, the Scenic and Cultural Landscapes Study and the Rural Lands and Villages Strategy 17.2 Prepare local character statements for the rural villages and localities based on their environmental, social and economic values 17.3 Review and update planning and development controls to support the implementation of local character statements for our villages. 17.4 Investigate the potential for rural lifestyle housing based on planning principles that require no adverse impacts on the local area and incentives to enhance the environmental, social and economic values of the MRA. 17.5 Continue to engage with relevant Government agencies and other stakeholders on the development of the Agribusiness Precinct within the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Growth Area to understand the benefits and investigate the opportunities for Penrith's rural lands. 17.6 Investigate expansion of appropriate forms of rural tourism and visitor accommodation. 17.7 Establish interim policy measures to manage the transition of existing rural areas that are subject to long term land use change. 17.8 Apply Council's planning framework to define and protect the MRA shown in Map 8 and described in the Draft Rural Lands and Villages Strategy. <u>Planning Priority 18.</u> Connect our green and blue grid 18.1 Prepare a Green and Blue Grid Strategy. 18.2 Review mapping and planning and development controls to update our green and blue grid. 18.3 Investigate funding opportunities for new open space to support our green and blue grid.		

Penrith City Council Rural Lands Strategy, 2022			
Vision and objectives	Nature of MRA, extent	Key issues	Key findings, principles, and actions
• Protect rural values and balance outcomes. • Secure the rural edge. • Protect ecological health and biodiversity. • Preserve open space, natural beauty and cultural connections. • Provide housing and services to meet the needs of the community. • Support a diverse rural economy.	• Rural lands currently comprise 70% of LGA and split into two sections, northern and southern parts of the LGA. • South east area of rural land will transition to urban in medium term through aerotropolis development and GPEC. • Largest watercourses form the LGA boundaries (Nepean River, South Creek and Ropes Creek).	• Provide adequate flood evacuation through LGA Some rural uses in south east will be displaced to allow for more intensive urban, commercial and industrial development. • Land use conflict (have large areas of residential in rural lands, that impact on ability of agricultural businesses to operate/expand) • Community believes that agricultural businesses are increasingly unviable on smaller lots (2 hectares) that are common in northern rural lands. Some sections of community would like to see smaller residential lots or urban development of rural lands however this is not supported due to a number of reasons such as flood risk and lack of sewerage infrastructure.	• Priority 1 Secure the rural edge ○ Outcome 1.1 The rural edge is included in the Local Environmental Plan ○ Outcome 1.2 That rural lands are maintained and protected. - Action: Use Council's planning framework to protect the rural edge as defined in the Rural Lands Strategy in the LEP and ensure rural development controls apply to all lands identified by the rural edge. • Priority 2 Protect ecological health and biodiversity ○ Outcome 2.1 Natural areas are protected and connected - Action: Review and update planning controls within the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to: • Reflect the outcomes of the Biodiversity Study once completed. • Incorporate buffers within land adjoining natural areas; and • Support protection and connection of natural areas. ○ Outcome 2.2 Waterways are maintained or improved - Action: Review and update planning controls within the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to: • Protect and restore waterways and riparian corridors; and • Incorporate relevant elements of the approach developed for the Wianamatta South Creek catchment in the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. ○ Outcome 2.3 Private conservation initiatives are expanded. - Action: Identify land subject to ongoing conservation agreements through environmental protection zonings in the Local Environmental Plan. Engage with, educate and support rural landowners to: • Access conservation programs and initiatives through partners including the Biodiversity Conservation Trust, Landcare and Greening Australia. • Increase involvement in volunteering and citizen science opportunities. • Priority 3 Preserve open space, natural beauty and Cultural Connections ○ Outcome 3.1 Scenic and cultural landscapes are identified and protected - Action: Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to identify and protect significant Aboriginal cultural landscapes in Penrith City's rural areas. ○ Outcome 3.2 Quality visual outcomes are achieved in highly visually sensitive landscapes. ○ Outcome 3.3 Design outcomes are enhanced in visual gateways

			- Action: Map important rural visits in the Development Control Plan and provide matters for consideration for development proposals within the view corridors. ○ Outcome 3.4 Important rural vistas are maintained. - Action: Amend the visual gateways in the Development Control Plan to reflect the outcomes of the assessment in the Penrith Scenic and Cultural Landscapes Study and incorporate relevant matters for consideration. ● Priority 4 Support a diverse rural community ○ Outcome 4.1 Land suitable for agriculture is identified and protected - Action: Review the Development Control Plan to ensure that controls adequately manage land use conflict between agricultural enterprise and rural living. - Action: Work with existing poultry operators to understand the changing needs of the industry, particularly in Londonderry and Llandilo, recognising the current metropolitan level relevance of this industry. - Action: Establish an agriculture, food and innovation network with industry, universities and government agencies to build capacity and foster innovation in new or niche agricultural enterprise. - Action: Investigate the potential to establish a farmer's market in the Penrith LGA to connect local producers to consumers. ○ Outcome 4.2 Rural tourism grows and expands - Action: Develop actions to foster the sustainable growth of rural tourism through the Economic Development Strategy including: ● Opportunity for food and beverage and culture-based business through product and experience development initiatives; and ● Establishment of networks of council, business, and government agencies to connect tourist businesses. ○ Outcome 4.3 Small businesses permitted in rural lands are supported and encouraged - Action: Review and update LEP & DCP controls to: ● Provide streamlined approval pathway opportunities e.g., localised complying development for home-based enterprises where appropriate ● Allow streamlined approval pathways for smaller scale truck parking and storage operations. ● Prepare site specific DCP guidelines for truck parking and storage. ○ Outcome 4.4 Animal boarding and training establishments are supported and regulated by the NSW Government ○ Outcome 4.5 Quarrying of identified resources continues, and land is rehabilitated on completion of extraction. ● Priority 5 Provide housing and services to meet the needs of the community ○ Outcome 5.1 The network of rural villages and localities is reinforced
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			- Action: Prepare local character statements for rural villages and localities as part of the Corridors and Centres Strategy for inclusion within the Development Control Plan - o Outcome 5.2 Housing diversity is provided for rural communities in rural villages - o Outcome 5.3 Rural lands for infrastructure are identified
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Figure 9: The rural edge adopted in this Rural Lands Strategy



