



# WOLLONDILLY RURAL LANDS STRATEGY

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SEPTEMBER 2021





# Acknowledgement\*

Wollondilly Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land in Wollondilly, the Dharawal and Gundungurra peoples.

We acknowledge the living culture and spiritual connections to the land for the Dharawal and Gundungurra people and all Aboriginal Nation Groups that may have connections to the area; and that Wollondilly is remarkably placed as the intersection of many tribal lands.

We recognise the traditional Custodians have occupied and cared for this Country over countless generations and celebrate their continuing contributions to the Shire.

We also acknowledge and remember the Dharawal and Gundungurra peoples who were killed in the Appin Massacre on 17 April 1816.

*We acknowledge our collaboration with the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wollondilly Shire values our Farmers, our producers, our rural industries and our important Rural Lands, which have supported Greater Sydney's needs over many years and we are keen to see this continue into the future. We have seen the loss of many traditional forms of farming and farmers, but we are also seeing the emergence of new opportunities. Our vision looks to support our remaining farmers and embrace new forms of farming and opportunities moving forward.

We appreciate the input from our Rural Industry Liaison Committee, Yerranderie Committee and our Rural land holders that have provided their professional knowledge views and experience.

This Rural Lands Strategy provides the framework for managing growth, change and development for rural land in Wollondilly to the year 2040. The Strategy's study area encompasses Wollondilly's rural land, meaning all land that is currently zoned, under the Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2011 (excluding land within the identified Growth Areas in Wilton and Greater Macarthur):

- RU1 Primary Production
- RU2 Rural Landscape
- RU4 Primary Production Small Lots
- E4 Environmental Living
- R5 Large Lot Residential

The Strategy also includes land on the western side of Lake Burragarang.

This Strategy is supported by the Rural Lands Findings Report, which was the first step in the development of this Strategy. It provides a snapshot of what Wollondilly looks like today, the type and location of uses in rural lands, as well as the drivers, challenges, opportunities and constraints that are present.

Wollondilly's diverse community live, own or work on land within Wollondilly's rural areas. There are farmers with generations of history as well as newer residents. The complex and interconnected nature of the competing interests on rural lands often results in conflicts between existing land uses, new opportunities or residents just seeking a rural lifestyle.

Recognising these complexities, this Strategy considers all the drivers, opportunities and demands for rural land use in Wollondilly. This Strategy has developed a holistic framework for planning and management of rural land, addressing these dilemmas, providing a balanced and more flexible approach, but also creating certainty about future development of rural land in Wollondilly.

A series of 11 principles have been developed to guide the preparation of this Strategy. These forward planning principles are:

## FORWARD PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- A** PRINCIPLE  
Develop and promote agricultural resources and the community
- B** PRINCIPLE  
Reducing land use conflicts
- C** PRINCIPLE  
Managing pressure for rural living opportunities
- D** PRINCIPLE  
Managing places with special landscape, rural and scenic value
- E** PRINCIPLE  
Promoting economic diversification including emerging opportunities
- F** PRINCIPLE  
Embracing the opportunities of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis
- G** PRINCIPLE  
Ensuring the proficient provision of infrastructure
- H** PRINCIPLE  
Balancing environmental, economic and social outcomes
- I** PRINCIPLE  
Taking a future-focused, long-term approach
- J** PRINCIPLE  
Maintaining consistency with State planning policies
- K** PRINCIPLE  
Right to farm

While this is a 20-year plan, the Strategy also considers Wollondilly's potential growth beyond 2040. In particular, it considers the need to ensure planning decisions made today do not compromise options to meet longer term needs.

Planning for rural lands over the plan period is structured around six major focus areas, a summary of each of these is shown below. These focus areas have been based on the planning principles and informed by evidence-based analysis in the associated Rural Lands Findings Report.

In examining each of these focus areas, the Strategy provides the following:

- **Strategic aims** - purpose and goals to work towards
- **Background** - short background to the focus area
- **Strategic direction** - identifies the desired outcomes of the policy direction
- **Actions** - provides a policy framework for the focus areas

These focus areas consider the planning and policy levers for safeguarding important rural land, provides an equitable approach for current and future residents, and includes a program of regular monitoring and review of actions.

## MAJOR FOCUS AREAS



The Strategy actions will directly influence the review of Wollondilly LEP 2011, related development control plans and other statutory documents. Key actions are included below. It is noted that not all actions are summarised below and a list of all the actions can be found in Appendix A:

- **Action 3.1.1 - Undertake as a priority action an Agricultural Viability Study, both current and into the future:** Investigate the development of an Agricultural Study that analyses the mechanisms needed for the future viability of primary production.
- **Action 3.1.6 - Investigate LEP changes to encourage greater horticultural production:** Review Wollondilly LEP 2011 with a view to allowing Intensive Plant Agriculture and construction/operation of associated infrastructure such as greenhouses, hothouses, polytunnels, igloos and hydroponic systems as exempt development within areas zoned RU1 Primary Production.
- **Action 3.2.1 - Investigate LEP changes for important agricultural land (following the completion of an Agricultural Viability Study for the Shire as required by Action 3.1.1):** Investigate amending the Wollondilly LEP 2011 to include a local provision and overlay maps to safeguard agricultural land.
- **Action 3.2.2 - Investigate developing rural subdivision guidelines:** Investigate the development of a guideline on when and where rural subdivision is acceptable for both small lot agricultural pursuits (under clause 4.2 of Wollondilly LEP 2011) or for the purposes of rural lifestyle lots.
- **Action 3.3.1 - Manage sensitive uses and agricultural land:** Continue use of the Clause 5.18 'Intensive livestock agriculture' and the Clause 7.6 'Development within a designated buffer area' of the Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011.
- **Action 3.4.1 - Review local policies regarding water protection and security:** Continue to protect riparian areas through Clause 7.3 'Water Protection' in Wollondilly LEP 2011 and review Wollondilly's Development Control Plan to promote the efficient use and re-use of water on rural lands.
- **Action 4.1.1 - Review the RU1 Primary Production zone:** establish clear objectives and direction, review all permissible land uses and the minimum lot size in the RU1 Primary Production zone that safeguards primary production. If necessary, adjust zone boundaries for minor changes to better reflect existing land use
- **Action 4.1.2 - Review the RU2 Rural Landscape zone:** establish clear objectives and direction, review all permissible land uses and the minimum lot size in the RU2 Rural Landscape zone to reflect landscape and scenic values, with a more rural lifestyle value.
- **Action 4.1.3 - Review the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone:** Develop a set of criteria to review the RU4 Primary Production Small Lot zone to better reflect existing clusters of land use which will include criteria for a transition to a more appropriate zone (such as the RU6 Transition Zone).
- **Action 4.1.5 - Review the E4 Environmental Living zone:** Review objectives and permissible land uses within the E4 Environmental Living zone (note: this may require a place-based approach).
- **Action 4.1.7 - Regulate truck and transport depots:** include a local provision to limit the size of truck and transport depot operations in the RU1 Primary Production and/or RU2 Rural Landscape zones.
- **Action 5.4.1 - Investigate opportunities for tourism in rural areas:** Investigate developing a rural tourism strategy/policy that provide a strategic framework within which investigate opportunities for tourism in rural areas.
- **Action 6.1.1 - Managing rural residential growth:** Prevent the encroachment of urban or residential lands into rural areas outside the identified growth areas or existing village footprints by not zoning any further land in Wollondilly for residential (excluding rural housing) unless clearly identified for these uses in the Local Housing Strategy.
- **Action 6.2.1 - Deliver well planned rural dwellings:** Amend the Wollondilly LEP 2011 for dwelling entitlements to be registered on a Dwelling Opportunity Map and include a temporary workers dwellings clause to increase options for seasonal farm workers.

Implementation of this Strategy will occur progressively over time. It is the nature of this Strategy that it sets the broad direction for Wollondilly and will guide future Wollondilly LEP 2011 amendments as well as other planning investigations.



## PART 1

# *Context &* BACKGROUND

# INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGY

The Wollondilly Rural Lands Strategy (the Strategy) outlines the long-term strategic direction for rural areas in the Wollondilly local government area (LGA). The Strategy will provide a detailed assessment of rural lands, its opportunities, issues and future use. The Strategy will be used by Wollondilly Shire Council to help inform future planning decisions and local planning policy for rural lands.

## 1.1 THE NEED FOR A RURAL LANDS STRATEGY

Some of Sydney's most productive agricultural land is within 100 kilometres of Sydney's CBD. Rural areas also support Sydney through biodiversity, recreation, rural housing, tourism, open space, natural resources, heritage and landscape conservation and infrastructure provision.

Proximity to Sydney, the rapid pace of growth and change, and the range of other land uses competing for space make Wollondilly's rural land some of the most contested in the State. Beautiful rural landscapes near Sydney are an attractive location for urban development and rural residential living. These uses compete with agriculture, resulting in the permanent loss of agricultural land and associated rural businesses. Developing rural lands for urban purposes also results in the loss of 'scenic and rural breaks' which provide Wollondilly with, and support, its highly valued natural landscapes.

Protecting the significant features and assets found in these areas is important for ongoing environmental, social, economic, cultural and wellbeing outcomes. More specifically, parts of Wollondilly are known as the 'birthplace of Australian Agriculture', form part of Sydney's drinking water catchment, make up a substantial portion of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and are now on the 'doorstep' of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. Rural areas, and surrounds, have a diverse range of values that need to be considered in a planning context.

## 1.2 WHAT LAND DOES THE STRATEGY CONSIDER?

This Strategy primarily focuses on the land use planning implications of managing growth and change on rural lands in Wollondilly. The Strategy's study area encompasses Wollondilly's rural land. Figure 1 indicates land to which this Strategy applies. The term "rural land" for the purposes of the Strategy means all land that is currently zoned as follows, under the Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011 (refer to Figure 2):

- RU1 Primary Production
- RU2 Rural Landscape
- RU4 Primary Production Small Lots
- E4 Environmental Living
- R5 Large Lot Residential

This Strategy also considers other land within the Wollondilly LGA for the purposes of their impact on rural landscapes (including the village of Yerranderie). Rural land does not include urban land, land within the Growth Centres, Crown land - National Parks, State Forests or Reserved Land.



**Legend**

- Towns/ Villages
- Wollondilly Local Government Area
- Rural Land
- Local Government Areas

0 5 10 km

Map produced by EMAP Consulting  
 Date: 12/08/2021  
 Coordinate System: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 55  
 Wollondilly Rural Lands Strategy  
 Preliminary Findings Report  
 Wollondilly Shire Council v[5]

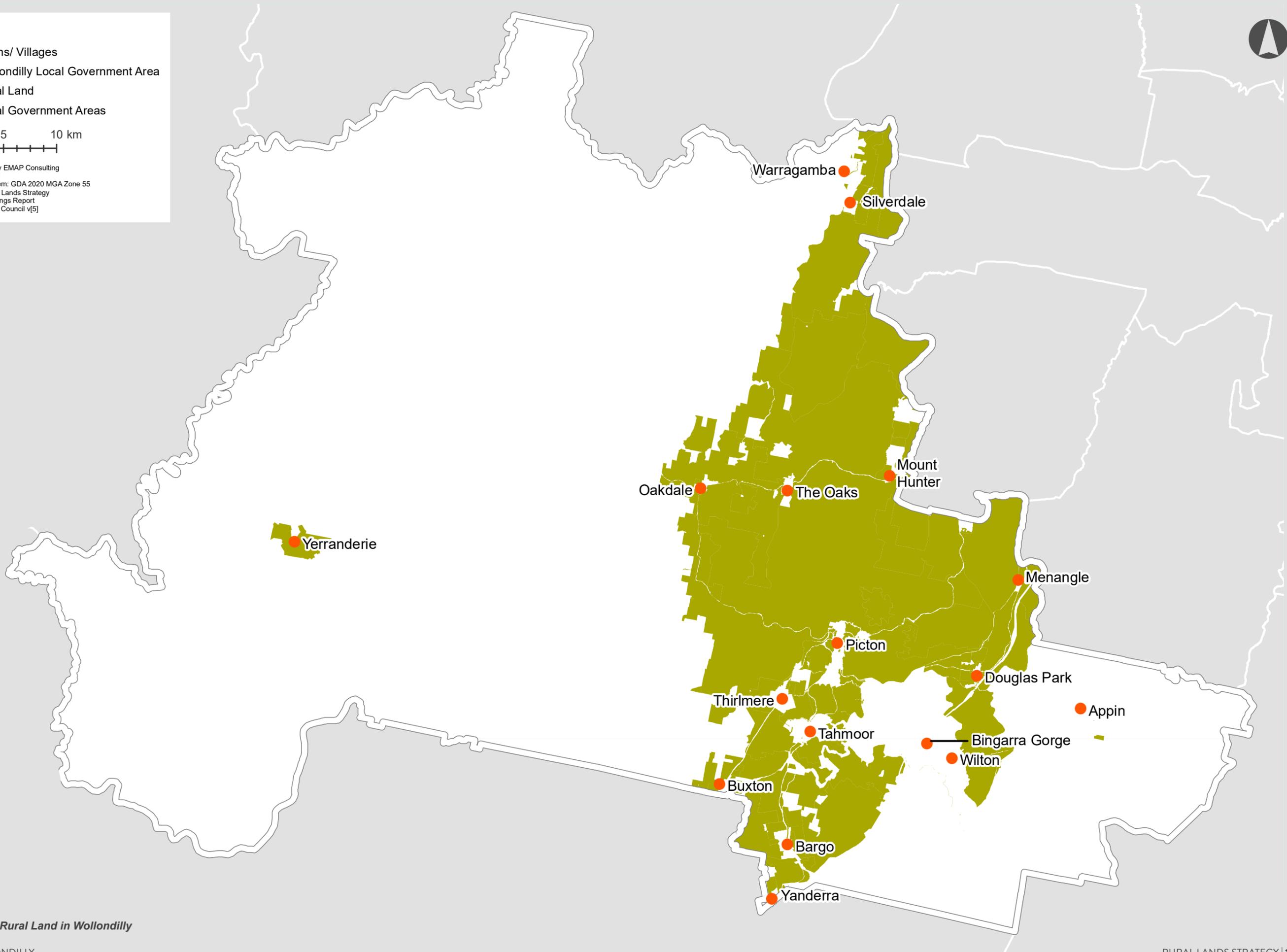


Figure 1: Rural Land in Wollondilly

**Legend**

- Towns and Villages
- Wollondilly Local Government Area
- Growth Areas

**Wollondilly LEP 2012**

- E4 Environmental Living
- R5 Large Lot Residential
- RU1 Primary Production
- RU2 Rural Landscape
- RU4 Primary Production Small Lots
- ▨ World Heritage Area
- National Parks and Protected Areas
- Other Environmental Areas
- Urban Areas
- Waterways

