



KURRI KURRI DISTRICT STRATEGY

PLANNING FOR OUR PEOPLE
OUR PLACE OUR FUTURE

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Executive Summary

The Kurri Kurri District is home to approximately 17,000 people and is the second most populated region in the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA). The District contains three main centres of employment, including the commercial centres of Kurri Kurri and Weston and the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct, which comprises the single largest area of occupied industrial land in the LGA. The District also contains the Hunter Economic Zone, which contains almost 880 hectares of land zoned IN1 General Industrial.

The District has strong connectivity to surrounding centres via some of the Hunter Region's major roads. Kurri Kurri is within 35 minutes of the Newcastle Regional City and 15 minutes of the Cessnock and Maitland major centres. The District has a unique history and strong identity, including prominent heritage buildings, high quality parks and public open spaces and murals in the Kurri Kurri Township, which depict the history of the area.

Overall, the District has a younger demographic than NSW, with much of the community working in the retail, health services or social assistance industry sectors. The District demographic is expected to remain young in the coming years, due primarily to the region's accessibility to employment centres, community and recreation facilities and also as a result of land and property value, which permits greater housing affordability.

In recent years, a number of major developments have occurred in land adjacent to Kurri Kurri and Weston indicating that the District is entering a period of renewal and growth. The prospect of growth is reflected in the Department of Planning and Environment's Hunter Regional Plan 2036, which identifies Kurri Kurri as a 'Strategic Centre'.



The Hunter Regional Plan foreshadows that a considerable proportion of the dwellings and jobs required in Greater Newcastle by 2036 will be accommodated through the renewal, diversification and connection of the Region's strategic centres.

The Draft Kurri Kurri District Strategy was developed by Cessnock City Council in collaboration with the local community and stakeholder groups. The Strategy was exhibited between June and August of 2017. The Strategy incorporates the community's aspirations for the future of the District and outlines a collective vision, directions and actions for land use planning and development in the District to 2036.

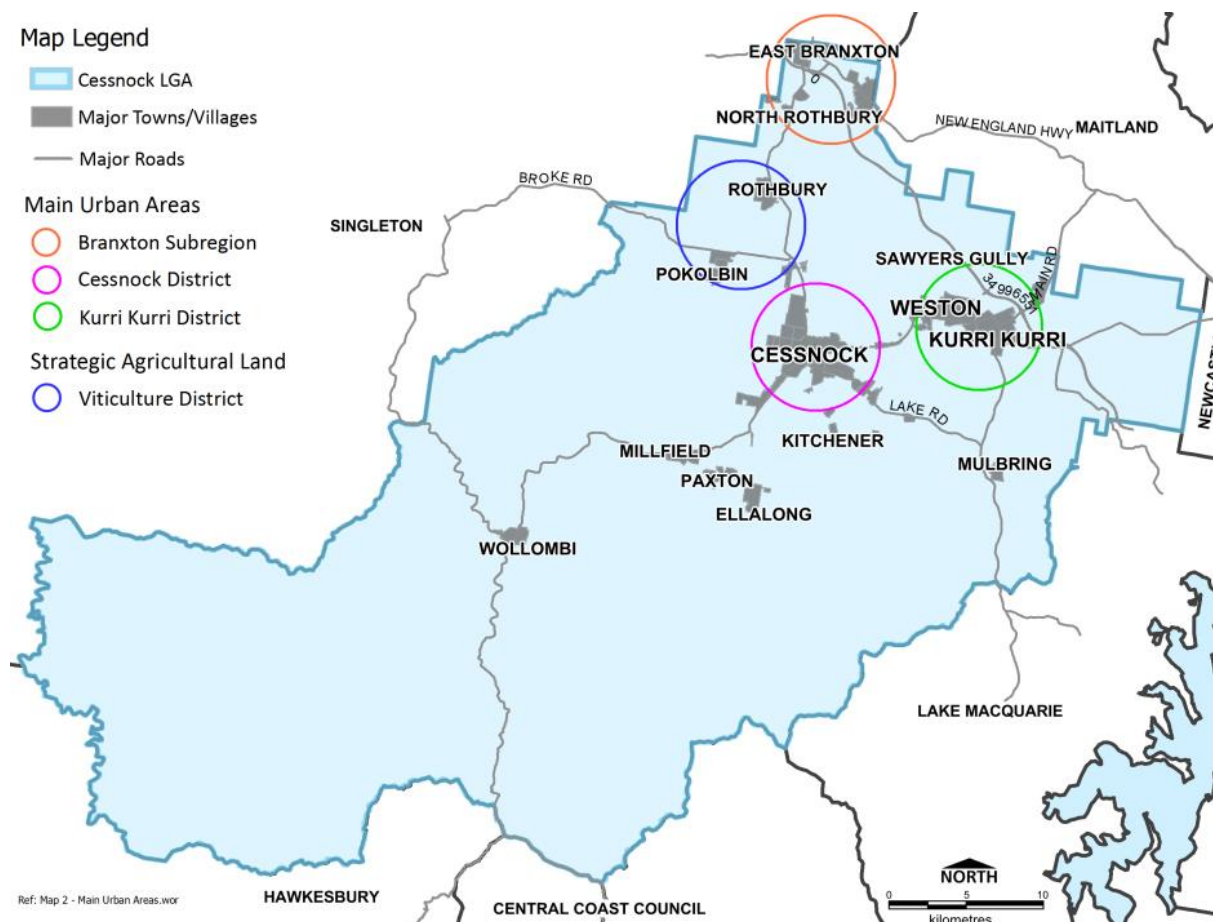
The Strategy is supported by commercial centre masterplans for Kurri Kurri and Weston. The masterplans set out more detailed considerations for the commercial centres and an indicative program to guide public domain improvements in the years ahead.

Introduction

1.1 Background

The Cessnock LGA encompasses approximately 1,950 square kilometres within the Lower Hunter Region of New South Wales. The total population of the LGA was 55,560 people in 2016, the majority of whom reside in a thin urban belt between the townships of Cessnock and Kurri Kurri (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The LGA contains three main urban centres, being the Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and Branxton districts or subregions. The LGA also contains an internationally recognised Vineyards District, the majority of which is recognised as Strategic Agricultural Land by Council and the NSW State Government. The approximate location of the main urban areas and the Vineyards District are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 – Main Urban Areas, Cessnock Local Government Area



The LGA's main urban areas are expected to grow significantly in the coming years, primarily as a result of greater housing affordability and in response to major infrastructure projects, such as the Hunter Expressway, which have made the LGA more accessible to employment centres, tourism and community services and facilities in the Upper and Lower Hunter. As a result, the LGA is expecting significant urban and economic growth and a shift from primary and secondary industries, such as mining and rural industries, to an increased range of service industries.

In preparation for this change, Council has undertaken considerable planning for several of the main urban areas in the LGA, including the adoption of the Cessnock Central Business District Masterplan in December 2012 and the Branxton Subregional Strategy, Structure Plan and Town Centre Masterplan in June 2016. Planning has also been undertaken more broadly across the LGA to assess the present capacity and future needs of the community regarding infrastructure and recreation facilities.

In May 2010, the Kurri Kurri 2030 Project was commenced by the University of NSW in conjunction with the Kurri Kurri Business Chamber. The Project was the first of its kind to undertake a detailed analysis of Kurri Kurri and identify broad opportunities and constraints relating to the Township. Since 2010, Council has completed several City wide studies relevant to the District, including the Cycling Strategy, Aquatic Needs Analysis, Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan and Recreation Needs Analysis. Concept masterplans have also been endorsed for Peace Park, Kurri Kurri Central Oval and for the Weston Commercial Centre upgrade. More recently, Council has commenced the Cessnock City Planning Strategy Project and Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan that will examine, among other things, the long term supply and demand for residential, commercial, industrial and recreation land and facilities in the Cessnock LGA.

1.2 Purpose

In recent years, a number of significant developments have occurred in land adjacent to Kurri Kurri and Weston indicating that the District is entering a period of renewal and growth. This prospect has intensified the need for an area specific strategy to coordinate local policy for Kurri Kurri and Weston.

The Strategy will ensure that Kurri Kurri and Weston are well-positioned to benefit from major regional infrastructure and future urban growth and infill development in the District. The Strategy will also assist Council in applying for grants and State and Federal Government funding for major infrastructure works. It is Council's aim to be proactive in this process by strengthening the planning framework that relates to the District.

The overarching objective of the masterplans for Kurri Kurri and Weston is to guide future public domain improvements in the commercial centres. Revitalising the public domain and differentiating the centres from those nearby will help attract redevelopment and activate the public domain for a range of ancillary uses. It is anticipated that the public domain improvements proposed in the masterplans will attract new businesses and redevelopment to the commercial centres.

1.3 The Kurri Kurri District

The Kurri Kurri District is located between the major centres of Cessnock and Maitland and is the second most populated urban area in the LGA, being home to approximately 17,000 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

For the purpose of this Strategy, the Kurri Kurri District includes the localities of Kurri Kurri, Weston, Pelaw Main, Stanford Merthyr, Abermain, Sawyers Gully, Heddon Greta and Cliftleigh. These communities form the primary catchment of the commercial centres at Kurri Kurri and Weston.



1.4 Study Area

The Study Area is shown as a circle that extends to the former Aluminium Smelter site in the north, the Hunter Expressway in the east, the Hunter Economic Zone in the south and Peace Park in the west. The extent of the Study Area is shown in **Figure 2**.

The character of the District is defined by its towns and villages, all of which are important in their own right and as a collective. The connections that exist between the towns and villages in the District are carefully considered in relation to the Study Area. The majority of the District population, the main employment centres and many of the key District attractions and facilities are located within a radius of approximately 2.5 kilometres of the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre. It is this community that stands to benefit the most from detailed planning and from the renewal and growth that is occurring in the wider District.

Detailed planning has already occurred in relation to the urban release areas to the north of the Hunter Expressway, including at both the rezoning and subdivision stages. Separate planning is also underway in relation to the former Hydro Aluminium land at Kurri Kurri. These localities and others that are beyond the Study Area, such as Abermain and Sawyers Gully will be considered further in the forthcoming City Planning Strategy Project.

Figure 2 – The Study Area



1.5 Regional Context

Kurri Kurri is identified in the Hunter Regional Plan as a 'Strategic Centre'. Strategic centres are identified as the largest areas of activity and employment in the Region and will be a major force shaping Greater Newcastle in the future. It is anticipated that a considerable proportion of the dwellings and jobs required in Greater Newcastle by 2036 will be accommodated through the renewal, diversification and connection of the Region's

strategic centres (Department of Planning and Environment, 2016). Other strategic centres in the Lower Hunter Region near Kurri Kurri include Cessnock, East Maitland and Maitland.

The Kurri Kurri District has strong connectivity to surrounding centres via some of the Hunter Region's major roads. The District is within 35 minutes of the Newcastle City Centre and 15 minutes of the Cessnock and Maitland centres. Kurri Kurri's major connection to Newcastle is the Hunter Expressway, which is the main arterial road connecting the Lower Hunter to the Upper Hunter. Strong connectivity along the Cessnock / Kurri Kurri / Maitland corridor also exists by way of Cessnock Road and Main Road, while connectivity to Western Lake Macquarie is Kurri Kurri-Mulbring Road or George Booth Drive. The Cessnock / Kurri Kurri / Maitland corridor is identified as a growth area in the Hunter Regional Plan, primarily for housing.

The NSW Roads and Maritime Services and the Department of Planning and Environment are responsible for preparing a land use strategy for the Hunter Expressway and the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area, respectively. Once finalised, these plans will also play a major role shaping land use in and around the Kurri Kurri District and Hunter Expressway. This document will help inform those strategies and will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains current.

The District contains three main employment precincts, including the commercial centres of Kurri Kurri and Weston and the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct. A fourth, but largely undeveloped employment precinct is located to the south of the established urban area and is known as the Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ). The District's main employment precincts and HEZ are shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3 – Main Employment Precincts



The Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre is located on either side of Lang and Barton streets, between Alexandra and Merthyr streets and functions as the District's main commercial precinct. The Centre contains a primary area of activity along Lang Street, between Hampton and Victoria streets, zoned B2 Local Centre, and less active

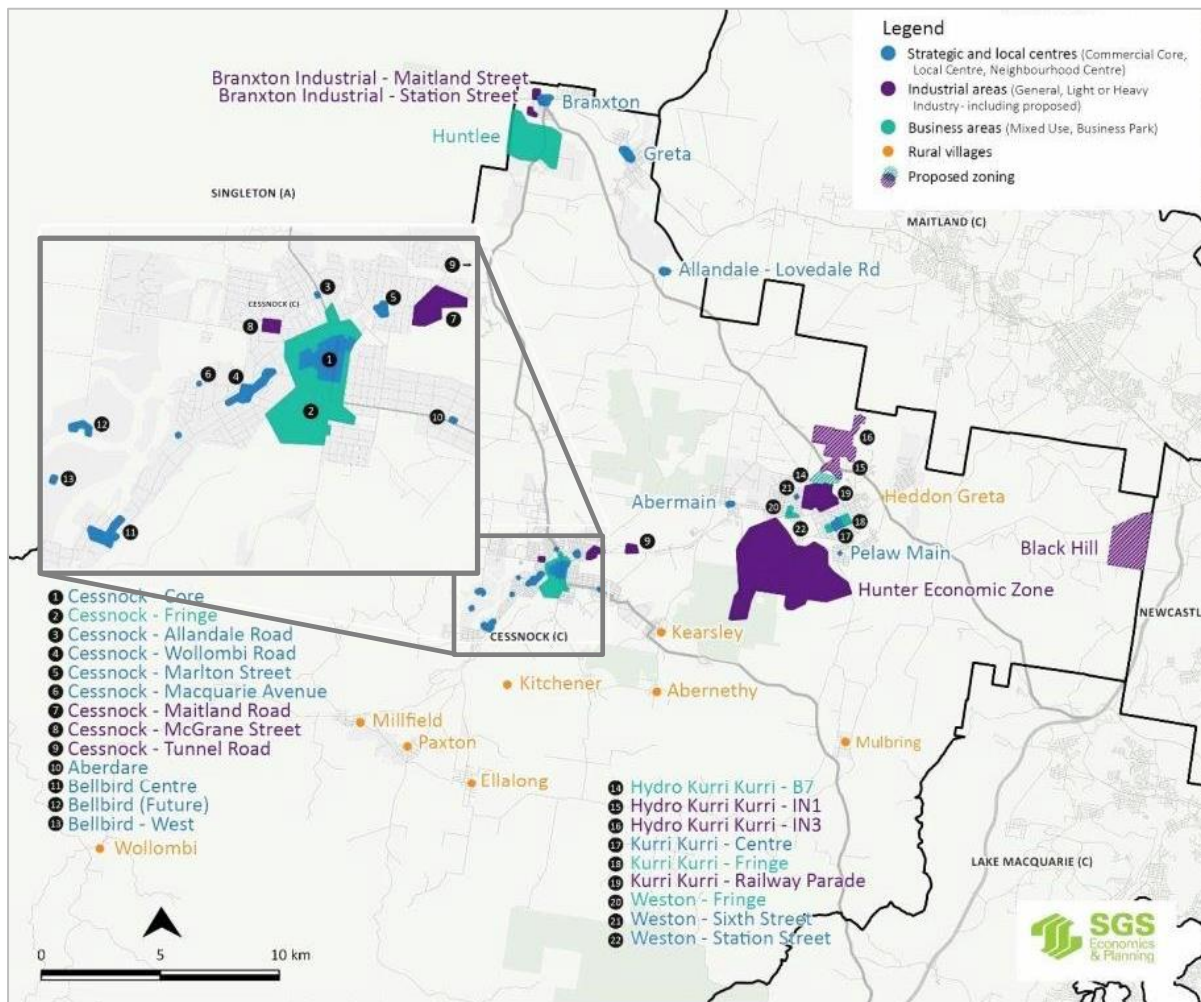
commercial fringe, which is zoned B4 Mixed Use. In the hierarchy of centres and for local planning purposes, Kurri Kurri is a Commercial Centre whose role is to support the major centre of Cessnock.

The Weston Commercial Centre is located along Station Street, between Scott and Third streets. The Centre is considerably smaller than at Kurri Kurri and contains proportionally fewer shops. In the hierarchy of centres, Weston has traditionally served the role of a convenience centre for the local community.

The Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct is approximately 100 hectares in area and contains a number of well-established light and heavy industrial developments. The Precinct is an important area for industry in the LGA due to its relative size and combination of manufacturing and other related industries which collectively occupy the site. The Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct is the single largest area of occupied industrial land in the LGA.

Employment Precincts within the Study Area are viewed in the context of existing and proposed employment centres in the LGA and the Greater Newcastle Region, including the proposed industrial centres at the former Kurri Kurri Aluminium Smelter site to the north of the District, land at Blackhill as well as land at Beresfield in the Newcastle LGA. Existing and proposed employment precincts in the Cessnock LGA are identified in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4 – Cessnock LGA Employment Precincts



1.6 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community and stakeholder engagement has been an important element in the drafting of this Strategy and was separated into two main stages.