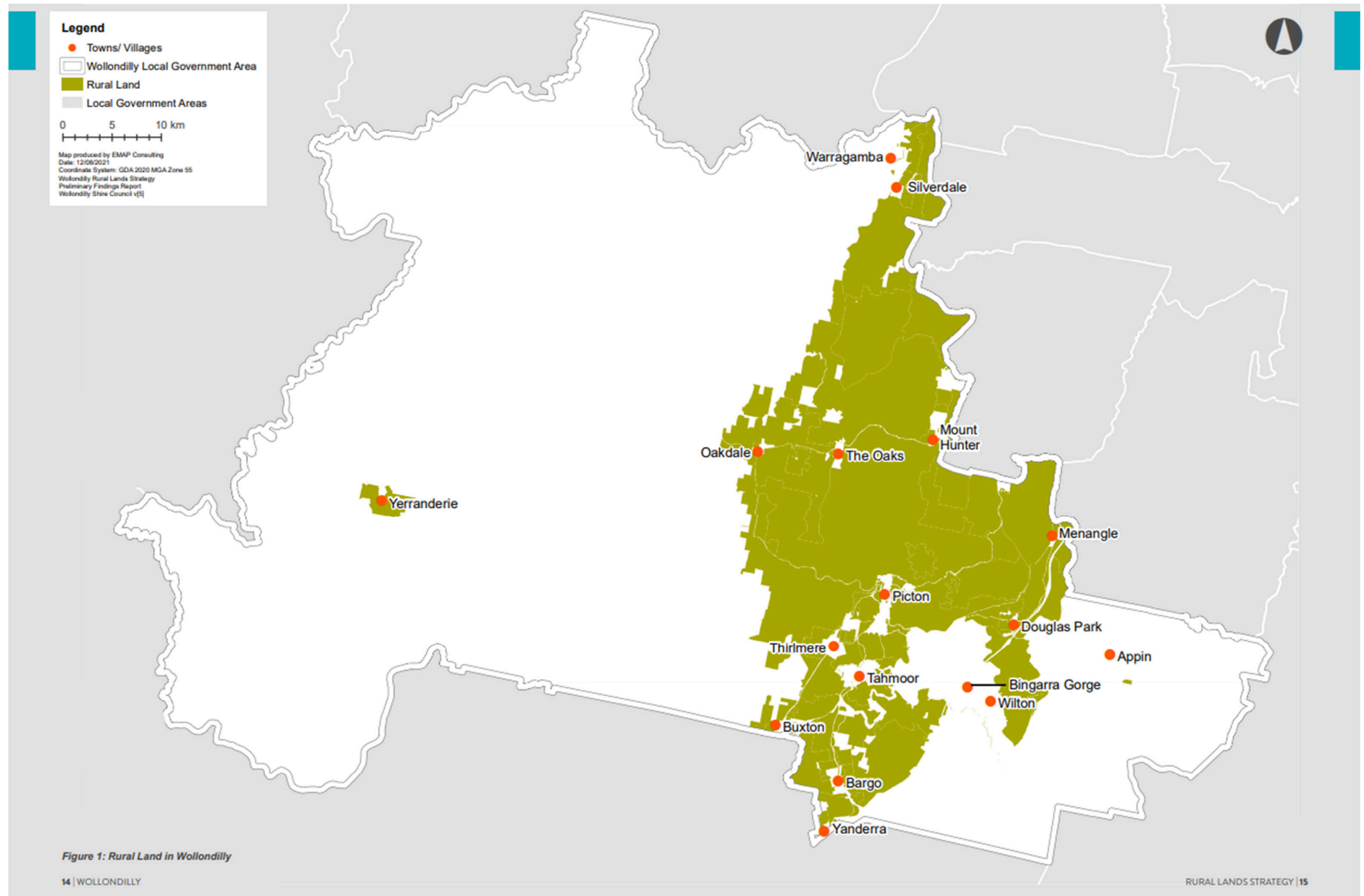
Wollondilly Shire Council

WOLLONDILLY SHIRE COUNCIL- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020		
Vision relating to MRA - A quality lifestyle in a rural setting - Prosperous towns and villages that maintain a rural character	MRA description - MRA- 34% (87,159ha) - Urban Area- 3% - Protected Natural Area- 63% 161, 350ha	MRA Issues - growth and development pressures - loss of agricultural land to urban development, land banking and land fragmentation - conflicts between rural and urban land uses - limited infrastructure and services - limited employment opportunities.
Policies/ planning priorities/actions <u>Planning Priority 5</u>- Providing housing options that meet local needs and match the local character of towns and villages 5.2 Review housing controls in the LEP and DCP in response to the local housing strategy, rural lands strategy, employment lands study and centres strategy 2. <u>Planning Priority 9</u>- Developing the visitor experience and economy by increasing access to natural areas and rural landscapes 9.4 Work with the NSW Small Business Commissioner to develop an agritourism business development program to support farm accommodation, farm tours and farm gate sales. 9.6 Investigate and, where appropriate, enable short-stay accommodation including caravan parks, RV facilities, campgrounds and more. <u>Planning Priority 16</u>- Enhancing and protecting the diverse values of the MRA - Agricultural, environmental, and scenic values, dairy, poultry, eggs and cut flowers- Support the long-term viability of these industries and encourage their growth - National parks, rivers and creeks, and water catchments - Fragmenting of rural land only supported in limited circumstances- including if no impacts on the agricultural, scenic and environmental values of the landscape.		