0 5 10 km

Map produced by EMAP Consulting  
 Date: 12/08/2021  
 Coordinate System: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 55  
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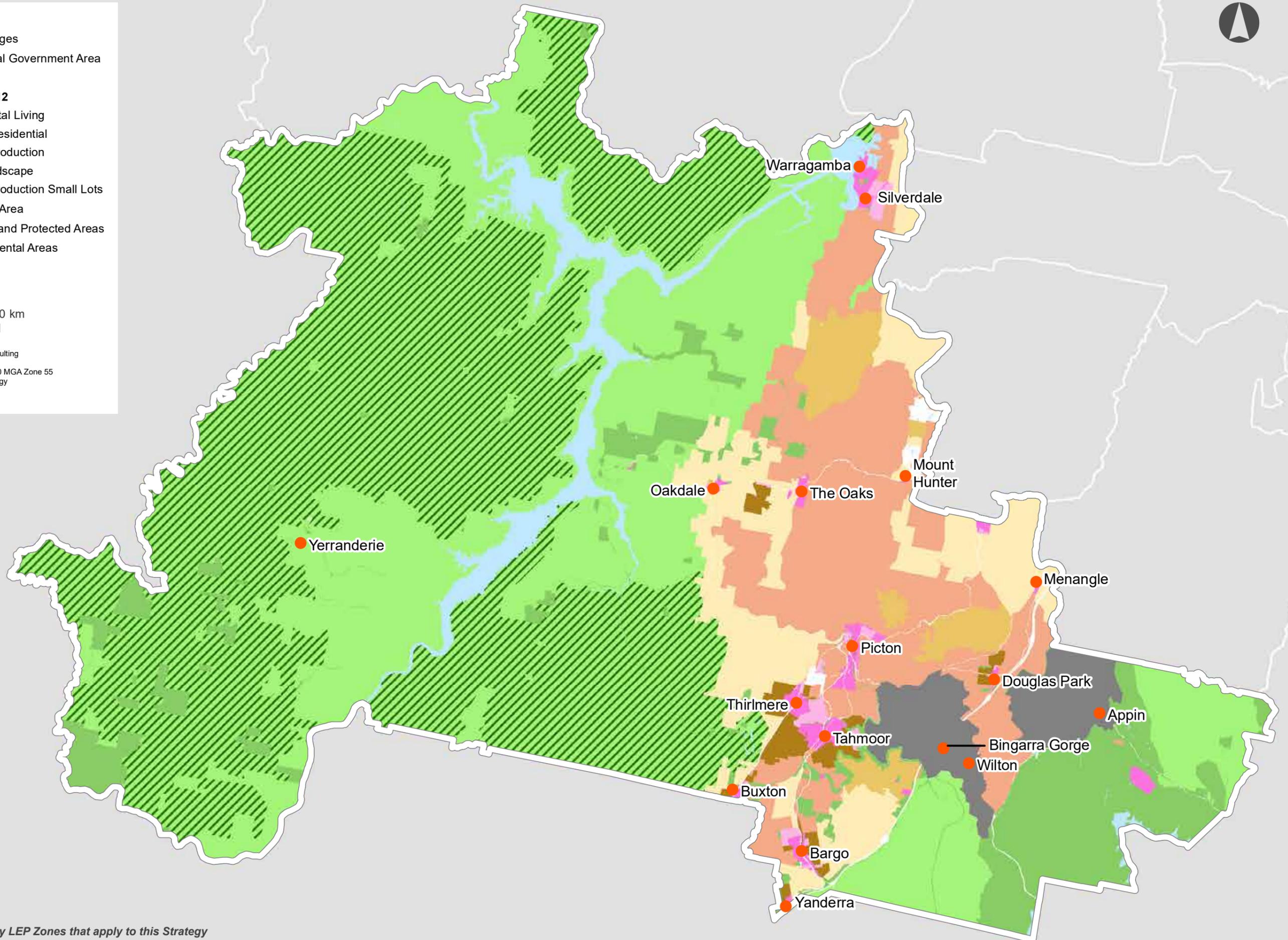


Figure 2: Wollondilly LEP Zones that apply to this Strategy

### 1.3 THE CHALLENGE OF RURAL LANDS IN WOLLONDILLY

A key objective of this Strategy is to maintain a healthy and balanced approach to land management in rural lands. Managing rural land is a complex challenge compared to other zones, with many competing and overlaid interests. As shown in the diagram below, the components of rural land vary, and Wollondilly has the added pressure of being located on the fringe of the Greater Sydney Region. The complex and interconnected nature of these competing interests often results in conflicts between existing land uses, new opportunities or residents just seeking a rural lifestyle.

#### KEY ATTRIBUTES OF RURAL LAND IN WOLLONDILLY



The challenge in Wollondilly is to find the balance between the need to provide fresh produce to the Greater Sydney Region, provide land for rural 'lifestylers', manage demand for tourism uses in the rural areas and safeguard the rural landscape, including important environmental areas. These challenges are also compounding and reinforcing the need to integrate broader issues of the changing climate, ageing transport infrastructure and water security.

As rural lands are complex, planning needs to consider all the drivers, opportunities and demands for land use in Wollondilly. This Strategy has developed a holistic framework for planning and management of rural land, addressing these matters, providing a balanced and more flexible approach, but also creating certainty about the future uses of rural land in Wollondilly.

This Strategy has developed overarching planning principles and six focus areas which will be delivered through strategic directions and actions designed to balance all components of rural lands.

#### HOW THE RURAL LANDS STRATEGY WILL SUCCEED



### 1.4 PROJECT STAGES

The project has been undertaken in five key stages to support the development of this Strategy. These stages have provided an opportunity for landowners and the community to be engaged as summarised below.

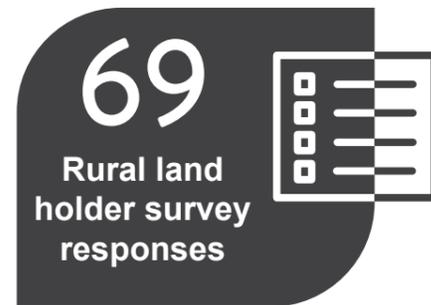
#### Stage 1: Background research and initial consultation

The first stage in developing this Strategy involved preliminary engagement with various stakeholders including State agencies, landowners, primary producers, the Wollondilly Rural Lands Strategy Reference Group, along with independent institutes and independent statutory corporations. This process was undertaken during April 2020.

The process also involved a targeted landowner/ primary producer survey which collected information regarding land holdings and the future of farming in Wollondilly. Working with a Project Reference Group comprising of community and local business representatives was also a part of the process. The consultation was adapted to comply with progressive COVID-19 public health orders and social distancing measures.

This Strategy also ties together a significant amount of research and previous State and local studies and strategies concerning rural areas of Wollondilly and the Greater Sydney Region. This Strategy is based on the most recent data available at the time of its preparation and additional studies and action items outlined in this Strategy should utilise any updated data as it becomes available. This Strategy is an action in the Wollondilly 2040 Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), in particular Planning Priority 16.

## CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES



## SURVEY RESULTS:

### TOP 6 REASONS TO LIVE ON A RURAL PROPERTY?

<b>1</b>	To farm
<b>2</b>	To live a rural lifestyle
<b>3</b>	To raise my family
<b>4</b>	To live close to nature
<b>5</b>	To grow my own food
<b>6</b>	To live on a large property, close to Sydney

## KEY INSIGHTS FROM INITIAL CONSULTATION

A generally consistent message across all consultation was a strong collective appreciation and desire to **enhance Wollondilly's agricultural values** and to celebrate its natural environment and scenic value.

This sense of community value of the rural landscape and its associated uses included a desire to improve **the viability of agricultural enterprises**, but not to see the area overdeveloped or to lose its connection to its history and the environment more broadly.

Similarly, while some farms are highly utilised and valued for their agricultural potential, others are perceived to be **constrained** through proximity to residential and urban development, small size, natural resource suitability, access to infrastructure, environmental values, a higher value for other purposes or barriers to development.

Overall, it was clear from the initial consultation that rural land and the **farming and rural nature of the LGA is highly valued**. However, it was recognised there are challenges and pressures on the best way to safeguard the agricultural productivity and other rural virtues of the land.

There was recognition of the need for the land to continue to meet the needs of its current agricultural users, whilst also **adapting to more diverse uses** and functionality into the future to be viable. This direction took a variety of forms, from addressing changing planning controls through to value-adding initiatives such as the potential for tourism and small footprint, high-value production.

### Support for Producers

Consultation for the Findings Report showed coordination, advocacy and education would assist producers and landholders in adapting or improving use of their rural holdings. These actions were also identified to support and maintain the scenic and agricultural values of Wollondilly by improving relationships with non-agricultural sectors.

Suggested initiatives and issues from the consultation included:

- cooperatives and share farming to combat supply chain constraints, marketing and scalability of production
- intensive high value agriculture and boutique products e.g. floral additives
- small footprint production e.g. hydroponics, glasshouses, vertical farming
- support for arrangements would help enable smaller operators to be viable and increase resilience through diversity of activity
- food waste and waste management
- need to keep land use planning controls open to allow piggeries and abattoirs to stay viable
- address planning barriers to integrated business opportunities such as on farm tourism
- connecting with the agribusiness precinct of Western Sydney Aerotropolis to value add and connect with wider markets
- education and communication to address land use conflict issues where agriculture and urban populations are increasingly forced together
- support producers right to farm
- awareness of high land values and link to impacting on viability of some smallholders to operate

## Stage 2: Wollondilly Rural Lands Findings Report

The second stage in process of developing this Strategy began with a comprehensive analysis of existing policy, including a broad review of successful approaches to complex rural challenges, both locally and internationally. This detailed evidence-based analysis is documented in the Rural Lands Findings Report.

This analysis provided insights about the current and future rural opportunities and challenges for the area, including an analysis of agricultural capability in the Greater Sydney Region and work associated with the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. The Rural Lands Findings Report also addressed the State's planning framework including the Western Sydney District Plan and review of the Right to Farm policy.

## Stages 3 to 5 – The Rural Lands Strategy

The following flow chart provides a graphical outline of the process for finalising this Strategy. Further stakeholder engagement was undertaken at Stage 4, to assist the Council in identifying any further concerns or challenges for rural lands. Council revised all submissions from the community following the exhibition. The finalised Strategy was amended following the exhibition period.

### Mapping

Various maps were produced for the Rural Lands Findings Report and the Strategy. The maps used the latest data available at the time of production. While all maps were considered accurate at the time of production, changes since that time could vary the information provided and as such, all maps are for indicative purposes only. It should also be noted many maps were produced to understand rural lands at an LGA level should be not be used on a site by site basis.

## Informing the Strategy – Our Approach

This document forms one component of the process. The Rural Lands Findings Report forms an important part of the development of this report and its direction.

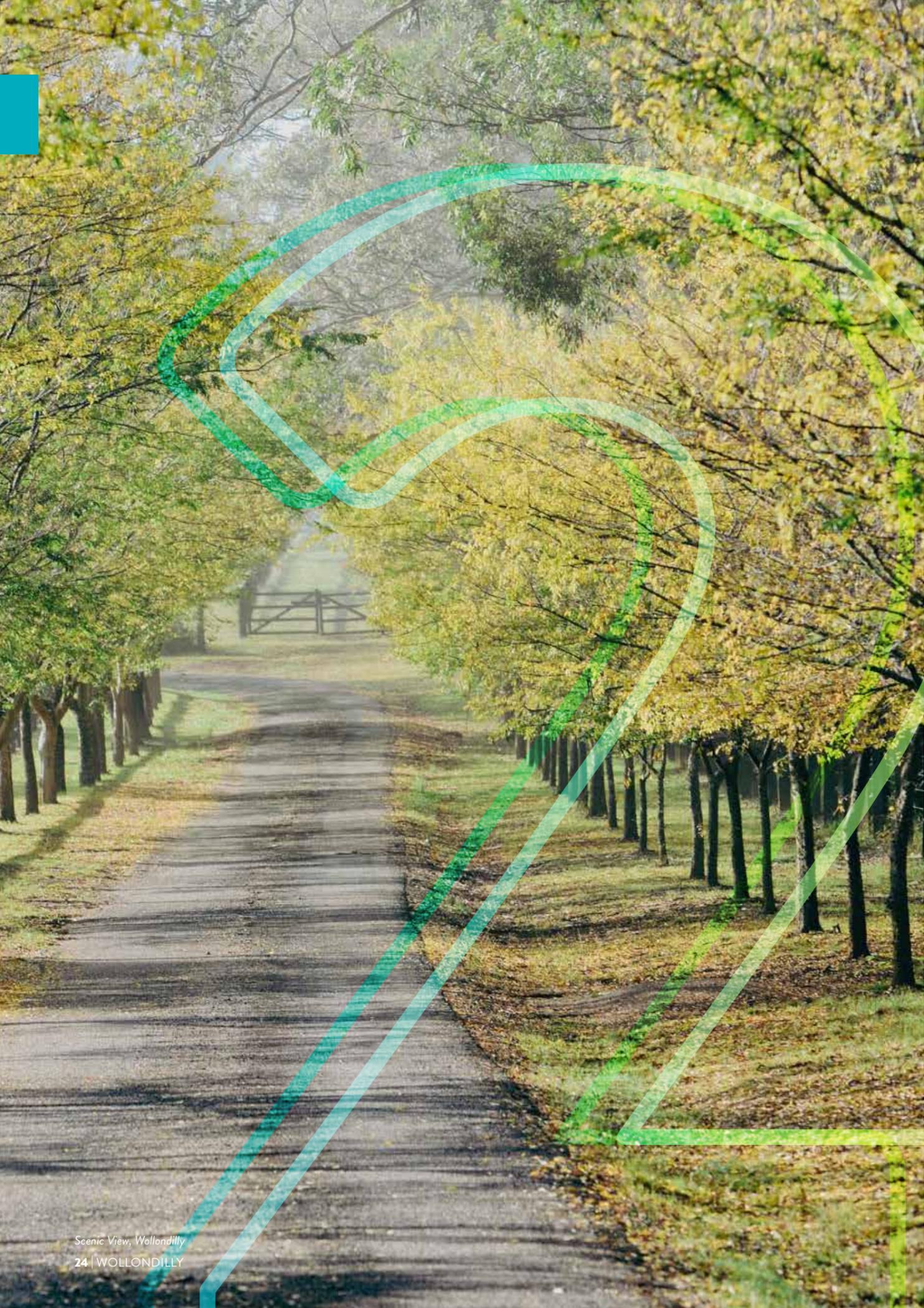
One of the most important aspects in developing this Strategy was the conversations that were held with a variety of stakeholder during Stage 1. This included state agencies such as Department of Primary industries, Local Land Services and Water NSW, along with independent institutes and independent statutory corporations such as the Farm Institute, Regional Develop Australia (Sydney), University of Sydney, NSW Farmers, Elisabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute to name just a few. A survey and discussions with the Rural Lands Strategy Reference Group were also imperative in the Strategy's development.

These conversations tie together previous studies and strategies from sources such as Sydney Food Futures, Western Sydney Aerotropolis and information obtained through recent Australian Agricultural Census data. While the census data was notable, the latest data census occurred in 2015/2016. It was therefore important to understand Wollondilly since this time through other sources such as those stated above.

The purpose of engagement during the development of the Strategy was a way to gather ideas, feedback and concerns in relation to issues, constraints and opportunities affecting both the present and future of rural land.

## RURAL LANDS STRATEGY PROJECT STAGES



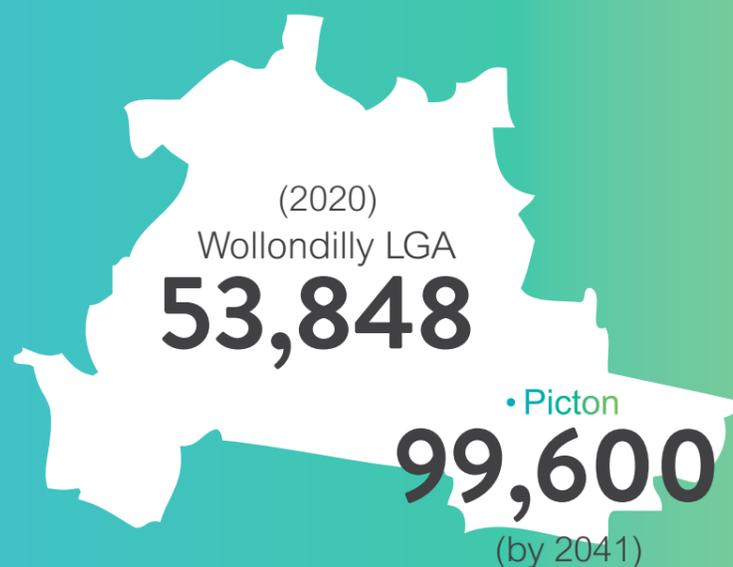


## PART 2

# *Understanding* THE OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

The Rural Lands Findings Report was the first step in the development of this Strategy. It provides a snapshot of what Wollondilly looks like today, the type and location of uses in rural lands, as well as the drivers, challenges, opportunities and constraints that are present. For a more comprehensive understanding of State policy, contextual and background analysis and drivers refer to the Rural Lands Findings Report.

# POPULATION



**302**  
properties rated as  
farmland (2015/16)

**1/3**  
live in rural areas



## 2.1 OVERVIEW OF WOLLONDILLY SHIRE'S RURAL LANDS

Wollondilly Shire is located on the western fringe of the Greater Sydney Basin, about 75 kilometres from the Sydney CBD. Bounded by Blue Mountains and Penrith in the north, Liverpool, Camden and Campbelltown in the east, Wollondilly is both part of the high growth Macarthur Region and the gateway to regional NSW.

