

# **NORTH WEST LAKE MACQUARIE CATALYST AREA**

**Background report  
Project and policy context**

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# 1. Introduction

The Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan (GNMP) established the North West Lake Macquarie Catalyst Area (catalyst area) in recognition of its growth potential as a strategic gateway to Greater Newcastle. The GNMP identified the desired role of the catalyst area as supporting:

- large format retail, advanced manufacturing, office-based jobs and open space with regionally significant catchment
- strategic gateway to Greater Newcastle
- urban renewal precinct, meeting demand for affordable medium-density housing and enhanced lifestyle amenities.

The GNMP projected the catalyst area could account for significant growth of 3700 dwellings and 1800 new jobs by 2036.

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 reinforces this potential and identifies the catalyst area as being within a larger 'North West Lake Macquarie Regionally Significant Growth Area' (Figure 1), requiring a Place Strategy to guide growth and infrastructure provision.

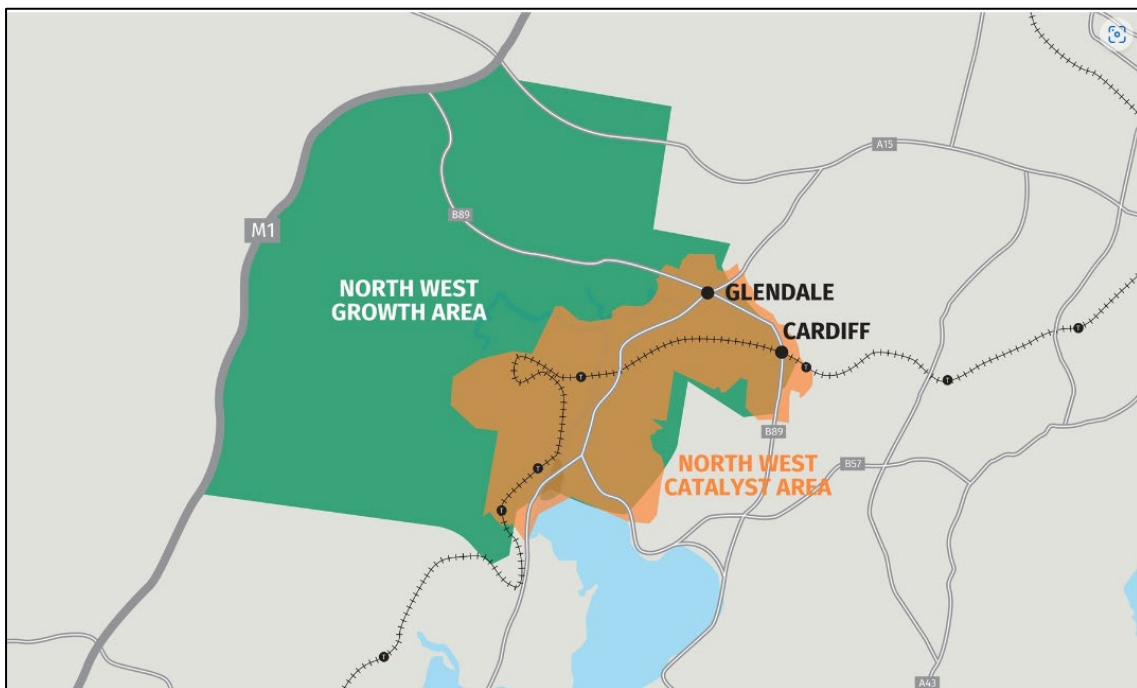


Figure 1: North West Lake Macquarie Regionally Significant Growth Area and the catalyst area

The Lake Macquarie Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) complements these regional plans, identifying the catalyst area as a strategic growth area and committing Council to pursue opportunities to realise its potential. Council prepared a catalyst area Priorities Plan to identify short-term priorities to meet the LSPS commitments for the catalyst area (see table 1). A key action was to commence preparing a place strategy aligned with the Hunter Regional Plan 2041.



