

## PART D: REVIEW and IMPLEMENTATION

### Review of this Strategy

One of the key principles underpinning this strategy is the importance of it being reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This review process ensures that the key policies and principles respond to the changing nature of cities over time and where deficiencies are identified, opportunities to remedy these can be implemented.

It is envisaged that this strategy will be reviewed every five years to ensure that the vision and key policy objectives for each of the activity centres and employment clusters are achieving the desired future outcomes envisaged by this strategy.

Regular monitoring of development in activity centres and employment clusters will ensure that the vision is being achieved and opportunities are being identified and pursued. The review of all activity centres and employment clusters will monitor a range of economic, social and community indicators to ascertain their viability. It also provides opportunities to introduce new initiatives to respond to future changes and continue to provide vibrant activity centres and diverse employment opportunities in employment clusters.

### Maintaining the Viability of Activity Centres and Employment Clusters

The viability and vitality of Maitland's activity centres and employment clusters is not only a measure of economic success, but must be considered through a range of indicators. The community, environmental and social aspects of activity centres also must be vital and viable to ensure that they support the needs of the residents, workers and visitors of the Maitland LGA.

Monitoring the viability and vitality of activity centres and employment clusters should be on a regular, ongoing basis. This provides valuable information to evaluate changes over time and to effectively respond to those changes that will occur in the community and local economy.

Indicators that can be used to effectively monitor the viability and vitality of activity centres and employment clusters include:

- **The Diversity of Activities** – to measure the type, number and size of the different activities within activity centres and employment clusters with regular land use surveys. This includes land uses such as retail; offices; cultural, community, civic and government functions; entertainment and leisure facilities; accommodation; and restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars. Having a diverse range of services and activities attracts a range of people, activities and contributes to a vibrant activity centre.  
  
Within employment clusters and precincts a diverse range and size of employment generating activities and support services cater for a range of skills and qualifications and provide opportunities for smaller businesses to enter the local market.
- **Views and Behaviour of Customers and Residents** – regular customer workers and community surveys can assist in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of activity centres and employment clusters. In particular surveys provide information on attitudes and other indicators which are qualitative and harder to measure.
- **Perceptions of Safety and Occurrence of Crime** – surveys should also include questions relating to the perceptions of safety within the activity centre and employment cluster. Although crime statistics provide accurate data on actual safety, the perceptions of customers, residents and workers can greatly impact on the viability and vitality of the centre or cluster, particularly the night-time economy of activity centres.
- **Quality of the public realm and surrounding environment** – conducting regular audits of the public domain and environment of activity centres and employment clusters can identify potential problems (i.e. graffiti, lighting and damaged street furniture) as well as the positive features (i.e. landscaping, public art, open spaces, seating).
- **Quality of the Built Environment** - conducting regular audits of the quality of the buildings in activity centres and employment clusters provides an indication of the level of expenditure and capital that owners are willing to invest into their

property and the surrounding landscape.

- **Accessibility** – the ease of access by a variety of transportation modes. This includes the quality of car parking in terms of location, safety and availability; the quality, frequency and connectivity of public transport and the provision of quality spaces for pedestrian and cyclists to access the centre from the main arrival point.
- **Potential Capacity for Growth and Change** – For both activity centres and employment clusters, this understands the physical constraints of the location to facilitate expansion and the land available for new and possibly more intensive development to occur.
- **Proportion of Vacancies** – conduct regular landuse surveys of activity centres and employment clusters to ascertain the take up and change in the type of businesses. In activity centres this is particularly significant for those properties at street level. High vacancy levels can contribute to an activity centre being lifeless, rundown and perceived as being unsafe. If this is observed as being a long term issue, incentives and alternative strategies can be put in place to reinvigorate or renew the centre.
- **Rental Value of Properties** – cost of rental can impact on the choices made about location. Providing a range of rental costs and grades of rental space offers choices, in terms of location, ongoing cost and types of services. A range of rental costs also facilitates the entrance of small business and start-up enterprises into the local market, and the location of community services within activity centres thereby resulting in greater choice and diversity for customers.
- **Pedestrian Volume and Movement** – This indicator is specific to activity centres and is a measure of vitality. Monitoring pedestrian volume and movement helps to evaluate the different areas which people are attracted to and frequently use within an activity area or alternatively an area that may be perceived as unsafe and that is not used. This can also be a sign of as to how the centre is being used and at what times of the day and night.

## Assessment of Planning Proposals

An important part to maintaining the viability and vitality of activity centres and

employment clusters and facilitating future development to strengthen existing and create new centres and clusters is through the development assessment process.

To achieve the desired future outcome of the network and hierarchy of activity centres and employment clusters in the Maitland LGA, Council will require applicants to demonstrate the appropriateness of the proposal. The following issues need to be justified for development application within activity centres and employment clusters as well as proposals for commercial, retail, industrial and community land uses located outside of centres.

The level of detail provided should be proportional to the nature and scale of the development proposed. However, all applications must demonstrate that:

- a. The need for the development within the local and if appropriate, the regional context. Consideration should also be given to the local network and hierarchy of activity centres and employment clusters as outlined in this strategy;
- b. The development is of an appropriate scale and is consistent with the vision, role and objectives of the activity centre or employment cluster in which the proposal is located;
- c. Based on the sequential testing framework, the development proposal can not be located within or at the edge of an activity centre or employment cluster;
- d. The location of the proposed development outside of activity centres and employment clusters will have no undesirable impact on their viability; and
- e. The location of the proposed development outside of activity centres and employment clusters is accessible by a variety of transportation modes.