Stage One – Preliminary Consultation

Preliminary consultation with the community and stakeholder groups occurred between July and December of 2016. The preliminary consultation introduced the Project to the community, raised awareness and encouraged participation and feedback to ensure the community's aspirations for the future of the District could be captured and considered early in the planning process.

The preliminary consultation involved drop in centres at Kurri Kurri and Weston, distribution of project postcards and face to face discussion with business operators in Kurri Kurri and Weston. An online survey was developed and social media and interactive online mapping was also used to obtain comments relating to the District.

Approximately 165 comments were received through the preliminary consultation process, including comments from public agencies and local community groups. The Draft Strategy and commercial centre masterplans incorporated many of the aspirations of the community and stakeholder groups.

Stage Two – Public Exhibition

Public exhibition of the Draft Kurri Kurri District Strategy occurred between 21 June and 2 August 2017. Engagement with targeted stakeholder groups continued for a brief period beyond the exhibition closing date, until 4 August 2017.

Approximately 100 people participated in the engagement process, including members of the local community, business owners and targeted stakeholder groups.

The engagement process included an online survey (41 completed), three community drop-in sessions (approximately 35 people attended) and targeted stakeholder consultation (approximately 30 people from seven community groups attended).

The public exhibition period was promoted through a dedicated webpage on Council's website, Council's Facebook page, the Cessnock Advertiser, drop-in sessions and directly with key stakeholders.

Planning Considerations

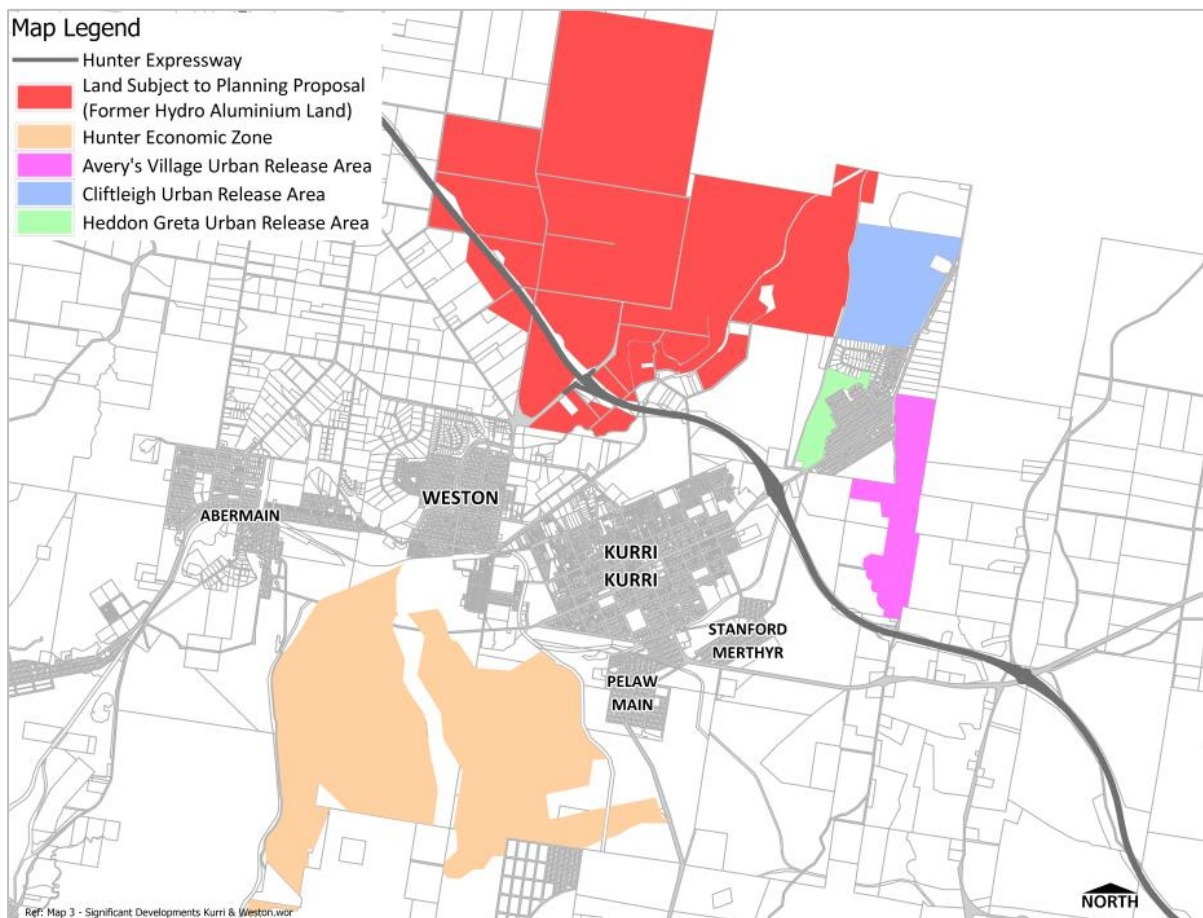
2.1 Community Profile

Settlement History

The traditional custodians of the land are the Wonnarua People. Archaeological investigation in and around the Kurri Kurri District has been reasonably extensive with evidence of Aboriginal settlement having been found from as early as 11,000 years before present (Archaeological and Heritage Management Solutions, 2014). Colonial settlement occurred from as early as 1820, when the area was opened for farming. By the late 1800s, coal was actively being extracted from several mines in the District and surrounding land.

The townships of Kurri Kurri and Weston were established in the early 1900s in response to increasing pressure for housing close to the collieries in the area. The townships grew rapidly until the 1950s, at which time deepening coal seams, difficult ground conditions and an overall reduction in coal markets resulted in the closure of several mines in the area. The downturn in the coal industry had a devastating impact on the local economy and resulted in many residents moving from the area. By 1967, the private railways that had serviced the District with a passenger line ceased operation for all but a few coal haulages.

Figure 5 – Significant Developments in the Kurri Kurri District



In 1969, in response to a State Government initiative to restore economic stability in the area, the Kurri Kurri Aluminium Smelter commenced production. The initial capacity of the smelter was less than 25,000 tonnes per

annum. The facility was expanded on two occasions and by 1985 was producing 150,000 tonnes annually and employed approximately 900 employees. However, by the early 2000s the smelter began experiencing financial pressure and by May of 2014 the smelter had closed altogether, impacting the local community.

The District is presently entering a period of renewal and growth, with a number of significant developments occurring in land adjacent to Kurri Kurri and Weston. These developments include the opening of the Hunter Expressway in March 2014 and the current Planning Proposal relating to the former Kurri Kurri Aluminium Smelter site, where there is expected to be a significant industrial, commercial and residential land release. The District will also be increasingly impacted by the rapidly emerging growth corridor between Kurri Kurri and Maitland, including the residential Urban Release Areas (URAs) at Avery's Village, Heddon Greta and Cliftleigh in the Cessnock LGA and at Gillieston Heights in the Maitland LGA. These significant developments are identified in **Figure 5**, with the exception of Gillieston Heights.

The Planning Proposal relating to the former Hydro Aluminium site encompasses approximately 1450 hectares in the Cessnock LGA and a further 465 hectares in the Maitland LGA. However, not all of this land will be released for redevelopment. A significant portion of the land will be retained for environmental and rural purposes, with the balance released for residential, commercial and industrial development.

Population and Dwelling Growth

The Kurri Kurri District is home to approximately 17,000 people and accounts for almost one third of the total population of the Cessnock LGA (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). A breakdown of population by suburb and census year is provided in **Table 1**. Approximately 65 percent of the District population resides within a radius of 2.5 kilometres of the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre and this has helped inform the extent of the Study Area.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment regularly updates projections for population and dwelling growth for NSW metropolitan and regional areas. The Department's most recent population and dwelling projections were released in 2017 and have been relied upon in this Strategy to predict future growth in the Kurri Kurri District to 2036. Growth projections based on the Department of Planning and Environment's population, household and dwelling projections for the Cessnock LGA for the Kurri Kurri District are presented in **Table 2**.

By 2036, the District population is projected to increase to approximately 21,000 people. To cater for the population growth, it is estimated that the District will need to accommodate an additional 1,800 dwellings, as a minimum. It is recognised that the majority of this growth will occur in the urban release areas to the north of the Hunter Expressway. A substantial amount of residential development has already occurred in the urban release areas, with far more planned for the future.

Table 1 – District Population by State Suburb (SSC) and Census Year, 2011 and 2016

	Census Population by State Suburb (SSC)	
	2011	2016
Localities in the Study Area		
Kurri Kurri	5,772	6,044
Weston	3,682	3,693
Pelaw Main	1,027	1,021
Stanford Merthyr	563	552
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<u>11,044</u>	<u>11,310</u>
Localities outside the Study Area		
Abermain	2,322	2,337
Sawyers Gully	517	500
Heddon Greta	1,711	2,047
Cliftleigh	180	888
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<u>4,730</u>	<u>5,772</u>
Grand Total	<u>15,774</u>	<u>17,082</u>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017

The Department’s population and dwelling growth projections are taken to be a conservative estimate of growth in the Kurri Kurri District. It is possible that beyond 2021, demand for housing within the District may increase at a more substantial rate as land supply reduces in surrounding LGAs and the influence of affordable housing initiatives and major infrastructure projects take effect. Significant population growth is also anticipated in the urban release areas to the north of the District. If this alternative scenario occurs, population and dwelling growth in the District may be as high as 2 percent beyond 2021, resulting in a District population of approximately 24,000 people by 2036.

Table 2 – District Population and Dwelling Growth Projections

	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Change (2016 – 36)
Total Population	15,774	17,082	18,192	19,284	20,344	20,955	3,873
Average Annual Population Growth		1.30%	1.30%	1.20%	1.10%	0.60%	-
Number of Dwellings	6,384	6,905	7,408	7,885	8,371	8,679	1,774
Average Annual Household Growth		1.6%	1.5%	1.3%	1.2%	0.7%	-

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017 and the Department of Planning and Environment’s 2017 NSW population, household and dwelling projections for the Cessnock LGA.

Age and Household Structure

The Kurri Kurri District has a marginally younger demographic when compared to New South Wales. The median age in New South Wales is 38, compared to 37 in the Kurri Kurri–Abermain Statistical Area (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). However, this is not uncommon for a rapidly growing regional area that is accessible to employment centres, has access to a range of community and recreation facilities and where land and property value permits greater housing affordability for first home buyers, sole parent households and young couples.

It is anticipated that the median age of people in the District will continue to fall in the coming years as housing affordability and supply in the Hunter Region’s coastal areas declines and as young families take advantage of the District’s accessibility to major employment centres in Cessnock, Maitland, Newcastle and the Upper Hunter. This scenario is already playing out in the growth corridor between Kurri Kurri and Maitland, where in 2016 the median age at Cliftleigh and Heddon Greta was 34 and 24, respectively.

Despite the younger demographic overall, some of the more established localities in the District, such as Kurri Kurri, Stanford Merthyr and Pelaw Main are witnessing a rising median age. This is likely a result of a lifestyle choice by older residents that have chosen to live closer to the established commercial centres and within lower maintenance, medium density housing.

When compared to the broader LGA, households in Kurri Kurri comprise proportionally fewer couples with children, but a greater number of one parent families and lone person households. The household structure in Kurri Kurri is likely to be a result of greater housing affordability in the District and is consistent with the age profile of the community. The District contains a higher proportion of younger households who are likely to have purchased their first home or have chosen to rent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The household structure may also be a reflection of the District’s accessibility to regional employment centres in the Upper and Lower Hunter.

Employment

Approximately 7,400 people in the Kurri Kurri District reported as being in the labour force in 2016. Of these, 54 percent were employed full time, 31 percent were employed part-time and 9.5 percent reported as being unemployed (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The rate of unemployment in the Kurri Kurri District in 2011 was markedly higher than both the State and national average of 6.3 and 6.9 percent, respectively (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Unemployment is a major contributing factor to the higher level of disadvantage presently experienced in the District.

In 2016, the most important industry sectors in the Kurri Kurri District were coal mining, aged care, takeaway food services, hospitals and supermarket and grocery stores. One in every five people employed in the District worked in these industries (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). 43 percent of the LGAs population travel outside the LGA to work, the majority of whom work in the Singleton and Maitland LGAs.

It is expected that demand for employment in the Kurri Kurri District will increase in line with projected population growth and that employment located outside the LGA will continue to be sourced by just under half the District's working population. Therefore, by 2036, it is anticipated that local demand for employment will increase by approximately 1,700 jobs, of which approximately 1,000 are expected to be provided within the District. The projected labour force for the Kurri Kurri District is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3 – Projected Labour Force Growth – Greater Kurri Kurri Region

	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Change (2016 – 36)
Population Aged 15+	14,044	14,957	15,854	16,726	17,228	3,184
Participation Rate	53%	53%	53%	53%	53%	
Projected Labour Force	7,411	7,927	8,402	8,865	9,130	1,719

Source: ABS 2017 Census data and the Department of Planning and Environment's 2017 NSW population, household and dwelling projections for the Cessnock LGA.

The Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct along with redevelopment of the former Kurri Kurri Aluminium Smelter site is anticipated to play a pivotal role in providing future local employment opportunities. The Industrial Precinct is an important area for industry in the LGA due to its relative size, including a substantial amount of land zoned IN3 Heavy Industrial and combination of manufacturing and other related industries which collectively occupy the land. The Precinct also benefits from its proximity to major transport infrastructure in the Hunter Region, including the Hunter Expressway. In time, the Industrial Precinct could also benefit from the heavy rail line that dissects it.

In a business as usual scenario, retail related employment in the District is anticipated to grow incrementally and in line with population growth. However, a different future scenario might be considered. Centres with nominally limited catchment areas, like Kurri Kurri and Weston, can build their status around an alternative offer which transcends beyond the traditional supermarket or department store anchored shopping trips. If a distinct offering is well marketed, it is possible to attract shoppers from the broader region, allowing the place to not only grow but also diversify away from its basic role as a supermarket anchored Local Centre. Examples include:

- festival-town, with shops that are themed around cultural offerings including music, art and film, perhaps building on Kurri Kurri's existing offer;
- services centre which is renowned for a variety of personal services;
- niche market oriented centre which provides themed fashions, such as retro, vintage or outlet goods; and/or
- health service centre.

2.2 Environmental Considerations

The Hunter Regional Plan identifies the corridor between Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and Maitland as a growth area. It is anticipated that more housing and greater housing choice will be available in this area. Funding will be provided to growth areas by the State Government for regional infrastructure, including better public transport, health, education and justice sectors as well as for open space. The State Government is expected to release a Hunter Region Special Infrastructure Contributions Plan that outlines a schedule of infrastructure projects to support growth (Department of Planning and Environment, 2016).

With this in mind, it is important that any future development and planning proposals that relate to the growth area consider the range of environmental constraints affecting the land and seek to protect the significant physical and environmental features of the landscape for future generations.

Biodiversity

The Kurri Kurri District comprises land which contains significant ecological values. Vegetation with the greatest ecological value is located to the south and west of the Study Area and includes land within the Hunter Economic Zone, adjoining the Weretaka National Park. Clearing land for new development, including residential, industrial and agricultural development, has the potential to impact these important ecological values.

Bushfire

The District is encircled by dense native vegetation and this presents a major bushfire hazard to fringe urban settlements and critical infrastructure, such as roads, rail, electricity and communication lines. Major roads in the District have historically been impacted by bushfire and this has resulted in temporary road closures, limiting traffic movement between the District and nearby settlements. The Hunter Economic Zone, Kurri Kurri District Hospital, Kurri Kurri Wastewater Treatment Plant and the local TAFE are all located within high hazard bushland settings and for this reason are more susceptible to bushfire.

The NSW Rural Fire Service continues to manage bushland in high risk areas within the District through back burning and other mechanisms. New development in areas that are likely to be affected by bushfire events will continue to be assessed in line with State government legislation and in consultation with the NSW Rural Fire Service. Council is also continually updating local bushfire mapping to comply with the NSW Rural Fire Service mapping guidelines.