The catalyst area place strategy is the first stage in identifying where and how growth should occur and the infrastructure needed to support growth within the North West Lake Macquarie Regionally Significant Growth Area. Separate place strategies will be prepared for the Cockle Creek West Precinct and the remainder of the North West Regionally Significant Growth Area.

Priority action	Status
Prepare an Integrated Landuse and Transport Plan including infrastructure investment and upgrade program	Draft Place Strategy complete
Work with government to review regulation associated with adaptative reuse of ex-mining land in the Cockle Creek West Precinct	Ongoing
Finalise the Cockle Creek Precinct Business Park rezoning	Complete
Finalise the sale of Cockle Creek Precinct land to private businesses to facilitate large scale retail and residential development	Ongoing
Expand the catalyst area boundary to the west to consider the wider North West Growth Area	Complete
Identification of the Lower Hunter freight rail bypass route	Complete
Develop an investment attraction package for the North West Lake Macquarie Catalyst Area	Ongoing

*Table 1: Priority action list– North West Lake Macquarie Catalyst Area Priority Plan*

## 1.1 Purpose

Place strategies aim to provide certainty to the community on areas of significant change and to identify catalytic infrastructure needed to enable the cost-effective delivery of new homes and jobs. The place strategy will provide a framework for land use change and infrastructure investment in the catalyst area. The place strategy will:

- provide a clear understanding of infrastructure needs, including utilities, transport, social, green and community infrastructure, to support government infrastructure planning and funding at the right time
- clearly identify development and growth opportunities that support private investment in locations consistent with the catalyst area vision
- offer potential for expediated planning proposals to rezone land where changes are consistent with the place strategy.

## 1.2 Project location

The boundaries of the North West Lake Macquarie Catalyst Area were first established under the GNMP. It extends from Teralba northward to Glendale and Cardiff (see Figure 2). It contains several local, neighbourhood and strategic commercial centres, employment lands, residential neighbourhoods and environmental conservation lands that offer differing roles, characteristics and opportunities.



Figure 2: North West Lake Macquarie Catalyst Area

## 2. Policy context

The Place Strategy has been developed with consideration of global trends, federal, state and local policy. This has helped to shape the planning principles, structure plan and precinct objectives. The following matters have been considered in the development of the draft Place Strategy.

### 2.1 Megatrends

A megatrend describes a significant shift in environmental, economic and social conditions that will play out over the coming years and decades. Megatrends are important to consider because they will influence growth and change at the local level. Figure 3 summarises relevant megatrends and Figure 4 identifies post-COVID short-term megatrends.



Figure 3: Long-term megatrend themes. Source: CSIRO



Figure 4: Short-medium term megatrends post-COVID. Source: CSIRO

## 2.2 Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S) provide a framework for the integration of environmental, social, economic and governance aspects of sustainability into local government responsibilities. Council's Sustainability Policy commits us to using the SDG framework as a way of implementing our sustainability initiatives.

The place strategy will help Council make progress on six UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular:

- good health and well-being
- clean water and sanitation
- decent work and economic growth
- industry, innovation and infrastructure
- sustainable cities and communities
- climate action
- life below water
- life on land.

## 2.3 National Housing Accord

The National Housing Accord is a landmark agreement to address one of our nation's biggest economic challenges - the supply and affordability of housing. It identifies an aspirational national target of delivering one million new, well located homes over 5 years from 2024. State and territory governments have agreed to build on this with an additional commitment of up to 10,000 new homes and in total delivering up to 20,000 new affordable homes.