A diverse community live, own or work on land within Wollondilly's rural areas. There are farmers with generations of history as well as newer residents. Many landowners live on their land while others own land but live outside of the rural areas. All these people are caretakers of the land with an equal responsibility to manage it.

Rural land in Wollondilly sustains a variety of uses. From substantial coal mining operations to farming enterprises, research stations associated with the University of Sydney and Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute. It also accommodates hobby farms and those that simply enjoy the space and amenity of the rural areas.

A landholding and minimum lot size analysis was undertaken and is presented in the Rural Lands Findings Report. Most lots in Wollondilly are not part of a larger holding. This is unusual for rural areas. Most rural areas in NSW tend to have more large landholdings than in Wollondilly. The minimum lot size analysis highlighted that 4,941 lots are currently under the minimum lot size allocated under the Wollondilly LEP 2011 across all the rural zones.

## 2.2 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Wollondilly's agricultural pursuits are highly diverse and are located throughout the rural lands in a variety of settings from productive agricultural soils, along with undulating arable and grazing land transitioning to steep slopes. A third of the Wollondilly population live in rural areas, and historically the start of agricultural land use in the LGA dates back to 1795. Rural land is now used for a diverse variety of agricultural purposes including research stations associated with the University of Sydney and Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute.

The value of agricultural commodities produced in Wollondilly has increased by more than 50% since 2000. Consultation for the Rural Lands Findings Report identified the importance of agricultural production in Wollondilly and that it is vital to Sydney's long-term food security due to its proximity to markets, access to infrastructure and labour, and quality soils.

From 2015 to 2019, 53 agricultural business closed in Wollondilly LGA (ABS, 2020). This has been evident with the recent closure of several poultry farms. Consultation supported this, finding that many farmers are feeling the pressure from speculation or rural living opportunities in this peri-urban location. However, Wollondilly still contributed 19% of the value of poultry meat produced in the Greater Sydney Region.

Agricultural practices in Wollondilly differ from other regions. The current number and size of rural holdings show many are diversifying into more intensive or niche activities that do not take up a large area of land (comparative to more extensive agricultural uses around the State). There is evidence in the ABS data that the production of vegetables, cut flowers and turf are increasing, along with the range of crop types each farm produces.

## KEY FINDINGS

The Rural Lands Findings Report identified the following:



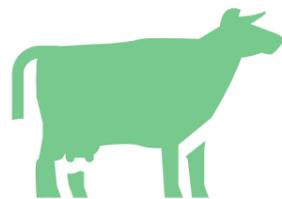
The number of agricultural enterprises in Wollondilly is **diverse** - from dairy to cut flowers, vegetables or beef farming, to poultry meat and egg production.



An analysis confirmed intensive animal enterprises (such as chicken sheds) are **distributed throughout** the rural lands within Wollondilly. This is a function of site constraints and proximity to processors rather than access to high quality soils. For biosecurity reasons, poultry farms cannot be located any closer than 1 km from other farms.



**Horticultural enterprises** (such as growing vegetables) have widespread distribution as they can utilise a range of soil types, water sources and topography. They are not confined exclusively to higher-quality agricultural land and are an important part of future agricultural production.



Wollondilly's contribution to the overall value of **milk and beef** in the Greater Sydney Region **is high** and indicates that Wollondilly contains a significant portion of all grazing land in the Greater Sydney Region.



The highest value of agricultural production in Wollondilly comes from **poultry meat**.



Wollondilly's rural lands are **essential for local food production for the Greater Sydney Region** (palate to plate), especially considering preferences of many middle and high-income consumers for locally produced food.

# IN 2015/16 WOLLONDILLY LGA WAS THE:

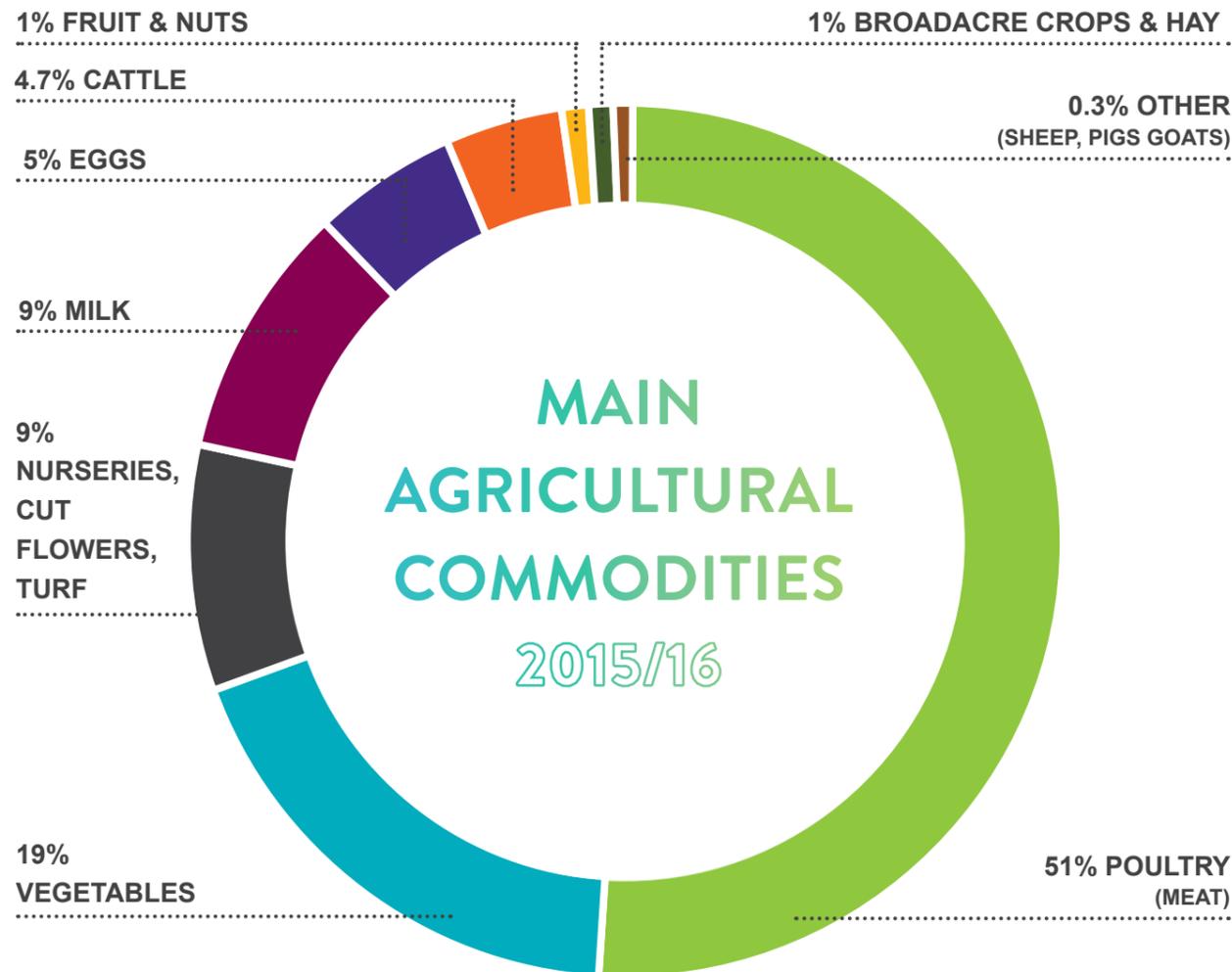
**5<sup>th</sup>**  
highest producer  
(value)  
in **NSW** for  
**poultry**  
(meat)



**5<sup>th</sup>**  
highest  
producer  
(value)  
in **NSW** for  
**tomatoes**



**HIGHEST**  
producer in  
**NSW** for  
**lettuce**  
- produced over  
**1.8 million**  
**kilograms**



The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARE) data was requested from Department of Primary Industries (DPI). DPI advised the consultants that had been engaged by Council to undertake the Strategy that “DPI Agriculture has used the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 census data for its work as it is the most recent comprehensive data available for our needs”. However, the data only provides a small portion of the information and research gathered in the analysis of agricultural land in Wollondilly.

One of the most important aspects in developing this strategy was the conversations that were held with a variety of stakeholders during stage 1. This included State agencies such as Department of Primary Industries, Local Land Services and Water NSW, along with independent institutes and independent statutory corporations such as the Farm Institute, Regional Development Australia (Sydney), University of Sydney, NSW Farmers, Elizabeth Macarthur Institute among others. A survey and discussions with the Rural Lands Strategy Reference Group were also imperative in its development.

## 2.3 BROADER ECONOMY AND LAND MANAGEMENT

While Wollondilly has significant industries such as mining, the majority of residents work outside of Wollondilly. Without intervention this pattern is set to increase through the development of Western Sydney Airport and Aerotropolis on the northern doorstep of the Wollondilly LGA.

Meanwhile, the mineral resource activity in Wollondilly is closely associated with the geological regions. Wollondilly is located on the Southern Coalfield and this region has premium quality hard coking coals and is one of Wollondilly’s largest industries. Mineral resources close to urban areas are susceptible to encroachment from other land uses, and in Wollondilly subsidence issues also exist in some locations.

While traditional agriculture and farming in Wollondilly is currently undertaken, it is undeniably challenging from an economic perspective. Consultation for the Rural Lands Findings Report identified that along with land price and availability, infrastructure provision (in particular water and transport) was identified as a limiting factor for use of rural lands for primary production. The location of the Nepean River and Warragamba Dam catchment are unique and complicated features in the landscape which impact on rural land use in various ways.

Accommodating the diversity of competing land uses within rural lands is the single biggest challenge facing the area. Tourism within the rural lands is one such example – some primary producers would like to value add to their farms, but not diminish agricultural potential. Similarly, providing for the housing needs of a growing population has its own difficulties, with increasing competition for land between residential and non-residential uses resulting in the potential for land use conflict.

## ECONOMY

65%  
of the population  
travel outside the  
LGA for **Work**



306  
number of registered  
businesses in 2019  
in **Agriculture**



\$97.3M  
Gross Value of  
**Agriculture**



816,030  
in 2018 median  
**House Price**



951,129  
in 2018/19 total  
**Visitors**



15%  
of local employment  
is from **Mining**



## 2.4 DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

Based on a detailed background analysis of relevant documents (including strategies, plans, policies and other legislation), observations and data analysis, along with stakeholder consultation, the following drivers for change have been identified through the Rural Lands Findings Report. This helps frame the key issues and opportunities associated with rural land in Wollondilly.



### POPULATION GROWTH

Wollondilly is experiencing and planning for significant levels of population growth (with a forecast increase of approximately 30,000 people between 2016 – 2041). The high population growth within the LGA is a dominating presence that will place significant strain on Wollondilly's rural land (including land use conflicts and infrastructure provision) as well as presenting substantial market opportunities.



### URBAN INTERFACE WITHIN SYDNEY

Wollondilly's location (about 75 kilometres from the Sydney CBD) is at the urban-rural interface and this is commonly known as a peri-urban area. Such areas can be considered as transition zones where urban and rural uses mix and are often incompatible. Specifically, in Wollondilly this creates land competition pressures when urban development speculation encroaches into productive agricultural land. The peri-urban location of Wollondilly, close to both the services of Sydney and attractive landscapes, also makes it a desirable location for rural lifestyle living, which is often a source of conflict with agricultural activities.



### FARMING

Agricultural practices in Wollondilly differ to many other regions. The current number and size of rural holdings show many are diversifying into more intensive or niche activities that do not take up a large area of land (comparative to more extensive agricultural uses around the State). The production of vegetables, cut flowers and turf is increasing, along with a diversity of crop types each farm produces. There remain some extensive agricultural uses, but these have generally existed on the same site for many years.



### FRAGMENTATION

There is a trend across Wollondilly towards increased rural land fragmentation and increased dwelling approvals within the rural areas. Wollondilly rural land already contains a large number of small farming lots and has been subject to 'urban-rural land use zone creep'. This can pose a significant threat to the productive use of agricultural land, good management practices and impact the ability of rural lands to continue to support the social fabric of the LGA.



### AEROTROPOLIS

The Western Sydney Airport and the broader Aerotropolis will be located on the northern boundary of Wollondilly. This will provide significant opportunities for primary production in close proximity to international markets and improved logistics capabilities.



### ECONOMICS

Many economic variables influence the type and form of agriculture that can take place, including commodity prices. In Wollondilly, the increasing cost of rural land, in this peri-urban location so close to Sydney, has placed significant strains on agricultural expansion. This has led in some areas to the value or cost of land starting to outstrip the productive value of the land for agricultural use or production.



### ACCESS TO WATER

The majority of Wollondilly's primary producers suffer from limited access to water for irrigation. This will become more pronounced into the future and will continue to have implications for the productive use of agricultural land including in the context of water required for urban expansion and the location in Sydney's drinking water catchment. Access to water can greatly improve yields regardless of land capability class. The water supplies we do have are generally more resilient than many other parts of NSW.



### THE CLIMATE CHANGING

The changing climate (and associated policy changes at all levels of government) will continue to have a significant impact on the rural areas of the LGA. A drier and hotter climate that will increase the frequency and severity of extreme weather events and environmental hazards will have significant impacts on agricultural activities and the use and development of rural land, for certain purposes. Opportunities also exist on rural land to increase resilience to extreme events.



### FOOD SECURITY

An increasing local and global population, coupled with increasing urban expansion, raises concerns for the ability to maintain food security into the future - especially fresh produce to Sydney's urban areas. Ensuring an adequate supply of productive agricultural land is paramount for underwriting food security, especially if Sydney is to maintain a 'food bowl'.



### TOURISM

The demand for rural tourism and agritourism experiences within Wollondilly, and surrounds, is growing. This can support a diversified economy and provide secondary income for farming families who want to do so. There are significant opportunities for Wollondilly in this space with the potential to make Wollondilly more resilient than other areas.

## 2.5 PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR RURAL LAND

The following planning principles have been established to guide the preparation of the focus areas, directions and actions in this Strategy.

**A**

### PRINCIPLE Develop and promote agricultural resources and the community

Agriculture is a key contributor to the Wollondilly economy. It provides essential food and fibre products, employment and value-adding opportunities. Careful planning is required to maintain these benefits to local and regional economies, to encourage ongoing investment in agriculture and to protect and promote the supporting resource base.

This Strategy will aim to support and promote agricultural land resources wherever possible by:

- discouraging rural lifestyle development from locating on or near the best agricultural land (having regard to natural resources and rural infrastructure constraints)
- minimising the fragmentation of rural land for non-rural uses
- supporting diversification of agriculture on rural land
- providing opportunities for emerging rural industries
- protecting secondary services such as processors etc

**B**

### PRINCIPLE Reducing land use conflicts

When residential or industrial development is dispersed throughout rural land, it can create conflict with agricultural uses (including complaints about smell, noise, dust, airborne chemical sprays and loss of amenity). This Strategy will minimise the potential for land use conflict by:

- favouring locations for dwellings that are least likely to generate land use conflicts
- providing adequate separation between potentially conflicting land uses

**C**

### PRINCIPLE Managing pressure for rural living opportunities

Providing direction on the preferred form and location of long-term residential growth in rural lands is important for efficient infrastructure planning and to guide the rezoning and subdivision approval process. This Strategy will provide Council with a clear position to withstand pressure for this type of development and the ongoing protection of rural land values from urban/residential encroachment.

**D**

### PRINCIPLE Managing places with special landscape, rural and scenic value

Wollondilly's rural landscape dates back to the early European settlers who followed the first fleet's famous straying cattle to the "Cowpastures". This gives the Shire special heritage character that needs to be recognised and valued.

Given the change that occurs when rural activities are lost, particular consideration will need to be given to the capability for rural land to accommodate rural residential or industrial development. Where appropriate, such development will need to be carefully balanced with surrounding uses and cultural values. To ensure there are no adverse effects on key natural resource values, including areas of biodiversity significance and other areas that have special landscape or rural value.