Wollondilly Shire Council Wollondilly Rural Lands Strategy, 2021			
Vision and objectives	Nature of MRA, extent	Key issues	Key findings, principles, and actions
- Develop and promote agricultural resources and the rural economy - Reduce land use conflicts - Manage pressure for rural living opportunities - Manage places with special landscape, rural and scenic value - Promote economic diversification including emerging opportunities	- Rural land in Wollondilly LEP 2011 includes the following zones and excludes Wilton and Greater Macarthur: - RU1 Primary Production - RU2 Rural Landscape - RU4 Primary Production Small Lots - E4 Environmental Living	- Population growth leads to pressure for residential use and conflict with rural/agricultural uses, shortage of infrastructure. - Small lot sizes = Fragmentation. - Urban interface within Sydney: peri-urban	- Focus Area 1- Building a strong diverse and viable agricultural economy 3.1 Growing a strong, viable and diverse agricultural industry - Action 3.1.1 Undertake an Agricultural Viability Study for sustainable agricultural production, both current and into the future. - Action 3.1.2 Create and promote opportunities for existing and new forms of agriculture and potential new enterprises in rural areas. - Action 3.1.3 Investigate the development of an agricultural business development framework - Action 3.1.4 Advocate for and explore the implementation of an agricultural enterprise credit scheme

• Embrace the opportunities of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis • Ensure the efficient provision of infrastructure • Balance environmental, economic and social outcomes. • Take a future- focused, long-term approach. • Maintain consistency with State planning policies.	- R5 Large Lot Residential - Land on the western side of Lake Burragorang. • Key attributes of rural lands in Wollondilly - Agriculture - Scenic landscapes - Extractive and rural industries - Proximity to WSA - Tourism - Rural lifestyle housing • Many farmers diversifying into intensive or niche activities that don't take up large areas of land.	area and land use competition. • Increasing cost of rural land, strain of agricultural expansion • Limited access to water for irrigation • Increasing population and urban expansion threatens food security in Sydney urban areas. • Constrained land	• Action 3.1.5 Investigate ways which generation changes in ownership can be best facilitated and managed within the Planning Framework • Action 3.1.6 Investigate LEP changes to encourage greater horticultural production • 3.2 Safeguard the productive capability of Greater Sydney Region's peri-urban agriculture • Action 3.2.1 Investigate LEP changes for important agricultural land. • Action 3.2.2 Investigate developing rural subdivision guidelines. • Action 3.2.3 Review the DCP for rural dwelling, rural industries and other rural enterprises • 3.3 Managing rural land use conflicts • Action 3.3.1 Manage sensitive uses and agricultural land. • Action 3.3.2 Provide ongoing protection of productive agriculture through buffers. • Action 3.3.3 Develop a right to farm framework. • 3.4 Sustainably manage and conserve water resources. • Action 3.4.1. Review local policies regarding water protection and security. • Action 3.4.2 Coordinate and advocate for sustainable management of water resources for primary producers • Focus Area 2- Managing rural zones • 4.1 Develop clear and consistent zoning • Action 4.1.1 Review the RU1 Primary Production zone • Action 4.1.2 Review the RU2 Rural Landscape zone • Action 4.1.3 Review the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone • Action 4.1.4 Investigate the use of the RU6 Transition Zone in the Shire • Action 4.1.5 Review the E4 Environmental Living zone • Action 4.1.6 Review the Rural Land use Zones • Action 4.1.7 Develop provisions for truck and transport depots in rural zones. • Focus Area 3- Manage the rural community, economy and services • 5.1 Sustainably manage mineral resources • Action 5.1.1 Protect mineral resources and manage risks. • 5.2 Leveraging export opportunities of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis • Action 5.2.1 Investigate protection of airport safety. • Action 5.2.2 Investigate leveraging opportunities for the primary production sector as part of the Agriculture Study • Action 5.2.3 Support research opportunities
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			• Action 5.2.4 Investigate and advocate for improved links for freight and logistics. • 5.3 Support strong infrastructure and transport networks • Action 5.3.1 Support the provision of transport infrastructure • 5.4 Expand rural tourism opportunities. • Action 5.4.1 Investigate opportunities for tourism in rural areas. • Action 5.4.2 Investigate the potential to support Yerranderie. • Focus Area 4- Managing pressure for rural living opportunities • 6.1 Managing rural residential growth • Action 6.1.1 Managing rural residential growth to preserve the viability of primary production. • 6.2 Deliver well planned rural dwelling options. • Action 6.2.1 Review planning policy for rural dwellings
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Appendix 2- Issues raised during Council engagement/ PWGs.

During the project working groups, Council staff were asked about the key issues in their local government area relating to the MRA. Responses are provided below:

	What are the key issues relating to the MRA in your LGA?
Hawkesbury	• Application of MRA designation by the Department of Planning (e.g., Senior's housing) • Need further details on how MRA to be applied. • How do we allow development to occur?
Penrith	• Ongoing viability of agricultural enterprise e.g., poultry farms need to scale up to remain viable. Lot sizes in rural lands don't allow for this. However, we have significant agricultural businesses we want to maintain and grow. • Community divided - landowners in several areas want rezoning for urban development while others want rural areas to remain as is. • Land use conflicts – conflicts between those who moved for lifestyle purposes vs those who are trying to run a rural enterprise or business – odour, noise etc. • Reaching a balance between protecting areas of ecological and heritage significance, retaining rural character, views, and vistas, retaining, and growing rural economy and building on opportunities from airport and agribusiness precinct.
Liverpool	• Maintaining existing MRA • Encourage landowners to use their land for agricultural purposes- no rezoning
Campbelltown	• Housing strategy- delivering diverse housing (low to medium density, high density but not delivering homes (larger lots) that are in the upper end of the market for people that want to live and work in the area where the scenic hills and MRA is proving attractive). ○ Planning proposal to convert golf course to lifestyle lots (rural residential living)- deliver 1 acre community title subdivisions. • Development consistent with rural values
Camden	• Lack of connection between MRA and rezoning. Need to have a stronger distinction between MRA and non- MRA. Don't allow rezoning in MRA & take into consideration when rezoning adjacent. • Tourism/ economic opportunities that are consistent with the MRA. • Viability of rural lands- land size is not big enough. • Opportunities for land within the MRA to support the Aerotropolis
Wollondilly	• Growth pressures- increase in pre- lodgements in MRA • Viability- land owners questioning lot sizes, scenic protection (whether it will shut down opportunities) • Diversification- offering rural land holder's other opportunities to support their primary production or other opportunities in terms of tourism etc. • Balancing other values of rural lands- scenic values, environmental values, characteristics • Protecting primary industries- poultry farms can't expand due to new residents complaining about odours etc. Risk these industries leaving the shire entirely
Blue Mountains	• Use of the MRA on an ad hoc basis by DPE • Lack of clarity around the definition of MRA (both textually and spatially as a broad-brush tool). The current description or characteristics identified in the District Plan is an awkward fit for the Blue Mountains, with limited rural / agricultural land. A definition which identifies and values the broader environmental and scenic attributes of the LGA (and other areas in Western Sydney) would be more appropriate. • As a City inside a UNESCO World Heritage listed National Park, coordination with NPWS and definitions already used by this agency (including 'protected lands designations') would be a beneficial refinement.

Appendix 3- Background document review- District, Regional and NSW

POLICY/PLAN SUMMARY	KEY INITIATIVES/ IMPLICATIONS FOR WESTERN PARKLAND CITY & THE MRA
THEME: RESILIENCE & CLIMATE CHANGE	
Climate Change Adaptation Strategy NSW Government, July 2022 NSW is experiencing the impacts of climate change which most recently included the unprecedented cycle of heatwaves, droughts, bushfires, storms, and floods. The NSW Climate Change Adaptation Policy sets out an ambitious approach to climate change adaptation. The strategy provides a framework that will strengthen and expand actions to adapt to climate change now and over the long term. It builds upon the policies already in place, such as the Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030. It also commits to release the first state-wide climate change risk and opportunity assessment and adaptation action plan in 2023. https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/nsw-climate-change-adaptation-strategy	
Resilient Sydney A strategy for city resilience 2018 NSW Government, Greater Sydney Commission, The Committee for Sydney Resilient Sydney: a five-year strategy for city resilience, has been developed with Sydney's metropolitan councils and contributors from the NSW Government, business, and community organisations. It marks the first resilience strategy for metropolitan Sydney. Sydney's current challenges including rising inequality, homelessness, mental illness, housing affordability and increasingly extreme weather events with every year classed as another record-breaking year in terms of rising temperatures. The strategy sets the direction we should take to strengthen our ability to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of increasing global uncertainty and local shocks and stresses. 5 Key Directions:	
	Key Initiatives: • Develop robust and trusted metrics and information on climate change risk • Complete climate change risk and opportunity assessments • Develop and deliver adaptation action plans • Embed climate change adaptation in NSW Government decision-making WPC & MRA: The Western Parkland City is particularly susceptible to Climate change impacts, as shown recently with extensive bushfires and flooding. The MRA can play a key role in mitigation of such impacts. The state-wide climate change risk and opportunity assessment and adaptation action plan in 2023 should inform MRA policy. Key initiatives: • Shocks and stresses managed through planning for growth • Collaborate for cross-city active transport • Improve access to health precincts • Advocate for affordable housing • Cool homes and streets • Invest in resilient buildings, assets, precincts, and cities • Enable affordable access to renewable and resilient energy • Monitor social cohesion and wellbeing • Mapping vulnerabilities at District level • Develop a Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy • Measure resilience and wellbeing • E-health initiative of Wollondilly Health Alliance • Developing a "Cool Suburbs" strategy for rating housing estates and existing suburbs • Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA): Green Star Resilience Innovation Challenge

1) People centered city 2) Live with our climate 3) Connect for strength 4) Get ready 5) One city Sydney - Resilient Cities Network	WPC & MRA: The Western Parkland City faces many challenges to resilience- from Climate Change to mental illness. The MRA provides an opportunity to respond to these challenges through providing social and ecological services.
Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities Hawkesbury- Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy Infrastructure NSW, January 2017	
A comprehensive long-term framework to reduce and manage flood risk in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley (HN Valley). The objective is to reduce flood risk to life, property, and social amenity from regional floods now and in the future. Vision: for communities and all levels of government to adapt to flooding by working together to: • Understand and be fully aware of flood risk • Act to reduce flood risk and manage growth • Be ready to respond and recover from flooding. Note: <i>Flood Risk modelling for the HN Valley is currently underway and due for release mid-2022.</i> WPC: The HN Valley covers 425 square km of floodplain from Bents Basin, near Wallacia, to the Brooklyn Bridge. It falls within 4 LGAs: Penrith, Hawkesbury, The Hills, and Blacktown City, and includes Penrith, Richmond, and Windsor. The valley has the highest flood exposure in NSW due to its unique landscape and large population. Floods can be deep and extensive, impacting lives, livelihoods, and homes. Climate change is exacerbating their severity and frequency. https://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/expert-advice/hawkesbury-nepean-flood-risk-management-strategy/	Key Initiatives: • Warragamba Dam wall raising • Permanently lowering dam full supply level by 5-12 metres • Dredging the Hawkesbury River • Currency Creek diversion channel • Major regional evacuation road upgrades WPC & MRA: Extensive flood risk is a key constraint for development in the WPC MRA, however some agricultural and recreational/tourism uses are compatible in floodplains. Areas retained for nature and recreation, including parks and riparian corridors provide important flood mitigation and can play a key role in future planning. Flooding impacts many towns, suburbs, and villages in the MRA. Community safety, evacuation planning and the adequacy of infrastructure are important. The Strategy's key proposal to raise Warragamba Dam wall by 14 metres may reduce flood risk but will not eliminate it and will also have environmental impacts on the WPCs' natural and recreational values. Other measures should also be evaluated.
POLICY/PLAN SUMMARY	
KEY INITIATIVES/IMPLICATIONS FOR WESTERN PARKLAND CITY & THE MRA	
THEME: SUSTAINABILITY	
Pathway to Net Zero Emissions Kinesis for Greater Sydney Commission, March 2022	

