Hunter Valley Wine Country
Signage Strategy

CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL

Singleton COUNCIL

MOIR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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1.1 Overview

Signage is a powerful tool for communities to develop a unique identity for their region, create a positive first impression for visitors, provide important information about an area and aid navigation and wayfinding.

This Signage Strategy has been developed as a joint project by Cessnock City Council and Singleton Council to provide guidance on the planning, design and installation of signage in the area known as Hunter Valley Wine Country (HVWC). It is intended to facilitate the development of well designed and positioned signage that reflects the values of the region and communicates a strong brand identity.

The popularity of the region as a major tourist destination makes effective wayfinding signage a necessity. Existing signage in the HVWC area is dated, overly complex and in poor condition. A hierarchy of new tourism signs has been designed to guide visitors to and around the region and strengthen the branding of the area as a premier tourist destination.

The Hunter Valley Wine Country Strategy was adopted by Cessnock City Council on 18th February 2015.

1.2 Project Objectives

The main objectives of this Signage Strategy are to improve visitor wayfinding around the HVWC and enhance the image and branding of the region as a major wine tourism destination. Specific objectives include:

- Promote ease of access to the many tourism destinations within Hunter Valley Wine Country.

- Ensure that signage is compatible with the desired visual character of the Hunter Valley Wine Country.

- Establish a clear signage hierarchy.

- Ensure signage is installed in suitable locations.

- Enable visitors to move with confidence throughout the region.

- Ensure signage is of a high quality, design and finish.

1.3 Report Overview & Structure

BACKGROUND 1	PROJECT OVERVIEW PROJECT BACKGROUND LITERATURE REVIEW PROJECT PROCESS STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT	The first section of this Strategy provides an overview of the project, its objectives, planning context and development process.
CONTEXT 2	REGIONAL CONTEXT STUDY AREA	Part two outlines the context of the study area including a contextual overview of the HVWC area in relation to surrounding regions.
ANALYSIS 3	REVIEW OF EXISTING SIGNAGE WINE COUNTRY FEATURES	Analysis of the HVWC was undertaken through a number of site visits, desktop investigation and consultation with the community and Council staff. This analysis was used to identify opportunities and constraints and assisted in guiding the concept development process.
SIGNAGE STRATEGY 4	PRINCIPLES OF GOOD SIGNAGE SIGNAGE FAMILY SIGNAGE TYPES	Part 4 outlines the family of new signs that are proposed for the HVWC. The proposed signs utilise an appropriate and consistent visual communication system to convey messages quickly and effectively. The signs reflect the character of the Hunter Valley and provide a unified approach to design elements in terms of materials, appearance, graphics and colours.
IMPLEMENTATION 5	PLACEMENT PRINCIPLES REMOVAL AND UPGRADE PROGRAM MAINTENANCE INSTALLATION RECOMMENDATIONS	Part five provides recommendations on the installation of the new signs including the removal and upgrade of existing signs, priorities for the installation of new signs, placement principles and ongoing maintenance recommendations.

1.4 Literature Review

The following documents have been reviewed as part of the preparation of the HVWC Signage Strategy and the information has been taken into consideration in the development of the Signage Strategy.

- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 64 - Advertising and Signage (SEPP 64)
- Tourist Signposting Manual, Destination NSW and Roads and Maritime Services
- Cessnock City Council LEP 2011
- Cessnock City Council Development Control Plan 2010
- Cessnock City Council Vineyards District Signage System Policy
- Singleton Local Environment Plan 2013
- Singleton Council Development Control Plan 2012
- Hunter Visitor Economy Draft Destination Management Plan, July 2013
- Cessnock 2020 Community Plan
- Cessnock CBD Masterplan, Sept/Oct 2012
- Sustainable Cessnock - Cessnock CBD Business and Marketing Plan, August 2009
- Cessnock Chamber of Commerce Business Plan 2011-2012 Branxton Urban Design Framework, 2010
- Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism Business Plan 2011-2012
- Vineyards District Community Vision Community Consultation Report
- Cessnock Social and Cultural Plan
- Draft Cessnock City Economic Profile, Strategy and Action Plan 2013 -2018
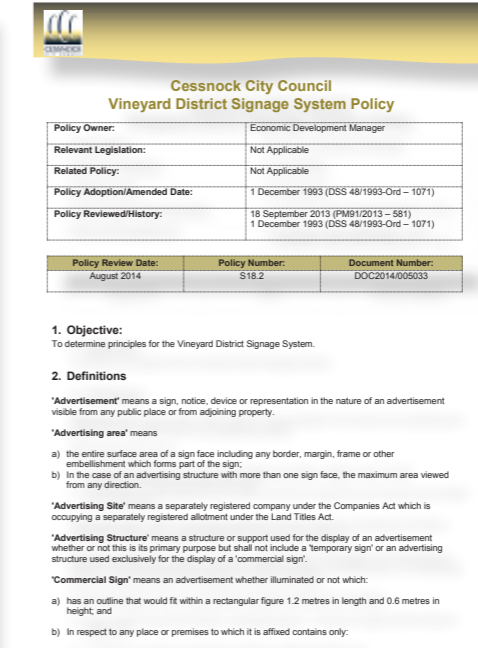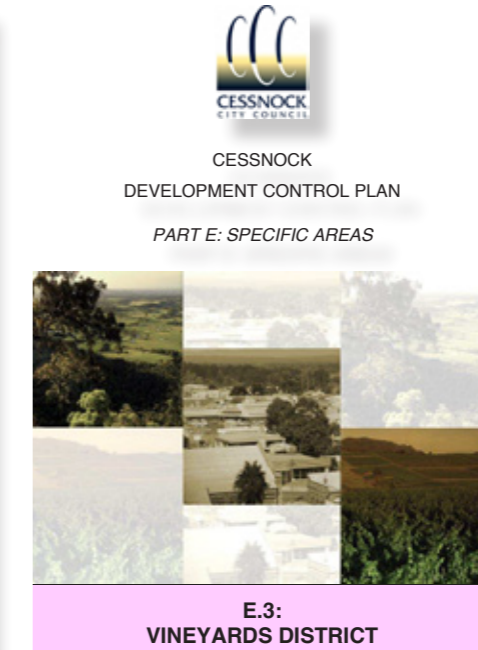
1.5 Existing Planning Framework

The design and installation of signage in the HVWC is currently controlled by the following planning instruments.

1.5.1 STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY NO. 64 - ADVERTISING AND SIGNAGE (SEPP64)

SEPP64 has been prepared under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (The EP&A Act) to introduce comprehensive provisions to ensure that outdoor signage is well located. It applies to all types of signs and advertisments that advertise or promote goods services or events and any structure or vessel that is used for the display of signage that is permitted under another environmental planning instrument and is visible from a public place or reserve. It does not include signage that is 'exempt development' under another environmental planning instrument or traffic signs. It applies to the whole of the state of NSW.

1.5.2 CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL LEP 2011

The Cessnock *Local Environment Plan 2011 (LEP 2011)* is a legal instrument that imposes standards to control development.

The Cessnock City Council *LEP 2011* defines signage types which are exempt from Council's consent under 'Schedule 2 Exempt Development' of the *LEP*. Exempt development may be carried out without the need for development consent under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act).

The *LEP 2011* covers private and commercial signs, including temporary signs for special events and political advertising.

1.5.3 CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL DCP 2010

Cessnock City Council's *Development Control Plan (2010)* contains two sections that specifically relate to outdoor signage.

Part D5 contains guidelines on outdoor signage applicable to the construction, erection, placement, alteration, illumination, relocation, attachment, painting or repainting of all existing and proposed advertising structures that are visible or likely to be visible from any public place, public road or adjoining property whether fixed or mobile. It applies to all areas covered by the DCP and includes including specific provisions for signage on land that buffers the Vineyards District.

Part E: Specific Areas, E.3 Vineyards District applies to land in the Vineyards District as identified in the DCP (2010). Appendix 5 contains a *Signage Code for the Vineyards District* which focusses specifically on the requirements for signage within this defined area.

1.5.4 CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL VINEYARDS DISTRICT SIGNAGE SYSTEM POLICY

Cessnock City Councils *Vineyards District Signage System Policy* is a guide to the **design,** materials and siting of advertising structures and signs in the Vineyards district which extends **across** both Cessnock and Singleton Council areas. The Policy defines the components of the existing Vineyards signage system and is intended to achieve an appropriate style and standard of signage for the Vineyards District.

1.5.5 SINGLETON LEP 2013

Schedule 2 in Singleton's *Local Environment Plan 2013 (LEP 2013)* defines development which can be carried out without the need for consent under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act).

1.5.6 SINGLETON DCP 2012

Singleton Development Control Plan 2012 (DCP 2012) contains a section on Outdoor Advertising Signage which provides information about regulatory requirements, guidance on the types of signs that are encouraged and discouraged, appropriate signage placement, maintenance and design considerations.

1.6 Australian Standards

Design and installation of outdoor road signage is to be in accordance with relevant Australian Standards including:

AS1742 - Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices Set
AS1743 - 2001 Road Signs - Specifications
AS2890 - 2009 - Parking Facilities Set

1.7 TASAC

Tourist signposting for installation on State Roads in NSW is assessed by the *Tourist Attraction Signposting Assessment Committee* (TASAC). TASAC is represented by Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), Tourism NSW and the NSW regional tourism organisations.

TASAC has overall responsibility for the planning and implementation of tourist signposting systems and aims to ensure that adequate, consistent signposting is provided to visitors within the framework of a total statewide tourist information system.

1.8 Signage Strategy Process

1. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS PHASE

The research and analysis phase of the project included an extensive review of the existing signage within the Wine Country region. A thorough site analysis, photographic survey, desktop review of existing documents and meetings with relevant council staff and stakeholders were undertaken during this phase.

2. DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The constraints and opportunities of the study area were identified through a combination of site analysis and stakeholder workshops. These formed the basis of the Signage Strategy objectives and recommendations.

3. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PHASE

The development phase of the project involved development of signage concepts and draft recommendations for the design and installation of the signs. The draft Signage Strategy is developed and refined in conjunction with feedback from Community and Stakeholder Meetings.

5. REVIEW OF DRAFT SIGNAGE STRATEGY

Stakeholders have an opportunity to review the Draft Signage Strategy and provide input into its development prior to finalisation of the document.

6. SIGNAGE STRATEGY FINALISATION

The Signage Strategy is finalised in accordance with responses from the community, stakeholders and Council staff.

1.9 Stakeholder & Community Involvement

The success of the development and implementation of the Signage Strategy requires a strong alliance between Council and stakeholders. The consultation process is about effectively involving key stakeholders and the general public in the decision making process and consultation has formed an integral component of the Signage Strategy development.