## 2.4 NSW Policy

Relevant State strategies and policies include:

- *Practitioner's Guide to Movement and Place, Greener Places Framework and Better Placed Policy* — these are intended to shape the future development of places by managing through traffic, ensuring access to green space and promoting well-designed places
- *NSW Housing Strategy* to coordinate supply and deliver affordable diverse housing
- *Future Transport 2056 Strategy and Greater Newcastle Future Transport Plan*; policies to ensure road projects consider space and safety requirements of vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists)<sup>1</sup>
- New design guidance including the *Walking Space Guide* and *Cycleway Design Toolbox*.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/providing-for-walking-and-cycling-in-transport-projects-policy.pdf>  
<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/road-user-space-allocation-policy.pdf>

## 2.5 Hunter Regional Plan 2041

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 declares the catalyst area part of a regionally significant growth area (see Figure 5) and provides the following summary:

*“North West Lake Macquarie is evolving into a housing and employment hub with intensive mixed use development; public transport and walking and cycling; retail; advanced manufacturing and urban services; and office and services employment. The precinct will include compact 15-minute neighbourhoods that incorporate shops, services, work from home opportunities, shady streets, and public and green open spaces that also serve a wider regional community.*

*Over the next two decades the urban area east of Cockle Creek will welcome 10,000 new residents, with more than 4,000 new dwellings and space for 6,000 new jobs. Strategic planning to support this growth will focus on the optimal densities of the regional plan, enable flexibility to transition employment for future jobs, enhance open space and vibrancy of centres, and investments in critical state and local infrastructure.*

*Land to the west of Cockle Creek presents a significant opportunity for new urban growth, brownfield redevelopment and an innovative re-use of mining lands that support economic diversification for 15-minute neighbourhoods. The area could provide more than 750 ha of developable land that could support 20,000 dwellings, thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of economic activity.”*

The Hunter Regional Plan identifies the following outcomes for each catalyst area precinct:

### Place Strategy Outcomes

<p><b>Boolaroo-Speers Point Precinct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to enhance Speers Point Park, Cockle Creek and Cockle Creek foreshore while mitigating flood and lake level rise impacts and providing accessible transport connections.</li> <li>• Revitalise the Boolaroo and Speers Point local centres to support business activation and housing diversity.</li> <li>• Create a 15-minute neighbourhood from Munibung Hill, Boolaroo and Speers Point local centres to Speers Point Park and Lake Macquarie foreshore.</li> <li>• Improve the intersection on the Esplanade, Five-Islands Road and TC Frith Avenue.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cockle Creek West and Killingworth Precincts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate suitable and sustainable re-use of mining land to balance environmental systems while leveraging existing power, water, sewer, rail loops and roads to facilitate a range of employment and urban uses.</li> <li>• Ensure land investigated for urban and employment use is near rail and road infrastructure and is supported by 15-minute neighbourhoods and optimum density.</li> <li>• Plan for transport connectivity and multi-modal opportunities that connect with the Northern Railway, proposed Lower Hunter Freight Bypass and new road connection from the M1 Motorway to Cockle Creek.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cardiff Advanced Industry Precinct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand flexible employment land uses and building provisions to foster the transition to an innovative industrial precinct.</li> <li>• Ensure the Munibung Road corridor provides access to national freight</li> </ul>	<p><b>Glendale–Argenton Renewal Precinct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate affordable housing choices near education clusters and the Glendale town centre.</li> <li>• Improve Lake Road and the Argenton local centre.</li> <li>• Improve transport networks and services, including walking and cycling connections across</li> </ul>