Flooding

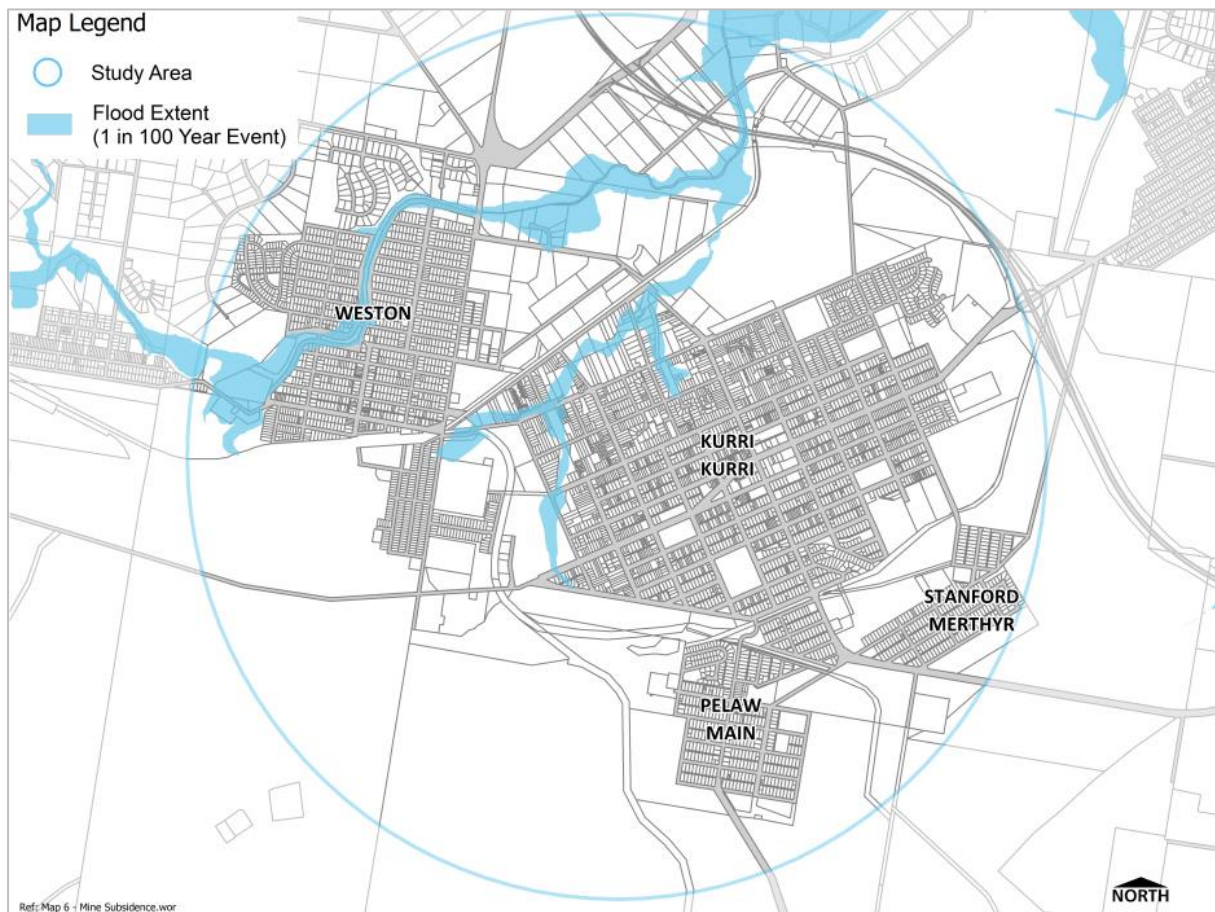
Parts of the Kurri Kurri District are susceptible to flooding, primarily from Swamp Creek, which dissects the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct, Weston and a number of properties to the west of the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre. The areas of the District impacted by flooding in a 1 in 100 year event are shown in **Figure 6**.

The most significant flood event in the catchment over the last 50 years occurred in June 2007. For Weston, the 2007 storm event was marginally higher than the predicted 1 in 100 year event (Worley Parsons, 2014). Some road infrastructure and a number of residential properties adjacent to Swamp Creek were impacted during the storm, including the Fourth Street Bridge at Weston, which was severely damaged.

Other areas of the District have also been severely impacted during recent flood events, including at Frame Drive in Abermain, Clift Street at Heddon Greta and Main Road at Testers Hollow.

Despite there being areas of flood prone land in the District, neither the Kurri Kurri nor Weston commercial centres are significantly impacted. The Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre is located on a natural high point in the landscape and the Weston Commercial Centre is sufficiently elevated to avoid the impacts of flooding. The risk of flooding will continue to be assessed through planning investigations to rezone land and through the development application process.

Figure 6 – 1 in 100 Year Flood Risk



Mine Subsidence

Subsidence Advisory NSW is responsible for administering the *Mine Subsidence Compensation Act 1961* that gives effect to areas of land in NSW that are prone to mine subsidence. These areas are referred to as 'Proclaimed Mine Subsidence Districts'. Although there has been a history of underground mining in the Region, the main urban areas of Kurri Kurri and Weston are largely unaffected by mine subsidence and are located outside the nearest Mine Subsidence District, which is the Tomalpin District. However, a large tract of land to the south and east of the established urban areas of Kurri Kurri and Weston is within the Proclaimed Mine Subsidence District.

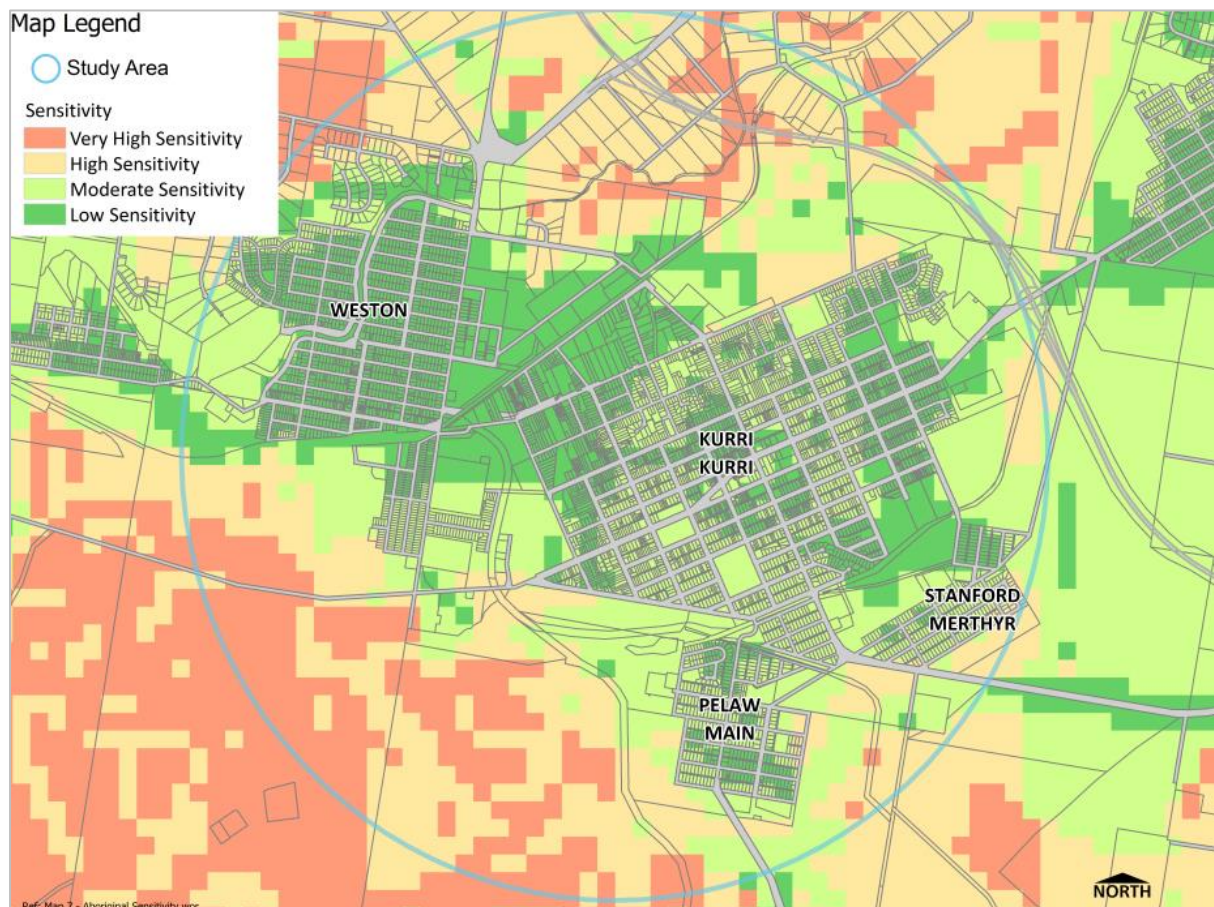
Subsidence Advisory NSW has recently completed a review of the Mine Subsidence Districts in NSW. Changes have been made to the extent of districts to ensure consistency, reduce unnecessary costs and minimise potential mine subsidence risks. The changes include new districts, extensions to current districts and revoking some areas (Subsidence Advisory NSW). For Kurri Kurri and Weston, Subsidence Advisory NSW has included the localities of Stanford Merthyr and the southern portion of Pelaw Main in the Proclaimed Mine Subsidence District of Tomalpin.

2.3 Heritage and Character

Aboriginal Heritage

The Cessnock LGA Aboriginal Heritage Study, undertaken in 2014, identifies areas of the local landscape that are more likely to contain surface and/or buried evidence of prior Aboriginal occupation and use. The Study identifies that the predominantly urban areas of the District are typically low to moderate sensitivity, whereas the northern and southern areas of the District are identified as high to very high sensitivity. Aboriginal Land Sensitivity as mapped in the Cessnock LGA Aboriginal Heritage Study 2014 is provided in **Figure 7**.

Figure 7 - Aboriginal Land Sensitivity Mapping



Built Heritage

The Kurri Kurri District has a unique history and strong identity. Central to the District's identity are the prominent heritage buildings in the commercial centres and the 'country town' streetscape.

The District contains over thirty heritage items, including items of built and natural significance. Additional depth to the character of the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre is provided by Rotary Park and the prominence of murals, which depict the heritage of the local area. Cumulatively, these prominent buildings, places and public art help establish the character of the District and are important attractors.

Increased pressure for redevelopment along the major road corridors, including Lang Street and Cessnock Road are anticipated to occur as the District grows. Increased density will also occur in and around the main commercial centres. Maintaining the country town character by preserving visual connections to natural landscape features and heritage items is important. It will provide a point of distinction in the District and attract visitors from surrounding communities and further afield.

2.4 Infrastructure

Roads

The Hunter Expressway was opened in 2014 and includes a full interchange at Kurri Kurri and Buchanan and half interchange at Hart Road (Loxford interchange). The proximity of the Hunter Expressway to the Kurri Kurri District is expected to transform the role and appeal of the District over the course of the next few decades. The Kurri Kurri District will be expected to serve both as a gateway to the Cessnock LGA and as an important employment node between the settlements of Maitland and Cessnock.

The District is also located within a significant growth corridor between Cessnock and Maitland that is identified in the Hunter Regional Plan. It is expected that urban growth in and about the Kurri Kurri District will continue to be shaped by its proximity to major regional roads, including the Hunter Expressway, Cessnock Road, Main Road and John Renshaw Drive. Each of these major roads experience high volumes of traffic.

\$15 million has been committed by the Federal Government to raise and realign Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow. The flooding at Testers Hollow has a substantial impact on local communities. The Federal Government is working on the Testers Hollow Project to ensure that communities stay connected to jobs, schools and emergency services. The Federal Government is working with the NSW Government to see this road upgraded in the most effective way possible.

Water and Sewer

With the exception of the large lot residential properties to the north of Abermain, the District is entirely serviced by the Hunter Water Corporation's reticulated water and sewer network.

A major component of the existing sewer network is the Kurri Kurri Wastewater Treatment Facility, located off McLeod Road in Kurri Kurri. The Facility currently serves the communities of Abermain, Weston, Kurri Kurri, Stanford Merthyr, Pelaw Main, Heddon Greta and Cliftleigh. The Facility treats 3.4 megalitres per day and can handle wastewater from a population equivalent to 21,500 people and is expected to be sufficient to cater for the projected District population until at least 2036.

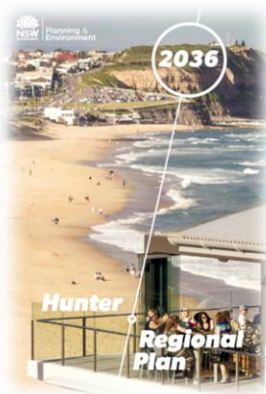
The Farley Wastewater Treatment Facility is located approximately 9 kilometres to the north of the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre. The Facility treats 5.6 megalitres per day and can handle wastewater from a population equivalent to 50,000 people.

Telecommunications

The District does not yet have access to the National Broadband Network (NBN); however the NBN is planned to be available in the District's main urban areas from as early as July 2018. Access to ADSL and fixed line services are presently available.

2.5 Strategic and Policy Context

Hunter Regional Plan



The Hunter Regional Plan supersedes the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006 and provides the overarching framework to guide the NSW Government's land use planning priorities and decisions to 2036. Relevant to the Kurri Kurri District are the Hunter Regional Plan's directions to enhance inter-regional connections, grow tourism, revitalise existing communities, create compact settlements and promote housing diversity.

The Kurri Kurri Centre is identified in the Hunter Regional Plan as a 'Strategic Centre'. Strategic centres are considered to be, or have the potential to be, the largest areas of activity and employment in the Region. It is anticipated that a considerable proportion of the dwellings and jobs required in Greater Newcastle by 2036 will be accommodated through the renewal, diversification and connection of the Region's strategic centres.

The Hunter Regional Plan's Key priorities for Kurri Kurri are:

- Retain a retail and service function for surrounding communities.
- Leverage its proximity to the Hunter Expressway and existing significant industrial land.
- Investigate opportunities for urban renewal of the Commercial Centre and new housing opportunities.
- Develop and implement a masterplan for Kurri Kurri CBD.

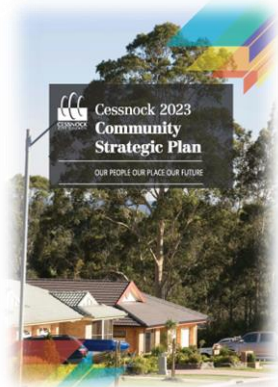
Other identified opportunities for the Kurri Kurri District include the potential to grow allied health services on land around hospitals and health services at Kurri Kurri and the completion of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail, which will provide a pedestrian and cyclist link between Newcastle and Kurri Kurri. The completion of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail is identified within the Plan as a Regional priority.

Cessnock 2023 Community Strategic Plan

The Cessnock 2023 Community Strategic Plan was endorsed by Council on 6 February 2013 and provides an outline of what the community has told Council it would like the LGA to look like by the year 2023.

Development of the Community Strategic Plan involved extensive community engagement and together residents, visitors, property owners, business owners, community organisations and government committed to the desired outcomes and strategic directions of the Plan.

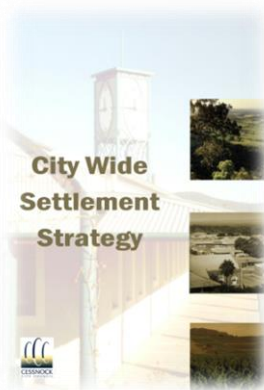
- A connected, safe and creative Community
- A sustainable and prosperous Economy
- A sustainable and healthy Environment
- Accessible infrastructure, services and facilities
- Civic Leadership and effective governance



The Community Strategic Plan establishes the following vision for the future of the Cessnock LGA:

Cessnock will be a cohesive and welcoming community living in an attractive and sustainable rural environment with a diversity of business and employment opportunities supported by accessible infrastructure and services which effectively meet community needs.

City Wide Settlement Strategy 2010



The City Wide Settlement Strategy 2010 sets out strategic directions that were used to inform the preparation of the Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011 and implement a number of the outcomes and actions arising from the former Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006. A fundamental action of the City Wide Settlement Strategy is the need to contain the urban footprint of the Cessnock LGA to that identified in the former Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006.

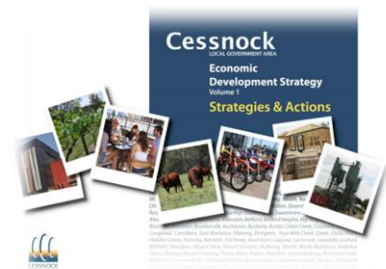
The City Wide Settlement Strategy identifies that the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre as a 'Neighbourhood Centre' concentrated in two nodes: the core retail area around Lang and Barton Streets, between Mitchell Avenue and Allworth Street; and the fringe retail area, which extends to Merthyr and Alexandria Streets. The City Wide Settlement Strategy notes the proximity of Kurri Kurri to the major centres of Maitland and Cessnock and identifies the rapidly emerging residential growth corridor between Kurri Kurri and Maitland.

In the hierarchy of centres, Kurri Kurri is a town whose role has traditionally been to support the major centre of Cessnock. While Weston is not specifically mentioned in the City Wide Settlement Strategy, it has traditionally served the role of a convenience centre for the local community.

Cessnock LGA Economic Development Strategy

The Cessnock LGA Economic Development Strategy provides the direction and framework to encourage and facilitate economic development in the Cessnock LGA. The Strategy lists the following key challenges relevant to the Cessnock LGA.

- Building a positive profile of the Cessnock LGA, capitalising on and promoting its strengths and attributes.
- Improving the presentation of the Cessnock LGA to create strong, positive first impressions and to showcase the natural environment, heritage and scenic assets.
- Building a strong economic development culture within Cessnock City Council, with Council recognised as a leader and driver of change.
- Developing the capacity and flexibility of both businesses and the workforce to respond to the changing marketplace and business environment.



Cessnock Cycling Strategy 2016



The Cessnock Cycling Strategy 2016 sets out Council's direction and framework to establish a bicycle friendly environment within the Cessnock LGA. The Strategy identifies critical cycling infrastructure and behavioural requirements necessary to deliver the Strategy's vision, which is for a network of on and off road bicycle routes that connect key destinations within the Cessnock LGA. The Cycling Strategy will contribute to and enhance Council's strategic vision for a sustainable community.

Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan 2009

The Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan 2009 assists Council to plan and manage the future development and maintenance needs of open space and recreation facilities throughout the Cessnock LGA. The Plan also provides a direction for the future of parks and recreation facilities in the LGA.

The Plan identifies that the District is presently well serviced by open space and recreation facilities. The facilities are generally well dispersed between the township of Weston, Kurri Kurri and the localities of Pelaw Main and Stanford Merthyr. With the exception of regional-level sports parks and district-level recreation parks, the provision of developed open space and recreation facilities in the District is expected to be sufficient to cater for the projected population until at least 2036.



Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan



The aim of the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan is to improve pedestrian safety and to encourage walking in the Cessnock LGA. The Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan prioritises a range of proposed infrastructure upgrades for the Kurri Kurri District, including new and upgraded footpaths, pedestrian refuges, ramps, and kerb and guttering.

Aquatic Needs Analysis 2014

The Aquatic Needs Analysis 2014 has been prepared to assist Council plan and manage the future development and maintenance needs of aquatic facilities in the Cessnock LGA. The Analysis is relevant to the Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre, which was built in 2002 and is located within Margaret Johns Park.

While the Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre is nearing capacity at peak times, neither a 50 metre pool or other expanded water spaces are recommended at Kurri Kurri as the imminent upgrade of Maitland Pool and future development of a new pool in Cessnock will reduce pressure on water space at Kurri Kurri.

Skate and BMX Facilities Needs Assessment 2020

The Skate and BMX Facilities Needs Assessment 2020 provides a strategic direction regarding improvements to existing skate and BMX facilities and the development of new and future facilities across the Cessnock LGA (LGA) until 2020. The Assessment is relevant to the Kurri Kurri District in light of the provision of an existing skate park facility in Margaret Johns Park, located to the north west of the Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre.

The Assessment identifies Kurri Kurri Skate Park as a local level facility catering for beginner to intermediate users. The Park contains two sections that are at capacity. The Assessment provides for several improvements to the Kurri Kurri Skate Park, including redevelopment of parts of the facility and the inclusion of basic amenities and additional drainage and lighting.



Kurri Kurri Central Oval Masterplan

The Kurri Kurri Central Oval Masterplan provides a direction for future improvements to the facility, which is located at the corner of Allworth and Hopetoun Street in Kurri Kurri. The Masterplan identifies a substantial number of improvements, including new perimeter landscaping, car park expansion, and new and refurbished facilities and lighting.

Weston Commercial Centre Upgrade Concept Plan

The Weston Commercial Centre Upgrade Plan was developed in 2006 and provides a concept for the future of Weston Commercial Centre. The Plan focuses on Station Street, Scott Street and Cessnock Road and identifies a number of potential improvements, including new street tree plantings, central median along Station Street, community facilities and public art.

Components of the Plan are at a detailed design and construction phase, including works along Station Street between First and Second Street. The Weston Commercial Centre Upgrade Plan forms the basis of the Weston Commercial Centre Masterplan contained in **Section 5** this Strategy.

2.6 Summary of Planning Considerations

- The Kurri Kurri District is home to approximately 17,000 people and is the second most populated region in the Cessnock LGA.
- By 2036, it is estimated that the District population, including the localities of Abermain, Sawyers Gully, Heddon Greta and Cliftleigh, will increase to approximately 21,000 people, requiring an additional 1,800 dwellings, as a minimum.
- The District is entering a period of renewal and growth, with significant urban growth anticipated for land adjacent to the District, including new industrial and residential land releases at the former Kurri Kurri Aluminium Smelter site and along the Cessnock – Kurri Kurri – Maitland growth corridor.
- In 2014, the District became considerably more accessible to employment centres in the Upper and Lower Hunter and to regional community and recreation facilities, due to the opening of the Hunter Expressway.
- Areas of considerable ecological value are located to the south, east and west of the District. The vegetation forms part of a larger and regionally significant area of vegetation and functions as an important biodiversity corridor to the Werataka National Park. This land is also prone to mine subsidence and bushfire.
- The District is well serviced by open space and recreation facilities, including several high quality regional level facilities, such as Chinaman’s Hollow / Peace Park, the Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre, skate park and Kurri Kurri Central Oval.
- The Kurri Kurri District contains over thirty items of local heritage, recognisable streetscapes, including several prominent buildings and regionally celebrated public art.

These planning considerations will continue to influence how land is used and developed in and about the District. Although environmental considerations will not preclude development outright, they may limit the nature or extent of development or attract specific management requirements. Subsequent planning investigations will identify site-specific controls or management requirements to address these considerations.

The Strategy

3.1 Guiding Vision

The Vision and Directions for the future of Kurri Kurri and Weston have been shaped through community consultation and in consideration of existing planning strategies that relate to the District. The Strategy is intended to guide and inspire planning and development in the Study Area until 2036.

The Vision summarises key opportunities that will distinguish the District from surrounding communities, including accessibility, open space, recreation facilities, industry and revitalised commercial centres.

3.2 Directions

To support the overarching Vision for the District, five Directions have been identified for each of the following elements:

Urban Form

Future urban form is compact, welcoming and reinforces local heritage and character

- Create a compact settlement
- Preserve the 'country town' character
- Enhance the urban area

Transport and Movement Network

The District will capitalise from an efficient transport and movement network and proximity to major Regional roads

- Leverage the District on its proximity to major regional roads
- Improve traffic flow through the District
- Improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists

Employment Land

Employment precincts are attractive and offer unique experiences

- Minimise 'out of centre' commercial development
- Revitalise the District's commercial centres
- Grow the District's tourism and health and wellbeing sectors
- Differentiate the District's centres from nearby centres
- Grow the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct

Urban Housing

The District offers a range of housing choice

- Encourage housing diversity, density and affordability

Open Space and Recreation

The District will capitalise from its open space and recreation facilities

- Leverage the District on its open space and recreation facilities

“The Kurri Kurri District will be an active and accessible community supported by revitalised and distinct commercial centres, strong industry and high quality open spaces”

3.3 Urban Form

The settlements of Kurri Kurri and Weston are separated by heavy rail corridor, industrial and recreation land and Swamp Creek. Both settlements boast a unique character, influenced by the region’s mining history, topography, road network and architecture. Local streets are typically arranged in a traditional grid pattern, providing regular lot shapes and efficient layout for navigation and accessibility. A characteristic feature of the Kurri Kurri Township is the prevalence of laneways that dissect residential blocks.

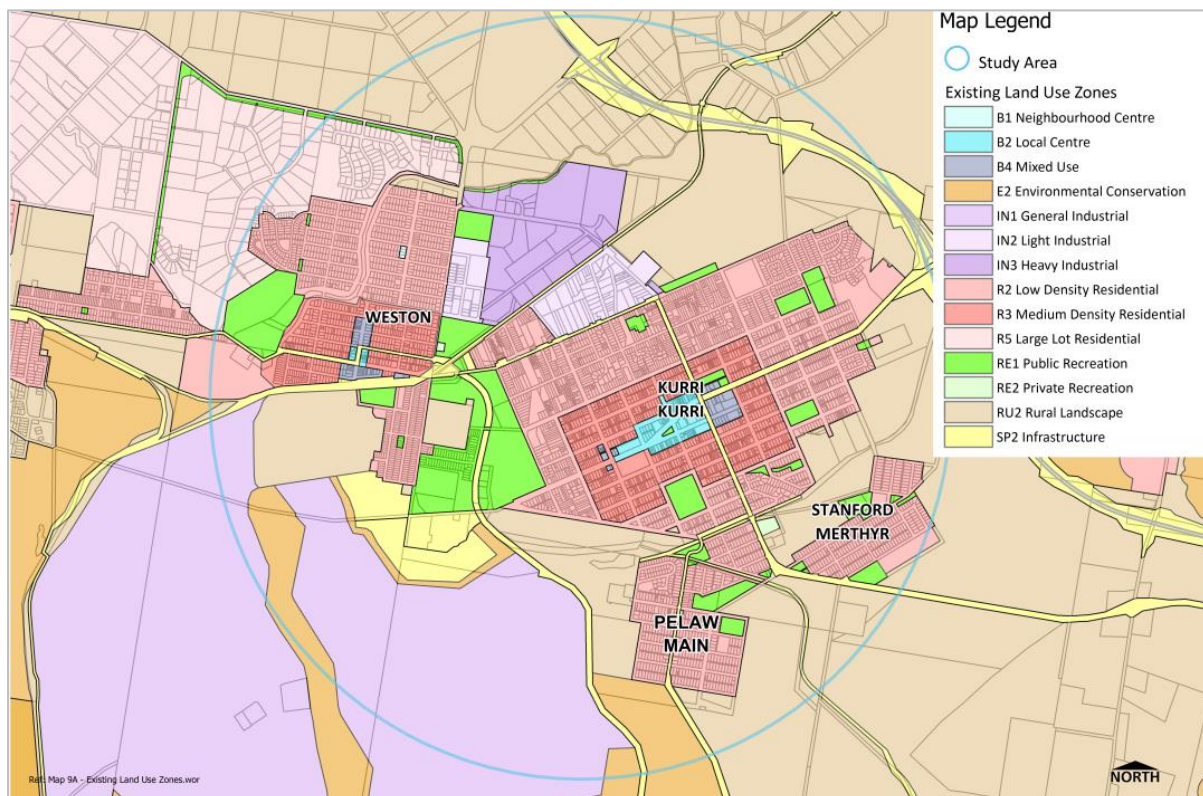
The Study Area contains a broad mix of land use zones and these are identified in **Figure 8**. Compatible urban zones are clustered together and form distinct precincts. These include the commercial centres at Kurri Kurri and Weston that comprise a B2 Local Centre Zone and B4 Mixed Use Zone, and the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct that comprises an IN2 Light Industrial Zone and IN3 Heavy Industrial Zone.

A large area of land zoned IN1 General Industrial is also located to the south of the established urban area and is known as the Hunter Economic Zone.

An R3 Medium Density Residential Zone surrounds each commercial centre before transitioning to the R2 Low Density Residential Zone further from the centres. The extent of the R3 Medium Density Residential Zone was recommended in the City Wide Settlement Strategy (CWSS) 2010 and was applied to land regarded by industry standards as being within an accessible walking distance of the centres. Environmental constraints, such as flooding and topography, were also taken into consideration in determining the final extent of the R3 Medium Density Residential Zone, typically a radius of 400 metres at Weston and 600 metres at Kurri Kurri. The interpretation of accessible areas under CWSS 2010 is further discussed in **Section 3.6**.

“Future urban form is compact, welcoming and reinforces local heritage and character”

Figure 8 – Existing Land Use Zones



Create a compact settlement

Opportunities for urban expansion around the Kurri Kurri Township are limited due to a range of environmental constraints. Foremost among these is the regionally significant area of vegetation that adjoins the Study Area to the south and functions as an important biodiversity corridor to the Weratoka National Park. Urban expansion is also constrained by mine subsidence, bushfire, flooding and noise associated with the Hunter Expressway.

Weston is marginally less constrained for urban expansion than Kurri Kurri. Opportunities for expansion exist to the immediate north and, to a limited extent to the south, into the Hunter Economic Zone.

Figure 9 identifies areas of the District where development is most likely to be constrained (areas coloured or hashed). The combined constraints mapping considers the four most relevant constraints that apply to land in the Kurri Kurri District, being flooding, mine subsidence, noise from the Hunter Expressway and prevalence of native vegetation. The mapping is based on best available data that has been given equal weight in the mapping; however, in reality, one constraint may be more easily addressed than another through the development assessment process, which includes public agency consultation.

Figure 9 – Combined Constraints



Housing and employment demand will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure the availability and capacity of zoned land. In responding to future demand for growth, developments that seek to increase the density of existing zoned land within or near the commercial centres will be encouraged as a priority. This includes increasing density through subdivision of allotments in the existing R2 Low Density Residential Zone and R3 Medium Density Residential Zone.

Dual occupancy development and multi dwelling housing will be strongly encouraged nearer the commercial centres. Shop top housing that is consistent with the 'country town' character of the District will also be encouraged within the commercial centres.

Medium density housing caters for the section of the market that requires close proximity to retail centres allowing people to walk or cycle to the main street. This market section is usually prepared to sacrifice residential space and outdoor living areas for a location close to the commercial centres.

Increasing the density of development near the commercial centres will benefit the community by focusing new construction within the established urban area. This will achieve greater use of existing services and infrastructure, reduce development costs, broaden dwelling mix and reinforce a sense of place and community. Compact settlements also enable lower infrastructure maintenance costs for Council over time and result in a concentrated rate base to fund new infrastructure and public domain improvements.

While the benefits of increasing density are widely acknowledged, the factors that make the District attractive to many new residents should not be disregarded or discouraged. Many people purchasing or building homes in the District are making a lifestyle choice. The District is attractive to many new residents as it allows them to be located within a short drive to a commercial centre, but avoid living in a busy urban area. Importantly, the District still offers the dream of a quarter acre block with a backyard in a neighbourhood of similar homes.

A significant amount of land to the north of the Hunter Expressway has been rezoned to meet the demand for low density residential development. This area comprises part of a substantial growth corridor between Cessnock and Maitland. Further development in this locality is also planned for the future, such as the redevelopment of the former Aluminium Smelter site, which will comprise a substantial amount of land for low density residential development.

If the future demand for housing cannot be met through infill development or medium density redevelopment in Kurri Kurri or Weston or in the growth area to the north of the Hunter Expressway, planning proposals will then be considered to rezone land outside these areas. Priority will be given to land in the identified growth corridor between Cessnock and Maitland that is adjacent to serviced land, proximate to the commercial centres and least constrained for urban expansion. Proposals will be discouraged on environmentally sensitive land, or in locations that will result in land use conflicts, adverse cumulative impacts, or on excessively constrained land, such as those areas identified in **Figure 9**.

Planning Proposals that seek to increase the mix of industrial land uses and the overall utilisation of land in the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct will also be strongly encouraged. However, any such proposal should not impact the viability of the main commercial centres with additional 'out of centre' commercial development. Maintaining compact commercial precincts will be vital to the ongoing viability of the Kurri Kurri and Weston commercial centres.

Preserve the 'country town' character

Wide streets, ample parking and low scale of development contribute significantly to the existing 'country town' character of Kurri Kurri and Weston. Balancing scale of development with the future direction for increased density nearer and within the commercial centres will become increasingly important as Kurri Kurri and Weston respond to growth.

Policy measures designed to preserve the existing scale of development along major residential and commercial streetscapes will need to be considered. These include provisions that encourage sensitively designed or lower scale development, together with provisions to improve the quality of landscaping, pedestrian connectivity and built form in the commercial centres and their main approaches.

One of the most important gateways to Kurri Kurri is Main Road, between the Hunter Expressway and Victoria Street. With the completion of the Hunter Expressway



and expansion of residential development in the Cliftleigh area, this stretch of road will be a priority for landscaping, including street tree planting.

Preserving visual connections to natural landscape features, items of heritage and prominent buildings is important and will provide a point of distinction to attract visitors from surrounding communities and further afield. Particular attention should be given to identifying and managing development within view corridors to dominant natural landscapes and built heritage, including prioritising the appearance of the major gateways to the District with treatments that are complementary with the established 'country town' character.

Enhance the urban area

The Hunter Regional Plan identifies urban renewal as a key priority for the Kurri Kurri Strategic Centre. Urban renewal relates to the revitalisation and enhancement of the urban area and is important as it improves the attractiveness of a place, while stimulating economic growth and employment through redevelopment and increased density.

Significant steps have already been taken by Council and community groups to revitalise the Kurri Kurri and Weston urban area. Examples include periodic infrastructure renewal projects undertaken by Council and the variety of public domain improvements that have been carried out over time by Council and local community groups, such as Towns With Heart Inc., Rotary, the Returned Services League and the Kurri Kurri Business Chamber.

One of the more successful revitalisation projects carried out in the District is the ongoing Murals Project at Kurri Kurri. The Project remains a significant drawcard for the Township and is considered by the community to be one of the main attractors to the District. The Murals Project is presently overseen by a Project Manager employed by Towns With Heart Inc. and a committee of local people who guide the development of new murals, assess and approve mural projects, seek and manage funding and undertake maintenance of existing sites. The committee has developed procedures for the management of the Project, including comprehensive guidelines for the murals and their placement.

Renewal projects led by Council will primarily take the form of infrastructure and public domain upgrades. However, these projects are typically expensive and progressively carried out over longer timeframes. The timing and nature of Council led renewal projects are guided by separate strategies, including those outlined in **Section 2.5**. Over the longer term, Council led renewal projects will focus on bridging gaps in the footpath and cycleway network and improving road infrastructure and recreation facilities.

To complement Council's long term revitalisation projects, more immediate projects will be investigated with a view of enhancing the appearance of local streets; for example, a street tree planting program to emphasise the existing 'country town' character at key gateways and in local streets.