An interactive consultation program was developed to ensure the needs of the community and stakeholders were addressed. Feedback and comments from each consultation influenced the next step in the development process. Stakeholder workshops held over the course of the Signage Strategy development phase included meetings with tourism operators, local businesses, Council staff and Councillors.
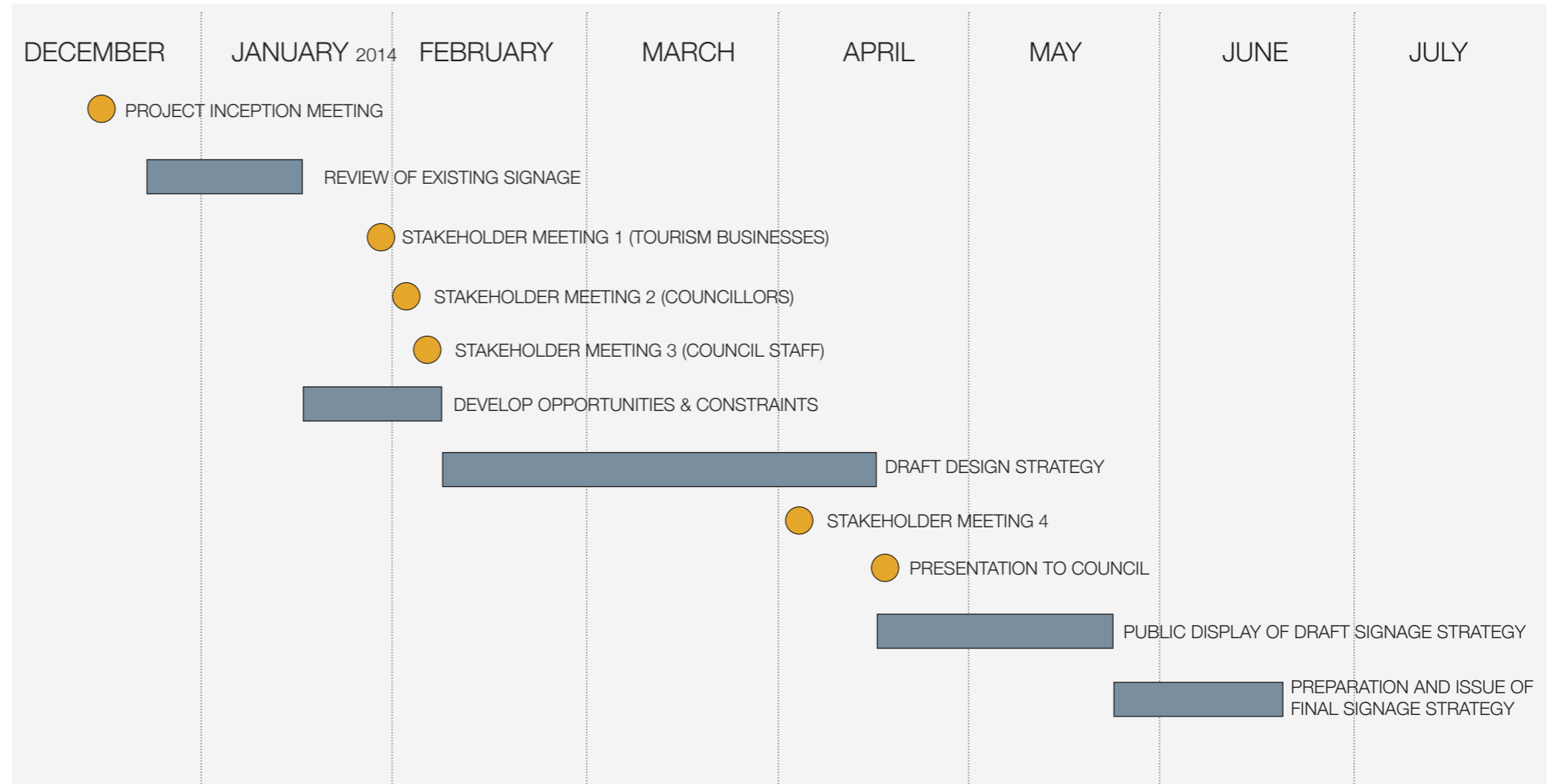

FIGURE 1. Signage Strategy Project Timeline

1 BACKGROUND

2 CONTEXT

3 ANALYSIS

4 SIGNAGE STRATEGY

5 IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Regional Context

The Hunter Valley is located on the east coast of New South Wales, approximately 150km north of Sydney and 40km west of Newcastle. It is bordered with the Central Coast Region and Sydney to the south, the Mid North Coast Region to the north, the New England/North West Region to the north-west and the Central West region to the west.

The Hunter Valley contains one of the largest river valleys on the New South Wales east coast, with the Hunter River flowing through its heart. The diverse landscapes of the region include rivers, lakes, beaches, harbours, rural landscapes, mountains, flood plains, cities, towns and villages. The Hunter Valley is bounded to the south-west by the rugged escarpments of the Broken Back Range (part of the Great Dividing Range) with many of the region's vineyards and agricultural areas lying in the foothills of this distinctive landscape feature.

FIGURE 2. Regional Context Map (SOURCE: Wikipedia)

2.2 The Hunter Region

The Hunter Region is defined by 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs) comprising Cessnock, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter, Port Stephens, Great Lakes, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Dungog and Gloucester. This region can be divided into two sub-regions; Upper Hunter and Lower Hunter. Cessnock, Newcastle, Maitland, Port Stephens and Lake Macquarie LGAs comprise the Lower Hunter sub-region.

The Hunter Region is the most populous regional area in Australia and is the fastest growing region in New South Wales outside of the Sydney metropolitan areas. Coal mining, agriculture, viticulture, tourism, horse breeding, electricity production, dairy farming and beef cattle farming and associated service industries are the main industries of the region.

FIGURE 3. Hunter Region (SOURCE: Department of Premier and Cabinet)

2.3 Hunter Valley Wine Country

This Signage Strategy focuses on the destination known as the Hunter Valley Wine Country (HVWC). Distinct boundaries of HVWC are not clearly defined and extend across Local Government Areas (LGAs) including Cessnock, Singleton and Muswellbrook. Wineries and associated tourism facilities are found as far north as Muswellbrook and Denman, however the vineyards district is generally considered to be centered around the areas of Pokolbin/Rothbury, Mount View, Cessnock, Wollombi Valley, Broke Fordwich, Around Hermitage, Dalwood and Lovedale/North Rothbury.

The Hunter Valley wine region is the oldest surviving and most well known wine area in Australia, with over 150 wineries represented across the region. In addition to the wineries and vineyards there are many other tourism companies operating in the area including accommodation, restaurants, galleries, food producers, tour operators and various attractions. Collectively these organisations represent the HVWC.

The destination is highly accessible by road, from Sydney, Newcastle and the New England area and the recent opening of the Hunter Expressway has meant that commute times to HVWC have significantly decreased. The Tourism Research Council estimated that Year Ending 2011, 90.5% of Domestic Overnight Visitors to Cessnock LGA travelled by car, 53.8% of International Visitors travel by rental car, 25.3% in a private car and 8% by motorhome or campervan. As visitors to the HVWC are predominantly reliant on travelling by car it is important that there is appropriate presentation, a sense of arrival and that the dispersal of traffic is effectively guided by appropriate signage within and around the destination.

Due to its value as a major wine region the area has been identified as a Critical Industry Cluster by the New South Wales State Government and excluded from Coal Seam Gas exploration in order to protect the wine and tourism industry.
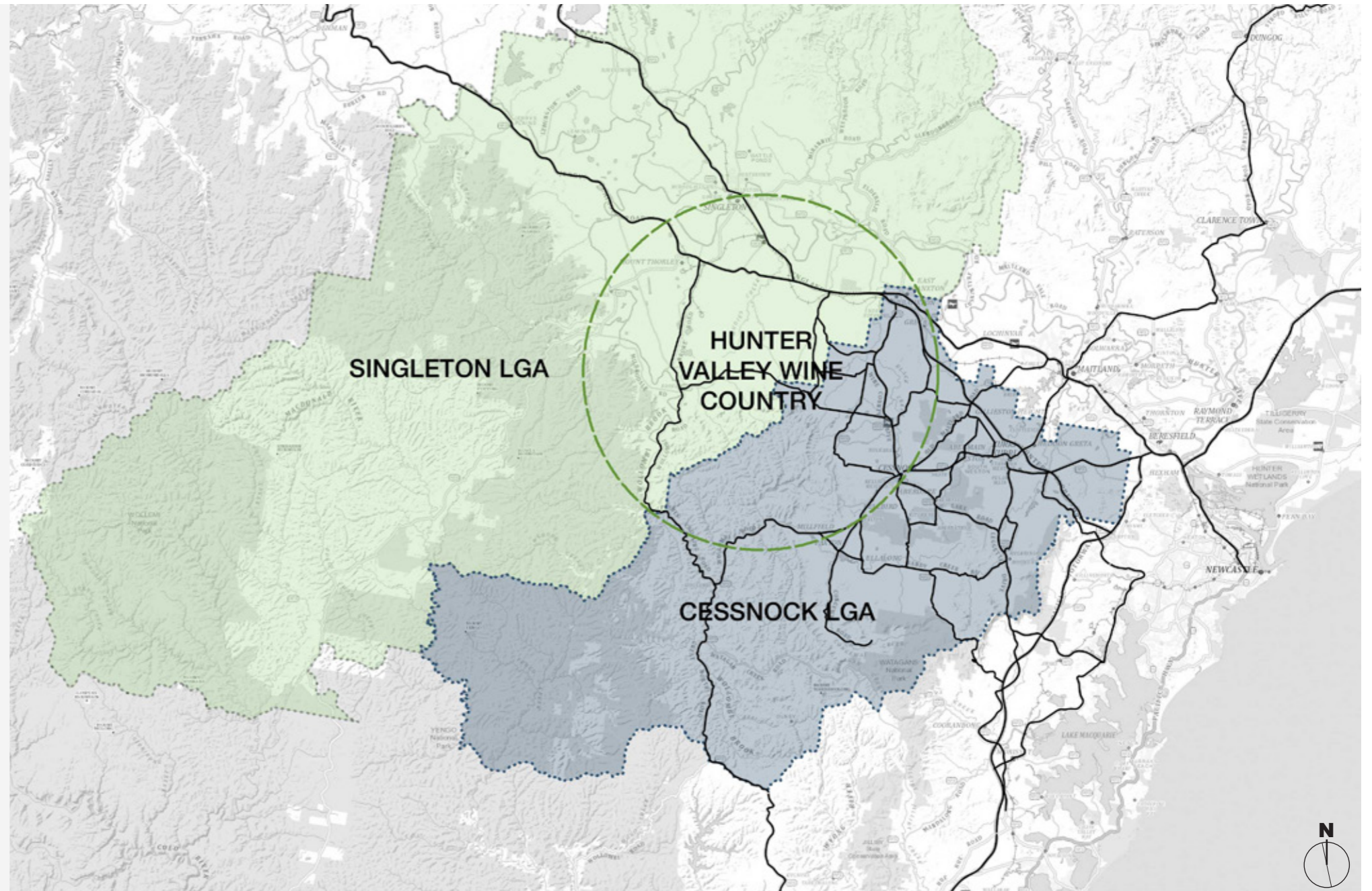

FIGURE 4. The Study Area (SOURCE: Six Maps)

1 BACKGROUND

2 CONTEXT

3 ANALYSIS

4 SIGNAGE STRATEGY

5 IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Review of Existing Signage

A review of existing signage in the Hunter Valley Wine Country (HVWC) has identified a real need to improve signage in the region. Existing signage lacks a coherent hierarchy, is dated and poorly maintained and inadequate for effectively guiding people around the region. Fragmented branding does not communicate a strong identity to visitors and does not reflect the high value destination the HVWC represents.

Existing signage within the HVWC can be loosely categorised into five sign types including:

• Gateway entry signage
• Street signage
• Visitor directional signage
• Visitor information signage
• Private and commercial signage

Descriptions of these signage types are described in the following pages.

GATEWAY ENTRY SIGNAGE

Gateway signs indicate a transition between one area and another. They are used to welcome visitors to a region or town or farewell them on their departure.

Gateway signs are used throughout the HVWC at the entry to many of the towns and suburbs. Existing signs lack prominence in the landscape and visitors do not experience a strong sense of arrival or have a clear understanding of when they are in 'Hunter Valley Wine Country'.

Many of the existing gateway signs are in poor condition and are constructed from a variety of materials which creates a general sense of inconsistency and presents a multitude of variations of the HVWC brand.

STREET SIGNAGE

Street signs are used to identify road names throughout the region.   Current street signage consists primarily of finger style signs fixed to a metal or timber pole at road intersections. There are instances of replication of street signage and street signage incorporated into commercial signage. Street signage varies in style and materials throughout the HVWC which results in an inconsistent representation of information.