<p><i>networks, buses and the principal pedestrian footpath network.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Work with Transport for NSW to develop the Pennant Street bridge.</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Lake Road, Fredrick Street and Main Road.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Plan for an accessible, mixed use education and innovation hub around Glendale TAFE.</i></li> <li>• <i>Rejuvenate and connect existing open spaces.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Cardiff Mixed Use Precinct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Create 15-minute neighbourhoods that connect a diversity of new housing, services, jobs and public open space, in particular a new public space in the Cardiff strategic centre.</i></li> <li>• <i>Enhance access, connection and visibility of Cardiff Rail Station, including the commuter car park.</i></li> <li>• <i>Create more walking, cycling and public transport connections for 15-minute neighbourhoods.</i></li> <li>• <i>Improve Myall Road and the Macquarie/Munibung intersection.</i></li> <li>• <i>Revitalise the Winding Creek Corridor.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Glendale Retail and Sport Precinct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Work with Transport for NSW and Stocklands on a potential Lake Macquarie transport interchange.</i></li> <li>• <i>Support the expansion and intensification of the Stockland retail centre with street tree planting.</i></li> <li>• <i>Support the expansion of the Hunter Sports Centre and Trampoline Centre of Excellence.</i></li> <li>• <i>Support the use and development of surplus Transport for NSW land to connect with open public spaces and mixed use development along Main Road.</i></li> <li>• <i>Improve walking and cycling paths on Stockland Drive and within the Stockland retail centre.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensure efficient movement of public bus services into the precinct.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Cockle Creek Precinct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Establish an iconic city landmark for visitors, workers and customers from outside the area.</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide a diversity of jobs in commercial and employment precincts such as retail, tourism, innovative and knowledge-based industries.</i></li> <li>• <i>Create people-oriented places that are inviting, entertaining, safe, convenient and integrated with active public transport, particularly along TC Frith Avenue, Main Road and Munibung Road.</i></li> <li>• <i>Expand Cockle Creek rail station and explore a multi-modal interchange to support growth.</i></li> <li>• <i>Enhance open spaces and connect the cultural and recreational potential of Munibung Hill.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Teralba Precinct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reinvigorate Teralba local centre using heritage as a point of difference.</i></li> <li>• <i>Protect the heritage values within the Teralba Heritage Conservation Area.</i></li> <li>• <i>Improve accessibility and multi-modal transport connectivity at Teralba and Booragul rail stations.</i></li> </ul>

## 2.6 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036

The Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 identifies the desired role for North West Lake Macquarie in relation to Greater Newcastle as:

- large format retail, advanced manufacturing, office-based jobs and open space with regionally significant catchment
- strategic gateway to Greater Newcastle
- urban renewal precinct, meeting demand for affordable medium-density housing and enhanced lifestyle amenities.