Report develops emission reduction scenarios to demonstrate how Greater Sydney could support the NSW Net Zero Plan, achieving net zero emissions by 2050. This report analyses emissions and emission reduction pathways for city-induced emissions from key energy, transport and waste emission sources including: • Building electricity and gas consumption • Resident and journey to work travel • Residential, commercial, and industrial operational waste. Greater Sydney Pathways to Net Zero Emissions Greater Sydney Commission (greatercities.au)	Key Interventions: • Electricity decarbonisation models • Building retrofits • New and higher building standards • Building Electrification & Hydrogen • EV uptake • Transport efficiency (Travel mode shift and electric vehicles) • Waste management policies and strategies including a 30% reduction in waste generation and 65% diversion of organics from landfill WPC & MRA: The challenge for Western Sydney is how to reduce emissions in the face of a rapid increase in new housing and development, including the new airport and Aerotropolis. It is predicted that total emissions will increase by 32% (by 2036) due to growth in energy consumption from new buildings.
Turn Down the Heat Strategy and Action Plan WSROC, 2018	
WSROC's Turn Down the Heat Strategy (2018) takes a collaborative, multi-sector approach to tackling urban heat in Western Sydney and focuses on achievable actions to reduce the impacts of heat. It identifies that "managing the way that the built environment... contributes to urban heat will be imperative to making any substantial progress in lowering temperatures in Western Sydney." The strategy aims to: • Identify and leverage existing best practices to develop a program of effective actions at the household, precinct, and regional levels. • Acknowledge the limitations of current policy regarding urban heat to galvanise action across diverse stakeholders. • Propose a series of priority actions for development with a broader stakeholder group. • Reduce average peak ambient temperatures by 1.5°C by 2023. • Zero net increase in economic impact of heatwaves by 2023. • Zero net increase in morbidity and mortality impacts of heatwaves by 2023. Project: Turn Down the Heat - WSROC	Key Initiatives: • Increase multi-sectoral collaboration and investment to deliver more projects to address the impacts of urban heat in Western Sydney by 2023. • Reduce the average peak ambient temperatures in Western Sydney by 1.5°C through water, greening and cool materials strategies by 2023. • Zero net increase in economic impacts of heatwaves by 2023. • Zero net increase in morbidity and mortality impacts of heatwaves in Western Sydney by 2023. • WSROC is also currently delivering four grant-funded projects under the Turn Down the Heat Strategy: 1. Urban Heat Planning Toolkit 2. Cool Suburbs Tool 3. Heat Smart Western Sydney 4. Climate Resilient Street Trees WPC & MRA: WSROC's Strategy on Urban heat recognises this as a critical and increasing issue for Western Sydney. The MRA can play a key role in reducing urban heat through providing an existential component of the City's green and blue network.
THEME: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT, TOURISM	
Greater Sydney Region Plan GCC, March 2018	

The Greater Sydney Regional Plan establishes 3 cities built upon Sydney's diverse landscape; each unique but connected. The three cities, Western City, Central City and Eastern City will boost Australia's economic, liveability and environmental qualities and support greater Sydney's status as a global City. This plan will coordinate population growth with improved or new infrastructure. It will supply homes to over 1.5 million people by 2056 in the Western City. The Western Sydney airport and surrounding Aerotropolis will support thousands of jobs. It is a 20-year plan with a 40- year vision connecting people to great places that recognize local character, housing, transport strategic centres, industrial and urban services, and health and education precincts. It protects and enhances greater Sydney's Environmental Green Grid and provides 725,000 new homes proving housing affordability. The 30-minute City will bring jobs and services closer to where people live. It will protect and enhance Greater Sydney's unique environment, its waterways, biodiversity, bush and rural lands and green spaces. It brings together land use, transport, and infrastructure planning. Greater Sydney Region Plan (gsc-public-1.s3.amazonaws.com)	Key initiatives: • The Western Sydney International (Nancy Bird Walton) Airport and the Aerotropolis • The Western Economic Corridor as a key employment area for the Western Parkland City. • The South Creek Corridor, a cool green corridor through the Western Parkland City. • Transport connectivity across Greater Sydney and new city-shaping transport initiatives connecting the three cities, including a North South Rail Link. • Campbelltown-Macarthur, Liverpool, and Greater Penrith and the Aerotropolis as the cluster of metropolitan centres for the Western Parkland City. • Creating a city in which residents have access to jobs, services, and other opportunities within 30 minutes of their homes. • Centres as focus points for employment, housing, and services. • Ensuring a supply of diverse housing and affordable housing options • The Greater Macarthur Growth Area as a significant focus for future urban development and redevelopment. • Protecting and enhancing employment lands. • Protecting and maintaining natural, environmental, and culturally important landscapes, places, and items. • Creating a network of connected open spaces and waterways across the region. • Adapting to climate change and building resilience within communities. WPC & MRA: The Plan recognises the importance of the MRA as a landscape and the social and ecological services it provides to Greater Sydney, as well as the pressures on the MRA arising from development.
Western City District Plan GCC, March 2018 The vision for Greater Sydney as a metropolis of three cities – the Western Parkland City, the Central River City, and the Eastern Harbour City and a 30-minute city – means residents in the Western City District will have quicker and easier access to a wider range of jobs, housing types and activities. This vision will improve the District's lifestyle and environmental assets. This <i>Western City District Plan</i> is a 20-year plan to manage growth in the context of economic, social, and environmental matters to achieve the 40-year vision for Greater Sydney. The Plan recognizes that the District's natural landscape is a great asset and attractor, sustaining and supporting a unique, parkland city. It leverages the transformative, economic improvements from the Western Sydney Airport and considers the transport,	Key initiatives: • Promoting north south and east west transport connections and matching population growth with infrastructure. • Establishing a framework for working collaboratively to unlock the district's opportunities. • A strong emphasis on jobs, leveraging off the Western Sydney Airport and the Aerotropolis to build the local economy by increasing agricultural production and promoting tourism. • Promoting more diverse and affordable housing types within the district. • Focusing on the delivery of urban tree canopy cover and Blue and Green Grid to create the Western Parkland City. • Creating a continuous open space corridor along the entirety of South Creek that provides ecological protection and enhancement, better stormwater treatment and a regionally significant corridor for recreation uses. • Recognising and protecting the values of the Metropolitan Rural Area. • Enhancing and protecting the river systems, including the Nepean River. • Using resources wisely and adapting to a changing world.