VISITOR DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

Directional signs are used to help visitors navigate to and around the HVWC. They guide visitors to major towns and provide information about the various services and attractions available in the region. Currently, directional signage aimed at visitors includes a combination of brown and white or blue and white tourism signs and timber 'fingerboards' mounted between vertical timber posts.

The Tourist Association Signposting Assessment Committee (TASAC) is responsible for authorising the installation of standard brown and white tourism signs and a number of these signs have been installed across the HVWC.

The timber fingerboards contain information about individual wineries and attractions. They are heavily text based and as they are typically located on intersections they can prove difficult to read from a moving vehicle. Tourism operators pay a fee to be included on the fingerboard signage however some fingerboards contain unauthorised attachments which have been added by individual business owners without Council approval.

VISITOR INFORMATION SIGNAGE

There are a variety of existing visitor information signs, maps and directories located around the HVWC. These types of signs include maps, contact details and interpretive information typically found close to the entry of key tourist areas, in parks and along roadsides.

Many of the information signs and maps are in poor condition, outdated and inconsistent in style, content and material use. There is a lack of integration with the surrounding landscape and in many cases vehicular stopping bays associated with the maps do not provide a defined area for vehicles to safely pull off the road.

PRIVATE / COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE

Singleton and Cessnock Councils' Development Control Plans (DCP) controls the number and type of private and commercial signs that are permitted in the vineyards district.

Many of the signs that appear around the region are not compliant with the DCP and local business owners suggest that existing conditions are too restrictive to allow them to appropriately promote their businesses.

Lighting and reflective text are not permitted under the DCP making night time wayfinding difficult for visitors.

Although the design of private and commercial signage is not part of this strategy recommendations for the integration of private signage into the wayfinding hierarchy have been explored and discussed during the design and consultation process and recommendations for improvements to private signage are included in Section 4.

3.2 Road Hierarchy

HVWC is well connected to major roads and highways but maintains a distinctive rural character on the many local and regional roads.

Major roads which service the area include the recently opened Hunter Expressway (M15), the Pacific Motorway (M1) and the New England Highway (A43).

The Hunter Expressway has significantly improved access to the HVWC via a number of interchanges that connect with existing regional roads at Branxton, Loxford, Allandale, Kurri Kurri, Buchanan and Newcastle.

The New England Highway (A43) is the main inland highway connecting Newcastle to Brisbane. It runs across the northern section of the Cessnock Local Government Area through the townships of Greta, and Branxton before continuing north-west through the Singleton Local Government Area.

The B82 (incorporating Leggetts Drive, Lake Road and Wine Country Drive) traverses the region in a south-east to north-west direction passing through the townships of Brunkerville, Mt Vincent, Elrington, Kearsley, Aberdare, Cessnock, Rothbury, North Rothbury and Branxton.

John Renshaw Drive (B68) is an alternative access road from Newcastle to Cessnock, passing through Buchanan, Kurri Kurri, Abermain and Neath.

Tourist Drive 33 runs through the rural heart of HVWC between Branxton and Calga via what were once some of the most important roads in New South Wales. This popular tourist drive follows part of the Great North Road which was built by convict labour between 1826 and 1836 to connect Sydney with Newcastle and the upper Hunter Valley.

LEGEND

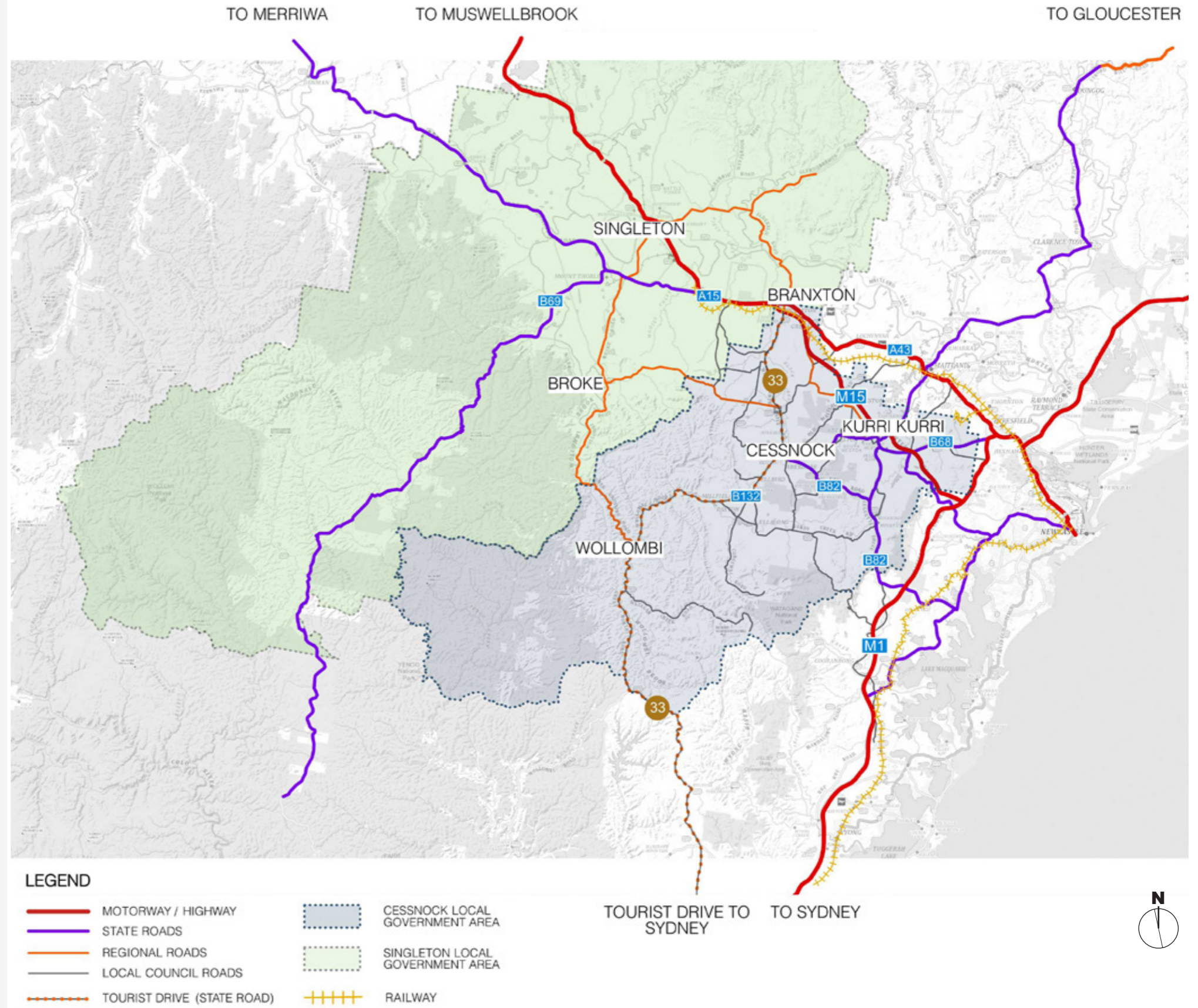|		
— MOTORWAY / HIGHWAY	▨ CESSNOCK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	
— STATE ROADS		
— REGIONAL ROADS	▨ SINGLETON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	
— LOCAL COUNCIL ROADS		
••••• TOURIST DRIVE (STATE ROAD)	+++++ RAILWAY	

FIGURE 5. Road hierarchy

3.3 Access Points

There are a number of access points into the HVWC. Visitors traveling from Sydney typically approach via the M1 Motorway, either taking the Freemans Waterhole exit and traveling along the B82 through the rural and residential areas of Freemans Waterhole, Brunkerville, Mulbring and Keasley or more recently by continuing along the M1 to the recently opened Hunter Expressway. The Hunter Expressway provides six new interchanges with direct access to the winery region at the M1 Pacific Motorway/Newcastle Link Road, Buchanan, Kurri Kurri, Loxford, Allandale and Branxton.

Visitors from Newcastle approach from the east via the Hunter Expressway, George Booth Drive or John Renshaw Drive while access from the north is typically through Maitland, Branxton or Singleton.

Another popular access point for visitors is via Tourist Drive 33 which enters Cessnock Local Government Area at Laguna and winds through the HVWC to Branxton.

The majority of people arrive in the HVWC by private vehicle as public transport is limited although there are rail connections to Newcastle and Sydney with railway stations at Greta, Branxton and Singleton.
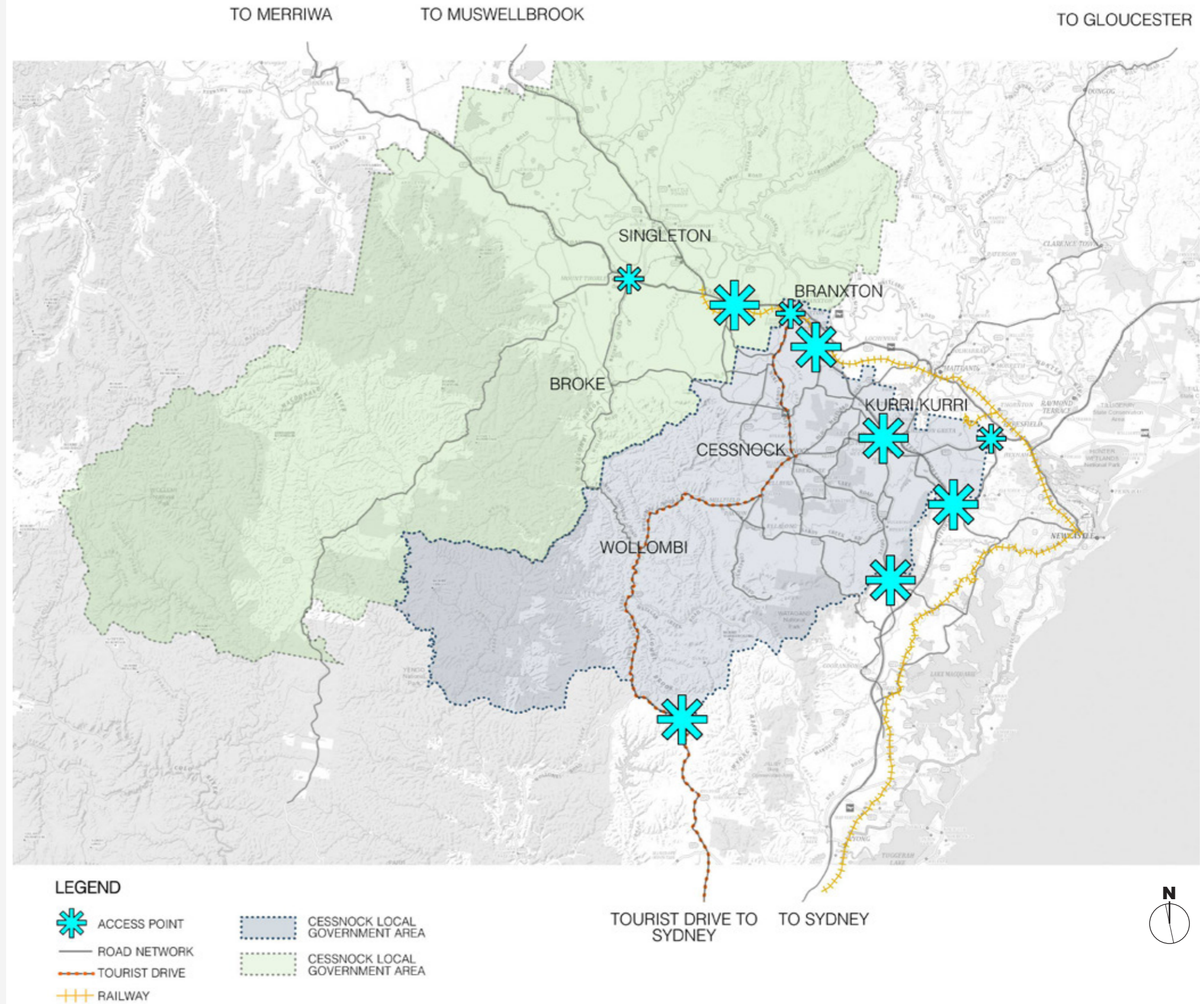

FIGURE 6. Access points

LEGEND

- ✳ ACCESS POINT
- —— ROAD NETWORK
- ••• TOURIST DRIVE
- +++ RAILWAY
- CESSNOCK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA
- CESSNOCK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

3.4 Towns

Singleton and Cessnock town centres are the major urban centres of HVWC and act as key starting points for visitors entering the vineyards district.