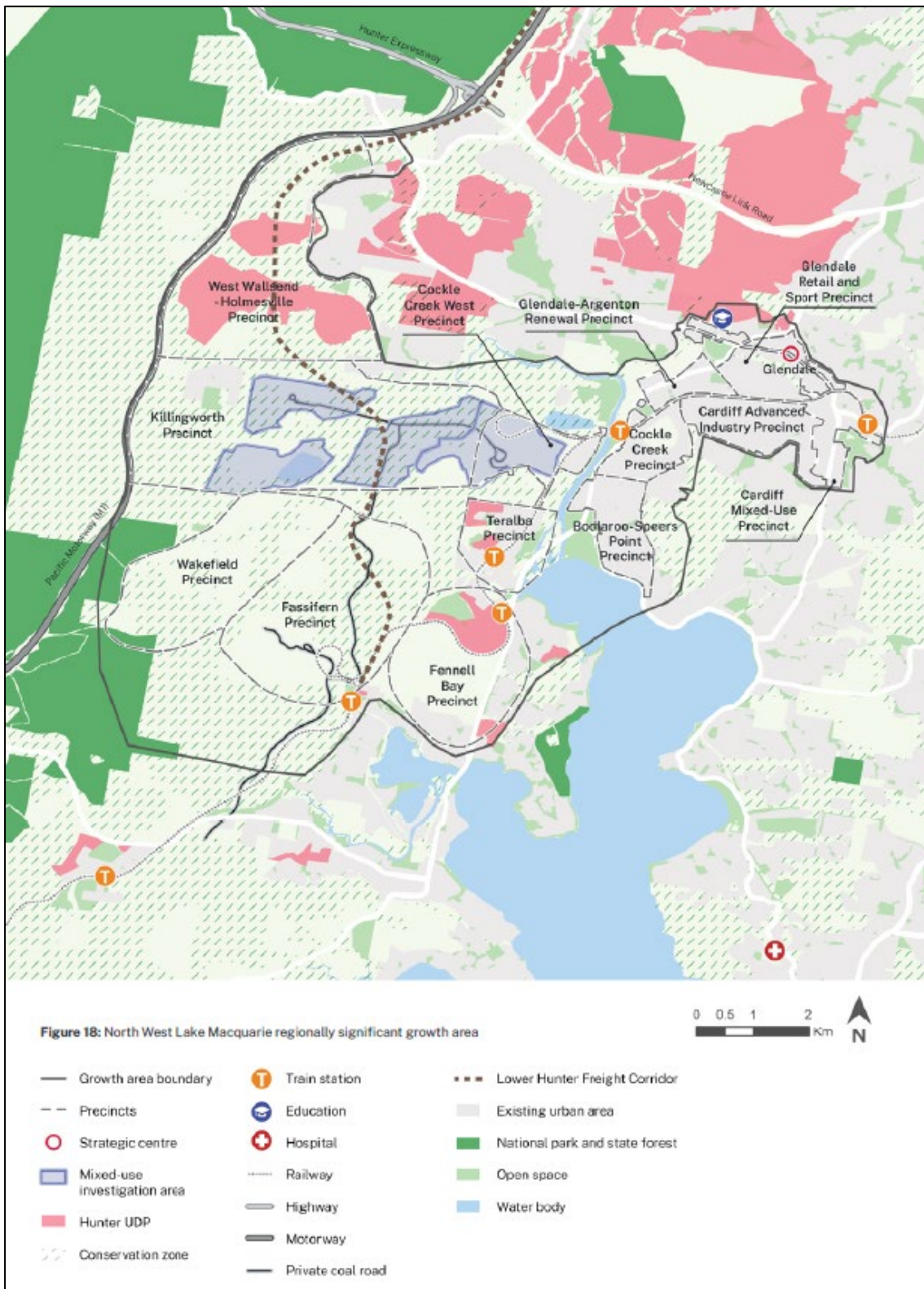


Figure 5: Hunter Regional Plan 2041 – North West Lake Macquarie Regionally Significant Growth

## 2.7 Greater Newcastle Future Transport Plan

For North West Lake Macquarie, the Greater Newcastle Future Transport Plan aims to improve transport connectivity between employment and retail precincts, explore opportunities for better pedestrian and cycle connectivity to Cockle Creek station and to the Glendale Retail and Sport Precinct. The Plan also identifies key initiatives that will impact the catalyst area including:

- new intercity fleet (committed)
- Lower Hunter freight corridor protection (committed)
- Greater Newcastle rapid bus package/strategy/network (investigation being undertaken)
- Greater Newcastle place plans, this is the delivery of the ILTP for the catalyst area (investigation being undertaken)
- Sydney-Central Coast-Newcastle Faster Rail improvement (investigation being undertaken)
- travel demand management policies and tools
- cycling improvements (investigation being undertaken)
- new suburban type rail service for Greater Newcastle, facilitated by the Lower Hunter freight corridor (long-term investigation).

## 2.8 Local Strategic Planning Statement

The LSPS sets city-wide planning principles, actions and identifies growth areas. This includes the catalyst area and North West Regionally Significant Growth Area. It identifies the following key directions for the catalyst area:

*“This area presents opportunities for transformational urban development in a convenient central location with considerable existing economic endowments.*

- *a focus of intense urban development in North West Lake Macquarie*
- *a strategic economic centre created by the combination of:*
  - *intensive mixed use development;*
  - *public and active transport that is easy to access;*
  - *large and small-format retail;*
  - *advanced manufacturing and urban services;*
  - *office and services employment;*
  - *and well connected recreational facilities and open space with a regionally significant catchment.*
- *a focus for an improved local pedestrian and cycle network, with direct links to cycleways such as the Eleebana to Wallsend shared pathway*
- *contain the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange at Glendale*
- *comprise affordable medium density housing occurring around the corridors to Cardiff, Edgeworth, Argenton and Speers Point*
- *ensure we protect and enhance the natural features of this area including Munibung Hill, the lake and its foreshore, biodiversity corridors, wetlands, Cockle*