infrastructure, services, affordable housing, and open spaces that will be required as the population grows. Introduction Greater Sydney Commission (greatercities.au)	WPC & MRA: The Plan is important in recognizing and mapping the MRA boundary with the rural area and protecting MRA functions and values. It highlights the importance of the MRA's ecological functions, the green grid, open space and also the role of agribusiness and opportunities provided by the WSA.
Western Parkland City - Blueprint Western Parkland City Authority (WPCA), October 2022	
The Blueprint sets out the infrastructure priorities that will deliver the Western Parkland City (WPC) vision as established in Greater Sydney Region Plan (GSRP). By 2036 WPC will be growing faster than any other part of NSW with the largest corridor of greenfield development in Australia that requires significant investment in infrastructure. This document shifts away from incremental planning and puts forward short to medium term priorities for the government to leverage the initial infrastructure investment for the WPC. https://wpca.sydney/assets/Documents/Publications/Blueprint-and-EDR/WPCA_draft_Blueprint.pdf	Key initiatives: • A8 Priority requires councils to develop and implement rural land strategies to support agricultural production • Expand the Green Grid network and achieve green-blue grid objectives • Improve integrated water cycle management • Deliver the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan • Provide pathways to deliver net zero emissions • Develop and finalise the Regional Land Use Planning Framework for the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley • Deliver on the outcomes of the Economic Roadmap • Progress the delivery of the WS Freight Line to connect Parkland City to Port Botany • Address urban heat island effects • North-South rail line and East-West link • Rapid Bus Service from the 4 Metropolitan Centres to the new airport and Aerotropolis • Deliver the Integrated Transport Plan • Equal digital access for all residents and enhanced mobile phone coverage • Provision of both hard and soft infrastructure • Attracting investment and talent • Support for the City's Strategic Centres • Growth and nurturing of an innovation ecosystem • Regional Economic Development Strategy WPC & MRA: Priority G6 requires continued protection of the MRA from urban development and notes that new development should be contained within existing towns and villages at a scale that enhances local character and amenity. The provision of infrastructure in the rural areas is a key issue. Whilst the focus in this draft Blueprint is on the aerotropolis, it does include some infrastructure that would benefit the MRA, e.g., digital infrastructure and resolving mobile phone blackspots. Further work on agribusiness has been undertaken by the WPCA and should be referred to for this project.
Western Sydney Visitor Economy Strategy 2017/18-2020/21 Destination NSW	
Western Sydney is a key contributor to the NSW Visitor Economy. In 2016, Western Sydney welcomed 12.4 million visitors, 33 per cent of all visitors to the Greater Sydney region.	Key initiatives: • Develop a strong collaborative network of Government, industry, and commercial partners • Deliver Destination Management Plans and improve perception • Assist development of business cases that promote investment

It currently delivers \$4.2 billion in visitor expenditure and has the potential to continue to grow in the future. However, several key challenges need to be overcome to grow the visitor economy. A cohesive approach to destination management is needed, with all stakeholders working together; and a long-term destination management plan is required. Western Sydney benefits from heritage and cultural venues such as Powerhouse Casula and Elizabeth Farm. The region boasts 3,600 square kilometres of national parks, including the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Western-Sydney-Executive-Summary.pdf	• Improve Western Sydney's tourism such as medical related tourism • Develop the Educational Tour Sector • Secure and Grow Major Events • Industry Skills Development • Double overnight visitor expenditure WPC & MRA: This Strategy highlights the importance of Western Sydney to NSW's visitor economy. Much of that economic value is generated in the MRA, including through visitation to natural areas and agritourism. This should be recognised in the review of the Strategy, currently underway.
THEME: PERI-URBAN AND AGRICULTURAL	
NSW Right to Farm Policy NSW Department of Primary Industries, December 2015	
The concept of 'right to farm' in this policy relates to government's support for farmers' desire to undertake lawful agricultural practices without conflict or interference with neighbouring land uses. Australia's peri-urban regions comprise less than 3 % of land used for agriculture but account for more than 25 % of the gross value of agricultural production. The policy aims to: • Establish a baseline and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of land use conflicts. • Ensure ongoing reviews of relevant EPIs including consideration of options to ensure best land use outcomes to minimise conflicts. • Improve education and awareness on management of land use conflicts. https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/587184/NSW-Right-to-farm-policy.pdf	Key initiatives: The NSW Government strives to increase certainty for existing agricultural use and promote innovation and investment in agriculture by: • Identifying and facilitating access to resources on which agriculture depends. • Supporting the retention of critical industry mass and access to services, infrastructure, processing facilities and markets. • Planning for land use near agriculture to minimise conflicts and where possible enable future growth and adaptation, while providing for other compatible industries to co-exist. • Working with local government and other stakeholders to identify and monitor nuisance complaints related to farming, and to identify any additional measures required to assist their efforts in best practice land use planning. • Developing a suite of Regional Plans that identify regional priorities for growth, including for primary industries. WPC & MRA: Land use conflicts in the WPC occur between agricultural industries and residential uses. Conflicts can be a considerable issue for councils, increase costs for farming enterprises and can force producers to either relocate, underinvest in farming, or leave the industry. This policy recognises the important issues and possible solutions to minimise conflict and support the agricultural industry.
Agriculture Industry Snapshot for Planning Greater Sydney Region Department of Primary Industries, NSW, August 2020	
This snapshot details the key agricultural industries in Greater Sydney, their requirements and interactions with suppliers, processing facilities and markets.	Key initiatives: • The planning system can support primary production with dedicated land use zones, planning controls and minimum lot sizes, even in contested areas.