Cessnock town centre is the main administrative, retail and service centre for the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA) while Kurri Kurri is an important secondary retail centre and the industrial heart of the LGA. Smaller towns such as Wollombi have developed their own distinctive character based on heritage, natural beauty and lifestyle opportunities.

Singleton town centre is located on the banks of the Hunter River and is surrounded by a number of smaller villages including Broke-Fordwich, Milbrodale, Bulga, Mt Thorley, Jerrys Plains and Warkworth. The Singleton landscape is highly scenic with vast tracts of fertile rural and agricultural land, horse training properties, national parks and lakes. The main industries in the Singleton LGA include viticulture, mining, agriculture and military training.
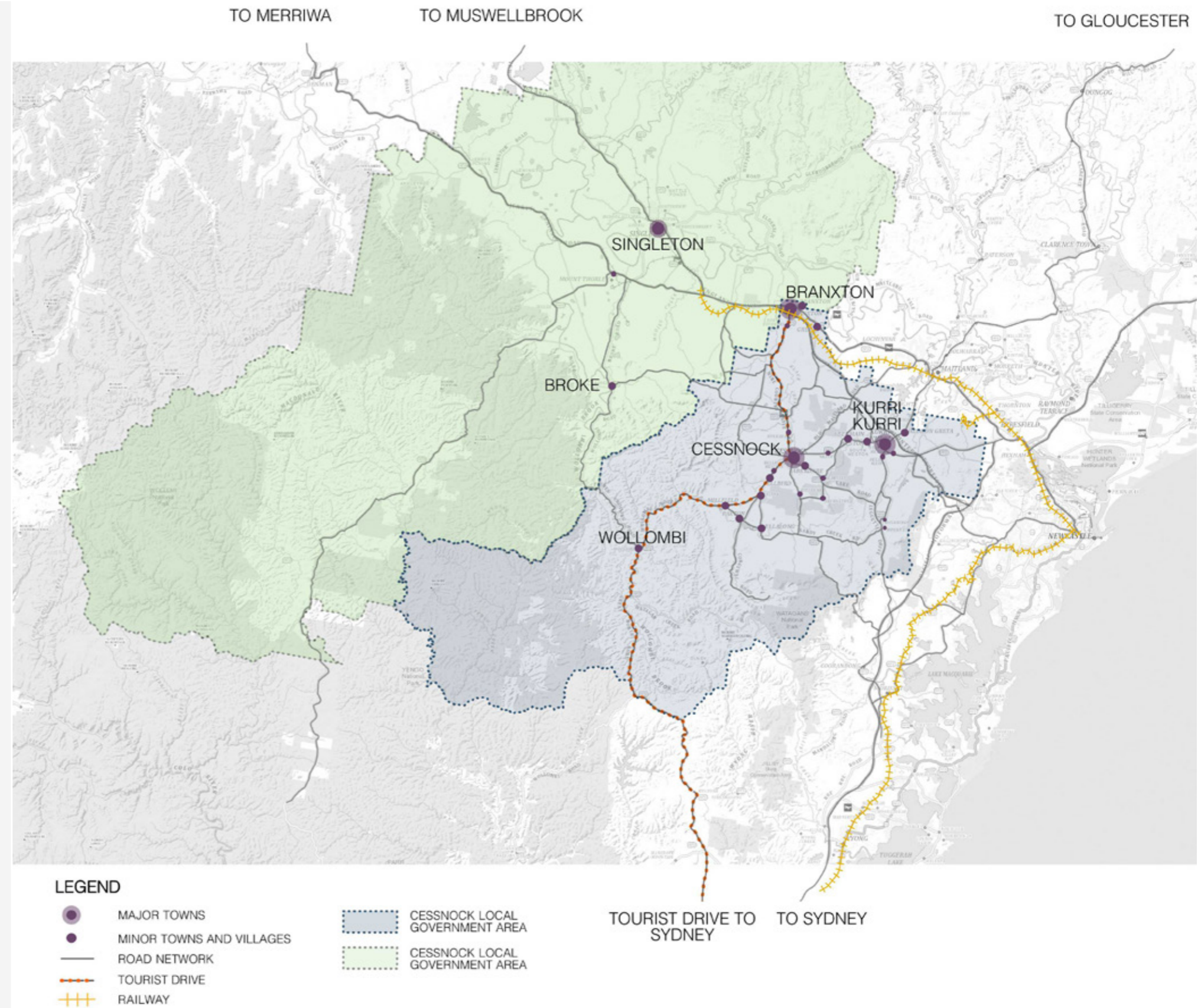

FIGURE 7. Hunter Valley Towns

3.5 Key Tourist Points

HVWC is one of the states most important tourist markets for domestic and international visitors with many attractions on offer across the region.

The charming village of Wollombi is a popular tourist destination with a relaxed country character and picturesque setting. It is a popular point from which to explore the historic Great North Road which was built by convict labour between 1826 and 1836 to connect Sydney with Newcastle and the Upper Hunter Valley. Remnants of the road remain visible at certain points along Tourist Drive 33 and are an important aspect of the regions historical tourism.

Kurri Kurri offers a range of attractions for visitors but is best known for its historical murals which depict the history of the area. The town hosts an annual nostalgia festival which attracts over 40,000 people to the region.

The major HVWC tourist attraction however, is the vineyards district and its associated range of attractions, accommodation, wineries and events. The HVWC is the oldest and best known wine growing region in Australia, attracting thousands of visitors to the area each year.

Tourist Information Centres are located approximately 6km north of the Cessnock town centre and at Singleton.
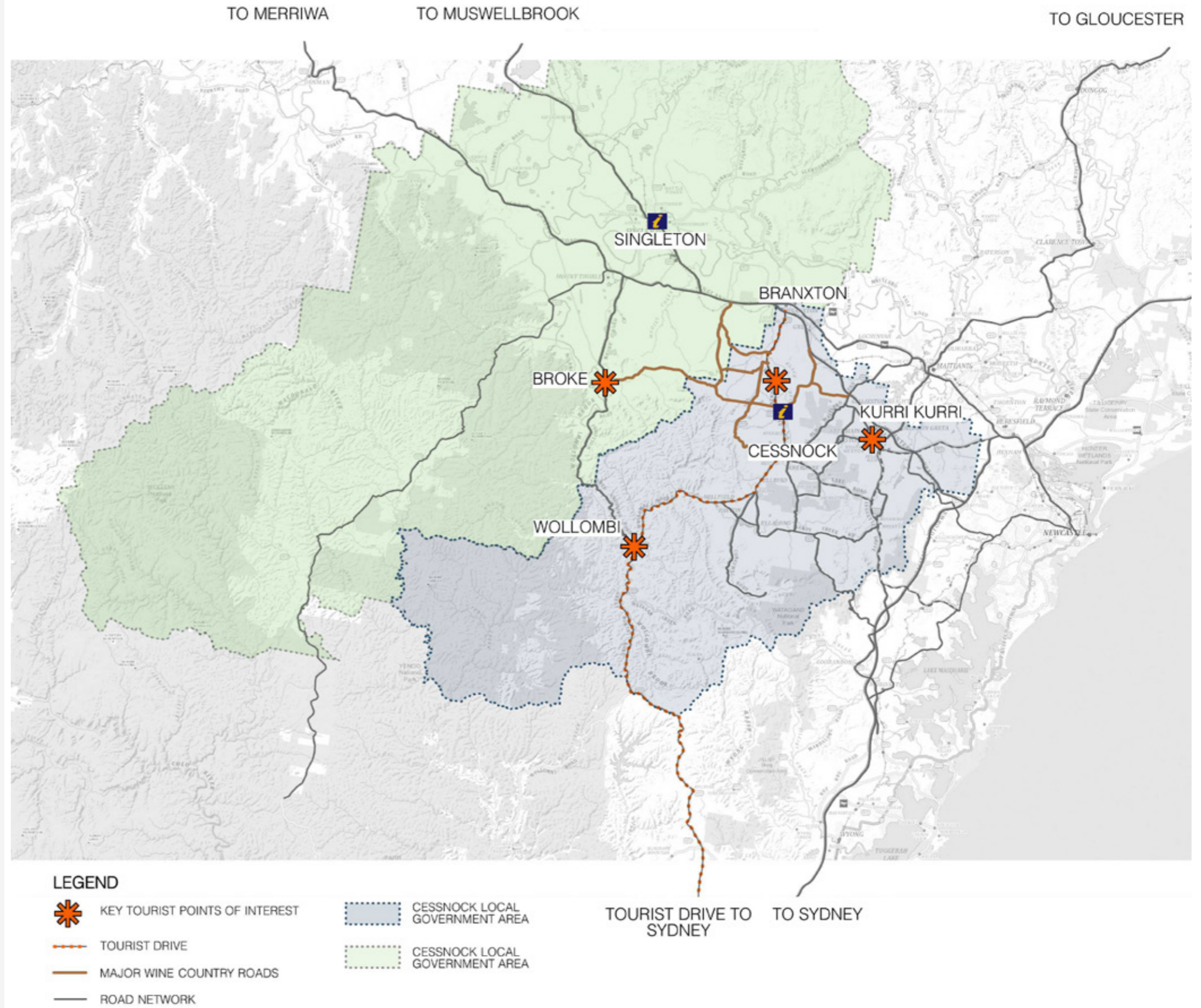
FIGURE 8. Key Tourist Points

LEGEND

✳ KEY TOURIST POINTS OF INTEREST

⋯ TOURIST DRIVE

— MAJOR WINE COUNTRY ROADS

— ROAD NETWORK

CESSNOCK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

CESSNOCK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

1 2 3 **4** 5

BACKGROUND   CONTEXT   ANALYSIS   **SIGNAGE STRATEGY**   IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Principles of Good Signage

High quality signs play an important role in the streetscape, providing information about facilities and attractions in an area and guiding people to their destination. Well designed signs can complement the environment, provide useful information and aid navigation, however poorly designed and inappropriate signs can detract from the overall quality of an area and the environment.

The signs presented in this Strategy represent the physical components of a larger way finding system which include websites, printed maps, vehicle GPS systems and phone applications. Although these components are beyond the scope of this Strategy they are an integral part of the visitor wayfinding experience and a consistent approach to the presentation of all sources of wayfinding information is required.

The key principles guiding the HVWC signage family are:

- Hierarchy
- Legibility
- Context
- Content

Hierarchy

HVWC signage should be presented in a systematic and sequential way to guide people on their journey into and around the region. Many visitors will pre-plan their journey and arrive with a specific destination in mind while others do little pre-planning and require additional guidance on arrival to navigate and plan their experience.

The signage system proposes a clear hierarchy of signs starting at the external approaches to the region, through to arrival at various HVWC Precincts and the final destination.

Context

The HVWC signage should positively contribute to the visual character of the area by drawing on themes and inspiration from the surrounding landscape, people and history of the area. Responding to these cues will ensure the signage system is meaningful to the community and visually compatible with the surrounding landscape. Where appropriate landscape treatments are incorporated around the signs to ensure they are well integrated into the landscape.

Legibility

The signage must be recognised as part of an identifiable system and reinforce the overall identity of the HVWC area. The components of the signage system are designed to work together to communicate a clear HVWC identity through consistent materials, finishes and colours.