*Creek, Winding, Brush, Slatey, Burkes, Cocked Hat and Diega creeks and riparian areas*

- *investigation of significant urban expansion occurs from Teralba to the M1, and north to the Newcastle Link Road*
- *support for critical infrastructure investments is provided and existing infrastructure is leveraged to increase the opportunities for growth in manufacturing, light industry and technology based industries. Growth in these sectors will replace employment opportunities lost as a result of economic restructuring and as mining activities wind down, creating new jobs for our residents*
- *provide regionally significant recreational, open space and cultural facilities”*

## **2.9 Local Housing Strategy**

The Lake Macquarie Local Housing Strategy forecasts the required demand for different housing types and identifies strategies to achieve goals to improve housing choice and affordability. The Housing Strategy identifies a range of actions relevant to the catalyst area including:

- actively support and pursue housing in the North West Lake Macquarie Catalyst Area including the West Wallsend urban intensification corridor
- work with industry, agencies and the community to deliver future housing growth through infill development in and around centres and train stations and new housing areas in the North West Catalyst Area and broader North West Growth Area.

## **2.10 Area Plans**

Council has several area plans (contained within the Lake Macquarie Development Control Plan 2014) which guide development outcomes within the catalyst area. These include:

- Ada Street Cardiff Precinct
- Boolaroo Heritage Precinct
- Cardiff Town Centre
- Cockle Creek Precinct
- Edgeworth Renewal Corridor Strategy
- Glendale Town Centre and Masterplan
- Munibung Hill Management Plan
- Munibung Hill Speers Point Quarry
- Speers Point Park Masterplan
- Teralba Heritage Conservation Area

Figure 6 illustrates the geographic distribution and location of Area Plans within the catalyst area. While Figure 7 shows the hierarchy of the Place Strategy relative to other state and local policy.