Historical planning policy has not strategically valued and protected rural land in peri-urban areas, and instead is regarding it as 'urban land in waiting'. The snapshot recognises agricultural industries as a significant contributor economically, environmentally, and culturally, and the need to apply best practice land use planning to enable industry investment and growth. Agriculture Industry Snapshots for Landuse Planning (nsw.gov.au)	To develop effective land use planning policy for agricultural industries it is important to understand their location, the reasons why they exist in that location, the opportunities they take advantage of and the challenges they face. WPC & MRA: Most of the agricultural land uses in Greater Sydney occur in the MRA, with privately owned rural land being highly fragmented. The snapshot reiterates the importance of urban planning in supporting agricultural production in peri-urban areas.
Sydney Peri Urban Network Action Plan SPUN, 2020	
The SPUN Action Plan advocates for solutions to peri-urban issues by identifying priorities for action and developing an action plan for all sections of community and relevant agencies. Sydney's peri-urban lands contribute to the health and wellbeing of all residents, and are critical to the future resilience of the city This action plan will ensure Sydney's peri-urban areas are better managed and adequately protected so that future generations of Sydney and surrounds continue to have an urban fringe that supports resilience and prosperity. Peri-urban means the interface between urban and rural areas. Peri-urban lands typically comprise a mix of urban and rural-residential areas, scattered settlements, productive agricultural lands, natural biodiversity areas and diverse topography. Sydney-PeriUrban-Network-of-Councils-SPUN-Action-Plan-2020-single.pdf (nsw.gov.au)	Key initiatives: WPC & MRA: The Action Plan recognizes the important value of rural areas and includes a range of actions relevant to the MRA in Western Parkland City, such as: Action 6.2- Advocate for and provide more certainty regarding the protection and enhancement of the metropolitan rural area and other surrounding rural areas. Action 8.1- Develop appropriate new legislation e.g., a "Greater Sydney Agriculture Lands Protection Act" or an equivalent State Environmental Planning Policy. Action 12.2- Capture and understand the socio-economic values included. - rural tourism. - Action 13.4- 13.4 Identify economic solutions to the "superannuation" subdivision approach to rural land.
THEME: TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE	
Future Transport 2056 Strategy Infrastructure NSW	
Future Transport 2056 is a suite of strategies and plans that set the 40-year vision, directions, and principles for customer mobility in NSW, guiding transport investment over the longer term. It presents future economic and societal shifts and has a customer focus, with the aim of achieving a world-class, safe, efficient, and reliable transport system.	Key initiatives: - Outer Sydney Orbital Road - Western Sydney Freight Line corridor - Sydney Metro City & Southwest extension between Bankstown and Liverpool - M5 extension - Western Sydney Airport – Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis to Parramatta train link - Western Sydney IMT and the Mamre Road precinct

Future Transport 2056 was developed collaboratively with the GCC, Infrastructure NSW, DPE, Industry and Environment to ensure NSW's overarching strategies for transport and land use planning align and complement each other, delivering an integrated vision for the State. https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/future-transport-strategy	• To continue collaboration with industry • NSW Connected and Automated Vehicles Plan • North South Rail Line between Cudgegong Road and St Marys and Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis and Macarthur • Southwest Rail Link Extension • Road Safety Plan 2021 • Western Sydney Freight Line (stage 1) • NSW Train Link hub and spoke coach trials • Smart Western Sydney • Sydney Metro – 100 per cent renewable energy offset in NSW WPC & MRA: The Future Transport Strategy includes a number of initiatives for the WPC which impact the MRA. In particular the Outer Sydney Orbital will increase pressure on agricultural land. Other initiatives may increase accessibility and market opportunities, including connections to WSA.
State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042 Infrastructure NSW, May 2022	
<i>State Infrastructure Strategy (SIS) 2022-2042</i> sets out Infrastructure NSW's independent advice to the NSW Government on the State's needs and strategic priorities for infrastructure over the long term. The Strategy recommends reforms, policies and projects that respond to NSW's changing economic, social, and environmental outlook. It assesses infrastructure problems and solutions and provides recommendations to best grow the State's economy, enhance productivity, and improve liveability for our NSW community. https://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/expert-advice/state-infrastructure-strategy/	Key Initiatives: • Boost economy-wide productivity and competitiveness • Service growing communities • Embed reliability and resilience • Achieve an orderly and efficient transition to Net Zero • Enhance long-term water security • Protect our natural endowments • Harness the power of data and digital technology • Integrate infrastructure, land use and service planning • Design the investment program to endure WPC & MRA: Western Sydney has traditionally experienced an under-provision of infrastructure. This is exacerbated by current high growth in new development areas, where there is a lag in infrastructure provision.
Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts, February 2018	