### Sequential testing

In line with the key principles of this strategy to protect the vitality and viability of existing activity centres and protect the viability of well located employment clusters a sequential testing framework will be used. This assessment method has been in

the United Kingdom for a number of years to protect the viability of centres and to ensure communities have access to a range of services and facilities which are easily accessible while also promoting economic growth and encouraging investment. The sequential approach has also been applied to this strategy and the identification of activity centres and employment clusters within the Maitland LGA.

Prioritising sites within existing activity centres and employment clusters or at their edge, the sequential approach aims to encourage developers and business operators to demonstrate that in seeking an appropriate site, they have also been flexible about their business model in terms of scale, format and car parking provisions. This enables specific types of activities and land uses to be located within activity centres and employment clusters which is supported by high levels of accessibility and supported by a range of facilities, services and public infrastructure.

The sequential testing approach requires that sites be considered in the following order:

- Preference will be given to sites located within existing activity centres and employment centres;
- Edge of Centre/Cluster - located on or near to the boundary of the activity centre or employment cluster that is or will be well-connected to the existing centre or where it is demonstrated that expansion is required without compromising the network and hierarchy of centres and clusters; and
- Out of Centre/Cluster – where suitable sites can not be identified in or at the edge of activity centres or employment clusters, preference will be given to sites which have accessibility to a range of transport options, that are close to existing centres or clusters and there is a possibility of forming links.

For large-scale sites out of centre/cluster, an impact assessment must accompany applications which demonstrate that the location will not significantly impact on the vitality and viability of existing activity centres and employment clusters.

## Impact Assessments

An impact assessment is required for significant development proposals for a land use best suited within an activity centre or for an employment generating activity best

suited within an employment cluster which is located outside and is inconsistent with the strategies and principles of this strategy.

This assessment must clearly demonstrate to Council that the location outside of the activity centres or employment clusters has considered the sequential testing framework. The impact assessment must justify the location choice and demonstrate that the proposed development will have no undesirable impact on the viability of identified activity centres and employment clusters within the surrounding area; and that the proposed land use activity is easily accessible, providing links with a variety of transport options and adequate car parking and therefore the impact on traffic and congestion.

Other considerations such as requirements for infrastructure provision to support the proposal, environment impact of the proposed location, the risk to Council's strategic approach to a network and hierarchy of activity centres and employment clusters and the community and social impact of the proposed development being located outside an existing centre or cluster.

## Structure Planning

The purpose of preparing structure plans for activity centres and employment clusters is to ensure that future growth takes place in a coordinated and sustainable manner. In consultation with the local community, government departments and agencies, infrastructure providers and community representatives, structure plans provide the framework, vision and key policy objectives for the activity centre or employment cluster.

It is envisaged that structure plans be prepared, but not limited to the following activity centres and employment clusters:

- Central Maitland Major Regional Centre;
- East Maitland Town Centre / Melbourne Street Precinct;
- Thornton Town Centre;

- Rutherford Town Centre; and
- Other new or identified activity centres and employment clusters as determined by Council.

The town centre proposed at Lochinvar and the local centres proposed for Chisholm, Gillieston Heights are part of adopted structure plans. However, a number of the smaller local or neighbourhood centres will be included as a part of a structure plan for an identified urban release area.

Therefore, the planning and design of those activity centres must be considered within the context of the overall release area and how it will best support the immediate and wider residential neighbourhood. The future development of activity areas will be required to provide a detailed planning and design proposals clearly demonstrating that the vision and key objectives of the centre and this strategy are being achieved.

## Design and Development Controls

The implementation of this strategy will occur through a number of mechanisms. In regards to landuse planning, the primary implementation mechanisms are the Maitland LEP 2011 and associated development control plan. Policies and guidelines to support specific issues will also be prepared to ensure that vision and objectives of this strategy are implemented.

To ensure a positive design outcome for Maitland's activity centres and employment clusters, design guidelines will be prepared to support the implementation of this plan. This will provide guidance on a range a design outcomes, such as street layout and design; public spaces and landscaping, safe public realm, mixed use development and higher density building design and car parking. This will present landowners with a clear understanding as to the expectations of Council and ways to achieve the vision and objectives outline in this strategy.



## REFERENCES

- City Plan (2009) 'Central Maitland Structure Plan': Commissioned by Maitland City Council and NSW Department of Planning
- Department of Communities and Local Government (2009) 'Planning Policy Statement 4 – Planning for Prosperous Economies (Consultation Paper)' United Kingdom
- Department of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005) 'Planning Policy Statement 6 – Planning for Town Centres' United Kingdom
- Hill PDA (2009) 'Maitland Centres Study': Commissioned by Maitland City Council and NSW Department of Planning.
- Maitland City Council (2008) 'Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy 2000-2021. 2008 Review Edition' adopted March 2009.
- NSW Department of Planning (2006) 'Lower Hunter Regional Strategy': Published October 2006
- 2001 Cultural Tourism Plan for the Maitland and Dungog Districts, NSW - Draft (November)