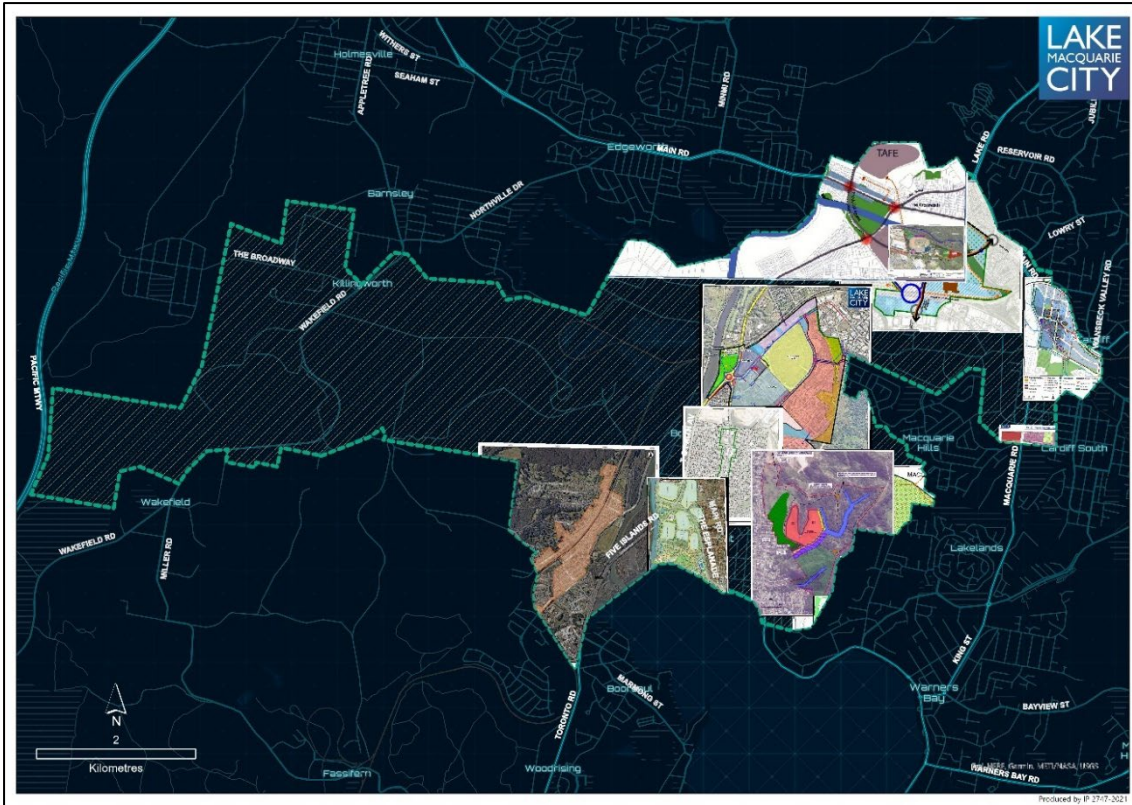


Figure 6: Existing Strategies and Area Plans

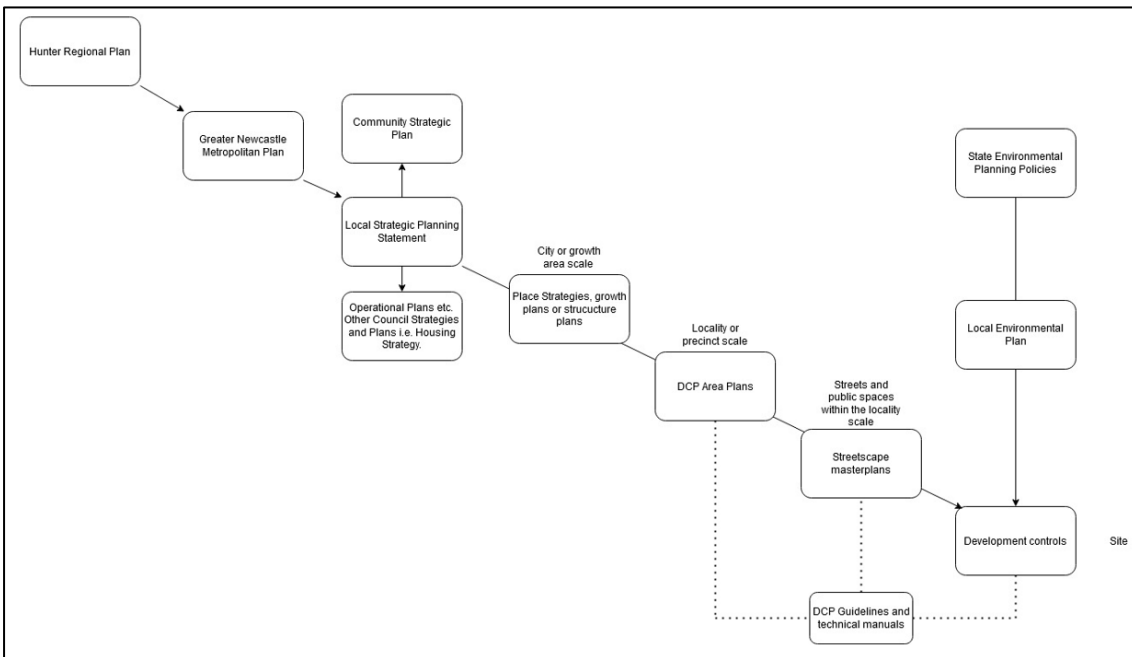


Figure 7: Policy relationship of Structure Plan to other plans

## 2.11 Other local policies

Other relevant local strategies and policies include:

- *Walking, Cycling and Better Streets Strategy* - guides active transport infrastructure provision and road safety improvements
- *Open Space and Recreation Strategies* to guide existing and future waterbodies, lands and facilities and include *Lake Activation Strategy, Parks and Play Strategy* and *Public Amenities Strategy*.
- environmental and sustainability plans to build resilience, protect and expand environmental lands and values including *Urban Greening and Urban Heat Strategies* and *Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2027*
- LEP amendments, including adjusting medium density residential zoned land across the city and modifying commercial zones to facilitate a larger diversity of business uses.