The Australian Government aims to build a stronger and more prosperous Western Sydney by investing \$2.9 billion over ten years in major infrastructure upgrades. The Plan involves major road and transport linkages that will capitalise on the economic gains from developing an airport at Badgerys Creek while boosting the local economy and liveability of Western Sydney. The aim is to relieve pressure on existing infrastructure and unlock the economic capacity of the region by easing costly congestion, slashing travel times, and creating thousands of local jobs. Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts	Key Initiatives: • Upgrade of The Northern Road to a minimum of four lanes from Narellan to Jamison Road, Penrith. • Construction of a new east-west motorway to the airport between the M7 Motorway and The Northern Road (to be known as the M12 Motorway). • Upgrade Bringelly Road to a minimum of four lanes between The Northern Road and Camden Valley Way. • Construction of the Werrington Arterial Road by upgrading Kent Road and Gipps Street to four lanes between the Great Western Highway and the M4 Motorway. • Upgrade of the intersection of Ross Street and the Great Western Highway. • A \$200 million package for local roads upgrades, to be delivered across four rounds over ten years. WPC & MRA: The Western Sydney Airport provides many opportunities for the MRA however it will increase congestion and impact on livability, the infrastructure plan helps to improve access to the airport and aims to alleviate some of the impacts, e.g., from congestion.
NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 NSW Government, September 2018	
The NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018- 2023 is a call to action for government and industry to work together to make our freight system more efficient, more accessible, safer, and more sustainable for the benefit of producers, operators, customers, and communities across NSW. Planning is underway for a Western Sydney Freight line, a line between the Western Parkland City and Port Botany. This will allow the transport of goods by rail across Greater Sydney, linking growing industrial areas and distribution centres. As a supporting plan to Future Transport 2056, this Plan is central to the NSW Government's long-term vision for transport in NSW. Western Sydney Freight Line – Stages 1 and 2 Transport for NSW	Key initiatives: • Drive economic growth and deliver capacity enhancements • Increase efficiency, connectivity, and access • Improve safety and sustainability The Plan includes over 70 initiatives to be delivered by 2023 – ranging from infrastructure investment to trials of new technologies. These initiatives are focused on achieving five key objectives: • Objective 1: Economic growth • Objective 2: Efficiency, connectivity, and access • Objective 3: Capacity • Objective 4: Safety • Objective 5: Sustainability WPC & MRA: Freight planning is important to the economics of the MRA by improving connectivity for industry (including agriculture and extractive industry). However increased freight movements impact negatively on the amenity of rural areas, including towns and villages.
THEME: BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES	
The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2022	
The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan is a strategic conservation plan for Western Sydney, prepared to meet biodiversity approvals for the Commonwealth strategic assessment	Key initiatives: • Urban and industrial development in the nominated areas

and NSW strategic biodiversity certification. It aims to protect Western Sydney's biodiversity and support its growth to 2056 and beyond. The Plan strategically identifies important biodiversity areas within the Cumberland subregion to offset the biodiversity impacts of future urban development, while ensuring a vibrant and liveable city. NSW Department of Industry publication (shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com)	• Infrastructure in the nominated areas • Intensive plant agriculture in the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Agribusiness Precinct • Western Sydney major transport corridors WPC & MRA: The CPCP will contribute to the Western Parkland City by supporting the delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure while protecting important biodiversity including threatened plants and animals.
NSW Natural Capital Statement of Intent - Recognising the value of nature NSW Government, December 2022	
The NSW Natural Capital Statement of Intent sets the ambition for, and approach to, sustainably managing natural capital in New South Wales. It provides a pathway to guide and inform NSW Government decision-making to conserve and enhance environmental assets and services while ensuring the State's economic prosperity. Consultation Draft NSW Natural Capital Statement of Intent NSW Environment and Heritage	The NSW Natural Capital Statement of Intent sets out a vision and pathway to contributing systemically towards an improved natural capital asset base, and a resilient and sustainable economy. The NSW Government will set out a pathway to recognising and valuing natural capital in a systematic and strategic manner that will support the evolution and maturation of voluntary natural capital markets and investments. WPC & MRA: The Statement of Intent informs an approach to the valuation of nature and ecosystem services, which will improve resilience and help provide a framework for understanding the ecosystem values of the MRA.
THEME: HOUSING	
Housing 2041, NSW Housing Strategy NSW Government, March 2021	

Housing 2041 sets a long-term vision and objectives for better housing outcomes across NSW - housing in the right locations and housing that suits diverse needs. It is centered around the four inter-related pillars of housing supply, affordability, diversity, and resilience. Housing 2041 approaches housing solutions holistically, looking at population patterns, economic and environmental effects, and other trends that affect the way we live. 20-year vision- NSW will have housing that supports security, comfort, independence, and choice for all people at all stages of their lives. https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/A-Housing-Strategy-for-NSW	Key initiatives: • Developing an agreed evidence base for the benefits of universal design to meet diverse needs and promote sustainable and energy-efficient homes • Increasing security of tenure in private or public rental • Continuing to modernise and invest in our social housing portfolio. • Testing new housing types, tenures, and delivery models to demonstrate best practice on government-owned land. • Strengthening partnerships and collaboration with councils for profit and not-for-profit developers and communities to deliver housing. WPC & MRA: The MRA can play a small role in housing provision through providing local need in towns and villages. Urban expansion into the MRA in Western Sydney can be controlled through ensuring appropriate planning guidance in the District and local plans and LEPs.
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