**E**

### PRINCIPLE Promoting economic diversification including emerging opportunities

Diversifying the rural economy can provide opportunities to respond to changing agricultural practices and the context of Wollondilly across Greater Sydney. Real opportunities exist for ongoing use, growth and diversification of its rural land. Emerging sectors such as tourism or agribusiness will also promote local job opportunities. This Strategy will build on existing strengths by promoting rural industries whilst facilitating the development of new value-adding processes, investigate emerging opportunities and encouraging diversification into "niche" markets.

**F**

### PRINCIPLE Embracing the opportunities of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis

The Western Sydney Aerotropolis will boost several local industries, including agritourism and agribusiness. Wollondilly is part of the Western Parkland City with the new airport and aerotropolis geographically located to the north east. The associated agribusiness precinct is located directly adjacent to Wollondilly's boundary. The Aerotropolis presents opportunities to broaden the economic catchment and to capture new agricultural opportunities.

This Strategy will support existing agriculture in the area and promote and facilitate new agribusiness and agritourism as an ongoing economic base, leveraging the opportunities presented by the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. These opportunities will need to consider the prevention of sensitive land uses that may be affected by aircraft noise and other airspace protection measures.

**G**

### PRINCIPLE Ensuring the proficient provision of infrastructure

Future development should strengthen the efficient use of infrastructure, services and transport networks whilst avoiding overburdening those that already exist. Rural businesses and residents require access to road networks to connect with places of employment, shopping and support services.

# H

## PRINCIPLE Balancing environmental, economic and social outcomes

The 2020 Wollondilly Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) demonstrates that the Wollondilly community already embraces sustainable practices.

This Strategy will incorporate the goal of sustainability and viability to promote a healthy environment and productive rural lands. There is a need to balance environmental, economic and social components in planning for and managing rural lands in a sustainable manner.

# I

## PRINCIPLE Taking a future-focused, long-term approach

This Strategy is a long-term plan that considers rural lands over the next 20 years. Rural lands in Wollondilly have changed dramatically during the past 20 years, with pressure continuing to be exerted to change land uses and develop rural land that will continue for the foreseeable future. This Strategy will consider long-term planning for rural lands, emerging agricultural and rural uses/practices and establish a contemporary policy to meet challenges for securing a prosperous future.

# J

## PRINCIPLE Maintaining consistency with State planning policies

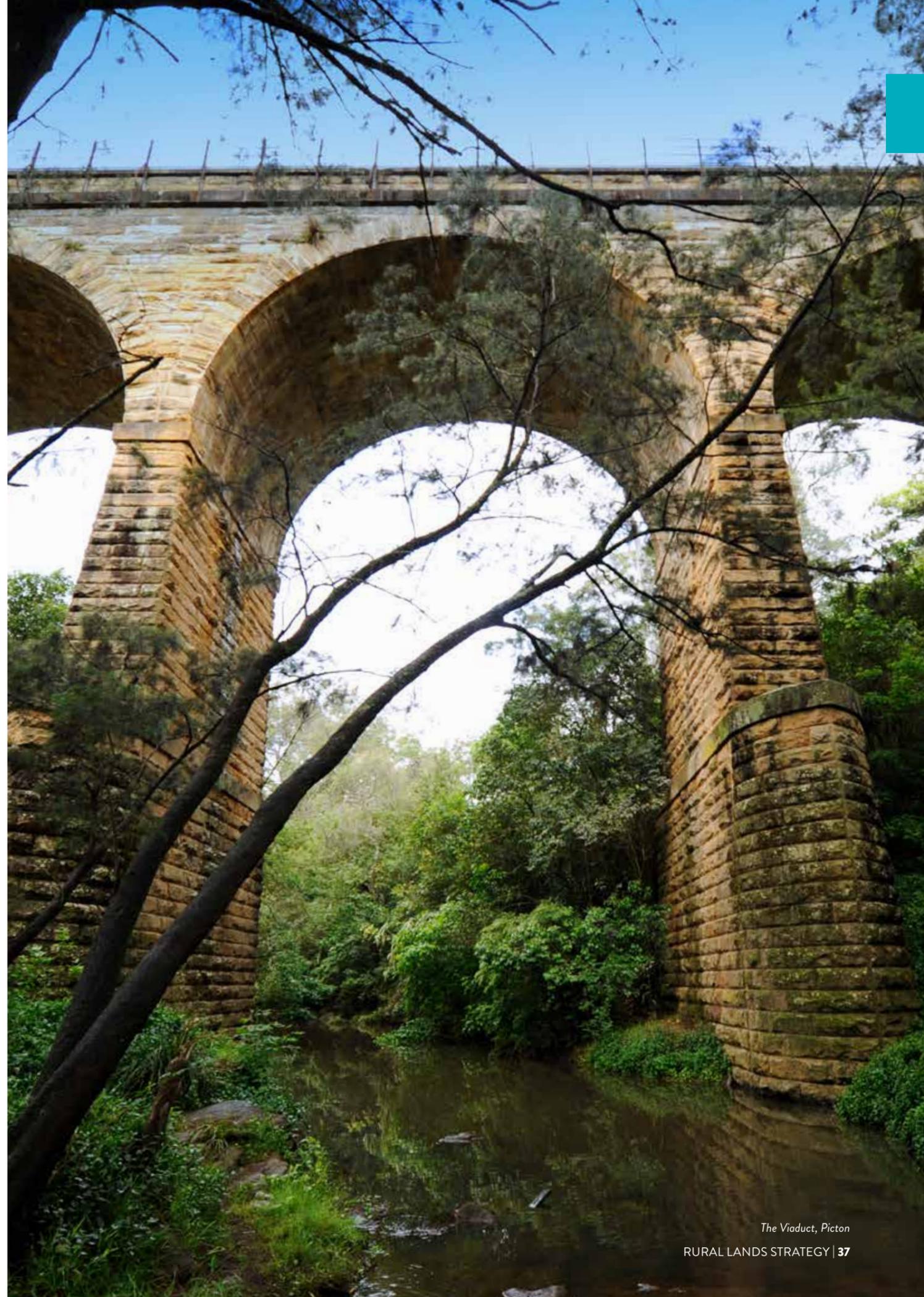
There is a range of processes that influence the consideration of activities occurring on rural land in Wollondilly. In preparing this Strategy, consideration of statutory and strategic planning tools of the State Government will be required. For example, directions will need to consider and be consistent with State policies such as the *Western City District Plan* and the *Western Sydney City Deal*.

# K

## PRINCIPLE Right to farm

This strategy recognises the right of agricultural producers to productively work their land and undertake lawful agricultural practices and activities without undue limitation or restriction from other nearby land uses.

Within the land use zones covered by this study the right of agricultural producers to farm their land will take priority over any conflicting land uses, with particular emphasis on activities within the RU1 zone.





## PART 3 FOCUS AREA 1

# *Building a* STRONG, DIVERSE AND VIABLE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

### **Focus Area 1 - Key Outcome**

Support the viability of primary production, recognising its economic and social significance including building for diversity and high value production

## 3.1 GROWING A STRONG, VIABLE AND DIVERSE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Promote opportunities for new forms of agriculture to sustain the viability of agriculture for Sydney's food security
- Examine shifting consumer preferences in favour of locally produced high quality, fresh food
- Assessing the sustainability of rural land use and management practices

### BACKGROUND

Wollondilly's agricultural producers are facing a range of pressures which include declining profitability and the associated need for enterprise diversification and intensification. There is also increasing awareness of environmental issues, land-use conflicts, and the need to manage land more sustainably.

The high economic value of rural land in Wollondilly, due in part to its proximity to Sydney, places significant pressure on agricultural enterprises to generate sound returns. The need to mitigate impacts of a changing climate and respond to land use conflicts may place further pressure on agricultural enterprises.

Growing a viable long term agricultural industry in Wollondilly is essential for Sydney's food security which will only exacerbate as our climate continues to change. The Prime Minister's Scientific, Engineering and Innovation Council has identified urban encroachment on Australia's peri-urban agricultural lands as one of the top seven emerging and existing food security challenges facing Australia (PMSEIC, 2010).

The survey of Primary Producer's undertaken for the Rural Lands Findings Report emphasised the need for land to adapt to more diverse uses and functionality to be viable in the future. The producers suggested a variety of forms, from addressing changing planning controls through to value-adding initiatives such as the potential for tourism and small footprint, high-value production.

### What is peri – urban land?

Peri-urban land (for the purposes of this Strategy) refers to land at the edge of Sydney. Sydney's boundary of urban areas provided in the Greater Sydney Region Plan - A Metropolis of Three Cities and the Metropolitan Rural Area (known as the MRA) provides a clear boundary between urban land and non-urban land. As with most peri-urban lands, Wollondilly's rural lands are subject to development and environmental pressures associated with urban growth.

Producers on Sydney's urban fringe have the opportunity to exploit both their proximity to a large consumer market and the preference of many middle and high-income Sydney consumers for locally produced food. This preference may relate to the real or perceived 'freshness' or 'organic' nature of the product attributable to the short time between picking/processing and sale to the consumer. There is also demand for fresh fruits and vegetables to improve personal health, animal welfare implications and increasing adoption of vegetarian diets and other environmental and sustainability concerns.

These more recent consumer trends do provide new market opportunities for agricultural producers, an opportunity to leverage existing advantages from Wollondilly's peri-urban production. This type of boutique buying may also assist farms with competition with large supermarkets. It presents a good marketing opportunity for local Wollondilly farmers and rural landholders.

The development of controlled production systems (e.g. glasshouses) to produce high output and high-value fruits and vegetables would fit well with an increasing consumer preference for local and fresh food. Such development would leverage the benefits of Wollondilly's proximity to the urban population and, being a controlled environment facility, they could be located on land not best suited for tree/vegetable cropping or pasture production. Overseas examples in peri-urban locations include the Netherlands or the United Kingdom where peri-urban landholdings tend to be small and labour-intensive, characterised by a high diversity of crops including perennials and annuals.

Responses to the identified pressures not only include increasing scale and/or intensity of operations such as glasshouses but also value-adding and diversification. Diversification of farming systems can provide a buffer against market fluctuations in mainstream farming products.

The contribution of horticulture to the value of agricultural production in Wollondilly is increasing over time. Horticulture's contribution to the value of agricultural production in the Greater Sydney Region has grown from 28% in 2000/01 to 51% in 2015/16. Given the significant area of quality land in Wollondilly, access to water (in part via farm dams) and proximity to labour and markets (including the development of the Western Sydney Airport) continued growth of the horticultural industry in Wollondilly is expected. Wollondilly does have areas of high quality soils that need to be protected, however there are options for horticulture where soil quality isn't quite so high. Horticulture is a growing industry in Wollondilly, and it does not necessarily require:

- specific (high quality) soils as production can occur in glasshouses, protected structures and/or pots, and many soil constraints can be ameliorated
- access to regulated and/or licenced surface or groundwater sources as the region has relatively high rainfall and deficiencies can be augmented by surface runoff captured in farm dams
- large scale rural holdings
- flat topography - whilst horticulture is not generally suited to steep land, many types of horticulture can be practised on sloping land.

Diversification in this industry is also expected with improved management in horticulture through crop diversification select new varieties/breeds to match conditions (e.g. horticultural enterprises will struggle under increase temperatures and stressed irrigation) and greater consideration to water-saving/retention techniques in cropping management (e.g. access to watering points and shade)

The volume of water that can be extracted for productive use from the Nepean River is fixed as set out in the Water Sharing Plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated Water Source, 2011. There is scope for increased access to secure water supplies arising from the growth of Sydney through the productive reuse of recycled wastewater and capture of urban runoff. Productive reuse of recycled wastewater is well established in the Wollondilly (at Picton) and there is significant scope to expand productive recycled wastewater reuse (refer to section 3.4 for further discussion regarding water).

According to the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Agribusiness Precinct, Feasibility Study, Department of Primary Industries (DPI, 2018), there are 92 poultry meat farms and 30 licenced egg producers in

the Greater Sydney Region of which 43% are in or next to Growth Centres or the Outer Orbital Road. These poultry facilities (following stakeholder consultation) will have to relocate in the next five to ten years. Wollondilly is well placed to capture a significant proportion of this poultry industry relocation out of the Growth Centres.

Farmers will generally make strategic decisions around the highest and best use of land for production and with irrigation return per ML of water used also comes into consideration. Potential opportunities in the future may also be demand-driven (e.g. poultry, fruit and vegetable crops) with scope for expansion of protected agriculture via larger scale greenhouses.

Diversification can also include non-agricultural enterprises which are compatible and ancillary, such as tourism (this is discussed further in section 5.4).

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

It is acknowledged that loss of agricultural land if replaced by more intensive agricultural uses does not necessarily equate to loss of agricultural industry as land productivity is less critical to intensive farming practices such as poultry farms, horticulture and animal husbandry (and other forms of rural industries). However, as a peri urban location there is significant competition for rural lifestyle dwellings on productive land which is likely to cause land use conflicts with some agricultural and other rural land uses. This demand needs to be carefully balanced for Sydney's future food security. Balancing these issues, includes providing flexibility and opportunities to encourage value-adding and diversification while having regard to the scale and impact of the activity on the main purpose of the land for primary production.

Access to enabling infrastructure, including water, road networks, electricity and telecommunications, is a significant constraint to agricultural business growth and diversification in Wollondilly. However, intensive land uses such as poultry and horticulture tend to occupy only small areas of land. Some areas in Wollondilly are not suited to intensive land uses due to a range of constraints including proximity to urban development, Sydney drinking water catchment restrictions, access to secure water supply, remnant vegetation and biophysical constraints. These lands may still have viable non-intensive agricultural uses and this should be explored as part of the future agricultural viability study.

Some key issues and opportunities in the poultry industry include the following:

- the need for increasing scale of production to maintain viability
- reduction in bird density to align with community concerns over animal welfare
- trend towards cage free egg production. Free range production includes biosecurity issues and needs careful consideration on their location.
- a minimum 500 metre and preferably 1,000m buffer for new developments to nearby dwellings to reduce land use conflict issues,
- 1,000m buffer (or more) between poultry facilities for biosecurity reasons
- community objections to new and/or expanding poultry facilities in the more closely settled areas, in relation to issues such as vehicle movement, hours of operation, noise and odour

Hence while there is an opportunity to capture some of the industries that need to relocate, the potential for greenfield (new) poultry development in the Wollondilly is uncertain especially with the cost of land in Wollondilly. As such, significant poultry development may require significant support from Council and State Government agencies. Existing poultry meat farms could convert to egg production which

may reduce land conflict issues as egg farms typically have significantly fewer noise issues and lower bird density.

The development of an agricultural viability study for Wollondilly will be important to understand the mechanisms needed for the future viability of primary production. An Agricultural viability study needs to be undertaken to assess and identify current and future agricultural potential within Wollondilly. This study is a key prerequisite to several other actions within this strategy and should focus not only on current agricultural models and practices but also on the sustainable management of primary production through production intensification, diversification of functions, and opportunities for improvement in the living conditions of small farmers.

For the purposes of this study viability is defined as being able to generate a return exceeding the expenses involved in sustaining the agricultural activity or during periods where this is not achieved, being able to generally sustain itself using resources from its operations (including available support or incentive schemes).

The scope of the agricultural viability study shall include but not be limited to:

- **Assessment of short and long term viability of the following models:**
  - » Current farming practices and agricultural land uses within the shire
  - » Agricultural production within Wollondilly using any alternative/emerging farming practices or agricultural land uses (including intensification of agricultural production, alternative crop/livestock types and emerging farming practices within the range of permissible and varied agriculture available)
  - » Agricultural production within Wollondilly using either current or alternative/emerging farming practices/land uses if actions and goals of this strategy are fully realised.
- **Identification and mapping of areas (at the locality level) where productive agriculture is viable under each model and the type/s of farming practices and/or agricultural land uses that are viable in that area in order to support farming;**
  - » Exclusive full time farming, that being agricultural operations where 100% of the household income can be derived from the agricultural use of the property
  - » Part time farming, that being agricultural operations where a significant proportion of the household income can be derived on-farm but where this is supplemented by income derived outside the agricultural use of the property
  - » Hobby farming, that being agricultural operations where the agricultural use of the property is only intended to provide a supporting income stream that the owners are not dependent on.
- **Identification and mapping of areas (at the locality level) which are not viable for any productive agricultural use or alternative rural land uses but which may be suitable for other possible land uses such as rural-residential use or transition zone land without introducing land use conflict issues or reducing the agricultural potential of neighbouring rural land.**
- **Identification of barriers to viability and any potential mitigation measures**
- **Identification of opportunities for increased viability and any measures to realise these opportunities**
- **Consideration of the wellbeing of the operators of the agricultural enterprises**

Opportunities and barriers for agriculture may be wide and varied and could include matters raised in this strategy from water, access to land, market and industry; to soils, topography and infrastructure, or other planning and environmental matters like vegetation, mining, biosecurity.