Revitalisation of the Kurri Kurri and Weston commercial centres will be largely governed by the commercial centre masterplans. The masterplans identify specific opportunities to revitalise the commercial centres by improving traffic flow, vehicle parking, accessibility, utilisation of public open space and coordinating infrastructure and landscaping treatment. Revitalising the urban area will enhance peoples' perception and experiences within the District and is intended to transform the centres into destinations, rather than convenience centres. It is anticipated that the public domain improvements, proposed in the masterplans, will attract new businesses and redevelopment in the commercial centres.



Actions

A.3.3.1 Through the Four Year Delivery Plan, monitor and regularly review housing and employment demands and the availability and capacity of zoned land.

A.3.3.2 Investigate policy measures to preserve the existing scale of development along major residential and commercial streetscapes.

A.3.3.3 Continue to progressively renew and construct infrastructure and public facilities in the District in line with Council's adopted strategies.

A.3.3.4 Prepare a street tree planting program for the District.

3.4 Transport and Movement Network

The Kurri Kurri District has strong connectivity to surrounding centres via some of the Hunter Region's major roads. The District is within 35 minutes of the Newcastle Regional City and 15 minutes of the Cessnock and Maitland major centres. The District's primary connection to Newcastle is via the Hunter Expressway, which serves as the major arterial road connecting the Lower to the Upper Hunter.

Overall, the townships of Kurri Kurri and Weston have a relatively limited public transport service, with buses connecting the neighbourhoods and commercial centres to Cessnock, Maitland and Morriset. A public transport analysis is provided at **Figure 10**.

Travel into the commercial centres from the surrounding neighbourhood and beyond is mainly by car. The commercial centre masterplans aim to encourage safe and legible routes into the commercial centres and to encourage pedestrians and cyclists from surrounding neighbourhoods.

Enhancing connections both within and between centres is vital to the facilitation of a competitive, efficient and diversified economy. Good connectivity between centres also provides accessibility to places of interest, such as employment and entertainment and is a key contributor to land and property value.

“The District will capitalise from an efficient transport and movement network and proximity to major Regional roads”

Figure 10 – Public Transport Analysis



Leverage the District on its proximity to major regional roads

The Kurri Kurri District is well placed to benefit from its proximity to some of the Hunter Region's major roads, including the Hunter Expressway, John Renshaw Drive, Main Road, Cessnock Road and Leggett's Drive. The District is accessible to both Cessnock and Maitland via Cessnock Road and to the Newcastle City Centre, Vineyards District and Upper Hunter via the Hunter Expressway. Connectivity to Western Lake Macquarie is via Kurri Kurri-Mulbring Road or George Booth Drive.

Leveraging Kurri Kurri on its proximity to major roads and focusing on enhancing connectivity between strategic centres are identified actions of the Hunter Regional Plan. Better connectivity will encourage successful and diversified employment precincts. The District's accessibility to regional centres also creates opportunities to promote the District to industries and services that are reliant on good connectivity, such as service industries, freight and logistics, emergency services and healthcare.

It is important that the District is readily accessible to traffic from the growth area to the north of the Hunter Expressway. Reinforcing connections between the District's main employment centres and the growth area will help reduce retail spend leakage to other centres and strengthen the commercial centres of Kurri Kurri and Weston.

Improve traffic flow through the District

Traffic congestion is fast becoming a major challenge for Cessnock Local Government Area as the city develops and grows. The Hunter Expressway has reduced travel times to Newcastle and the surrounding coastal areas, but it has also increased travel demand on a number of main roads, in particular, Cessnock-Maitland Road. If not addressed, congestion will impact productivity, safety and the amenity of towns and villages and undermine the lifestyle enjoyed by the City's residents and visitors.

Weston

Traffic congestion presently occurs along Cessnock Road through Abermain and Weston with substantial queuing of vehicles on the western approach to the signalised intersection of Cessnock Road and Station Street. The configuration of the road effectively pushes a heavy traffic volume through the Weston Commercial Centre and this has the effect of reducing the attractiveness of the Centre and limits redevelopment or renewal potential. The high traffic volume is also a risk to pedestrians and is incompatible with existing developments, including homes, which have direct access off Cessnock Road, Station Street and First Street.

Council's Draft Traffic and Transport Strategy identifies that widening Cessnock Road and realigning the rail overpass to increase capacity may reduce these delays. However, this would come at a significant cost to the community. The works would require substantial property acquisition through Abermain, Weston and beyond. The resulting traffic volumes through the Township would not be compatible with the existing 'country town' character, would increase the potential for vehicle collisions in the Township and discourage walking and cycling for local trips.

The replacement of Frame Drive Bridge in 2017 has had the effect of reinstating a bypass of the Weston Commercial Centre and this has relieved some of the traffic delays experienced along Cessnock Road. In the future, the bypass will benefit from an upgrade to the Hunter Expressway Interchange at Hart Road, associated with the proposed redevelopment of the former Aluminium Smelter site. The upgrade would provide a full interchange at Hart Road, including north



bound on and off ramps. This is the preferred option for relieving traffic congestion in Weston.

A new link road to the north of Ginger's Lane, conceivably connecting Hart Road to Old Maitland Road has also been recommended in Council's Draft Traffic and Transport Strategy. This is a long term solution to improve traffic flow through the District. It is anticipated that the link road will act as a bypass of the Weston and Kurri Kurri commercial centres and alleviate much of the urban through traffic.

Kurri Kurri

Traffic congestion presently occurs at the roundabout at the start of the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre, where Mitchell Avenue and Lang Street intersect. The intersection experiences peak hour congestion, predominantly on the single lane, Lang Street approach. This is due to high volumes and unbalanced traffic flows.

Minor traffic congestion occurs along Lang Street in the commercial centre due to the existing car parking configuration associated with retail premises. Congestion also occurs further west along Lang Street and corresponds with school drop-off and pick-up times.

Over the next 25 years, traffic volumes on Lang Street are predicted to increase substantially, particularly to the east of Mitchell Avenue. This is primarily due to increased development in the growth corridor between Kurri Kurri and Maitland.

To address the higher traffic volume, it is anticipated that Lang Street, to the east of Mitchell Avenue, will be upgraded to four lanes and the existing roundabout replaced with a signalised intersection. Roundabouts are not suited to areas of high pedestrian activity and are particularly difficult for people with reduced mobility. A signalised intersection will provide accessible pedestrian facilities on all approaches.

Traffic safety at the intersection of Hart Road and Government Road in Kurri Kurri is also a widely acknowledged problem. The intersection currently functions as a component of the District bypass between the Hunter Expressway and Cessnock Road. However, as Government Road is a Regional Road, any upgrade to the intersection would need to be carried out and funded by the State Government. It is recommended that Council continue to lobby the State Government to upgrade the intersection of Hart Road and Government Road, along with the intersection of Orange Street and Cessnock Road, which is also a major element of the District bypass.

Additional fine grain solutions to enhance traffic flow within the District's commercial centres are proposed in the masterplans that accompany the District Strategy.

Improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists

The traditional grid pattern of streets, together with the fact that so many of the key destinations in the District are within close proximity of each other, offer the District a distinct advantage for cycling and travel by foot. However, gaps in the provisioning of footpath and cycleway infrastructure and the lack of dedicated bike paths and lanes, detracts from the overall pedestrian and cycling experience.

The District will benefit from improvements to the footpath and cycling network, including the installation of a consistent footpath treatment and paving in the Kurri Kurri and Weston commercial centres. Enhancing the footpath treatment in the commercial centres is a key element of the commercial centre masterplans for Kurri Kurri and Weston. Improving connections through the townships by bridging existing footpath and cycleway



infrastructure is also a priority, as well as enhancing north-south pedestrian connections through Kurri Kurri, which are particularly impacted by topography.

Council's draft Traffic and Transport Strategy identifies improved pedestrian connectivity at the intersection of Mitchell Avenue and Lang Street with the removal of the existing roundabout and installation of a signalised intersection. Further east, along Lang Street, a separate pedestrian refuge is expected to be installed by the State Government to improve safety and reduce the Lang Street crossing distance for pedestrians. Gradual improvements to the footpath and cycleway network will also be facilitated through Council's Cycling Strategy and Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan by addressing gaps in the provisioning of the existing footpath and cycleway infrastructure.

Improving accessibility should also be encouraged as a component of private redevelopment in the commercial centres, including through policy controls and development incentives. Particular attention should be given to pedestrian connectivity in the commercial block bound by Lang, Barton, Hampton and Victoria Streets in Kurri Kurri.

From a tourism perspective, enhancing pedestrian and cycleway connections between the recreational vehicle area at Kurri Kurri Central Oval and the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre is a priority and should form part of a wider footpath and cycleway linkage along Allworth Street, between Log of Knowledge Park and the Commercial Centre.

The Kurri Kurri and Weston Commercial Centre Master Plans identify a range of specific opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cyclist environment. The aim is to encourage bike use and walking for short trips to the commercial centres, schools and surrounding neighbourhoods. The proposed routes use the existing laneway networks, on road and shared paths to provide links to key destinations and recommend a range of treatments to improve safety, way finding and amenity for bike riders. **Figure 11** identifies the existing and proposed cycle and pedestrian network

Figure 11 – Existing and Proposed Cycle and Pedestrian Network



Actions

- A.3.4.1** In conjunction with the Kurri Kurri Business Chamber, promote the District to industries and services that are reliant on good connectivity, such as service industries, freight and logistics, emergency services and healthcare.
- A.3.4.2** Implement the Cessnock Cycling Strategy and Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan.
- A.3.4.3** Implement and promote key elements of the draft Traffic and Transport Strategy.
- A.3.4.4** Through policy control and development incentives, encourage private development to incorporate improvements to the pedestrian environment and public domain.
- A.3.4.5** Lobby State Government to upgrade the intersection of Hart Road and Government Road and the intersection of Orange Street and Cessnock Road.
- A.3.4.6** Enhance the pedestrian and cyclist environment between Log of Knowledge Park and the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre as a priority.
-

3.5 Employment Land

The Kurri Kurri District accounts for 75 percent of the total occupied industrial land and 20 percent of the total commercial floor space in the LGA. A comparative analysis of the LGA’s main employment centres is provided in **Table 4**.

The Study Area contains three main employment precincts, being the commercial centres of Kurri Kurri and Weston and the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct. The Industrial Precinct is presently the single largest area of occupied industrial land in the Cessnock LGA. The District’s main employment precincts are shown in **Figure 12**.

A fourth, but largely undeveloped employment precinct is located to the south of the established urban area and is known as the Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ). However, beyond the provisioning of essential services and infrastructure to HEZ, the anticipated level of industrial development has not transpired there. While there are many reasons for this, the major cause is attributable to the considerable environmental constraints that affect the land.

“Employment precincts are attractive and offer unique experiences”

Figure 12 - Main Employment Precincts



The District has good prospects of growing its industrial capacity and deepening and diversifying its retail offering. This is primarily due to renewal and growth within the District’s catchment brought about by the opening of the Hunter Expressway in 2014 and the proximity of Kurri Kurri and Weston to the growth area in the

north of the District. Kurri Kurri and Weston are also proximate to the former Aluminium Smelter site, which is presently under investigation for rezoning. It is anticipated that land for bulky goods retail will be made available as a component of the Planning Proposal for the former Aluminium Smelter site.

It is acknowledged that a significant barrier to retail growth in the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre are the high commercial rents. Key stakeholders, including Council and the Kurri Kurri Business Chamber should actively work to promote the District to new businesses and encourage active shopfronts.

Table 4 - Structure of Employment Land

Locality	Industrial Zoned Land			Commercial Zoned Land	
	Total Zoned Industrial Land (HA)	Occupied Industrial Land (HA)	Occupied Industrial Land as Percentage of Total	Commercial Floorspace for Centres (SQM)	Commercial Floorspace as Percentage of Total
Branxton Subregion	12.6	9.2	12%	22,614	7%
Cessnock District	24.5	6.1	8%	191,659	63%
Hunter Economic Zone	878.2	3.4	4%	-	-
Kurri Kurri District	106.1	57.3	75%	62,481	20%
Other	-	-	-	28,433	9%
Total	1021.4	76	100%	305,187	100%

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2016

Minimise ‘out of centre’ commercial development

Minimising ‘out of centre’ commercial development will be vital to the ongoing viability of the Kurri Kurri and Weston commercial centres. Presently, commercial activities, which include office and retail land uses, are not altogether contained within the centres, but occur infrequently throughout the industrial, rural and residential zoned areas of the District. Commercial development has expanded along Northcote Street in the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct and near the intersection of Tarro and Railway Street at Kurri Kurri.

Expansion of commercial activities in the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct has occurred due to former planning provisions that permitted certain types of commercial development in the IN2 Light Industrial Zone, including those that were ‘ordinarily incidental or subsidiary to industry’. However, in reality, the now repealed provisions gave rise to several commercial land uses that would otherwise have been more appropriately located in the commercial centres. The majority of these commercial land uses are now dependent on existing use rights, where a change of use requires development consent.

It is important that the established commercial centres at Kurri Kurri and Weston are not further weakened by ‘out of centre’ development, which has established in non-commercial zones. The District’s commercial centres are highly sensitive to competing areas of commercial development and this is echoed in the commercial centre vacancy rates, provided in **Table 5** and by the community during public consultation.

In the medium term, the District is expected to accommodate only incremental commercial growth in line with population growth (SGS Economics and Planning, 2016). Therefore, emphasis should be placed on policies that encourage, protect and guide commercial development within the District’s established commercial centres. Reinforcing the role of the centres will reduce retail spend leakage to nearby centres,



attract further professional services and encourage a greater presence of the tourist and visitor economy through higher amenity and improved merchandising.

To cater for new development, such as a supermarket or other large floorplate retail development, priority will first be given to proposals that seek to redevelop within the existing commercial centres and take advantage of key sites, including the Goodyear Automotive site, the former Workers' Club site and the Kingsway Plaza site in Lang Street Kurri Kurri. These sites offer a range of opportunities for redevelopment.

If demand cannot be met within the existing centres, proposals will then be considered in respect of land that improves the edge of the centre and encourages intensification of activity on zoned commercial land (including forms of residential development) and community uses to create compact and walkable centres.

Table 5 - Commercial Vacancy Rates

Locality	Total Zoned Land (HA)	Total Commercial Floor space (SQM)	Vacant Commercial Floor space (SQM)	Vacant Commercial Floor space (% of Total)
Kurri Kurri - B2 Local Centre	13.4	37,453	5,560	15%
Kurri Kurri - B4 Mixed Use Zone	5.3	13,195	1,537	12%
Weston - B2 Local Centre	1	4,373	337	8%
Weston - B4 Mixed Use Zone	4.8	7,012	1,913	27%
Total	24.5	62,033	9,347	15%

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2016

Weston B4 Mixed Use Zone

Table 5 identifies that commercial floor space vacancy is highest in the B4 Mixed Use Zone at Weston. The high vacancy rate is attributable to a number of factors, not least of which is the size of the Commercial Centre at Weston relative to the density of the residential area that it services. Other contributing factors include the existing mix of commercial land use zones and competition from nearby centres, such as Kurri Kurri, Cessnock and Maitland.

Approximately 84 percent (4.9 hectares) of the Weston Commercial Centre is zoned B4 Mixed Use, whereas only 28 percent (5.3 hectares) of the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre is zoned B4. Typically, a B4 Zone is applied to areas where there is a genuine prospect of relatively intense, integrated commercial or retail with residential development. The prospect of any integrated development occurring in the Weston Commercial Centre is low in the foreseeable future and would be more likely to occur at either Cessnock or Kurri Kurri.

In planning for a viable centre at Weston, it is appropriate to focus commercial development within the core business area (between Scott and Second Street) and redefine the extent of the B4 Mixed Use Zone. The R3 Medium Density Residential Zone would seem to be a more logical outcome for the future of the Township, with commercial development (beyond Second Street) continuing to enjoy existing use rights.

Revitalise the District's commercial centres

The appearance and ongoing maintenance of shopfronts in the District's commercial centres is a recognised issue in the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre. Additionally, the manner in which development addresses rear lanes is also an issue, particularly in the block bounded by Hampton, Lang, Victoria and Barton Streets.

Providing specific provisions in Council's Development Control Plan for the siting and built form of commercial development will assist in improving the amenity and functionality of new or redeveloped commercial development. Providing clear provisions for redevelopment is also consistent with the Hunter Regional Plan, which identifies urban renewal as a key priority for the Kurri Kurri Strategic Centre.

Broader enhancement of the District's main commercial centres will help attract redevelopment and activate the public domain for a range of ancillary uses, including those that utilise the footpath. The commercial centre masterplans will primarily direct the commercial centre enhancement form and process. The masterplans identify specific opportunities to improve traffic flow, vehicle parking, accessibility, use of public open space and coordinate infrastructure and landscaping treatment.

Grow the District's tourism and health and wellbeing sectors

The Kurri Kurri District is located at the convergence of some of the Hunter Region's major roads and is recognised as a gateway to the Hunter Valley Wine Region. The District contains a variety of significant attractions and places of interest, including sports and recreation facilities, prominent heritage buildings, art and community services. The District is also home to several local and regional events, such as the annual Nostalgia Festival that attracts in excess of 20,000 people each year.