## 3. Stakeholder consultation

In recent years, Council has undertaken extensive community engagement to inform the vision and planning outcomes for the catalyst area. This included engagement during:

- exhibition of the Community Strategic Plan in 2016
- Imagine Lake Mac 2050 and LSPS in 2016-2019
- Housing Strategy in 2018
- Better Streets in 2020
- recreational strategies, and various Area Plans, including Cardiff and Cockle Creek throughout 2019-2021.

In 2019, a multi-government agency steering group was established to support the desired vision and growth of the catalyst area. This steering group included Council staff, representatives from the Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure, Transport for NSW, Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation and the Department of Regions. Regular meetings throughout 2019 – 2022 were undertaken with this steering group to inform the Place Strategy.

Council and Transport for NSW also undertook a collaborative process aligned with the Movement and Place Framework to help understand requirements and possible options for specific land use, infrastructure and transport network planning. This was supported by workshops throughout 2021 to assist in defining current movement and place barriers and opportunities, while understanding mega trends, existing and future place character, guiding principles and objectives.

Council also engaged other key agencies and organisations to understand future infrastructure and facility needs against projected growth to ensure that infrastructure can be delivered in an efficient and timely manner.

In 2022, Council engaged development industry representatives to understand opportunities and constraints to development in the catalyst area. Key feedback included a range of current issues and suggested actions.

- Transport infrastructure is inadequate for growth, in particular key intersections such as Five Islands Road. Council will either need to upgrade these or advocate/lobby for faster delivery times via TfNSW.
- Any proposed rezoning to accommodate the Place Strategy may hinder private investment due to the prolonged process of preparing environmental studies and amending LMLEP 2014.
- The NSW Rejuvenation Fund may be a source to acquire the funding to prepare environmental studies (particularly within Cockle Creek West Precinct).
- Cardiff Advanced Industry Precinct will capitalise upon the Fibre City Network to facilitate advanced manufacturing or data centres etc. Require flexible landuse to ensure future business attraction.
- Do not overlook the need for commercial/retail land to cater for projected or conceptual high growth. Glendale, Cardiff and Edgeworth act as the main supermarket destinations. These areas are nearing capacity. Glendale will attract most of the population catchment though has limited capacity for supermarket expansion due to existing supermarket footprint. Conceptual high growth projections would require two new supermarkets minimum. An area within the catalyst area in single ownership will be required to build these future supermarkets which limits locations to the Cockle Creek Precinct or Glendale Precinct. All other precincts are in fragmented land ownership.
- Land fragmentation limits the ability to undertake place making initiatives.
- Biodiversity will be a major constraint and the need for biodiversity offsets within the Cockle Creek West Precinct. All other precincts are existing urban areas and will not require environmental or bushfire studies.
- T.C. Frith roundabout has been designed with a 5th leg and could potentially construct a road bridge in future to connect Cockle Creek West and the M1 Motorway.
- Investigation Areas shown within the Structure Map will require detail on their opportunities and constraints to guide any future applicants.
- The development of Cockle Creek West Precinct and broader catalyst area may need a City Deal agreement with federal, state and local government to ensure the adaptive reuse of the site can be realised. The area needs to be promoted as nationally significant for it to be identified by all levels of government.
- Fast Rail station could be a catalyst for investment.
- The catalyst area name requires rebranding for it to be relatable as a place over a planning term.