The study should also include an economic and social analysis of agricultural production in Wollondilly. A bottom-up approach in this study will potentially assist in yielding alternative and more successful approaches to maintaining farming on the fringe of the Sydney Basin.

Minimum lot size is a primary agricultural land protection mechanism for councils. There are a large number of minimum lot sizes in the rural zones as also examined in Focus Area 2 (refer to Section 4). Whilst Residential, Rural residential and similar uses can be a threat to legitimate farming practices, ensuring that subdivision patterns and subdivision processes are conducive to supporting and encouraging changes in agricultural practices is also important. For instance, more intensive forms of agriculture do not require the same amount of land as traditional forms of agriculture so ensuring that there is access to a range of lot sizes for all types of farming is essential for supporting agricultural endeavours on Sydney's fringe.

Diversity in lot sizes also helps support a range of agricultural uses such as grazing, cropping, and intensive agriculture as well as more small scale innovative, boutique or niche operations – whether these are value adds or separate businesses. The study as part of the first step in examining the rural zones will assist in examining the best mechanisms for this process.

Collaborative (or collective) farming is a system of agricultural production in which the holdings of several farmers are run as a joint enterprise, engaging jointly in farming activities. Traditionally, the structural approach to farming in rural Australia is that farms are run by one landowner on a scale that individuals can manage effectively. There are inefficiencies with operating separate farms, particularly where resources and infrastructure can otherwise be shared (such as transport, packaging and handling facilities) and partnerships with neighbours can occur.

Whilst Wollondilly's planning processes cannot dictate tenure arrangement between multiple landowners interested in a collaborative arrangement to their land uses, consideration can be given on merit to proposals which may not otherwise be permitted in certain rural zones, provided there is sufficient justification. This is one area where the agricultural study should investigate to grow the viability of primary production in Wollondilly.

Growing agricultural productivity should also mean assisting to build stronger farms supported by the surrounding communities and associated authorities. Facilitating more agricultural productivity within the existing rural lands may include the following:

- assisting land users to access development capital
- develop a primary production investment prospectus
- facilitating agribusiness relocation from the Sydney Metropolitan area and Growth Centres (and other regions) into the rural zones, particularly from the poultry, horticulture and horse industries

The federal government also has a Seasonal Worker Programme to assist employers in the agriculture sectors to fill employment gaps unable to be met by the Australian workforce. This is a different program to working visas. This is currently a pilot program (as at December 2020) that only occurs in four regional areas in Australia including in Wimmera Mallee (Victoria), Riverina (NSW), Sunraysia (NSW/Victoria) and Goulburn / Murray (Victoria). There are significant large-scale horticultural enterprises

that have been successfully established on land in Wollondilly. Consultation during the development of the Findings Report concluded there is a significant need for seasonal workers. Lobbying the federal government to be included as a pilot region will assist primary producers' seasonal worker's needs.

Establishing a positive and pro-active approach to awareness of business opportunities and encouragement of appropriate economic development in rural areas where initiatives consistent with the rural character of the location are supported and encouraged is seen as an important role for Council.

While there is already a diverse range of farming activities in Wollondilly, there is potential for greater use of innovation, value-adding, and diversification. The development of the skills necessary to run a rural enterprise and having access to the information upon which critical business decisions can be based is a multi-faceted aspect of working and living on the land which is primarily the responsibility of the landowner to acquire. This is often supported through programmes run by education providers and government, but without access to information, many landowners may not know where to find information that will assist in making the best decisions for the economic viability of their farming operation.

### **Affordable Farming**

Council recognises that viability is subjective with many variables, such as: climate and weather variations, crop and or stock decisions, fallow allowances, topography, water, sub soil carbon, organic matter fertility, and bush land cover. Other factors include traditional business considerations, debt servicing, and fixed and variable outgoings. It is acknowledged that there are many factors that farmers have to consider when business-casing their return on investment.

**There is strong consensus that there is clearly not a 'one size fits all' approach when it comes to viability.**

Within the Sydney basin it is expected that intensive agricultural production is more likely to achieve a return on investment. Climatic variations will impact growing options and opportunities. Smaller, more intensive holdings will be more adaptive and responsive to these impacts. This concept is important for Wollondilly Shire which will be depended upon to help meet the food needs and demands of the growing Sydney population. We are the next frontier on the urban fringe of Sydney.

It is with this understanding, that our 'affordable farming' concept should be more heavily integrated into our Rural Lands Strategy. It is this mechanism that will allow, with covenants, land owners and prospective investors to participate jointly in securing agricultural production in the Wollondilly Shire.

As previously proposed, certain and strict covenants will need to apply to the establishment of small lot intensive agricultural production and subsequent dwelling entitlements, as well as the other standalone entitlements that an independent lot will require to function.

### **Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme**

In February 2017 Council resolved to investigate the feasibility of establishing a market based Agriculture Enterprise Credit Scheme (AECS) to provide reward for food production for farmers in the PeriUrban areas in Wollondilly. As part of this investigation Council Officers, with the guidance of the Rural Industry Community Advisory Committee (RICAC), worked in partnership with the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) over an 18 month period to research and further refine the initiative. A tradeable credits scheme awarded to farmers in the Wollondilly Shire region was explored to incentivise rural land use by allowing farmers to hold saleable credits that they may trade with developers. This

was based on a similar principle to the City of Sydney's Heritage Floor Space Scheme, whereby farmers could accumulate credits production rate and trade these with developers, who could then achieve higher rates of density in new urban developments.

As an alternate option, an Agricultural Futures Fund, was explored in order to retain and enhance agricultural land used for food production within the Wollondilly Shire. This approach envisaged progressing the scheme in some way to assist farmers who were maintaining and preserving the Metropolitan Rural Areas (MRA) rural views, vistas and agricultural production for the common good, in the Shire, through the planning contributions framework.

In 2020, the NSW Productivity Commissioner was requested to undertake a review of the infrastructure contributions system in New South Wales, and tasked to report back with recommendations for reform. The NSW Productivity Commissions report emphasised that items within section 7.11 plans or local planning agreements that are not development contingent, should be removed (which would include an AECS or similar mechanism).

More work and investigation is required into funding mechanisms and planning strategies associated with rezoning and development in the PeriUrban area, such as a levy, to enable the implementation of an Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme to ensure Agriculture in the Greater Sydney Area is valued and preserved.

## Farming together

The Australian Government, through the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, funded Southern Cross University to develop a collaborative farming model.

Starting Farm Co-operatives Program, known as Farming Together, helps farmers, fishers and foresters establish collaborative business models and co-ops that address economic and environmental challenges.

A collaborative farming model can reduce supply chain risk, improve bargaining power for small farmers and build diversification.

Models such as these may assist farms in Wollondilly.

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTIONS

**Action 3.1.1 Undertake as a priority action an Agricultural Viability Study for sustainable agricultural production, both current and into the future.**

**Undertake as a priority action an Agricultural Viability Study that analyses the mechanisms needed for the future viability of primary production including (but not limited to) the following:**

Assessment of short and long term viability of the following models:

- Current farming practices and agricultural land uses within the shire.
- Agricultural production within Wollondilly using any alternative/emerging farming practices or agricultural land uses (including intensification of agricultural production, alternative crop/livestock types and emerging farming practices within the range of permissible and varied agriculture available).
- Agricultural production within Wollondilly using either current or alternative/emerging farming practices/land uses if actions and goals of this strategy are fully realised.
- Identification and mapping of areas (at the locality level) where productive agriculture is viable under each model and the type/s of farming practices and/or agricultural land uses that are viable in that area.
- Exclusive full time farming, that being agricultural operations where 100% of the household income can be derived from the agricultural use of the property.
- Part time farming, that being agricultural operations where a significant proportion of the household income can be derived on-farm but where this is supplemented by income derived outside the agricultural use of the property.
- Hobby farming, that being agricultural operations where the agricultural use of the property is only intended to provide a supporting income stream that the owners are not dependent on.
- Identification and mapping of areas (at the locality level) which are not viable for any productive agricultural use or alternative rural land uses but which may be suitable for other possible land uses such as rural-residential use or transition zone land without introducing land use conflict issues or reducing the agricultural potential of neighbouring rural land.
- Identification of barriers to viability and any potential mitigation measures.
- Identification of opportunities for increased viability and any measures to realise these opportunities.
- Consideration of the wellbeing of the operators of the agricultural enterprises.
- Investigation of new enterprises and opportunities in Wollondilly providing greater resilience for the agricultural industry against market fluctuations.
- The sustainability of primary production through production intensification, diversification of functions, and improvement of the living conditions of small farmers.
- An economic and social analysis of agricultural production in Wollondilly.

### **Action 3.1.2 Create and promote opportunities for existing and new forms of agriculture and potential new enterprises in rural areas.**

- a) Investigate the subdivision and development of identified smallholdings on rural land where there is a demonstrable opportunity to diversify or intensify productivity of the land.
- b) In conjunction with part a) above, investigate 'small scale' or affordable farming opportunities on RU1 and RU2 land that support agricultural viability and affordability, whilst ensuring any potential development for small scale' farming satisfies strict requirements for the land to be used solely for agricultural purposes.
- c) Consider alternative systems for primary production such as collective farming and agricultural cooperatives in development of future land use planning policy.
- d) Continue to review and amend the Local Environmental Plan to ensure that intensification and diversification of agricultural production can occur, including the need for support infrastructure (e.g. water storages) and emerging opportunities (e.g. solar energy), while managing potential land use conflicts.

### **Action 3.1.3 Investigate the development of an agricultural business development framework**

- a) Develop an 'Agricultural Business Development Framework' (collaborating with adjoining councils) to assist primary producers including the following:
  - facilitate business relocation into the rural zones of the Wollondilly LGA particularly from the poultry, horticulture and horse industries
  - develop a primary production prospectus with the potential of attracting new investment into primary production.
- b) Develop a local business newsletter to facilitate farming connections that would allow Council to send out information about grant opportunities, workshops and networking events.
- c) Lobby the Federal Government to include Wollondilly LGA in the pilot program for seasonal workers.
- d) Lobby the federal government for Wollondilly to be included in the second year visa scheme.

### **Action 3.1.4 Advocate for and explore the implementation of an agricultural enterprise credit scheme**

- a) Continue to work with the Institute for Sustainable Futures and the Rural Industry Advisory Committee (RICAC) to investigate mechanisms whereby an Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme (AECS) can be applied within the planning framework to rezonings and/or certain development applications.
- b) Advocate for a tradeable credit scheme or other incentives to be incorporated into the NSW Planning system as a means of incentivising agricultural production on rural lands and minimising the land lost to urban encroachment.
- c) Investigate amending Wollondilly LEP 2011 to include a local provision that would enable the operation of a trial Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme in identified areas of the shire.
- d) Advocate for DPIE to review SEPP (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006 to include a provision that would enable the operation of a trial Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme in those areas under the SEPP that fall within Wollondilly.

### **Action 3.1.5 Investigate ways in which generation changes in ownership can be best facilitated and managed within the Planning Framework**

- a) Investigate opportunities and mechanisms to effectively manage generational change in ownership and operation of agricultural properties and enterprises that doesn't also create unintended consequences.

### **Action 3.1.6 Investigate LEP changes to encourage greater horticultural production**

- a) Review Wollondilly LEP 2011 with a view to allowing intensive Plant Horticulture and construction/operation of associated infrastructure such as greenhouses, hothouses, polytunnels, igloos and hydroponic systems as exempt development within areas zoned RU1 Primary Production.
- b) Review Wollondilly LEP 2011 with a view to allowing intensive Plant Horticulture and construction/operation of associated infrastructure such as greenhouses, hothouses, polytunnels, igloos and hydroponic systems as exempt development or complying development within areas zoned RU2 Rural Landscape.
- c) Review Wollondilly LEP 2011 with a view to allowing intensive Plant Horticulture and construction/operation of associated infrastructure such as greenhouses, hothouses, polytunnels, igloos and hydroponic systems as either complying development or permitted with consent within areas zoned RU4 Primary Production Small Lots and other appropriate zones.
- d) Investigate amending Wollondilly DCP 2016 to encourage greater horticultural production within the shire and streamline controls and approval pathways.

## **3.2 SAFEGUARD THE PRODUCTIVE CAPABILITY OF GREATER SYDNEY REGION'S PERI-URBAN AGRICULTURE**

### **Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -**

- Support the continuation of existing agricultural land uses as part of Greater Sydney's food security
- Promote a framework sustainability of rural land uses and management practices in rural areas
- Prioritise the use of agricultural land for farming over residential development and industrial uses

## **BACKGROUND**

Agricultural businesses in the peri-urban area of Wollondilly occupy some of the Greater Sydney Region's most productive land. Sydney's boundary of urban areas provided in the Greater Sydney Region Plan - A Metropolis of Three Cities and the Metropolitan Rural Area (MRA) provides a clear boundary between urban land and non-urban land. As with most peri-urban locations, Wollondilly's rural lands are subject to development and environmental pressures associated with urban growth.

*UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures (2020)* modelled future food producing capacity in a scenario where existing production in the Greater Sydney Region is safeguarded and it could continue to produce around half a million tonnes of food a year. However, as Sydney grows so will its food demands. The study surmised that even with the safeguarding of agricultural land, agricultural productivity on rural lands will need to increase. Without these protections, Sydney's growth is predicted to have a significant negative impact on the production of vegetables, eggs, meat and dairy.

Agricultural production in Wollondilly is vital to Sydney's long-term food security due to its proximity to markets, access to infrastructure and labour, and quality soils. Producers on Sydney's doorstep have the opportunity to exploit both their proximity to a large consumer market and the preference of many middle and high-income Sydney consumers for locally produced food.

Reducing these pressures by safeguarding this productive, or potentially productive, agricultural land from excessive subdivision and land use conflict, including from speculation or rural 'lifestylers', is therefore important. As previously stated, many agricultural industries in Wollondilly do not require soil types of any specific nature, therefore, all soil types in the rural area are potentially capable of supporting a variety of industries such as poultry businesses.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

As many of the key agricultural industries in Wollondilly are not reliant on high quality agricultural land, it is not practical to focus the protection of agricultural land to specific land classes. The key opportunity is to establish safeguards to protect land for agricultural purposes more generally unless the agricultural viability study identifies the land as not having a viable agricultural use, currently or into the future.

In most instances, the subdivision of rural land is not required unless it is to be developed for agricultural pursuits rather than lifestyle reasons.

The development of the agriculture study (section 3.1 above) and the review of the RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape zones in section 4 will assist this process. Reducing conflicts in rural lands and increasing viability and diversity of farms will improve by prioritising the use of agricultural land for farming over residential development will assist this process.

Improving planning decision-making through the use of LEP overlays and local provision/s to support sustainable agriculture in Wollondilly's rural land is the next step to providing food security in Sydney's 'food bowl'. This will need to consider a range of issues (both current and likely future outcomes) including:

- access to water
- other infrastructure provision
- retention of important soils
- integration with industry
- effective ways to management land use conflict
- Policies to address the changing climate
- legislative constraints
- significant government investment in agricultural infrastructure

It will also protect the right to farm within the rural lands of Wollondilly.

Over the recent decades as the Greater Sydney Region expanded so did the pressure to subdivide for dwelling entitlements rather than farming. Minimum lot size is a primary agricultural land protection mechanism for councils. There are a large number of minimum lot sizes in the rural zones in the instance of Wollondilly's rural lands, and as a consequence, high levels of agricultural land fragmentation. This has seen a significant increase in rural dwellings in productive agricultural land.