Community groups, such as Towns With Heart Inc., Kurri Kurri Business Chamber, Rotary and the Returned Services League have created and implemented many of the tourism assets that attract visitors to the District. The Town of Murals Project and the Kurri Kurri Nostalgia Festival are two notable examples implemented by Towns With Heart Inc. The work of community groups is recognised as a key driver of tourism and visitation to the District and their achievements should continue to be supported.

Richmond Vale Rail Trail

The Hunter Regional Plan identifies the need to expand recreational walking and cycling trails in the Region to allow more people to experience the Region's natural areas. Investigations are presently under way regarding the Richmond Vale Rail Trail, which will provide a pedestrian and cycling link between Newcastle and Kurri Kurri. A 'trail head' to the proposed Richmond Vale Rail Trail is expected to be provided at Log of Knowledge Park. The Trail is anticipated to be a significant tourism attraction and will result in additional visitation into the District.

In conjunction with local community groups, opportunities should be explored to integrate the Richmond Vale Rail Trail with key tourism assets in the District, including the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre and the existing recreational vehicle area at Kurri Kurri Central Oval. Additional street trees and infrastructure upgrades in Allworth Street will improve the pedestrian and cycling experience and draw day visitors to the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre.

Opportunities to extend the Richmond Vale Rail Trail to the former Pelaw Main Station off Hebburn Street in Kurri Kurri should also be explored. The Station is utilised by the Richmond Vale Railway Museum that operates an occasional steam locomotive to that point. The Museum is a volunteer, non-profit organisation, formed in 1979 with the aim of preserving the Railway and Mining Heritage of J&A Brown and the Hunter Valley (Richmond Vale Railway Museum, n.d.). The Museum is located 4 kilometres to the south of Kurri Kurri. Enhancing connections between the Richmond Vale Rail Trail and the former Pelaw Main Station will encourage visitation and help promote the Museum and Kurri Kurri to the wider tourism market.



Tourist and Visitor Accommodation

The lack of tourist and visitor accommodation in the District has been identified as a barrier to economic growth in the District. Presently, only a handful of tourist accommodation exists in the District and this is predominantly limited to hotel and motel accommodation. A greater number and mix of tourist and visitor accommodation should be encouraged within the District to cater to the broader tourism market. For example, the District would benefit from a caravan park.

Subject to detailed examination of site constraints, there are several sites in the District that may be suitable for a caravan park. Suitable sites would need to meet the following criteria, as a minimum:

- *large and predominantly cleared of trees;*
- *free of site constraints, such as flooding and bushfire;*
- *proximate to the commercial centres and key tourist attractions;*
- *access to services, such as water, sewer and electricity;*
- *accessible and proximate to footpaths, cycleways and major roads; and*
- *appropriately zoned (i.e. any of the following land use zones RU2, R5, RE1 or RE2).*



Directional Signage

Additional directional signage from the Hunter Expressway and along Main Road, directing tourists to the District's commercial centres and the attractions, services and facilities therein, would benefit Kurri Kurri and Weston in an economic sense. Additional street signage should also be installed in the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre on the main traffic routes, directing visitors to the Tourist Information Centre, Rotary Park, retail areas and the RV parking areas within the Township.

Recreational Vehicle 'RV' Friendly Town

'RV Friendly Town' status for Kurri Kurri should be actively pursued and maintained and would assist in growing tourism and visitation to the District. An 'RV Friendly Town' is one that has met certain criteria to ensure that a level of amenity and services are provided for RV tourists and visitors. When RV tourists enter a town displaying the 'RV Friendly Town' sign, they know they will be welcome and that certain services will be provided for them that may not be available in other towns, including access to a safe place to stay overnight and possibly for a longer period (Campervan Motorhome Club of Australia, 2017). The following essential criteria must be met, before any town can be appointed to the program:

Essential Criteria

- *Provision of appropriate parking within the town centre, with access to a general shopping area for groceries and fresh produce.*
- *Provision of short term, low cost overnight parking (24/48 hours) for self-contained recreational vehicles, as close as possible to the CBD.*
- *Access to potable water.*
- *Access to a free dump point at an appropriate location.*

Short term RV parking has recently been identified in Barton Street on the southern side of Rotary Park. Additional short term RV parking is also proposed in Hampton Street as a component of the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre Masterplan. Overnight RV parking, including access to potable water and free dump point is already provided at Kurri Kurri Central Oval.

Desirable Criteria

- *Provision of long term parking for self-contained recreational vehicles.*
- *Access to medical facilities or an appropriate emergency service.*
- *Access to a pharmacy or a procedure to obtain pharmaceutical products.*
- *Visitor Information Centre (VIC) with appropriate parking facilities.*
- *VIC to provide a town map showing essential facilities, such as short and long term parking areas, dump point and potable water.*
- RV Friendly Town signs to be erected within the town precinct.

In November 2017, Council lodged an application to the Campervan Motorhome Club of Australia to enable Kurri Kurri to be classified as an RV Friendly Town.

Health and Wellbeing

Kurri Kurri contains several health and wellbeing service providers, including the Kurri Kurri District Hospital, general medical practices in Lang Street, dentists and other healthcare professionals, including pharmacies. Together with the retail and social assistance sectors, the health and wellbeing sector is one of the most important industry sectors in Kurri Kurri in terms of employment (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

The Hunter Regional Plan identifies the potential to grow allied health services on land around hospitals and health service providers in Kurri Kurri. Encouraging health and wellbeing service providers to the District will improve access to care services and provide additional employment opportunities.

The District is an ideal candidate for a new, large scale, healthcare facility, being accessible to regional centres via the Hunter Expressway and other major regional roads. A new healthcare facility at Kurri Kurri, near the Hunter Expressway, would reduce demand on the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle and provide a much needed employment anchor in the District.

The District's accessibility to regional centres also creates opportunities to promote the District to other industries and services that are reliant on good connectivity, such as service industries, freight and logistics, emergency services, and health and wellbeing establishments.

State Government Healthcare Incentives

The Department of Health offers incentives to attract healthcare professionals, including general medical practitioners, to relocate to areas where there is an identified healthcare shortage. These incentives apply to areas on the basis of their remoteness. Metropolitan and regional areas of Australia are categorised by the Department of Health according to the Modified Monash Model (MMM) for rural classification. An MMM remoteness category is applied to an area based on road distance to the nearest urban centre.

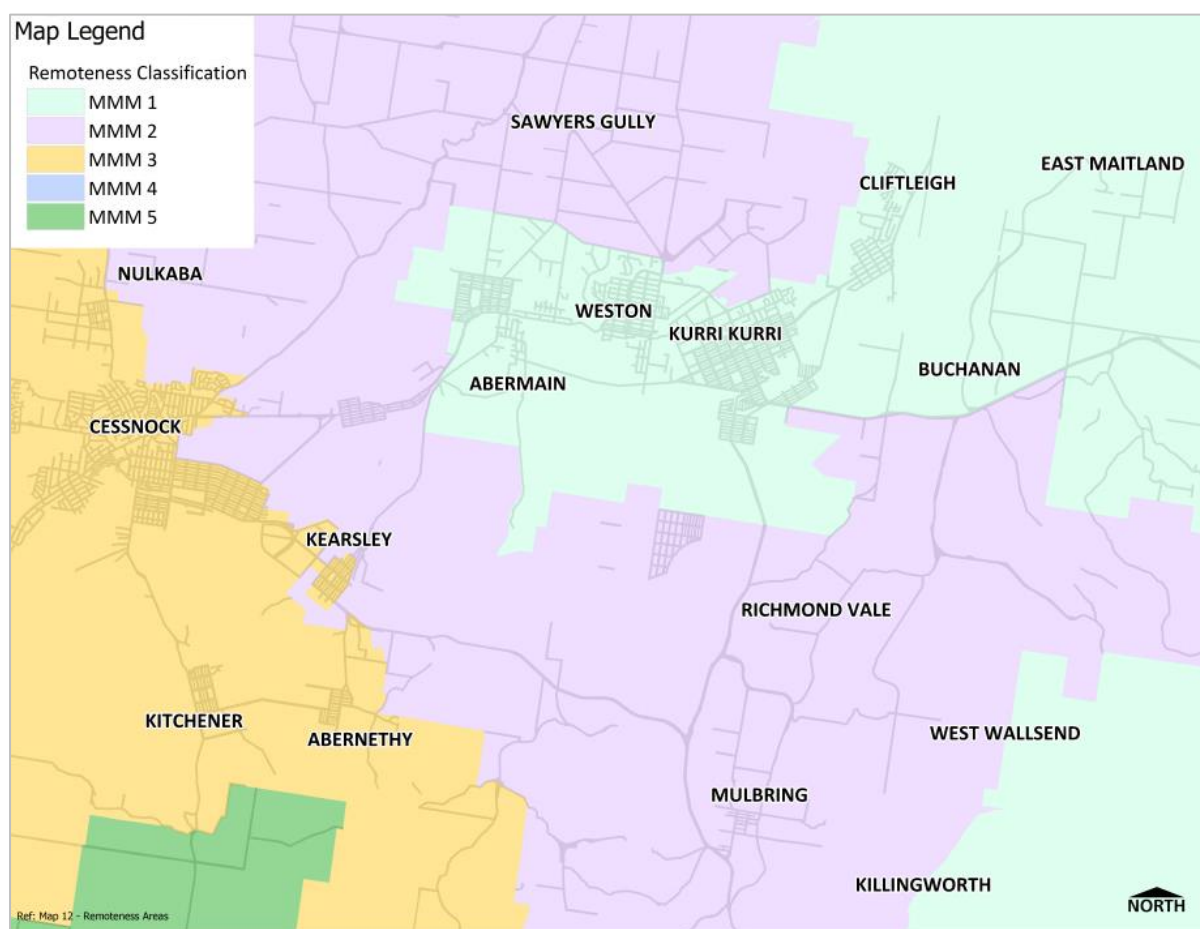
Areas within the LGA are categorised differently by the Department of Health in terms of their remoteness. For example, the Cessnock District is categorised as MMM 3, where Federal Government incentives apply to encourage general practitioners. However, the Kurri Kurri District is classified as MMM 1, where no incentives apply. The MMM classifications that apply to the Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Districts are provided in **Figure 13**.

The problem with the MMM classification system, in this instance, is that it only measures one dimension of a community's need for health service providers and that is distance. The system does not account for a community's need on the basis of socio-economic status or on the basis of strategic planning merit.

The lack of incentives that apply to the Kurri Kurri District to attract general practitioners is contrary to the action of the Hunter Regional Plan to grow allied health services in the District. Therefore, there is an opportunity to

lobby the Federal Government with a view of providing additional incentives to attract general medical practitioners to the District.

Figure 13 - Department of Health, Remoteness Classification



Source: (Department of Health).

Differentiate the District's centres from nearby centres

Centres with nominally limited catchment areas, like Kurri Kurri and Weston, can build their status around an alternative offer which transcends the traditional supermarket anchored shopping trips. If a distinct offering is well marketed, it is possible to attract shoppers from the broader region allowing the place to not only grow but effectively diversify away from its basic role as a supermarket anchored local centre. Opportunities for the District include festival town, with shops that are themed around cultural offerings or niche market orientated centre, which provides themed fashions, such as retro, vintage or outlet goods (SGS Economics and Planning, 2016).

Substantial steps have already been taken by local businesses and community groups to differentiate the District's commercial centres, including the Mural Project and annual Nostalgia Festival at Kurri Kurri. The District's commercial centres should continue to build on these strengths and grow the economic sectors that take advantage of the District's unique assets. Coordinating the branding of the District's commercial centres with Council's Signage Strategy would be one way of differentiating the commercial centres from those nearby.

Focusing on the District's substantial heritage is equally important in differentiating the commercial centres from those nearby. Heritage provides tangible connections to the past and can attract tourism, which contributes to the local economy. It is important to ensure that the commercial centre experience continues to be authentic and of high visual and historic interest to tourists (Department of Planning and Environment, 2016).

Strengthen the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct

The Kurri Kurri District is the only area in the Cessnock LGA that contains the three available industrial land use zones – IN1 General Industrial, IN2 Light Industrial and IN3 Heavy Industrial. The Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct contains two of these zones (IN2 and IN3), which are located immediately adjacent to each other. The Hunter Economic Zone, which is located to the south of the urban area, contains the IN1 General Industrial Zone. The three industrial zones offer considerable land use choice and this is a distinct advantage when compared with other industrial areas in the LGA and the Hunter Region.

The Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct is approximately 100 hectares in area and contains a number of well-established light and heavy industrial developments. The Precinct is an important area for industry in the LGA due to its relative size, including a substantial amount of land zoned IN3 Heavy Industrial and combination of manufacturing and other related industries which collectively occupy the land. The Precinct also benefits from its proximity to major transport infrastructure in the Hunter Region, including the Hunter Expressway. In time, the Industrial Precinct could also benefit from the heavy rail line that passes through it.



Despite the relative size and importance of the Industrial Precinct, its utilisation is relatively low, with 40.6 percent of the Precinct identified as vacant, refer to **Table 6**. There are several reasons that may explain the high vacancy rate, not least of which is the nature of the land itself, which is constrained by flooding from Swamp Creek - approximately 20 percent of the Industrial Precinct is constrained by flooding. Other reasons for the high vacancy rate may relate to the quality and appearance of the infrastructure that services it. The Industrial Precinct could benefit from appropriate policy provisions, which address the range of constraints that affect the land and guide the quality and appearance of development and infrastructure.

Out of centre commercial development that occurs within the IN2 Light Industrial Zone along Northcote Street will remain a challenge for the District's employment centres into the future. These developments have occurred primarily as a result of former planning provisions that applied to the Zone. The majority of these commercial developments are now dependent on existing use rights and would no longer be permitted under the current zoning regime. Over time, it is anticipated that these 'out of centre' developments will relocate to the commercial centres, where they are more appropriately located.

While no change in area is recommended in relation to the Industrial Precinct's land use zoning, further consideration should be given to the range of permissible land uses in the Precinct, including the permissibility of vehicle sales or hire premises (car dealerships). Car dealerships contain few built structures and are far less sensitive to the impacts of flooding. Car dealerships are also likely to benefit from the large industrial blocks and visually prominent areas, such as adjacent to Northcote Street. Increasing the range of permissible land uses in the Precinct will provide greater flexibility for industrial development and encourage greater utilisation of the Local Government Area's industrial zones.

Table 6 - Industrial Vacancy

Locality	Total Zoned Industrial Land (HA)	Occupied Industrial Land (HA)	Vacant Industrial Land (HA)	Vacant Industrial Land (%)
Hunter Economic Zone	878.2	3.4	874.8	99.6
Kurri Kurri District	106.1	57.3	48.8	40.6
Total	984.3	60.7	923.6	-

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2016

Priority will be given to proposals that seek to increase the mix of industrial related land uses and the overall utilisation of land in the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct for industrial purposes. Proposals that have the potential to impact the viability of the main commercial centres with out of centre development will not be supported.

Opportunity for outward expansion of the Industrial Precinct exists to the immediate north and this is being investigated as a component of the former Kurri Kurri Aluminium Smelter site redevelopment, together with possible northern ramps to the Hunter Expressway off Hart Road.

The Hunter Economic Zone

The Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ) is the largest zoned employment area in the LGA, comprising approximately 880 hectares zoned IN1 General Industrial. According to the City Wide Settlement Strategy 2010, HEZ is one of few employment lands in the Region that can accommodate developments that require lots of 100 hectares or more. However, there has been little development in the 14 years since its establishment, with biodiversity issues sited as the principal development constraint. For example, HEZ is one of a handful of breeding locations for the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater. The total known population of Regent Honeyeaters nationwide is estimated at between 800 and 2,000 (Department of the Environment and Energy).

HEZ's prospects have also been influenced by the Hunter Expressway and the adoption of the Hunter Regional Plan. The completion of the Hunter Expressway increases accessibility and connectivity for employment precincts located in proximity to the Expressway.

The various constraints on employment land at HEZ will continue to impact upon its ability to attract major industry. Nonetheless, HEZ is still unique because it is a large site in a location well buffered from residential development. It is therefore still possible for the site to accommodate a large user requiring an isolated location.

The HEZ precinct should not be the primary industrial precinct of focus in the long term. There are other locations in the LGA that are potentially more suitable to the market for attracting industrial activities and those that will yield higher levels of employment, including the former Kurri Kurri Aluminium Smelter site and Black Hill. In this regard, HEZ may have higher value, not as a premier industrial precinct, but as environmental offset. In any event, the extent of the IN1 General Industrial Zone as it applies to HEZ should be redefined with a view of reducing offset requirements to make HEZ more viable for industrial development.