To be effective, tourist information maps needs to stand out and be easy to read. They should be highly visible and use consistent colour coding and symbols. Fonts should be clear and easy to read with good contrast between the text and the background panels.

Content

The signage system must be clear and easy to understand, incorporating recognisable symbols and graphics and easy to read fonts.

Information is to be presented with clarity and accuracy at an appropriate scale to enable people to read and understand the content, whether from a moving vehicle or as a pedestrian. Important content such as location information is to be presented in braille and tactile format at the pedestrian scale to enable access by all users.

Consistency of content with associated print material, websites and other tourist information will enhance the visitor experience in HVWC.
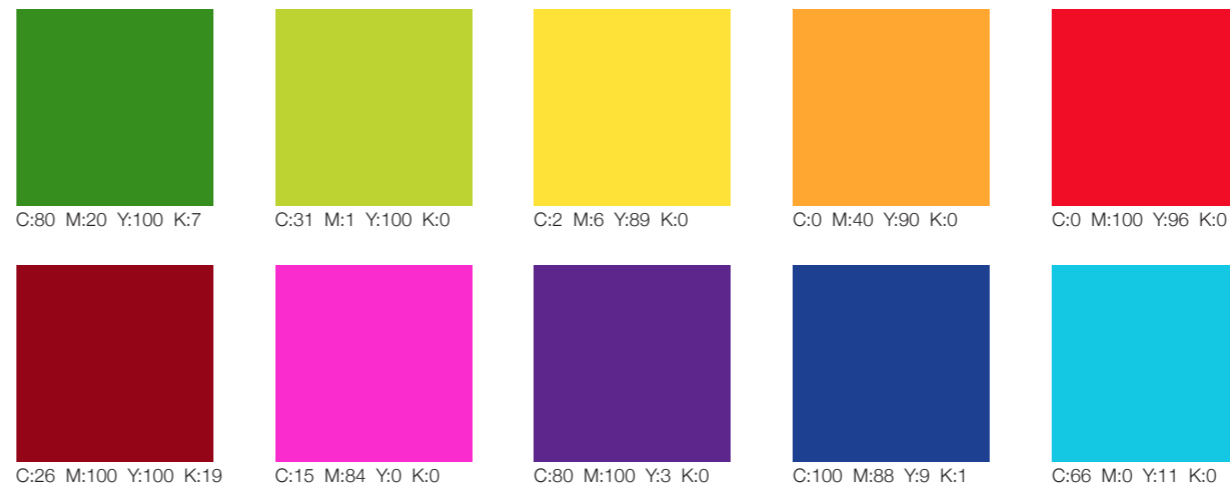
4.2 Precincts

HVWC encompasses a wide area and many of the individual towns and communities within the region have developed their own distinct character. Visitors have an opportunity to explore these areas over several visits with new discoveries to make on each trip.

To enable visitors to experience all that the region has to offer the signage family allows for the individualisation of these Precincts through unique elements attached to a standard sign base. Colour coding and incorporation of individual graphics, fonts and logos are proposed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Wine industry stakeholders, in partnership with Cessnock and Singleton Councils' form a working party to identify the various tourism Precincts within Hunter Valley Wine Country.

2. Develop unique graphics that represent each Precinct for inclusion on the Precinct signs.

3. Provide a colour for each Precinct to use to strengthen their own brand within the region and act as a navigational aid for visitors. Precinct colours should be used consistently on all signs, printed material and electronic media.

C:80 M:20 Y:100 K:7   C:31 M:1 Y:100 K:0   C:2 M:6 Y:89 K:0   C:0 M:40 Y:90 K:0   C:0 M:100 Y:96 K:0

C:26 M:100 Y:100 K:19   C:15 M:84 Y:0 K:0   C:80 M:100 Y:3 K:0   C:100 M:88 Y:9 K:1   C:66 M:0 Y:11 K:0

Suggested Precinct colour options

Examples of existing graphics used to represent various sub-regions within Hunter Valley Wine Country.

4.3 Pictograms

Imagery can help people to visualise their journey and make effective wayfinding decisions. Pictograms are a way to communicate large amounts of information in a single graphic representation without creating language barriers. While signs with a lot of text can be complex and difficult to read from a moving vehicle pictograms can be used to convey information quickly and concisely. When used in combination with text they are a valuable way of helping people make sense of an unfamiliar environment.

A standard suite of pictograms is proposed for use on the HVWC signs including Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and Australian Standard pictograms.

The standard symbols are supplemented with customised pictograms which identify the types of tourist facilities and services available in the HVWC. The customised pictograms are to be incorporated into the signage used on the local and regional road network only, as standard RMS signage is required on all state roads.

The pictograms are to be designed as removable modular components to allow for updating and replacement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A standard suite of pictograms be adopted and used consistently on all signs, printed material and electronic media.

2. The number of customised pictograms should be limited to represent key activities within the region in order to avoid the proliferation of multiple symbols.

3. Include a written description of each pictogram on information boards, printed literature and electronic media to help visitors become familiar with their meanings.

4. Final design of customised pictograms to be determined in accordance with relevant Australian Standards.

RMS TOURIST INFORMATION PICTOGRAMS
Winery/Vineyard — Walking Track — Scenic lookout — Historic village — Aboriginal

STANDARD TOURIST INFORMATION PICTOGRAMS
Tourist information — Food service — Accommodation — Rest area — Caravan park
Accessible — Toilets — RV Dump — Parking — Airport

CUSTOM HUNTER VALLEY WINE COUNTRY PICTOGRAMS
Cooking class — Gourmet produce — Sky diving — Zoo — Spa — Ballooning — Garden/Nursery
Golf — Horse riding — Museum — Shopping — Cellar door — Functions/Events/Weddings

Examples of pictograms to represent tourist facilities and attractions in the Hunter Valley Wine Country.

4.4 RMS tourist signage

The Signage Family will work in conjunction with standard RMS Tourist signage which is typically represented by a brown sign with white text and graphics. Use of the following sign types is proposed:

EXPRESSWAY SIGNS

PURPOSE
To direct motorists at key decision points approaching the HVWC.

STYLE
Standard RMS white on brown tourist sign with distance and directional information.

LOCATION
Hunter Expressway
1. Entry to Expressway at West Wallsend
2. Approaching Wine Country Drive heading eastbound.
3. Approaching Wine Country Drive heading westbound.
4. Approaching Allandale Road

M1 Motorway
1. Freemans Drive interchange.

VINEYARDS DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

PURPOSE
To direct motorists to the vineyards district at key decision points approaching the Hunter Valley.

STYLE
Standard RMS white on brown tourist 'vineyards' sign:
* Type G11-4
* Type G11-7
Refer to RMS Tourist Signposting manual.

RECOMMENDATIONS
* Audit existing signs and upgrade those in poor condition or inconsistent to the Tourist Signposting manual.
* Liaise with TASAC and RMS to identify new sign locations as required.

ADVANCE SIGNS

PURPOSE
To direct motorists at key decision points throughout the HVWC

STYLE
Standard RMS white on brown and white on green tourist sign:
* Type G1-202
Refer to RMS Tourist Signposting manual.

RECOMMENDATIONS
* Audit existing signs and upgrade those in poor condition or inconsistent to the Tourist Signposting manual.
* Liaise with TASAC and RMS to identify new sign locations at junctions with high turning volumes.
* Provide signs back to major centres and roadways at key local and regional road junctions within HVWC.

4.5 Themes and Inspiration

The rural, viticultural and industrial landscapes of the Hunter Valley provide a number of cues to inform the design of the signage system.

The signage family has been designed to compliment the surrounding landscape and reflect the relaxed, classic elegance that characterises the area.

The selected materials reference the rural and historical character of the district but are applied as a contemporary design solution. Materials such as timber, steel and rammed earth are robust options that are in keeping with the relaxed rural character of the HVWC and provide a simple welcoming feel.

4.6 Signage Family

The HVWC signage family comprises five sign types including:

INFORMATION BAYS to provide tourist information maps and detailed information about facilities and services in the area.

PRECINCT SIGNS to identify various tourism Precincts within HVWC.

INTERSECTION SIGNS to provide directional information at road junctions.

REASSURANCE SIGNS to provide information about what facilities and services lie ahead.
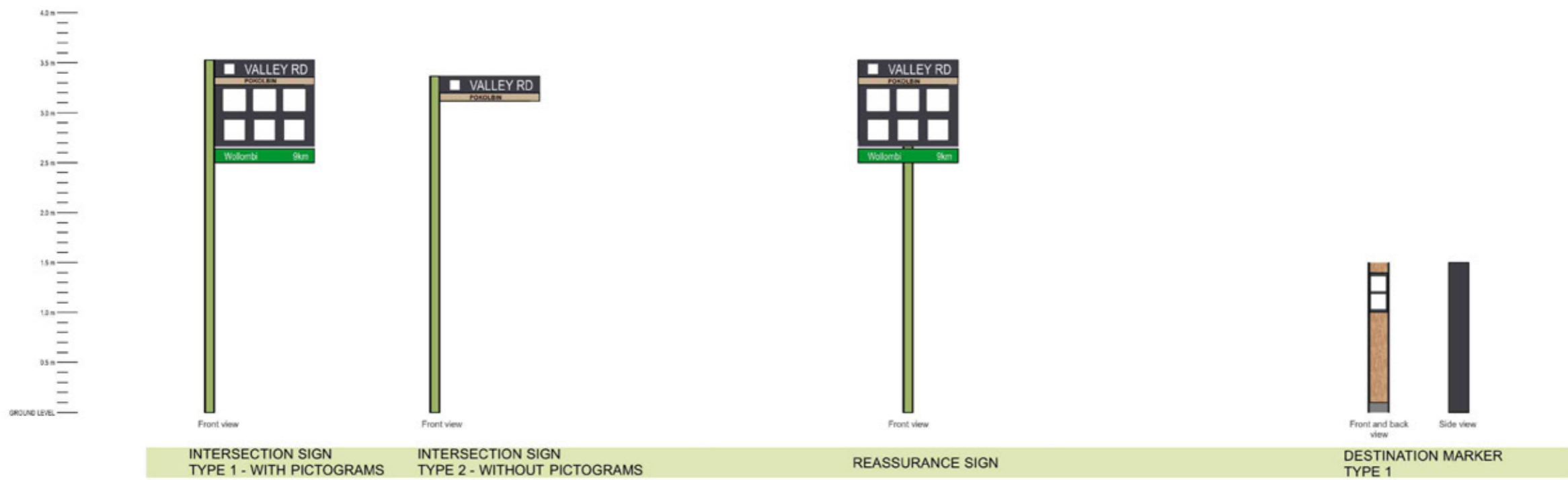
DESTINATION MARKERS to identify arrival at the destination.

These signs will work in combination with standard Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) tourist signs.

The signs presented in this Strategy represent the physical components of a broader wayfinding system which include websites, printed maps, vehicle GPS navigation systems and phone applications. Although these components are beyond the scope of this Strategy they are an integral part of the visitor wayfinding experience and a consistent approach to the presentation of all sources of wayfinding information is required.

Examples of themes and materials which have inspired the signage design.

INFORMATION BAY

PRECINCT SIGN

INTERSECTION SIGN
TYPE 1 - WITH PICTOGRAMS

INTERSECTION SIGN
TYPE 2 - WITHOUT PICTOGRAMS

REASSURANCE SIGN

DESTINATION MARKER
TYPE 1

4.7 Information bay

PURPOSE

To provide visitor information and a coordinated directory of tourism operators in the area.

STYLE

Sheltered bay with vehicular rest area.

MATERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

WALL:

Rammed earth

COLUMN:

200 Universal I Column with painted steel or coloured polycarbonate infill to identify Precinct.

ROOF:

Colourbond steel.

BENCH SEAT:

Treated timber in a steel frame.

INFORMATION FACE PLATE:

Powder coated aluminum.