For instance, within the RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape zones in Wollondilly many lots have rural dwellings. High levels of fragmentation are likely to be an ongoing constraint to agriculture by limiting farm business operators' capacity to consolidate land to increase in scale, as well as increasing the likelihood of land use conflict with non-agricultural uses. To counter these impacts, allotment and property amalgamation could be encouraged through incentive mechanisms to reverse fragmentation where this is sought by the landowner.

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTIONS

### Action 3.2.1 Investigate LEP changes for important agricultural land (following the completion of an Agricultural Viability Study for the Shire as required by Action 3.1.1)

- a) Investigate amending Wollondilly LEP 2011 to include a local provision, with the assistance of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The aim of the clause is to ensure that existing agricultural land remains available for agricultural purposes and prevents subdivision for urban purposes unless it is prescribed in a Council endorsed Strategy (such as the Local Housing Strategy). This would seek to reduce or eliminate ad-hoc residential development on rural lands. This may also include reference to diversity and value adding opportunities that can be supported on smaller rural land holdings.
- b) Investigate producing an overlay map that identifies important peri-urban agricultural land. This may include an assessment of the social and economic capability in the rural lands.

### Action 3.2.2 Investigate developing rural subdivision guidelines

- a) Investigate the development of a guideline that considers when and where rural subdivision is acceptable for both small lot agricultural purposes (under Clause 4.2 Wollondilly LEP 2011) or for the purposes of rural lifestyle lots. This would contain comprehensive, clear guidance for rural land subdivision and be in a plain English, user friendly format.

### Action 3.2.3 Review the Development Control Plan for rural dwelling, rural industries and other rural enterprises

- a) Review the Wollondilly Development Control Plan (DCP) 2016 to include new guidelines, controls, objectives and principles for effective and appropriate planning, development and management of the following:
  - a. Rural dwellings (which are not subject to the Rural Housing Code), and
  - b. Agricultural uses
  - c. Rural industries
  - d. Other rural enterprises.

### 3.3 MANAGING RURAL LAND USE CONFLICTS

#### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Minimise and manage the impacts between dynamic land use activities and the practices employed by agriculture and other rural sectors in Wollondilly
- Limit the encroachment of non-agricultural or incompatible land uses which may conflict

#### BACKGROUND

Land use conflict in peri-urban settings stems from perceived or real incompatibility between agricultural practices and neighbouring land uses. The potential for conflict is exacerbated where pre-existing notions of pristine rural residency are met with the reality of living in close proximity to normal agricultural practices. Typical farming practices that can result in land use conflict includes noise, odour, dust, smoke, chemical drift, water quality issues, vehicle movements, hours of operation and poor visual amenity. Small landholdings are prevalent in the peri-urban fringe and farming there is often intensive, which can amplify these sources of conflict.

Close proximity of residential or rural-residential neighbours can also create impacts on agricultural productivity. Potential sources of problems from non-farming neighbours can include unchecked weed emergence, biosecurity risks and pest animals (including domestic cats and dogs). It is evident from various studies and stakeholder engagement that there is a need for all agricultural industries, in conjunction with all levels of government, to quantify what constitutes normal, acceptable and reasonable farm practices. The 'right to farm' is commonly interpreted to be the ability for farmers to undertake lawful agricultural practices without conflict or interference from neighbours and other land users complaining about these activities. Section 4 of the recently enacted Right to Farm Act 2019 includes provisions to protect commercial activities from 'nuisance' complaints.

Wollondilly Shire Council has already developed a Good Neighbour Charter for the Wollondilly Poultry Industry. The charter was developed 'to promote a collaborative approach to mitigate the impact caused by farming operations.' The charter provides specific commitments from Council, poultry growers and processing companies. The commitments intend to improve farm activities and improve communication with the neighbours in order to build goodwill.

Guidance on effective communication between neighbours is critical, based on regular information and consultation. For example, forewarning neighbours when irregular farming activities are about to occur or establishing time-of-day preferences for activities that cause noise or odour. In this scenario, proactive farmers will help to mitigate effects and neighbours may be more willing to accept them.

Agricultural land uses in particular intensive agricultural use have the potential to generate land use conflict when they occur in proximity to residential uses. Buffers are therefore commonly considered as a means of avoiding future conflict and protecting agricultural land uses.

Department of Primary Industries developed an interim guideline around buffer zones, Buffer Zones to Reduce Land Use Conflict with Agriculture (DPI, 2018). This is particularly relevant for non-agricultural developments (e.g. residential development) which have previously relied on adjoining land for buffer zones. This reduces the value of that rural land for its agricultural pursuit or future potential agricultural expansion on to the land now identified as a buffer.

Land use conflict and poor planning outcomes for peri-urban farmers can be exacerbated where fragmented individual planning decisions have an unintended cumulative effect, such as increases in rural lifestyle dwellings. Effective policy settings need to focus on the prevention of future land use conflicts, and where possible avoid the requirement to resolve future conflicts via regulation or mediation processes. Where proactive planning measures are not in place, significant and reactionary resources are required to deal with issues that inevitably arise.

#### Land Management for Buffers

Whilst buffers can be very effective, the practical application of these measures can be difficult. A requirement for new residential or rural residential land uses encroaching on existing agricultural use to include a buffer zone within the proposal development is reasonable but may present practical difficulties to land developers (see Action 4.2.2 (1)). Options for these types of buffers may include:

- Developers leasing or selling the buffer zone for compatible agricultural activity such as livestock grazing. For a lease to be feasible, there would need to be livestock grazing enterprises already present in the area, and both parties being willing to enter into such an agreement. A livestock grazer would need to be interested in utilising a small-scale buffer zone, and accept land title or other legal agreement with constrained use of that buffer zone.
- Developers retaining ownership of buffer zones and ensuring the land is maintained in perpetuity. This could be agreed to through a Planning Agreement but could present a bushfire, pest, weed and biosecurity risk for neighbouring farmers and residential landowners.
- Local government or other land management agencies taking ownership and responsibility for peri-urban buffer zones after residential developments have been sold. This approach would require a comprehensive strategy for public management of buffer zones, developer funding mechanisms and a well-developed planning framework to include these arrangements in rezoning decisions.
- The developer purchases the buffer from the adjoining farmer, but it remains under the farmer's management control and use. This would compensate farmers for losing the development potential of that buffer zone and may be implemented via an easement arrangement.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The most significant source of land use conflict is the introduction of new non-farming residents into rural areas. This can result in conflict between the new residents and adjoining farmers. This is where the concept of defining and protecting the rural amenity (including agricultural lands) is an option for Wollondilly. That is, protecting existing agricultural land use from planning decisions which allow encroachment of sensitive uses (such as residential or other urban development).

A solution could be to develop a set of 'land suitability criteria', to be a statutory consideration prior to the approval of a non-farming activity such as rural lifestyle dwelling or subdivision. Council could only agree to accept planning proposals/development applications for sites located substantially adjacent to an incompatible agriculture use if it is clearly justified in relation to these criteria. This should also entail the preparation of a 'sensitive agricultural land use' map which identifies areas of potential land use conflict that may trigger the use of the criteria. The map should include intensive livestock, poultry and plant agriculture as well as any other known productive land uses that may be incompatible to sensitive uses.

Buffers are commonly considered as a means of avoiding future conflict and protecting agricultural land uses. The continued use of Clause 5.18 'Intensive livestock agriculture' and Clause 7.6 'Development within a designated buffer area' from Wollondilly LEP 2011 would provide some policy protection for productive agriculture. Furthermore, the use of Buffer Zones to Reduce Land Use Conflict with Agriculture (DPI 2018) as an interim measure when assessing applications and planning proposals for sensitive uses will also be helpful.

Department of Primary Industries has recently developed, Managing Biosecurity Risks in Land Use Planning and Development Guide, October 2020. This guide outlines steps to be considered to ensure biosecurity is appropriately addressed during the planning and assessment of development proposals. Council will refer to the guide during a development application process to understand the relevance of biosecurity risk management and specifically its importance in mitigating potential impacts of a development proposal on the environment, economy and community.

The Right to Farm Act and the Right to Farm Policy (2015) reinforces rights and responsibilities of rural landowners. Right to farm policy can also be established through a local policy framework or guidelines on how to mediate complaints or a complaint register to effectively manage activities. However, effective policy settings should focus on the prevention of future land use conflicts by reducing non farming practices near farming practices.

Wollondilly Shire Council's Good Neighbour Charter for the Wollondilly Poultry Industry has initiated the conversation to effectively manage sensitive uses in rural areas. Continuing the application of this charter and the commitment of each sector will be important for the future of the industry.

Wollondilly Shire Council with the assistance of the Rural Industry Advisory Committee will develop a comprehensive set of engagement material regarding land in rural lands in Wollondilly. A key direction includes continued improvement of communication channels to assist the community to be informed and considerate of neighbours. This would utilise the set of fact sheet already developed to 'rural lifestylers' moving to the rural areas.



## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

### Action 3.3.1 Manage sensitive uses and agricultural land

- a) Investigate developing a set of land suitability criteria to be utilised in the assessment of a non-farming activity such as rural lifestyle dwelling or subdivision. This could be based on the DPI Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA). In an accompanying policy, Council could only agree to accept planning proposal/development applications for sites located substantially adjacent to a productive agriculture use if it is clearly justified in relation to the criteria which should include, but not be limited to, the following.
  - proximity to an existing residential dwelling
  - existing primary production uses
  - investigating areas suitable for agricultural expansion
  - topographical features that may reduce conflicts
- b) Investigate developing a 'sensitive agricultural land use' map which identifies areas of potential land use conflict that may trigger the use of the criteria. The map will include uses such as poultry sheds and extractive industries. Require all Planning Proposals affected by the 'sensitive agricultural land use', especially in areas that have a significant number of intensive livestock agriculture, to include a Land Use Conflict Study.
- c) Continuing the application of Wollondilly Shire Council's *Good Neighbour Charter for the Wollondilly Poultry Industry* to assist in good neighbour procedures and practices.

### Action 3.3.2 Provide ongoing protection of productive agriculture through buffers

- a) Continue the use of the Clause 5.18 'Intensive livestock agriculture' and the Clause 7.6 Development within a designated buffer area' within the Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011 to provide ongoing protection of productive agriculture. Include the requirement for new residential or rural residential land uses encroaching on existing agricultural use to include a buffer zone within their development not the agricultural use.
- b) Review as an interim measure, *Buffer Zones to Reduce Land Use Conflict with Agriculture* (DPI 2018) when assessing applications and planning proposal for sensitive uses.

### Action 3.3.3 Develop a right to farm framework

- a) Develop a local right to farm framework or guidelines that mediates complaints, or a complaint register to effectively manage activities over time.
- b) Develop a media strategy for the regular distribution of Council and community information to assist in educating all residents regarding rural issues.
- c) Advocate for DPI to review *Managing Biosecurity Risks in Land Use Planning and Development Guide, October 2020* and revise the types and size of buffer zones for farms on the Eastern side of the Great Dividing Range to better reflect the smaller size and more intensive nature of these operations.

## 3.4 SUSTAINABLY MANAGE AND CONSERVE WATER RESOURCES

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Sustainability manage water resource for economic opportunities
- To encourage the exploration of opportunities for recycled water, stormwater harvesting, and new and innovative agriculture uses and practices

### BACKGROUND

Sustainable land uses in rural areas rely on consistent access to irrigation water which has become an increasingly critical issue in the last 20 years. Water extraction from rivers contributes to economic prosperity, but too much extraction may severely affect aquatic ecosystems, especially during periods of low river flows.

Wollondilly is part of the expansive Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment, which is one of the largest coastal basins in NSW, and one its major dams, Warragamba Dam, is also within the LGA. Warragamba Dam, the Nepean River and its waterways are significant to the Greater Sydney Region as it provides nearly all Greater Sydney's drinking water supply.

The water catchment in Wollondilly contains mapped 'Protected and Special Areas around Warragamba Dam' which function as important buffers to protect the integrity of potable water supplies. The land is mapped as Special Areas under the Water NSW Regulation 2020 (Regulation) and is located around The Oaks and Oakdale and contain a provision for animal management within these areas. The Regulation specifies land uses that can not occur in this area including aquaculture, intensive livestock agriculture, or an animal boarding or training establishment.

Water NSW manages the catchment in Wollondilly and supplies Sydney's water through a licencing system. The issues of water quality and quantity are critical determinants of land use planning. Farming, coal mining, power generation and settlement all draw significantly on the water resources from the Nepean River which are managed through this licencing system.

Environmental flows are essential to maintain the ecological values of natural waterways. Over extraction has the ability to reduce water quality, increase salinity, cause algal blooms, destroy native fish stocks and alter the biodiversity of the catchment. Areas that rely on surface water need to ensure that the quantity of water extracted is sustainable and that future development does not compromise water quality or quantity.

Initial consultation with agricultural producers revealed that irrigation water availability was one of the main barriers to expanding production. There is a prevailing perception in some parts of the rural community that competition exists between urban and rural water users regarding water use and management.

The agricultural capability of land adjoining the Nepean River increases with the potential for surface water diversion and crop irrigation. The availability of irrigation water opens a wider range of agricultural types including higher-value horticultural commodities such as fruit, vegetable and turf on better soils. Without irrigation, horticultural crops will be limited to low water crops such as grapes or olives. Over extraction is one of the key water related challenges.

Water NSW emphasises the importance of water sharing plans. Water sharing plans are designed to establish rules for sharing water between environmental needs of the river or groundwater system and a range of extractive uses such as villages, domestic, stock watering and irrigation needs. The Plans that apply to Wollondilly include the following.

- Water Sharing Plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sources 2011
- Water Sharing Plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Groundwater Sources 2011

While some improvements to water efficiency have been made in recent years, water supply and its disposal has remained unchanged for several decades. Wollondilly is currently on the forefront for innovative and suitable water reuse. Sydney Water has a Water Recycling Plant located at Picton that treats wastewater that has been used in about 3,800 homes and businesses in Picton, Tahmoor, Thirlmere, Bargo and Buxton. The treated wastewater is used for productive agriculture.

Surface runoff capture in NSW is limited to a basic landholder right of 10% of surface runoff for dams built after 1998. Urban development increases runoff by a factor of two or more and the incremental increase in runoff resulting from new urban development could be captured for productive reuse. Both these water supply options would provide expanding and secure water sources to support horticultural development in Wollondilly. Land zoned RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape that is either currently being irrigated and/or used for horticulture could be investigated to safeguard the land for productive agricultural use.

By way of example, there is currently a significant irrigated agriculture development proposed using Melbourne wastewater from the Werribee and Black Rock wastewater treatment plants near Geelong. The proposal recommends establishing water demand (backed by high value export market opportunities and a water rights system) as a precursor to financing pipeline construction and delivery systems. Vegetable production is identified as clearly economically viable to provide a return to developers and irrigators. The Werribee proposal is of large scale: covering 20,000ha and with the capacity to use 56,000 megalitres of water. Economies of scale and various topographical and engineering issues will need to be considered to determine whether a smaller scale approach in the Wollondilly would be feasible.

Therefore, access to recycled water or stormwater harvesting opportunities from nearby urban areas could help address the challenges of water scarcity and help disperse the wastewater from new urban development that adjoining the rural areas.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Land mapped as Special Areas under the Water NSW Regulation 2020 contain provisions that restrict some agricultural uses which function as important buffers to protect the integrity of potable water supplies.

Water resource management is vested in all three tiers of government, so a cooperative and collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders is required.

Coordinating and managing water resource requirements across business and industry, communities and the environment relies on a better understanding of local water allocations and using water more resourcefully. Water allocation is complex due to seasonal fluctuations and is an ongoing concern for agricultural producers in Wollondilly.

Whilst Council has no formal role in the allocation of water for irrigation or farm storage, Council's

planning controls can influence the ability of the LGA to productively utilise its water resources. Council can also advocate on behalf of its primary producer's water licencing's issues for economic opportunities. The protection of water quality and quantity is one of the highest priorities for Wollondilly and attention must be given to the cumulative impact of land uses on this resource.

The volume of stormwater runoff in Wollondilly is significant. This volume of water can provide both an alternative supply for non-drinking purposes and a healthy flow to the waterways. Capturing this water will assist to minimise water price, assist farms to access water and improve the health of waterways. Advocating for a reliable supply of water for agricultural uses, including the potential to use recycled water and wastewater, can provide irrigators with sustainable sources to allow for future expansion. This will also reduce pressure on the Nepean River and the Sydney Water Drinking Catchment.