Actions

A.3.5.1	Reinforce the role of the commercial centres by encouraging, protecting and guiding commercial development within the District's established centres.
A.3.5.2	Implement the masterplans for the Kurri Kurri and Weston commercial centres.
A.3.5.3	Redefine the extent of the B4 Mixed Use Zone at Weston.
A.3.5.4	In conjunction with local stakeholders, explore opportunities to extend the Richmond Vale Rail Trail to connect with key tourist assets in the District.
A.3.5.5	Explore opportunities for additional directional signage from the Hunter Expressway and within the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre.
A.3.5.6	Council to pursue and maintain 'RV Friendly Town' status for Kurri Kurri.
A.3.5.7	Lobby the Department of Health for incentives to attract general practitioners to the Kurri Kurri District.
A.3.5.8	Investigate appropriate planning provisions to regulate the siting and built form of commercial development in the District.
A.3.5.9	Continue to build on the District's strengths, including public art and local festivals, to help differentiate the District's centres from those nearby.
A.3.5.10	Coordinate the branding of the District's commercial centres with Council's Signage Strategy.
A.3.5.11	Implement provisions in the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to manage the environmental constraints impacting development in the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct.
A.3.5.12	Review the IN2 Light Industrial Zone Land Use Table with a view of encouraging a wider range of industrial related land uses.
A.3.5.13	Engage with the owners of the Hunter Economic Zone to determine an appropriate outcome for the land.

3.6 Urban Housing

The Kurri Kurri District is home to approximately 17,000 people and is the second most populated region in the Cessnock LGA (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). By 2036, the District population is estimated to increase to approximately 21,000 people.

To cater for the projected population, it is estimated that the District will need to accommodate demand for an additional 1,800 dwellings by 2036, as a minimum. This equates to approximately 100 new dwellings per annum.

A considerable proportion of the demand for new housing is expected to be met in the growth area to the north of the Hunter Expressway. Demand is also expected to be met through infill development and medium density redevelopment nearer the established commercial centres of Kurri Kurri and Weston.



Housing Demand

Between 2012 and May 2016, 479 new dwellings were approved in the Kurri Kurri District. The Clifftleigh area accounted for a little over half of all single dwelling approvals, whereas Heddon Greta and Kurri Kurri accounted for the majority of dual occupancy development. An analysis of the recent housing demand is provided in **Table 7**.

The recent demand for housing in the District generally corresponds with the projected dwelling growth of approximately 100 dwellings per annum. It is acknowledged that there may be some variation between dwelling approvals and actual construction; however, approvals data is readily collected by Council and provides a reliable estimate of market demand.

It is possible that beyond 2021, demand for housing in the District may increase at a more substantial rate as land supply reduces in surrounding LGAs and the influence of affordable housing initiatives and major infrastructure projects take effect. If this alternative scenario occurs, population and dwelling growth in the District may be as high as 2 percent beyond 2021, resulting in a District population of approximately 24,000 people by 2036 and a corresponding rise in the demand for dwellings.

Table 7 – District Dwelling Demand, 2012 – May 2016

Locality	Single Dwellings	Secondary Dwellings	Dual Occupancy	Multi Dwellings	Boarding House Rooms	Total
Clifftleigh	202	-	0	3	-	205
Heddon Greta	60	-	56	4	-	120
Kurri Kurri	16	2	38	4	-	60
Weston	50	-	9	-	-	59
Abermain	29	-	6	-	-	35
Total	357	2	109	11	-	479

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2016

Housing Land Supply – Main Road Growth Corridor

A significant amount of land to the north of the Hunter Expressway has been zoned for low density residential development. This area comprises part of a substantial growth corridor between Cessnock and Maitland. To date, approximately 500 residential allotments have been released in the Main Road growth corridor, with a further

1,400 allotments projected to be released in the future. Redevelopment of the former Aluminium Smelter site at Kurri Kurri is also expected to comprise a substantial number of allotments for low density residential development, as well as commercial and industrial allotments.

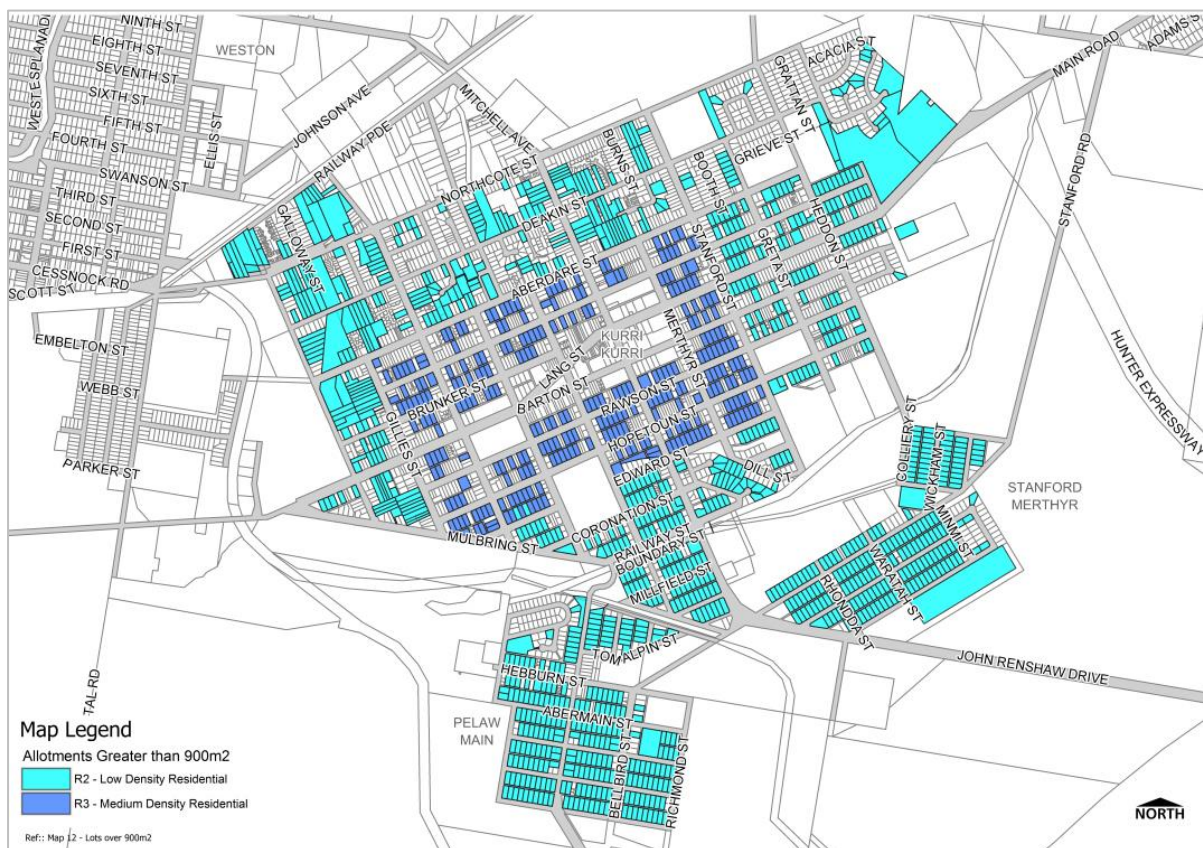
Housing Land Supply - Kurri Kurri

Opportunities for urban expansion around the Kurri Kurri Township are limited due to a range of environmental constraints. Foremost among these is the regionally significant area of vegetation that adjoins the Study Area to the south and functions as an important biodiversity corridor to the Weratoka National Park. Urban expansion is also constrained by mine subsidence, bushfire, flooding and noise associated with the Hunter Expressway. Cumulatively, these constraints present significant limitations to urban expansion and are likely drive the market toward infill and redevelopment for medium density housing nearer the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre. The main constraints affecting the Kurri Kurri Township are identified in **Figure 9**.

The average residential lot size in Kurri Kurri is 1,195m²; however, this figure is skewed by several larger allotments in the Township. The median residential lot size is more likely to be 1,000m², which is a calculation of frontage by depth of a typical allotment (20 by 50 metres). The minimum residential lot size for subdivision in Kurri Kurri is 450m². Therefore, on face value, there is considerable potential for subdivision and increased density in the Township.

Figure 14 identifies approximately 300 residential allotments in the R3 Medium Density Residential Zone that are of a sufficient size to be subdivided. Each of these allotments could conceivably contain a dual occupancy or multi dwelling housing, being three or more dwellings. If the surrounding R2 Low Density Residential Zone at Kurri Kurri is also considered for subdivision potential, a further 1000 residential allotments are a sufficient size for subdivision.

Figure 14 – Residential Allotments Greater than 900m²



By and large, the existing configuration of dwellings within allotments at Kurri Kurri also appears to lend itself to increased density through subdivision or dual occupancy development. One way this might be achieved is by retaining the existing dwelling at the street frontage and utilising the rear portion of the allotment for an

additional dwelling. The benefit of this approach is that the streetscape is unaffected, despite the increased density.

Recent amendments to *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011* have provided greater flexibility to subdivide residential land to a minimum size of 300m² for new or existing dual occupancy development. The amendments relate to dual occupancy development that occurs in the R2 Low Density Residential Zone or R3 Medium Density Residential Zone. Strata subdivision of multi dwelling housing may already be carried out as complying development under Part 6 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008* and is not subject to minimum lot size.

Despite the subdivision potential at Kurri Kurri, there are obvious limitations to consider when redeveloping in existing areas. These limitations include the cost associated with the removal of established development, land value, topography, quality and provisioning of infrastructure and the existing subdivision pattern. Further limitations exist for redevelopment in the District's R3 Medium Density Residential Zone, including in some instances, the necessity to consolidate smaller allotments and the barrier presented by fragmented property ownership.

It is recognised that increased residential densities, including unit style development and smaller lot residential subdivision will not suit everyone, particularly in the context of a country town where there is an expectation of larger allotments. Medium density development caters for the section of the market that requires close proximity to retail centres allowing people to walk or cycle to the main street. This market section is usually prepared to sacrifice residential space and outdoor living areas for a location close to the commercial centres.

As a result of these limitations, only a proportion of the existing residential allotments in Kurri Kurri are likely to attract increased density and these alone may not be sufficient to address the anticipated population growth whilst preserving a mix of dwelling choice. This is particularly true if the projected rate of growth exceeds expectations.

Housing Land Supply - Weston

Weston is marginally less constrained for urban expansion than Kurri Kurri. Opportunities for expansion exist to the immediate north and, to a limited extent to the south, into the Hunter Economic Zone.

The average residential lot size in Weston is approximately 790m² and this is considerably less than the minimum size of 900m² required for subdivision. The typical residential allotment has a street frontage of approximately 20 metres and depth of 40 metres and contains a single dwelling. For the most part, residential allotments in Weston have been considerably less affected by subdivision than at Kurri Kurri. The potential for increased residential density at Weston is largely limited to redevelopment of existing allotments in the R3 Medium Density Residential Zone, or to a small number of residential zoned allotments that either exceed 900m² in area, or are suitably configured to site a dual occupancy under the new Local Environmental Plan provisions.



Encourage housing diversity, density and affordability

The Kurri Kurri District contains a number of residential land use zones, ranging from large R5 Large Lot Residential to the north of Weston, to R2 Low Density Residential and R3 Medium Density Residential nearer the District's commercial centres. The range of land use zones that apply to the District are shown in **Figure 15**. The zones provide for a wide variety of dwelling choice.

The District will require an additional 1,800 dwellings by 2036, as a minimum. A considerable proportion of the projected dwelling demand is capable of being delivered in the existing urban release areas to the north of the Hunter Expressway and through infill development, together with medium density redevelopment in and around the commercial centres. This includes through the subdivision of larger allotments, the development of dual occupancies or, where permissible, through medium density housing.

The District contains a higher proportion of younger households who are likely to have purchased their first home, or have chosen to rent. This is likely a result of greater housing affordability in the District when compared to coastal areas and a reflection of the District's accessibility to regional employment centres in the Upper and Lower Hunter. To continue to cater for these types of households, opportunities for a mix of housing choice should be provided in the District.

Kurri Kurri and Weston will need to market their strengths to attract a greater share of the future regional demand for housing. Some of the most important strengths of these localities relate to public art, festivals, services, open space, recreation facilities and proximity to the District's established commercial centres.

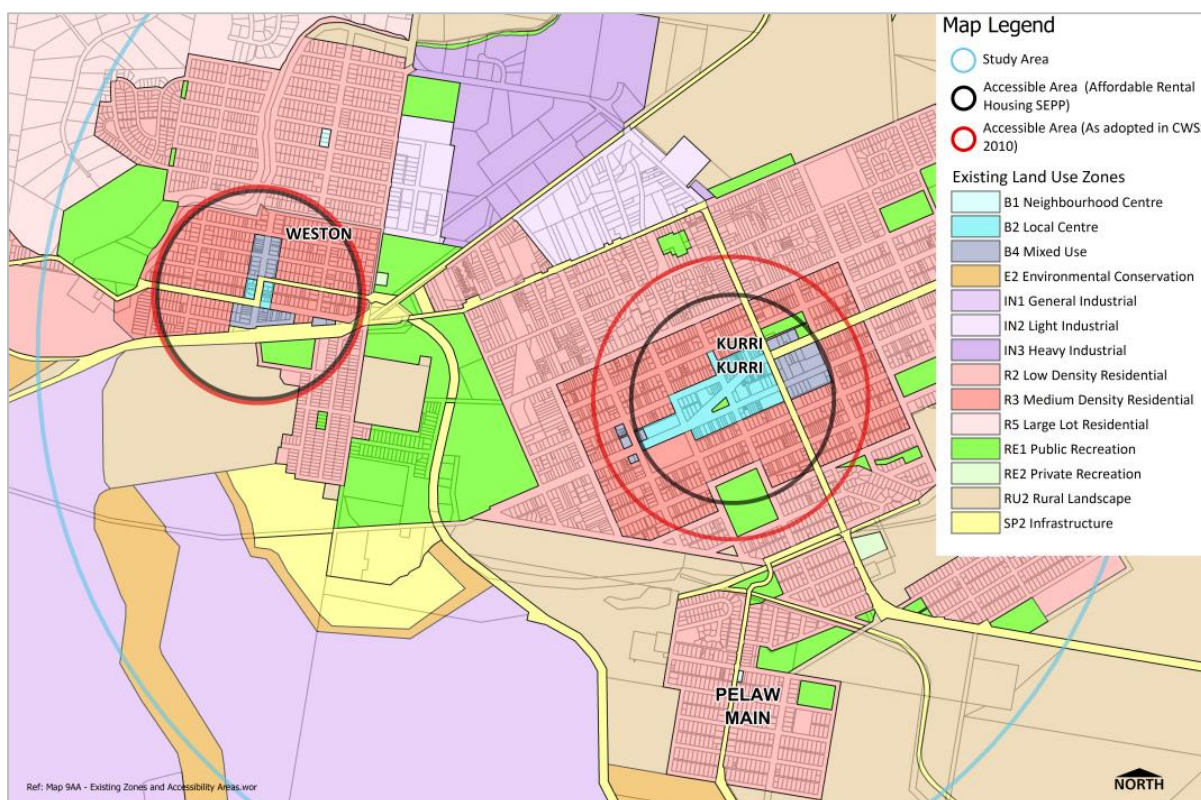
The Kurri Kurri and Weston townships have an opportunity to differentiate themselves from the growth area to the north of the Hunter Expressway by providing greater diversity of housing. While single dwellings presently dominate the urban area, it is anticipated that a greater mix of dwelling types and density will begin to appear in Kurri Kurri and Weston over time. This shift is already beginning to occur in Kurri Kurri, where medium density development currently out paces single dwelling development.

Medium density housing is preferable in areas that are within easy walking distance of the commercial centres and public transportation. These areas are typically referred to as 'accessible'. For certain types of development in accessible areas, more flexible planning provisions apply, which provide an incentive to intensify development in those areas. *State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009* provides clear parameters to define accessible areas. The Policy identifies that an accessible area includes land that is within 800 metres of a railway station, or 400 metres of a bus stop that provides a regular, hourly service between 6am and 9pm weekdays, and 8am and 6pm weekends.

A passenger rail service no longer operates from Kurri Kurri or Weston. However, there are two bus stops in the District that do meet the parameters of the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP and therefore give rise to a 400 metre accessible area around them. These include the bus stop at Rotary Park, Kurri Kurri and the bus stop at the Weston Commercial Centre. The boundaries of these accessible areas are shown in **Figure 15**.



Figure 15 - Land Use Zones and Accessible Areas



The boundary of the R3 Medium Density Residential Zone at Weston generally aligns with the accessible area, as defined in the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP, with the heavy rail line, Swamp Creek, Swanson Street and recreation land acting as logical boundaries between land use zones.

However, the boundary of the R3 Medium Density Residential Zone at Kurri Kurri does not align with the accessible area defined by the SEPP. The reason for the inconsistency is that the *City Wide Settlement Strategy 2010* adopted a slightly larger radius of up to 600 metres for the accessible area at Kurri Kurri, with Aberdare Street identified as the logical boundary between land use zones. Residential blocks to the north of Aberdare Street are not as permeable as those to the south of the Street, due to the larger block sizes in that area. Additionally, several of the residential allotments to the north of Aberdare Street are subject to flooding and as such, would not be ideal candidates for medium density housing.

Increasing the density of development nearer the commercial centres will benefit the community by focusing new construction within the established urban area. This will achieve greater use of existing services and infrastructure, reduce development costs, broaden dwelling mix and reinforce a sense of place and community. Compact settlements also enable lower infrastructure maintenance costs for Council over time and result in a more concentrated rate base to fund infrastructure and public domain improvements.