LETTERING:

Brushed stainless steel.

CONTENT

- Hunter Valley Wine Country branding.
- Standard information 'i' symbol.
- Location information.
- Information about local 'hero' experiences and attractions.
- Explanation of graphic symbols.
- Braille and tactile identification plate (including location reference and contact details for Visitor Information Centre).
- Digital media information (QR codes, tourist information websites, phone app information).
- Regional Context and Precinct Maps.
- Colour coding to reflect Precinct.
- Paid advertising section for local businesses to promote their products and services (optional).
- "Thanks for visiting - Please drive carefully"

Information Bays should provide maps at two scales: Regional Context Maps and Precinct Maps.

REGIONAL CONTEXT MAPS

Information on Regional Context Maps is broad in nature and provides an overview of key landmarks and towns in Hunter Valley Wine Country. Regional Context Maps should include the following information:

- Major road network
- Major towns
- Significant features or landmarks
- Locations of other tourist information bay and Visitor Information Centres
- You are here marker

PRECINCT MAPS

Precinct Maps provide detailed information about specific facilities and attractions in that Precinct. Precinct Maps should include the following information:

- Major and minor road network
- Road lengths on long roads
- Name and location of tourism operators with symbols to represent the various tourism facilities they provide
- Map grid reference
- You are here marker

PROPOSED MATERIALS
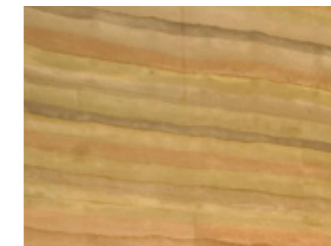
Rammed earth

Steel lettering

Timber and steel bench seat

PROPOSED PLANTS

Corymbia maculata

Lomandra 'Tanika'

Anigozanthos cultivars

Plan view

Side view

Front view

INFORMATION BAY
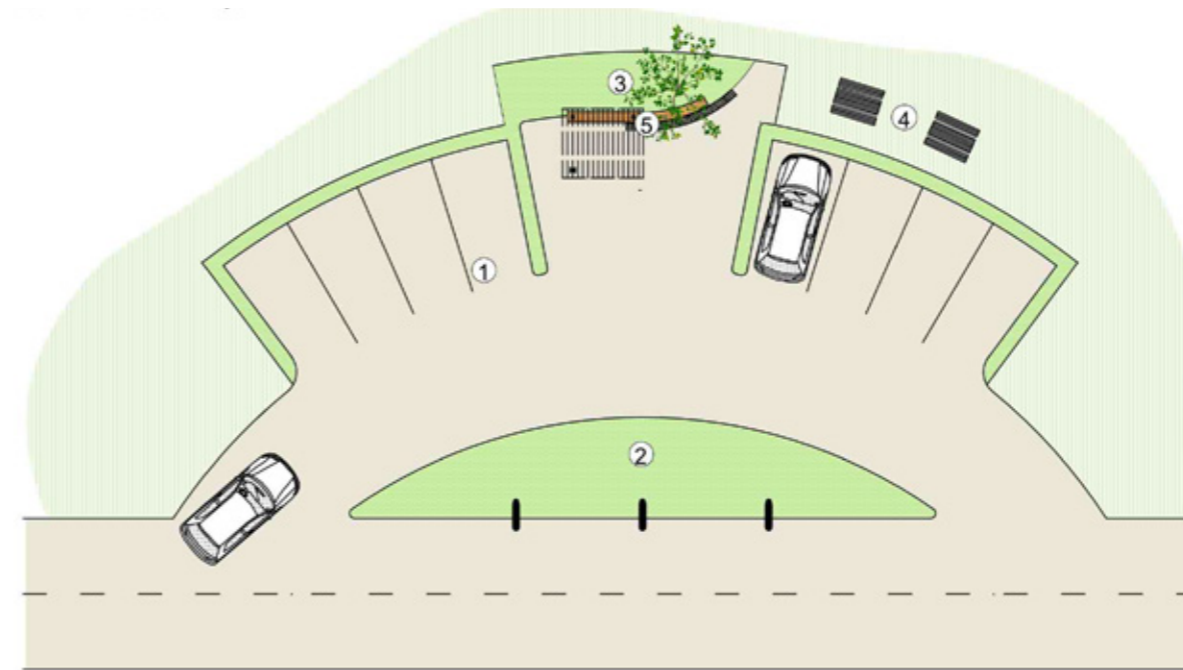
Pokolbin

HUNTER VALLEY

Wine Country

PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The suggested positioning options shown opposite are indicative only. Final placement of each Information Bay is to be determined on a case by case basis in accordance with the following principles:

- Information Bays are to be located in visually prominent locations to allow motorists sufficient time to decide to pull over.
- Information Bays are to be set back from the road in a sealed parking bay to allow motorists to safely stop their vehicle and access the information.
- Include the standard 'Information' symbol on the preceding Intersection Sign to advise motorists that an Information Bay is approaching.
- Provide advance warning of the upcoming Information Bay in accordance with Figure 2.7 AS1742.6 - 2004.
- Accessible pathways are to be provided between parking areas and the Information Bay.
- Ensure adequate milling space is provided around the sign.
- Allow adequate parking space for long wheel base vehicles and caravans.
- Provide feature landscaping around the Information Bay to integrate it with the landscape.

LOCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Locate at key entry points to the Wine Country region (i.e, Lovedale Road, Hermitage Road, Wollombi, Brunkerville).
- Provide a minimum of one Information Bay for each Precinct.
- Locate in visitor rest areas around Cessnock and Singleton Local Government Areas.
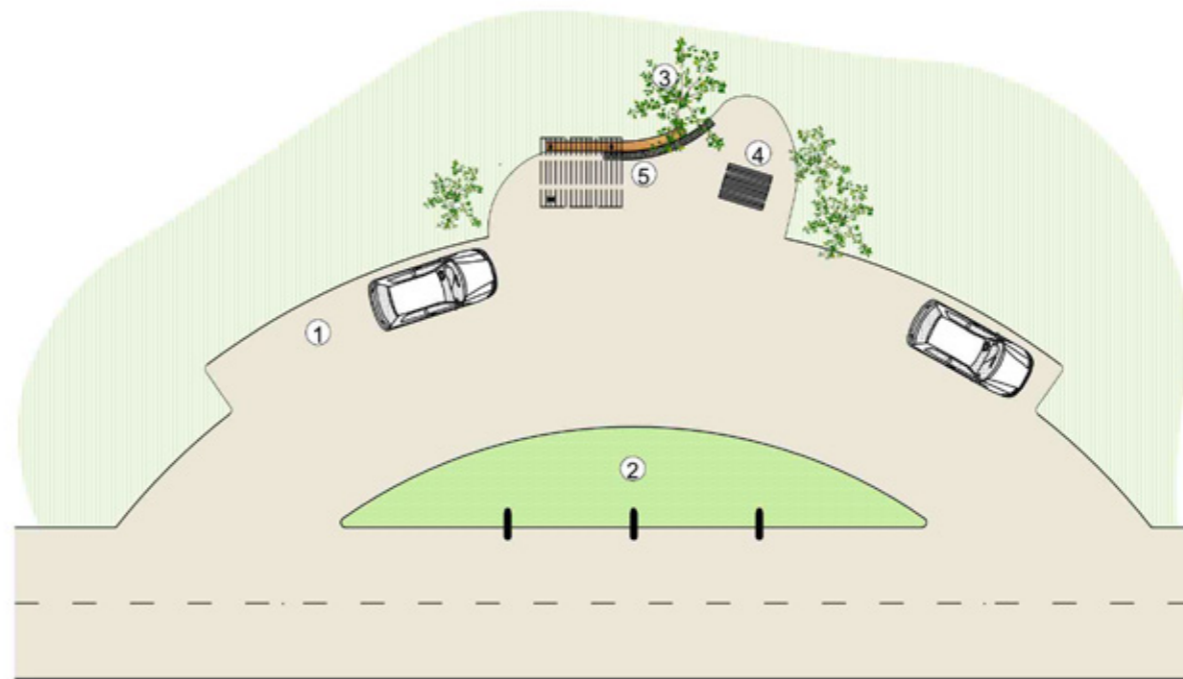
KEY

1. Sealed parking bays.
2. Banners for each Precinct to advertise their upcoming events. Private advertising is not permitted.
3. Low maintenance feature landscaping.
4. Optional picnic area
5. Information Bay.

INFORMATION BAY - SUGGESTED POSITIONING OPTION 1

INFORMATION BAY - SUGGESTED POSITIONING OPTION 2
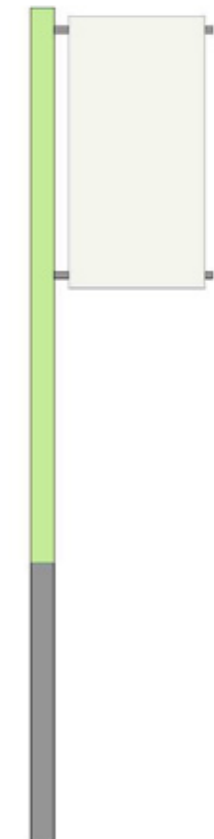
BANNER

4.8 Precinct signs

PURPOSE

To identify entry to various Precincts within Hunter Valley Wine Country and provide an opportunity for individualisation of each Precinct.

STYLE

Pillar sign

CONTENT

- Precinct name (white text on charcoal background).
- Hunter Valley brand (white text on charcoal background).
- Precinct logo (Full colour).
- Pictograms to identify facilities and services in the Precinct (maximum eight per sign).
- "Thanks for visiting - Please drive carefully"

MATERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

COLUMNS:

200 Universal I Column.

INFILL PANELS:

Hardwood timber (or modwood composite) and painted steel or coloured polycarbonate feature panel.

FACE PLATE:

Powder coated aluminum.
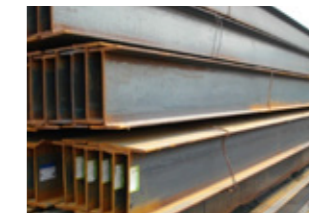
MOUNTING:

Ground mount.

LIGHTING:

LED ground mounted uplighting (optional).

PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- Perimeter entry points to each Precinct.
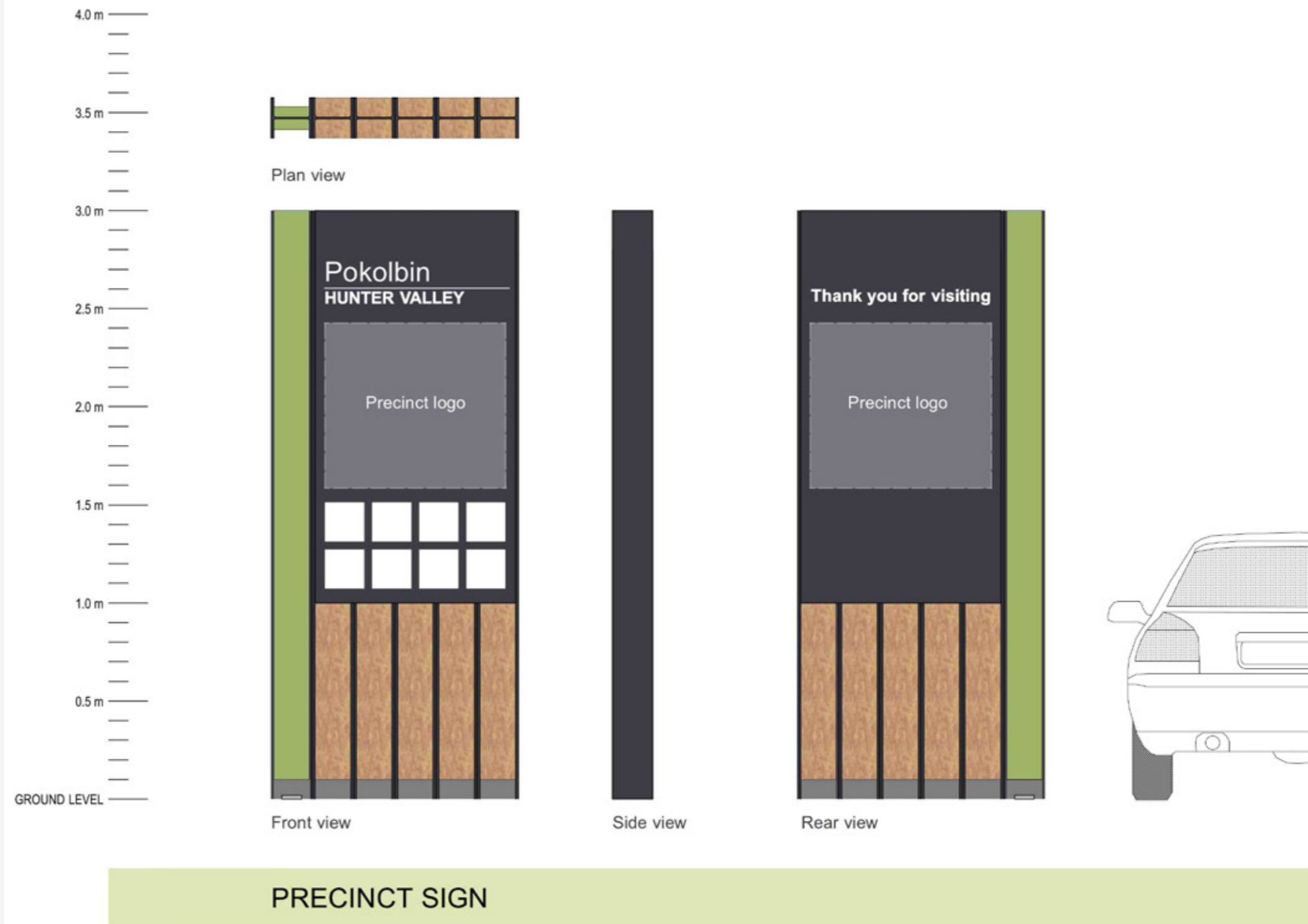- Position to be clearly visible to motorist on the approach to the Precinct.

Hardwood timber   Universal I Column   Timber infill detail

Plan view

Pokolbin
HUNTER VALLEY

Precinct logo

Thank you for visiting

Precinct logo

Front view   Side view   Rear view

PRECINCT SIGN

4.9 Intersection signs

PURPOSE

To identify street names and provide information about services, facilities and attractions in that street.

STYLE

Finger sign on dedicated post.

CONTENT

- Street name (white text on charcoal background).
- Suburb name (black text on light brown backrgound).
- Local Government Area logo.
- Pictograms to identify facilities and services in the street (maximum six per sign).
- Coloured post to identify each Precinct.
- Advance sign with distance to the next major town or Precinct (standard RMS white text on green background).

MATERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

COLUMNS:

100 Universal I Column.

INFILL PANELS:

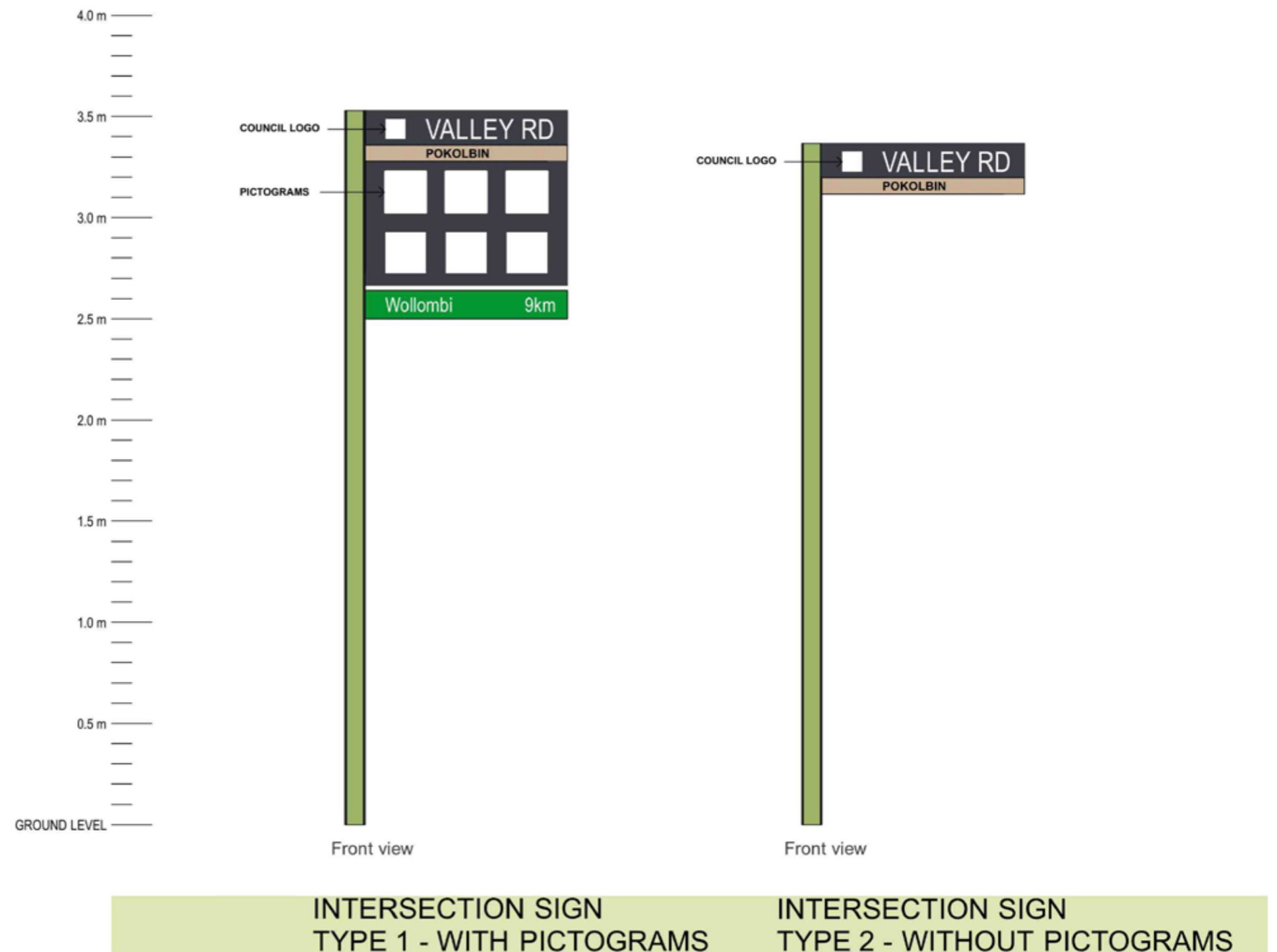Painted steel or coloured polycarbonate.

SIGN BLADE:

6mm powder coated aluminum with road name in retro reflective text. To AS1743.

MOUNTING:

Ground mount.

PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- All HVWC road intersections

INTERSECTION SIGN
TYPE 1 - WITH PICTOGRAMS

INTERSECTION SIGN
TYPE 2 - WITHOUT PICTOGRAMS

4.10 Reassurance signs

PURPOSE

To reassure motorists on longer roads that they are still in HVWC and give advice about what lies ahead.

CONTENT

- Street name (white text on charcoal background).
- Suburb name (black text on light brown background).
- Local Government Area logo.
- Pictograms to identify facilities and services ahead (maximum six per sign).
- Coloured post to identify each Precinct.
- Advance sign with distance to the next major town or Precinct (standard RMS white text on green background).

STYLE

Finger sign on dedicated post.

MATERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

COLUMNS:

100 Universal I Column

INFILL PANELS:

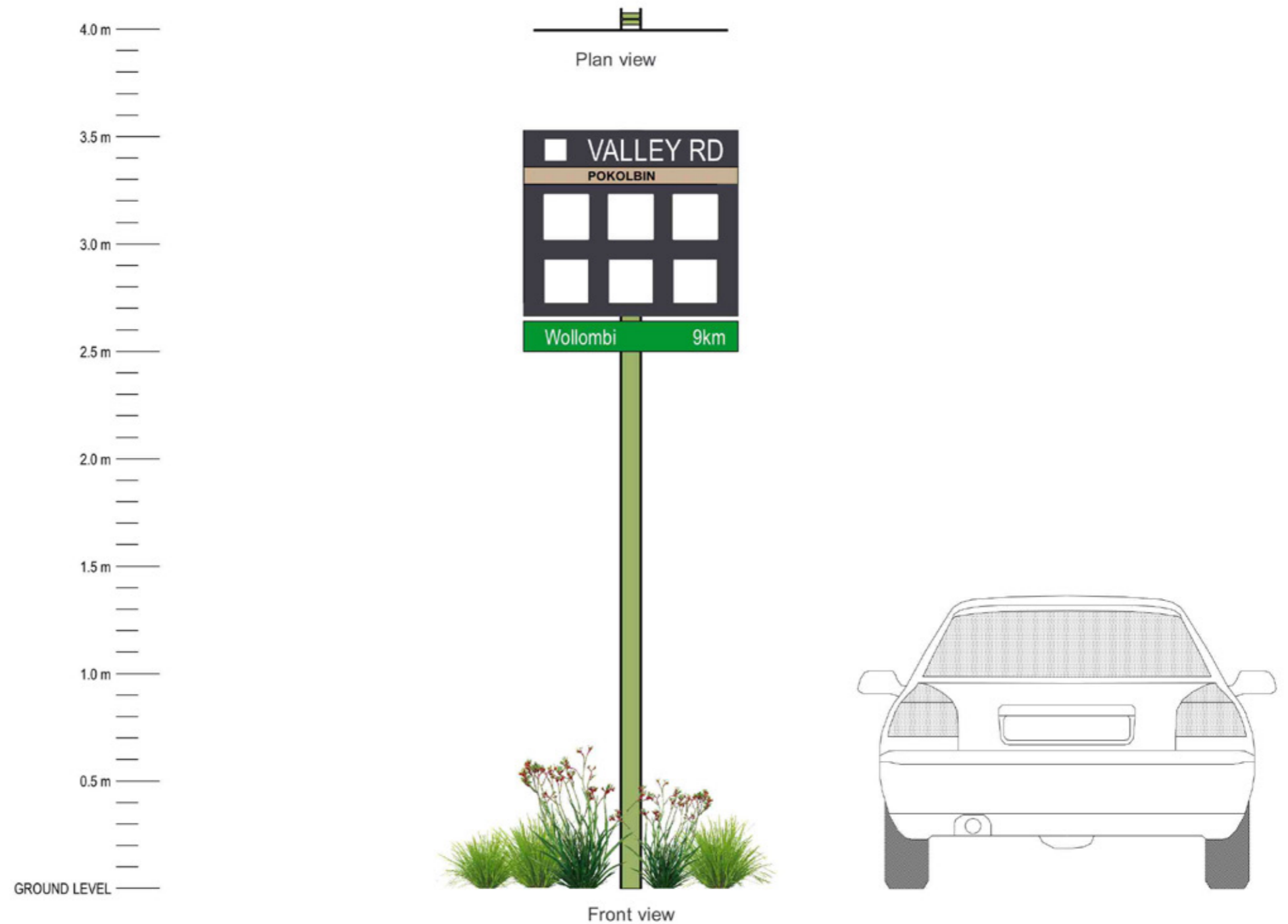Painted steel or coloured polycarbonate.

SIGN BLADES:

6mm powder coated aluminum to AS1743.

MOUNTING:

Ground mount.

PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- 1km intervals along long or remote roads.