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

### Action 3.4.1. Review local policies regarding water protection and security

- a) Continue to protect riparian areas through Clause 7.3 Water Protection' in Wollondilly LEP 2011.
- b) Review policy within Wollondilly's Development Control Plan to promote the efficient use and re-use of water in agricultural and other rural land uses as well as any urban development that has the potential to supply water to rural areas. The policy may also include incentives for the sustainable use of water.
- c) Investigate finalising and implementing integrated water management policy, strategy and waster sensitive urban design (WSUD) guidelines.
- d) Review Wollondilly Development Control Plan for high impact development to consider the integrated water management policy, strategy and WSUD guidelines once finalised.

### Action 3.4.2 Coordinate and advocate for sustainable management of water resources for primary producers

- a) Lobby Water NSW regarding the issuing of water licenses within the catchment and the economic viability of farms in the LGA.
- b) Continue working with the Sydney Water to provide secure, sustainable and long-term water supply solutions including the expansion of its water recycling plant to support food production





## PART 4 FOCUS AREA 2

# MANAGING *Rural Zones*

### **Focus Area 2 - Key outcome**

Streamline and modernise land use to support the clear and consistent approach to land management and development through the planning framework.

## 4.1 DEVELOP CLEAR AND CONSISTENT ZONING

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Establish a clear direction and objectives for land use for each rural zone under the Wollondilly LEP 2011
- Ensure appropriate safeguards for rural land which can support agricultural land use and primary production, recognising the economic, social and historical significance of these industries in Wollondilly
- Recognise the demand and create opportunities for alternative uses on rural lands within specified areas to manage the impacts between non-agricultural land use activities and the practices required as part of agricultural production

### BACKGROUND

The rural zones discussed in this section include RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape, RU4 Primary Production Small Lots and E4 Environmental Living zones, as defined in the Wollondilly LEP 2011. In 1996, the Wollondilly Review of Rural Lands Report analysed and applied several zones to Wollondilly's rural lands under the previous Wollondilly LEP 1991. These zones were then converted directly into a new Standard Instrument LEP in 2011. A summary of the history of the zones is provided below.

- 1(a) Agriculture zone was originally applied to land mapped as Classes 1 to 3 under the agricultural land classification system (with some minor areas classed 4 and 5) which was then converted to the RU1 Primary Production zone in the Wollondilly LEP 2011
- 1(b) Agricultural Landscape zone was originally applied to land that was predominantly mapped as Class 4 (with some minor Class 3 and 5) and was considered 'relatively hilly and would not be suitable for major Agricultural production enterprises of an intensive nature'. The 1(b) Agricultural Landscape was converted to the RU2 Rural Landscape zone in the Wollondilly LEP 2011
- The 7(c) Environmental Protection - Rural Living zone was a rural residential zone under the Wollondilly LEP 1991. The areas were chosen because of 'their highly fragmented nature and non-degraded areas as well as lack of any significant agricultural enterprise'. The 7(c) (Environmental Protection (Rural Living) Zone was converted to E4 Environmental Living in the Wollondilly LEP 2011
- RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone was developed for the Wollondilly LEP 2011 and at present it is largely "used around villages to create a buffer and edge for the urban area"

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

#### RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape zone

It is acknowledged that whilst agriculture is common and very important, it is necessary to recognise that agricultural land uses are just one of many vital uses in a land use zone. A second important and unique purpose of agricultural uses is to maintain a non-urban/rural break around the Greater Sydney Region. The rural landscape values are a critical part of the character and identity of Wollondilly and have high biodiversity values. The Rural Lands Findings Report compared the RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape zone, which demonstrated that only a small number of uses in the two zones differ in permissibility under Wollondilly LEP 2011, and they essentially function the same.

To ensure that these rural landscape values and agricultural production are able to be co-managed, it is important that the RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape zones are well designed

and implemented to differentiate between the primary roles. A review of these zones to ensure that this occurs into the future is therefore recommended.

On the agricultural side, and aiming to have a strong primary agricultural purpose, objectives and permitted uses, the RU1 Primary Production zone should be reviewed to more accurately reflect this intent. The traditional method for identifying an agricultural zone is to identify the most productive soil types. However, many agricultural industries in Wollondilly do not require productive soil types such as the poultry industry. The RU1 Primary Production zone needs to be reviewed to reflect the diverse primary production industries currently existing and emerging in the LGA. This may include the following:

- Considering intensive plant agriculture to be permitted without consent within this zone to allow flexibility for primary producers
- Reduce subdivision and rural dwellings safeguarding the rural lands for agricultural production and reduce land use conflicts. This should include a review of the minimum lot size

As stated previously, Wollondilly's rural landscapes are highly valued. The RU2 Rural Landscape zone should therefore be used to reinforce key landscape areas and high biodiversity values that form part of the objectives of this zone as well as capturing agricultural land that may be productive but which doesn't warrant RU1 zoning as well as agricultural land with more modest agricultural uses (such as hobby farming etc) and change the land use table to reflect its intended use. This may also reduce land use conflicts if less intensive agricultural uses are permissible. Another option for the RU2 Rural Landscape zone is to investigate the zone for agribusinesses in order to provide support to primary production areas (in the RU1 Primary Production zone) and therefore not reduce the agricultural capability of that land.

Whilst this is largely seen as a review of the land use tables of the LEP, the investigation may also need to review the zone boundaries to better reflect the intent of the zones. For example, where a locality has extensive agriculture but is zoned RU2 Rural Landscape zone, this may be more suitable for the RU1 Primary Production zone. A set of criteria for the delineation between the zones should be established to clearly define and justify any zone changes.

#### RU3 Forestry Zone

Under the Standard Instrument – Principal Local Environmental Plan 2006, A Council may include the RU3 Forestry Zone within its Local Environmental Plan.

The Department of Planning's LEP Practice Note for Preparing LEPs using the Standard Instrument: standard zones states the following in relation to the RU3 Forestry Zone:

*this zone identifies and protects land that is to be used for forestry use, such as State forests. Land which is to be used for private forestry may alternatively be zoned RU1 Primary Production zone or RU2 Rural Landscape.*

Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011 currently does not have any land in the Shire zoned RU3 Forestry. It may be appropriate going forward to consider whether any areas of the Shire may be appropriate for this zoning, noting that Forestry is already permitted in the RU1 and RU2 zoned which are considered more appropriate for private forestry in any case.

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### Summary of intent of the RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape zone

**RU1 Primary Production** - these are areas considered critical to preserve agricultural land assets, protected from 'lifestyle' subdivision and other incompatible development, with the specific aim of protecting viable land to allow for a range of diverse agricultural uses.

**RU2 Rural Landscape** - The RU2 Rural Landscape zone should therefore be used to reinforce key landscape areas and high biodiversity values that form part of the objectives of this zone as well as capturing agricultural land that may be productive but which doesn't warrant RU1 zoning as well as agricultural land with more modest agricultural uses (such as hobby farming etc) and change the land use table to reflect its intended use.

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### Truck and Transport Depots in the RU1 Primary Production or RU2 Rural Landscape zones

Development approval is needed for truck depots and transport depots in certain rural zones when they are not associated with the agricultural uses of the land. In these instances, there are no limitations on the size of truck depots or transport depots that are permitted with consent. In some circumstances, depots can be large scale fleet operations and the type of vehicles may vary from rigid trucks, prime movers and trailers, agricultural or earthmoving equipment and even a fleet of light vehicles. It is therefore recommended that a local provision be developed which considers the appropriate attributes for this type of use in rural locations.

### RU4 Primary Production Small Lots

The intent of the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone is an agricultural area that provides for specific commercial agricultural activities that may be viable on smaller lot sizes than traditional extensive grazing or cropping activities. This intent is reflected in its objectives and permissible uses.

However, an analysis undertaken for this zone demonstrates the majority of the lots have a dwelling and are not related to farming operations. In addition, the distribution of smaller lots in this zone are generally concentrated around existing villages and main roads.

The analysis concluded the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone is not being used for its primary purpose, agriculture. Instead it has evolved in an ad hoc manner to include a mix of land uses, including rural living development. In addition, there are several areas zoned RU4 Primary Production Small Lots that have obvious scenic qualities or are being used for intensive farming enterprises which does not match the intent of this zone due to issues such as land use conflict with rural dwellings.

A review of the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone is needed as part of the LEP review. This review could convert some areas according to their existing land use to other zones – such as E4 Environmental Living zone, RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape zone or a new RU6 Transition zone.

### RU5 Village Zone

Under the Standard Instrument – Principal Local Environmental Plan 2006, A Council may include the RU5 Village Zone within its Local Environmental Plan.

The Department of Planning's LEP Practice Note for Preparing LEPs using the Standard Instrument: standard zones states the following in relation to the RU5 Village Zone:

*This zone is a flexible zone for centres where a mix of residential, retail, business, industrial and other compatible land uses may be provided to service the local rural community. The RU5 zone would typically apply to small rural villages within rural areas.*

Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011 currently does not have any land in the Shire zoned RU5 Village. It may be appropriate to investigate the potential use of RU5 Rural Village for Yerranderie Village as one possible option (refer to Action 5.4.2(b) in this Strategy).

### RU6 Transition Zone

The RU6 Transition zone will provide a new option for those areas that do provide a buffer between urban and rural uses. The RU6 Transition zone could also supply land for 'lifestylers' that would like dwelling on large lots within the rural landscape.

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### Summary of intent of the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots and RU6 Transition zones

**RU4 Primary Production Small Lots** - is for land which is to be used for commercial primary industry production, including emerging primary industries and agricultural uses that operate on smaller rural holdings such as small vegetable farms. Current RU4 zoned land that is identified in the agricultural viability study as not suitable for this purpose will be rezoned to other zones - e.g. E4 Environmental Living zone, RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape zone or the new RU6 Transition zone

**RU6 Transition** - will provide a new option for those areas that provide a genuine buffer between urban and rural uses. The RU6 Transition zone could supply land for 'lifestylers' that would like dwellings on large lots, whilst being clearly communicated that this zone does not imply that the land is identified for future urban use.

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## E4 Environmental Living Zone

Many councils utilise this zone for land with special environmental or scenic values and accommodates low impact residential development. The emphasis on the objectives for this zone is on low density living in natural surroundings rather than hobby farming or extensive agriculture.

While there is evidence of agricultural uses within this zone, they are smaller scale and appear to be medium sized hobby farms or 'lifestyle rural holdings'. In addition, uses permitted with consent suggest a more 'lifestyle orientated' intent, with uses such as backpackers' accommodation, while intensive agricultural uses are not permitted (except for viticulture).

The E4 Environmental Living Zone is located in areas with extensive native vegetation and scenic values. Rural landscapes are an important element of Wollondilly's identity, social fabric and tourism offer. Given the landscape values and the potential economic benefits this offers it may be worth investigating this zone for a wider suite of permissible land uses, including tourism uses, compatible with agriculture, environmental and landscape characteristics of the areas with this zone.

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### Summary of intent of the E4 Environmental Living zone

*E4 Environmental Living - whilst capable of supporting low-scale primary production activities where land capability allows, this zone is generally located in areas that can protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural landscape values of Wollondilly. Given many of the areas comprising this zone are on the elevated slopes, this zone has the potential to accommodate uses such as low impact tourism, low impact farms such as grazing, cropping, hobby farms and home-based business. This will need to occur whilst ensuring development, land use and subdivision is sensitive to the natural and biological fabric of the area.*

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## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTIONS

### Action 4.1.1 Review the RU1 Primary Production zone

- Review the objectives and direction in the RU1 Primary Production zone that safeguards primary production. This may include the following additional objectives:
  - To protect viable agricultural land for agricultural purposes.
  - To enable development that is compatible with the rural and environmental values of the land
- Review all permissible land uses within the RU1 Primary Production zone to limit the encroachment of non-agricultural or incompatible land uses which may conflict with agriculture and provide more flexibility for primary producers. This shall include consideration of allowing intensive plant agriculture to be permissible without consent.
- Review the minimum lot size for all areas in the Wollondilly LEP 2011. This may involve developing a range of criteria influencing agricultural outputs (water supply, soil type, buffer requirements and existing environmental and/or biodiversity constraints).
- Investigate adjusting zone boundaries for minor changes to better reflect existing land use.

### Action 4.1.2 Review the RU2 Rural Landscape zone

- Review the objectives in the RU2 Rural Landscape zone that identify the clear land use purpose of this zone including having a landscape and scenic value as well as a primary production purpose.
- Review all permissible land uses within the RU2 Rural Landscape zone to reflect landscape and scenic values, with a more rural lifestyle value. Consider removal of intensive animal agricultural uses as permissible with consent in this zone and revise with possible overlays as part of a future scenic and landscapes study (refer to chapter 7 for more information).
- Review the minimum lot size for all areas in the Wollondilly LEP 2011.
- Investigate the feasibility and need for any RU3 Forestry zoned land in the Shire or the inclusion of these land uses within other Rural zones.

### Action 4.1.3 Review the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone

- Investigate developing a set of criteria to review the RU4 Primary Production Small Lot zone to better reflect existing land use. This will include criteria for a transition to the following zones:
  - E4 Environmental Living zone
  - RU1 Primary Production
  - RU2 Rural Landscape zone or
  - RU6 Transition zone

The criteria will consider the primary use of each zone as reflected in Actions 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.1.4.

- Review the objectives in the RU4 Primary Production Small Lot Zone that identify the clear land use purpose of this zone including having a landscape and scenic value as well as a primary production purpose.
- Review all permissible land uses within the RU4 Primary Production Small Lot zone to ensure it reflects contemporary small lot farming needs.

### Action 4.1.4 Investigate the use of the RU6 Transition Zone in the Shire

- Investigate introducing the RU6 Transition zone with a minimum lot size that reflects the average lot size (or minimum lot size) in each area. The transition zone is to be used in special circumstances only in order to provide a transition between rural land uses (including intensive agriculture, landfills, mining and extractive industries) and other areas supporting more intensive settlement or environmental sensitivities. This zone is not to be used to identify future urban land.

### Action 4.1.5 Review the E4 Environmental Living zone

- Review objectives and permissible land uses including tourism uses (this may include a place-based approach) to ensure any potential conflicts with existing agricultural uses are minimised. This may include the following additional objectives:
  - To conserve the environmental and scenic quality of visually significant land
  - To permit development that is compatible with the character, infrastructure capacity and access limitations of the area.
- Investigate through a local provision overlay in the E4 Environmental Living zone the archaeological, landscape, ecological, cultural or scientific values, to ensure any sensitive areas are protected and celebrated. This should be revised as part of any future rural landscapes study.

#### Action 4.1.6 Review the Rural Land use Zones

- a) Review land zoned for each of the RU land use zones across the Shire following the completion of the agricultural viability study to ensure that the land use zoning and the characteristics of those lands are consistent. (noting that this requirement does not extend to the part of action 4.1.1 to give consideration to allowing intensive plant agriculture to be permissible without consent in the RU1 Primary Production Zone).

#### Action 4.1.7 Develop provisions for truck and transport depots in rural zones

- a) Investigate developing a local provision to limit the size of truck and transport depots in the RU1 Primary Production and/or RU2 Rural Landscape zones. An example local provision may include the following:

*Transport and Truck depots in Zone RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape zones*

1. *The object of this clause is to ensure that development for the purpose of transport and truck depots in Zone RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape is appropriate for the locality.*
2. *Development consent must not be granted to development for the purpose of truck depots on land in Zone RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape unless the consent authority is satisfied of the following -*
  - a) *adequate road access is available, or will be available, to the site to support the scale of the development,*
  - b) *the development will predominately service vehicles engaged in supporting the primary industry sector,*
  - c) *the development will not have a significant impact on the amenity of the locality.*
  - d) *the maximum number of trucks, earthmoving machinery and the like should be limited to ## per lot.*
3. *Clause 4.6 does not allow development consent to be granted for development that would contravene subclause (2).*
4. *This clause applies despite any other provision of this Plan*





## PART 5 FOCUS AREA 3

# *Manage the* RURAL COMMUNITY, ECONOMY AND SERVICES

### **Focus Area 3 - Key Outcome**

Promote the sustainable use and management of existing industries such as mineral resources whilst facilitating the development of emerging markets such as tourism and export markets while providing sustainable access to transport networks

## 5.1 SUSTAINABLY MANAGE MINERAL RESOURCES

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Establish a clear direction and objectives for land use for each rural zone under the Wollondilly LEP 2011
- Ensure appropriate safeguards for rural land which can support agricultural land use and primary production, recognising the economic, social and historical significance of these industries in Wollondilly
- Recognise the demand and create opportunities for alternative uses on rural lands within specified areas to manage the impacts between non-agricultural land use activities and the practices required as part of agricultural production

### BACKGROUND

Unlike many other industries, mining can occur only in specific locations, i.e. where mineral deposits are located. The mineral resources in Wollondilly are closely associated with geological regions. Wollondilly is located on the Southern Coalfield. This region has premium quality hard coking coal which is mined by underground mining methods at depths in excess of 400 metres. All mining, petroleum production and extractive industries are subject to *SEPP (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007*. The SEPP will generally over-ride any strategy or LEP that Council may prepare.