Housing demand will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure the availability and capacity of residential zoned land. This is particularly relevant in light of the future impact of the Hunter Expressway. The Hunter Expressway was opened in 2014 and its long term impacts on residential development in the District are not completely known.

In responding to future demand for growth, developments that seek to increase the density of existing zoned land within or near the commercial centres will be encouraged as a priority. This includes increasing housing diversity and density through the subdivision of allotments in the existing R2 Low Density Residential Zone and R3 Medium Density Residential Zone. Dual occupancy development, shop top housing and multi dwelling housing will also be encouraged nearer the commercial centres.

Priority will be given to developments that seek to take advantage of available but underutilised infrastructure in the District, including development within larger parcels of undeveloped, accessible and unconstrained residential

land. Opportunities to further differentiate and intensify the District’s housing supply will also be prioritised in locations nearer the commercial centres, including for developments relating to seniors’ housing, shop top housing and affordable housing projects.

Opportunities to provide seniors’ living and residential care facilities in the District should be explored and encouraged. Between 2011 and 2016 there was a discernible rise in the median age of people living in the Kurri Kurri Township. This is to be expected as older members of the community begin to ‘downsize’ to low maintenance, medium density housing nearer the commercial centres. This is a trend that is likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

Sites suitable for senior’s housing are those that meet the following criteria, as a minimum:

- *flat and unconstrained;*
- *Proximate to the commercial centres;*
- *access to services, such as water, sewer and electricity; and*
- *accessible via ‘at grade’ footpaths and public transport.*

If future demand for urban growth cannot be met within the existing urban area, planning proposals will then be considered to rezone land outside this area. Priority will be given to those areas that are least constrained for urban expansion and proximate to the existing employment centres in the District. Proposals will be discouraged on environmentally sensitive land, in locations that will create land use conflicts or adverse cumulative impacts, or on excessively constrained land, such as those areas identified in **Figure 9**.

Actions


A.3.6.1	Investigate planning provisions that encourage greater diversity of residential accommodation in the District.
A.3.6.2	Market the strengths of Kurri Kurri and Weston to attract a greater proportion of the Region’s future housing demand.
A.3.6.3	Encourage increased density in accessible and unconstrained areas of the District.
A.3.6.4	Encourage development of seniors’ housing and residential care facilities in accessible and unconstrained locations near the District’s commercial centres.

3.7 Open Space and Recreation

The District is presently well serviced by open space and recreation facilities. The facilities are generally well dispersed between the townships of Kurri Kurri and Weston and the localities of Pelaw Main and Stanford Merthyr.

The District's open space is categorised into a hierarchy that comprises local, district, regional and specialised sports and recreation facilities. With the exception of regional level sports parks and district level recreation parks, the provision of developed open space and recreation facilities in the District is expected to be sufficient to cater for the projected population until at least 2031 (Ross Planning, May 2016).

Council is currently developing a new Open Space and Recreation Strategy for the LGA and **Section 3.7** should be read in conjunction with that Strategy, when it is finalised.



**“The District
will capitalise
on its open
space and
recreation
facilities”**

Leverage the District on its open space and recreation facilities

The Kurri Kurri District contains some of the most noteworthy recreation and sporting facilities in the LGA, including Chinaman's Hollow / Peace Park at Weston and the Aquatic Centre, Rotary Park and Central Oval at Kurri Kurri. A trail head to the proposed Richmond Vale Rail Trail is also expected to be provided at the Log of Knowledge Park at Kurri Kurri, which will result in additional visitation to the District. The proposed Richmond Vale Rail Trail is addressed in **Section 3.5**.

There is an opportunity to differentiate Kurri Kurri and Weston from nearby settlements by leveraging upon the District's considerable open space and recreation facilities. Some of the District's most important strengths relate to its accessibility, including the proximity of residential land in the District to established open space and recreation facilities.

The District contains a higher proportion of younger households that require access to functional sporting and recreation facilities. To continue to cater for these types of households, recreational facilities in the District that are suitably located and utilised should be progressively upgraded to ensure they continue to meet the demands and expectation of the local community.

Conversely, parcels of existing but constrained recreation zoned land that is deemed surplus to recreation needs should be examined for rezoning and redevelopment potential in the medium term to allow for infill development. The sale of surplus recreation land could provide a source of funds, which could be redirected to improving more suitably located and utilised recreational facilities in the District, subject to increased density considerations.

There are nine formal playgrounds within the District and these are identified in **Figure 16**. Weston is shown to be generally well serviced by playgrounds, whereas gaps exist in the provision of playgrounds at Kurri Kurri. The nearest playground to the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre is located at George Winter Park to the north of the Study Area. A proposed playground at the Molly Worthington Netball Courts Site would ensure there are adequate playgrounds within proximity to nearby residences, schools and the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre.

Figure 16 – Recreation Space and Playgrounds Analysis



Open Space and Recreation Facilities – Key Sites

Rotary Park, Kurri Kurri

Rotary Park is a prominent, passive park in the heart of the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre. The Park presently hosts community events, such as the Nostalgia Festival and is also used for informal recreation and social gatherings. The Park is highly constrained due to its size, surrounding development and as a result of ad hoc development that has occurred within the park over time.

Rotary Park serves as an important centrepiece in the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre. Sightlines from the surrounding Commercial Centre to the Park are important and help establish the character of the place. These views should be accommodated and preserved into the future.

The Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre Masterplan specifically addresses Rotary Park, with opportunities for its ongoing use, renewal and revitalisation.

Molly Worthington Netball Courts, Kurri Kurri

The Molly Worthington Netball Courts are a well utilised sports facility in the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre. The site is prominent, being immediately adjacent to Mitchell Avenue, Lang Street and the Commercial Centre. However, the Netball Courts site lacks formalised car parking and is constrained by surrounding development. Access to the site is also limited, with primary access off the nearby residential streets and laneways.

There is currently a gap in the network of playgrounds. Establishing a new playground at Molly Worthington Park would address the gap in the playground provision in Kurri Kurri and is consistent with the direction of Council's Draft Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan.

Long term opportunities to relocate the netball courts facility should be investigated, together with the reuse of the existing site for residential development.

Booth Park, Kurri Kurri

Booth Park is located a short distance from the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre. However, the Park is not widely utilised and its topography does not support its long term use as a sportsground (Ross Planning, May 2016).

It is recommended that Council investigate realigning the boundaries of Booth Park, with a view of supporting more suitably located and more frequently utilised recreational facilities elsewhere in the District.

Nellie Simm Park, Kurri Kurri

Nellie Simm Park is constrained due to nearby residential development and localised flooding. The Park contains no physical embellishments.

The eastern portion of Nellie Simm Park is effectively land locked and not ideal open space. There may be some merit in retaining and improving western portion of the Park as a Green Linkage or other alternative uses.

It is recommended that Council investigate realigning the boundaries of Nellie Simm Park, with a view of achieving greater use the eastern portion of the Park, which is less impacted by flooding.

Log of Knowledge Park, Kurri Kurri

The Log of Knowledge Park at Kurri Kurri will incorporate the future trail head to the proposed Richmond Vale Rail Trail. It is anticipated that the Rail Trail will bring additional visitors and tourism to the District.

Opportunities to integrate the Richmond Vale Rail Trail with the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre and the proposed recreational vehicle area at Kurri Kurri Central Oval should be further investigated, including consideration of additional street trees and upgrades to Allworth Street in Kurri Kurri to improve the pedestrian and cycling environment.

Opportunities should also be explored to extend the Rail Trail through to the former Pelaw Main Station off Hebburn Street in Kurri Kurri. The former Train Station is still utilised by the Richmond Vale Railway Museum that operates an occasional steam locomotive to that point.

Stanford Merthyr Crown Reserve

The Stanford Merthyr Crown Reserve site is constrained by native vegetation and considerable mine subsidence. These constraints limit the site's long term development potential.

It has previously been suggested (by UNSW) that the reserve could be utilised as a 'conservation park', including walking trails and environmental education centre. Use as conservation park may have some merit; however, it would come at cost and there may be risks to personal safety.

Due to site constraints, it is unlikely that anything beyond 'soft' development would be permitted within the land.



Actions

A.3.7.1 Implement the Cessnock Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan.

Section 4

Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre Masterplan

4.1 Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre Masterplan

Overview

The Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre Masterplan has been developed based on a response to the findings of the detailed analysis presented under separate cover. A focus has been placed on the development of the Commercial Centre and connectivity throughout the Study Area.

The Masterplan has been separated into the following key projects:

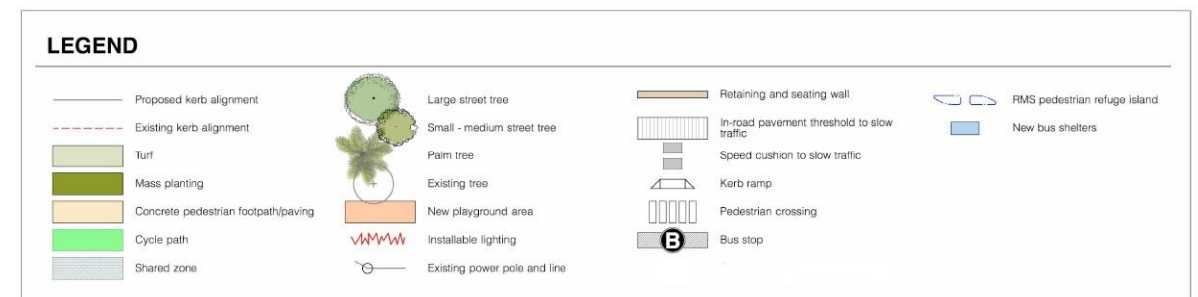
- Project 1: Lang Street Upgrades
- Project 2: Barton Street Upgrades
- Project 3: Rotary Park Improvements
- Project 4: Molly Worthington Park Improvements
- Project 5: Pedestrian Arcade
- Project 6: Wayfinding and Public Art
- Project 7: Street Tree Masterplan

For detailed information, refer to the Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre Masterplan written document.

Kurri Kurri Master Plan Key:

1. Streetscape upgrades to Lang Street between Alexandra Street and Allworth Street to create sense of arrival to the Commercial Centre.
2. Streetscape Improvements including street tree planting to Allworth Street.
3. Streetscape upgrades to Lang Street between Allworth Street and Hampden Street.
4. Upgrades to Rotary Park.
5. Streetscape upgrade to Barton Street fronting Rotary Park between Allworth and Hampden Streets.
6. Streetscape improvements to Barton Street, including street tree planting
7. Streetscape improvements including street tree planting to Hampden Street.
8. Proposed pedestrian connection between Lang Street and Barton Street.
9. Streetscape upgrades to Lang Street between Hampden and Victoria Streets.
10. Work with landowner to improve existing lighting, safety and amenity.
11. Streetscape improvements including street tree planting to Mitchell Avenue.
12. Streetscape upgrades to Victoria Street.
13. Playground
14. Reconfiguration of existing netball courts.
15. Streetscape upgrades to Lang Street between Victoria Street and Merthyr Street to create sense of arrival to the Commercial Centre.
16. Installation of pedestrian refuge at centre of road to improve pedestrian safety when crossing Lang Street.
17. Streetscape upgrade to create sense of arrival into Commercial Centre.
18. Bike lane and median upgrade at the intersection of Barton and Victoria Street allowing for safer bike crossing.

Figure 17 – Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre Masterplan



4.2 Rotary Park Concept Plan

The Rotary Park Concept Plan aims to provide a flexible village green for passive recreation and community event use. The Plan proposes sympathetic improvements to the Park to retain the existing character and create a series of spaces to improve the amenity, usability, access and circulation for the enjoyment of workers, residents and visitors.

Figure 18 – Rotary Park Concept Plan



Rotary Park Concept Plan Key:

1. Retain and protect the War Memorial, iconic Kurri Kurri Kookaburra and Mining Memorials.
2. Install a Pit Horse Statue near the Miner's Memorial.
3. Establish a Kurri Kurri Memorial Walk to celebrate, consolidate and curate the collection of memorials and plaques.
4. Declutter the central lawn areas to increase the usable Park area for passive recreation and community event use.
5. Improve the accessibility and circulation with a range of Park paths.
6. Plan to relocate the Park amenities in the longer term to provide a flexible open lawn area for community events such as the Nostalgia Festival, farmers markets, outdoor cinema, celebration and carols' night.
7. Investigate a new location for a new public amenity building including male, female, accessible and baby change facilities, bike end of trip and storage facility.
8. Provide coach bus parking on Barton Street near the existing amenities building.
9. Provide additional seating near bus interchange.
10. Improve and formalise the main Park entries.
11. Unify the Park with a consistent palette of furniture, materials and planting
12. Regrade the lawn areas to improve usability and create view embankments
13. Provide low boundary planting to define the edges and shelter the Park from the street.
14. Retain, protect and manage healthy mature Park trees.
15. Provide a mixture of new native and exotic Park tree plantings to provide shade and improve Park amenity.
16. Provide a range of seating recreational opportunities including tables, bench seats and picnic tables.
17. Improve night time safety with Park top post lights.
18. Refurbish the rotunda including feature beacon lighting and Wi-Fi.
19. Create a quiet, enclosed memorial space.
20. Change existing angled parking to parallel parking on Barton Street to increase Park area and improve park amenity.
21. Improve pedestrian access, circulation and safety with mid-block kerb extension to reduce crossing distances.
22. Install street trees around the Park to improve park amenity.
23. Remove street lighting poles from the middle of grassed areas.

Rotary Park – Artist Impression



Memorial Walk Theming Images



Memorial walk stone Inset



Interpretive text in memorial walk

4.3 Molly Worthington Park Concept Plan

The Molly Worthington Park Master Plan aims to provide an increase to recreation opportunities and use of the park. The plan reconfigures the park to retain the existing Netball Courts and provide space for a new playground and youth orientated activities near the Commercial Centre for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Molly Worthington Netball Court Key:

1. Relocate a netball court to the northern end of the Park to provide more open space near the Commercial Centre.
2. Consolidate the netball courts around a central spectator and gather space near the clubhouse building.
3. Provide a series of terrace seating walls for spectators and address the level change.
4. Establish a new playground near the Commercial Centre for residents and visitors and address the gap in the playground provisions.
5. Provide a range of youth orientated recreation facilities including a basketball hoop and table tennis table.
6. Relocate the amenities building to increase the passive open grass area and provide a range of recreational uses to increase Park use.
7. Upgrade netball court with a new green plexipave surface.
8. New low barrier fence and buffer planting to Mitchell Avenue.
9. Utilise the netball courts for community events including temporary bike tracks or skateable moments.
10. Provide gathering space adjacent to the clubhouse building.
11. Install mid-block stairs to improve access.
12. Improve the Park entries to provide a welcoming open space.
13. Unify the Park with a consistent furniture, planting and materials palette.
14. Provide a mixture of new native and exotic tree plantings to provide shade and improve Park amenity.
15. Provide a range of seating opportunities and rest spots.
16. Improve night time safety with Park post top lights.
17. Provide additional tables, benches and picnic opportunities.
18. Upgrade the car parking and provide trees and low shrub planting to improve the amenity and provide shade.
19. New right turn lane into Maitland Street to facilitate turnaround traffic movements.



Figure 19 – Molly Worthington Park Concept Plan

Molly Worthington Park – Artist Impression



Weston Commercial Centre Masterplan

5.1 Weston Commercial Centre Masterplan

Overview

The Weston Commercial Centre Masterplan has been developed based on a response to the findings in the detailed analysis. A focus has been placed on the development of the Commercial Centre and connectivity throughout the Study Area.

The Masterplan has been separated into the following key projects:

- Precinct 1: Station Street Upgrades
- Precinct 2: Memorial Park Improvements
- Precinct 3: Bluey Frame Park Improvements
- Precinct 4: Street Tree Masterplan

For detailed information, refer to the Weston Commercial Centre Masterplan written document.

Figure 20 – Weston Commercial Centre Masterplan



LEGEND

Proposed kerb alignment	Paved laneway plaza with outdoor dining space	Kerb ramp
Existing kerb alignment	Permeable paving to improve water quality	New bus shelters
Turf	Large street tree	Bus stop
Mass planting	Small - medium street tree	Outdoor dining/retail opportunities
Concrete pedestrian footpath/paving	Secondary street tree	
Brick paving upgrade	Existing power pole and line	
Heritage sandstone paving	In-road pavement threshold to slow traffic	

Weston Masterplan Key:

1. A shared path connection to Appleton Avenue, Kurri Kurri, Abermain and beyond.
2. In road paving threshold to create a low speed traffic environment, improve access, safety and encourage bike use on Scott Street.
3. New Street Tree Planting to improve the visual amenity, green the street and provide shade.
4. **Memorial Park** – Park upgrade including new amenity shelters, seating areas and planting to improve usability and the visual amenity.
5. **Bluey Frame Park** – Park upgrade including new amenity shelters, seating areas and planting to improve usability and the visual amenity.
6. Laneway improvements to provide safe, low speed bike routes in the Commercial Centre and encourage bike use for short trips.
7. **Station Street** – Streetscape upgrades to Station Street, including street trees, furniture, pavements.

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