Plan view

VALLEY RD
POKOLBIN

Wollombi   9km

Front view

REASSURANCE SIGN

4.11 Destination markers

PURPOSE

To identify individual tourism operators at their property entry, signal arrival at a destination and identify facilities available using a standard suite of graphic pictograms.

STYLE

OPTION 1: Freestanding pillar sign

Option 1 should be used for smaller properties where a maximum of three pictograms are needed. This option may be used in conjunction with or instead of existing private signage.

OPTION 2: Symbols incorporated into private signage.

Option 2 is recommended for larger businesses or properties with a number of businesses operating from one site. In this instance the pictograms may be incorporated into the proprietor's own private signage to reduce visual clutter.

MATERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

COLUMNS:

200 Universal I Column
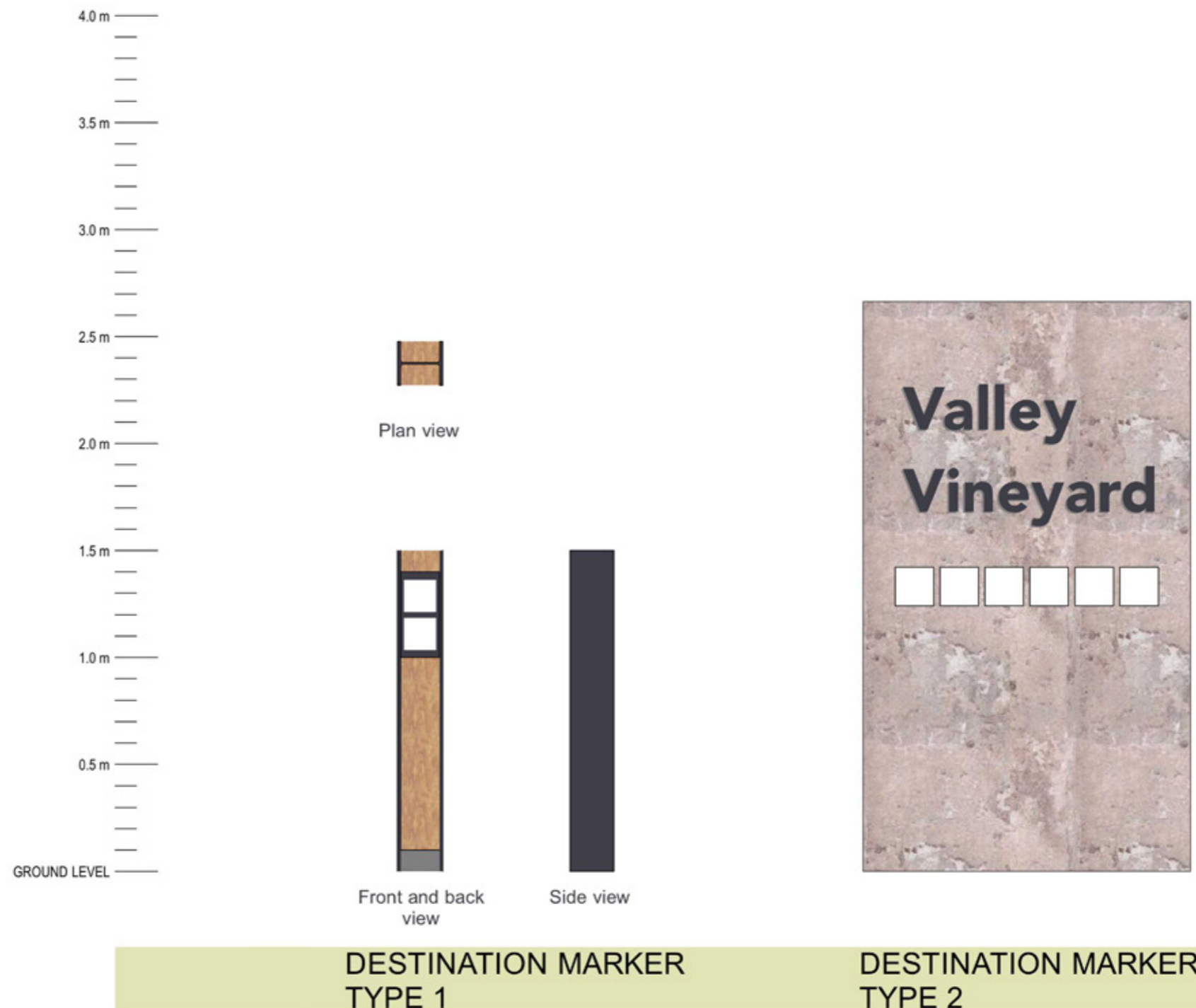
INFILL PANELS:

Hardwood timber

FACE PLATE:

Powder coated aluminum.

MOUNTING:

Ground mount.

PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATION

* Within the road reserve at the entry to tourism operators' property.
* Signs should face the traffic.
* Ensure clear driver sightlines to the sign.

4.0 m
3.5 m
3.0 m
2.5 m
2.0 m
1.5 m
1.0 m
0.5 m
GROUND LEVEL

Plan view

Front and back view

Side view

Valley Vineyard

DESTINATION MARKER TYPE 1

DESTINATION MARKER TYPE 2

4.12 Recommendations for private signage

Private and commercial signage includes property identification and business type signs that are visible from public spaces but sited on private property. Installation of these types of signs is currently controlled by Council's Development Control Plan (DCP). Cessnock City Council's DCP contains a specific Signage Code for the vineyards district.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

In order to encourage high quality private signage that enhances the distinctive character of the HVWC it is recommended that Singleton and Cessnock Council's collaboratively investigate developing Guidelines for Private and Commercial Signage to supplement the existing Singleton Council's DCP and the Signage Code for the Vineyards District in Cessnock Council's DCP. The Guidelines should provide examples of appropriately designed private signage and seek to encourage good design outcomes. They would be referred to by Council in conjunction with the DCPs whenever approvals for new signs are required.

LIGHTING

Many visitors arrive at HVWC at night and current restrictions on illumination of private signage can make navigation difficult. The following recommendations seek to maintain a balance between respecting the peaceful rural character of the region at night while improving visitor way-finding options.

It is recommended that regulations are updated to permit moderate intensity up-lit lighting on entry signage. Lighting should be focused on the sign and not the street or night sky. Current restrictions on internally illuminated, backlit, neon or scintillating signs should be maintained.

It is recommended that retro-reflective text is permitted on frontage signs to assist night time navigation. Retro-reflective material should be restricted to the business name only and should not be used extensively on the sign.

Examples of appropriate up-lit signage with lights focused on the sign, not the street or night sky.

1 2 3 4 5

BACKGROUND   CONTEXT   ANALYSIS   SIGNAGE STRATEGY   IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Implementation Program

1. AUDIT

- Conduct an audit of RMS brown and white tourist signs and identify those that are faded, damaged or inappropriately located.
- Identify locations where new signs are required.
- Liaise with RMS to arrange replacement and/or new signs.
- Identify unauthorised private signs located on public land and remove.

2. DETAILED DESIGN

- Liaise with HVWC representatives to identify the various Precincts within HVWC and develop suitable logos for each Precinct.
- Undertake detailed design of signage concepts and prepare a Technical Manual with specifications and details for each signage type, including font styles and colours.
- Engage an accredited road safety auditor to consider the location of all proposed signs to be located in roadways in terms of their impact on road safety.

3. REMOVAL OF EXISTING SIGNS

Removal of existing signs should coincide with the installation of replacement signage. Refer to 5.4 for further recommendations on the removal of existing signage.

Unauthorised private signs on public land should be removed following Council's adoption of the Signage Strategy.

4. INSTALLATION

Due to funding constraints it may not be possible to install the entire family of signs simultaneously. Prioritising installation with an implementation program for installing the signs is highly recommended.

HIGH PRIORITY

Indicates signage which is important for effective way-finding and should be installed as quickly as possible. High priority should be given to signs which enhance the sense of arrival in the Hunter Valley Wine Country district.

MEDIUM PRIORITY

Signage that may be installed after high priority works have been completed. Medium priority should be given to upgrading directional signage and improving motorist way finding throughout Wine Country.

LOW PRIORITY

Signage which may be installed progressively on a needs basis.

To get a proper idea about how the signs will look and function it is recommended that full size prototypes be developed where feasible.

5. PLANNING INSTRUMENT UPDATES

The following documents are to be updated to reflect the recommendations in this Strategy:

- Cessnock City Council DCP Part D, Chapter 5 - Outdoor Signage.
- Cessnock City Council DCP - Part E. 3, Appendix 5 - Signage Code for the Vineyards District.
- Cessnock City Council Vineyards District Signage System Policy.

5.2 Placement Principles

The following placement principles are provided to maximise appropriate sign positioning while minimising the number of signs required.

- Sign placement to be in accordance with relevant Australian Standards.
- Signs should be placed so they are clearly legible to motorists and pedestrians. They should not be placed where they can cause obstruction to visibility or create a cluttered roadside environment.
- Road signs should be placed where they are visually prominent in the landscape to allow drivers time to read and comprehend the message of the sign and have time to react accordingly.
- Each potential sign site must be assessed for its own merits to allow for a considered installation.
- To minimise clutter it is preferable to have a single sign post at intersections rather than multiple posts.
- Sign blades on street signs should point in the direction of travel.
- Maintain adequate setback from the kerb in accordance with Australian Standards.
- Important information for pedestrians such as detailed maps should be placed at eye level (approx. 1600mm high).
- Important information for motorists should be placed at eye level (approx. 1200mm high).
- Position signs for easy access by maintenance personnel.

5.3 Maintenance

Although the signage family has been designed to minimise the need for maintenance, from time to time it will be necessary to undertake maintenance activities to ensure the signs remain fit for purpose.

It is recommended that Council implement a regular program of Maintenance for all new signs as detailed below.

AUDIT SYSTEM

It is recommended that Council maintain a GIS database for all new signs installed including the sign location, sign type and installation date. These signs should be audited regularly to check for damage, vandalism or removal.

UPDATING INFORMATION

Information provided on tourist maps and directories invariably dates and changes as new businesses establish and others cease to operate. It is recommended that tourist maps and directories be reviewed annually to check the accuracy of information provided.

It is recommended that business owners pay a nominal renewal fee each year in conjunction with their updated business information to ensure that maps and directories are kept up to date. New businesses can apply to have their business included on the next available print run.
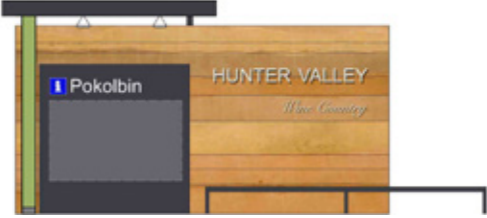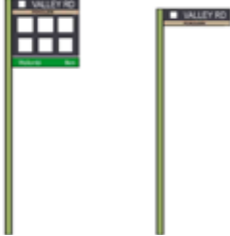
REPLACEMENT SIGNS

Where signs are vandalised, damaged or removed they should be promptly replaced.

GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Removal of graffiti should be undertaken using solvents which have been tested prior to use on the sign.

5.4 Installation Recommendations

SIGN TYPE		PRIORITY	INSTALLATION RECOMMENDATIONS
INFORMATION BAY		HIGH	It is recommended that Information Bays be installed simultaneously. All existing information boards are to be removed.
PRECINCT SIGN		HIGH	It is recommended that all Precinct Signs be installed simultaneously. All existing gateway signage is to be removed.
INTERSECTION SIGN		MEDIUM	It is recommended that all Intersection Signs be installed simultaneously. All existing fingerboard signs and street signs are to be removed.
REASSURANCE SIGN		MEDIUM	It is recommended that Reassurance Signs be installed at the same time as the Intersection Signs.
DESTINATION MARKER		LOW	Destination Markers may be installed progressively. Individual property owners should be encouraged to incorporate the standards symbols into their existing signage as soon as possible.

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