Wollondilly currently has three operating coal mines as well as several gravel and sand quarries. Mining is one of Wollondilly's largest industries and is one of the highest employers in the LGA. Mining can be an important complementary industry to agriculture and provide diversity to rural economies that can assist in times of poor agricultural commodity prices.

Coal resources in Wollondilly are extracted using the technique of longwall mining. Subsidence, or the lowering of the land surface, is an unavoidable consequence of this technique. The actual behaviour of subsidence movements does, however, vary from site-to-site depending on local geology and mine layouts. These surface movements can cause structures to be damaged especially buildings with large footprints.

The extent of mine subsidence damage can vary depending on the location of a building in proximity to the mine workings. Subsidence generally occurs a short time after longwall mining has taken place and, in most cases, the ground completely settles within three years of mining. After this time, there is a minimal residual risk of further subsidence. If the long wall is inactive subsidence can occur for up to 6 months after the activity has ceased.

With known subsidence over and around longwalls in the area, the policy can reduce the number of structures in the rural area until such time the mining activity is complete. This will assist in protecting future structures and dwellings from any potential subsidence issues. *Coal Mine Subsidence Compensation Act 2017* recently included a revised framework for subsidence compensation from mining companies.

Development may be at risk of damage due to subsidence and as such development applications are assessed by Subsidence Advisory NSW. As mining of hard coking coal continues, a certain level of subsidence impact must be accepted as a necessary outcome of mining in Wollondilly until all the resource has been extracted and/or mining ends.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

One of the biggest threats to the future availability of mineral resource extraction is the proliferation of scattered rural housing and potential land use conflict between these two land uses. This is particularly important given the subsidence issues within Wollondilly and the extent of rural housing throughout the LGA.

Council can play a role in ensuring that subsidence issues are minimised by reducing the development of rural housing and the like above-known longwall areas where subsidence issues are of the highest risk.

This may include the consideration of maps and policy for high-risk areas with potential subsidence issues to minimise the number of structures on a site-by-site basis until such time the longwall operation ceases. This can protect a longstanding industry that provides local jobs. While it is understood engineering solutions for structures can be developed to reduced subsidence effects this can come at a significant cost and risks remain.

Extracting mineral resources need haulage routes to transport the material offsite. This can cause localised impacts with the movement of trucks. The typical haulage routes for Wollondilly's mineral resources should also be considered in relation to compatible development along these routes and any potential impacts.

### TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

#### Action 5.1.1 Protect mineral resources and manage risks

- a) Consider the development of maps for high-risk areas with potential subsidence issues and develop policies to minimise the number of structures on a site-by-site basis until such time as the mining activity is complete, in partnership with the Subsidence Advisory NSW.
- b) Investigate identifying typical haulage routes for extractive resources and ensure that these are considered planning controls and planning decisions, including contributions and infrastructure plans, for relevant development in the locality.

## 5.2 LEVERAGING EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES OF THE WESTERN SYDNEY AEROTROPOLIS

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Take advantage of the opportunities provided to Wollondilly's rural lands by the location and facilities to be provided in the Aerotropolis
- Ensure land use and development in the vicinity of the Western Sydney Airport does not hinder or have any other adverse impacts on the operation of the airport

### BACKGROUND

The Western Sydney Airport and broader Aerotropolis area is less than 5 kilometres from Wollondilly's northeastern border. The curfew-free airport will be operated 24/7, and the Aerotropolis will cover a surrounding 11,200 hectares that will include defence and aerospace, advanced manufacturing, technology, agribusiness, health, education, research and tourism uses.

Wollondilly is strategically located nearby and will be connected to the Aerotropolis via major transport routes. Upgrades to pre-existing transport corridors are planned with the airport's development. This includes identifying main corridors and seeking to preserve them to secure the future delivery of key transport infrastructure (such as the Outer Orbital Road). Geographic challenges, like Australian supply chains that involve more than 1,000km travel, mean transport costs are currently up to 40% of the market price. A single point of transit and fewer touchpoints in the supply chain would be beneficial for domestic logistics in the context of agriculture, especially fresh produce. Therefore, the closer the produce to the airport the cheaper it will be to export. Similar scenarios have been established in airports such as Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport, through its Perishable Goods Facility where fresh produce from the Darling Downs is exported to Asia weekly.

According to Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan (2018), growing food demand domestically and internationally underpins the development of an Intensive Integrated Production Hub (IIPH) of 250 hectares to 500 hectares within the Agribusiness Precinct. The IIPH will facilitate 24-hour, 7 days a week export of food adjacent to Wollondilly's agricultural producers. IIPH is linked directly to an adjacent freight and logistics hub within the Aerotropolis. *The Western Sydney Aerotropolis Stage 1 Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan* (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2018) states one of the most attractive propositions for the Agribusiness Precinct of the Aerotropolis is controlled glasshouse vegetables.

The poultry and horticulture industries comprise 85% of the total value of agricultural commodities produced in the Wollondilly. There is strong alignment between existing agricultural industries within Wollondilly and the export vision for the airport. In particular, the precinct will provide significant opportunities for peri-urban farmers in Wollondilly to leverage the logistics and market opportunities from this major capital investment. The Agribusiness Precinct could deliver increases in domestic production for Wollondilly through export opportunities.

Research documents for the Aerotropolis have also indicated that with the growing world population there are significant opportunities for Australia to support and capture the economic benefits from the growing food demands, particularly in Asia and the Middle East. In particular, people in higher income ranges in these markets are likely to adjust their buying behaviour such that they purchase



better quality food products (in terms of attributes like taste, substance, use of chemicals, producer provenance, etc.). The Asian market is expected to grow by over 750 million people by 2050 and there is a strong desire for high quality products, where provenance and safety are non-negotiable. Food safety scandals across Asian countries are driving this trend.

The northern precinct in the Aerotropolis also includes the development of research facilities with links to food production and processing. Located within Wollondilly are two of the largest agricultural research facilities in NSW, including the University of Sydney Institute of Agriculture and the Department of Primary Industries Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI). Like primary producers export opportunities, these research facilities can leverage their accessibility to the northern precinct research facilities and accessibility to the airport, with links to biosecurity as well as further possibilities of food research and development.

Apart from a connection to the broader Aerotropolis, there are a range of other considerations that are relevant to the presence of the airport and subsequent planning activities. Tall structures or other obstructions have the potential to create air safety hazards and/or limit the ability of aircraft to arrive and depart, and this is relevant to future development for the agriculture sector in the context of not just height of buildings but also material colour, reflectivity etc. These will connect wider centres to the Aerotropolis as well as protecting the airport's operational airspace. However road connections between the northern section of Wollondilly and the aerotropolis need to be upgraded to enable efficient transport access for Wollondilly Primary Producers. Requirements to upgrade these connections have not been recognised in the planning for the Aerotropolis to date (LSPS Planning Priority 11).

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

There is potential to leverage the development of the Agribusiness Precinct as well as associated warehousing and logistics that will be developed alongside Sydney's second airport.

The northern areas of Wollondilly, particularly around Silverdale, could be explored to leverage the benefits of its proximity to the airport in terms of agribusiness and agricultural opportunities. Opportunities can be explored through advocacy to leverage the benefits the airports proximity may bring to Wollondilly and export opportunities for the LGA produce and products.

The diversity of agricultural production possible in the area (refer to section 3) will assist in developing 'paddock to plane' opportunities where perishables will be able to fly direct to Asia from Wollondilly where they are produced. This in turn will increase confidence in the agriculture sector with direct access to international markets. The strength of the existing productivity that Wollondilly already has can then be further harnessed to accelerate growth in food-based exports. This is consistent with the Economic Development Strategy that promotes the rural Wollondilly as a place for primary production and leverage the opportunities the airport brings to the LGA.

The EMAI is the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Centre of Excellence for Plant and Animal Health. It is NSW's premier quarantine and biosecurity facility with critical infrastructure and world recognised research scientists. While the University Of Sydney Institute Of Agriculture is one of Australia's leading universities for food and fibre production, processing, distribution and consumption research. These institutions have an opportunity to directly benefit from the presence of the Aerotropolis and Council will support and advocate any opportunities for this integration.

The safety of the airport operations are also important in nearby locations such as Silverdale. Obstacles within the airports operational airspace can limit activity and therefore certain types of agricultural structures in Wollondilly.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Aerotropolis) 2020 includes some limitations on land uses around certain parts of the Aerotropolis precinct. Clause 19 of the SEPP prohibits 'Noise Sensitive Development' on land that is in an ANEF or ANEC contour of 20 or greater. This affects land in the northern part of the Wollondilly Shire, however, Noise Sensitive Development captures uses such as Residential Accommodation, Places of Public Worship, Educational Establishments and the like, and is unlikely to prevent typically rural and in particular agricultural uses.

The SEPP also prescribes a Wildlife Buffer Zone which also affects a large area of land in the northern part of the Shire. Under Clause 21 of the SEPP, Council must not consent to any 'Relevant Development' located within the 13 km wildlife buffer unless it has consulted with the relevant Commonwealth body and that Commonwealth body is satisfied that the development will mitigate the risk of wildlife to the operation of the Airport. The requirements of this clause are relevant to uses such as Agricultural Produce Industries, Aquaculture, Intensive livestock agriculture, Intensive Plant Agriculture, livestock Processing Industries and Plant Nurseries.

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

### Action 5.2.1 Investigate protection of airport safety

- a) Investigate developing a local provision in the Wollondilly LEP 2011 to protect airport safety, if it is not protected under a SEPP, in consultation with Western Sydney Airport and the Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment.

### Action 5.2.2 Investigate leveraging opportunities for the primary production sector as part of the Agriculture Study

- a) Investigate leveraging opportunities for the primary production sector as part of the Agricultural Viability Study (see Action 3.1.1). This should include investigating mechanisms to promote rural Wollondilly as a place for primary production through 'paddock to plane' opportunities.

### Action 5.2.3 Support research opportunities

- a) Support any research opportunities scheduled for the Aerotropolis with the University of Sydney Institute of Agriculture and EMAI and the relevant State agencies.

### Action 5.2.4 Investigate and advocate for improved links for freight and logistics

- a) Advocate with Transport NSW and Western Sydney Airport to ensure improved links for freight and logistics to Silverdale and surrounds.

## 5.3 SUPPORT STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT NETWORKS

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Support transport networks and other infrastructure that sustain rural industries and respond to changes in and around rural lands

### BACKGROUND

Rural businesses and residents require access to road networks to connect with places of employment, shopping and support services. These roads, including bridges, need continual upgrading and maintenance due to ever-increasing traffic using the road network. Council currently manages 865 kilometres of roads and 106 bridges.

Agricultural producers and extractive industries often need to transport agricultural produce utilising heavy vehicles. Heavy vehicles utilise Wollondilly's local roads to connect to major corridors such as the Hume Highway. Heavy vehicles require certain class roads and some roads in Wollondilly cannot yet support these requirements. Some local roads are also failing under the pressure of freight movements or limit the ability to move freight due to their condition or alignment.

Parts of the existing road network are old and have reached their useful life in some locations - a particular issue for causeways and bridges. The full replacement cost of a bridge, causeways or worn-out section of rural road cannot be levied on new development. Council cannot collect for maintenance of roads even if the approval of additional dwellings or commercial space leads to an increase in maintenance requirements. Maintenance funds therefore come from other sources, such as general rate revenue. The upgrade of transport infrastructure is a major cost burden for Council. Council's *Transport Asset Management Plan* estimated the approximate current replacement cost of its roads at approximately \$300 million.

In many rural areas in Wollondilly, sewerage treatment is generally supplied by landowners at their own expense. On-site wastewater disposal is usually achievable as long as there is sufficient land to dispose of the amount produced. If Council pursues significant further rural development, it needs to ensure that any land identified is capable of wastewater disposal on-site at the likely density, or that alternative suitable means are identified (such as pump out at the applicants cost).

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

It is important to recognise the important role that transportation links and associated access to markets create for employment-generating rural industries on rural lands. The current transport situation in Wollondilly, resulting from continued growth and its proximity to the Western Sydney Airport and Aerotropolis, will only be under more pressure in coming years.

In response, *Create Wollondilly - Resourcing Strategy, Asset Management Strategy 2017/18 - 2026/27* identifies the following three key transport projects to assist rural landowners:

- Duplication of Silverdale Rd between Warragamba/Silverdale and Wallacia and/or a new link road between Silverdale to adjoining Local Government Areas to the east (Penrith or Liverpool);

- Improved road linkages from Picton/Tahmoor to the Hume Motorway, possibly including a Picton Bypass;
- An improved road linkage between Wilton and Appin. Currently this is served by Wilton Road including a bridge crossing of the Cataract River, known as Broughton Pass.

It needs to be recognised these projects are significant and beyond Council's ability to pursue under ordinary budget processes and as such will need to include a range of funding sources such as development contributions and grants from the state and/or federal governments.

Council will need to ensure contributions and infrastructure plans are updated and each future proposal does not impact on the performance of the rural road network.

Further, funds will need to be allocated by the State and Federal Government, and Council will need to continue to lobby for these.

Local pinch points limit connections with the State and national road network and reduce productivity. Advocating the State and Federal Government for financial support to develop a prioritised rolling program of works to upgrade and improve local roads will be needed to ensure safe and efficient transport system in Wollondilly.

### TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

#### Action 5.3.1 Support the provision of transport infrastructure

- b) Advocate the State and Federal Government to identify, coordinate, prioritise and fund road projects that help support the regional transport network and the function of rural industries in Wollondilly.
- c) Review Wollondilly's Section 7.11 contributions and other contributions mechanisms to fund the necessary local infrastructure for the expected traffic generated from rural development (such as mining and farm-based businesses).
- d) Consider undertaking a rural road and bridge assessment when deemed necessary for major rural development so that Council is not required to bring forward major replacement of infrastructure that it has not budgeted for.

## 5.4 EXPAND RURAL TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Provide opportunities for tourism potential that is consistent with aesthetic, natural and culturally significant values of the rural areas
- Investigate the potential for tourism in the village of Yerranderie

### BACKGROUND

Tourism and supporting industries are significant contributors to the rural economy in Wollondilly. Tourism is an important and growing industry in Wollondilly which focuses on its unique rural character, historic features and natural beauty. *Wollondilly Destination Management Plan (2018)* reported visitation to the LGA has been growing, with a large proportion of the visitor market (83%) being domestic day trippers.

Planning for tourism and recreation should make use of existing services and infrastructure and ensure that rural character, lifestyle values and landscape are not compromised. Wollondilly has several established tourism markets, particularly amongst self-drive, rural experiences, grey nomad and business travellers. Opportunities also exist to broaden this market to include greater event tourism, trail bike, hikers, backpackers and the broader international market.

For example, agricultural tourism (agri-tourism) is a form of niche tourism that is considered a growth industry in Australia and can be a supplementary source of income for rural landowners. Agri-tourism and food tourism refer to activities such as visiting working farms or other farm or food related business (including paddock to plate restaurants and produce outlets).

Rural areas are often well equipped to facilitate these types of land uses, therefore long-term and sustainable coordination of tourism in rural areas are needed to promote and develop this type of land use activity.

At the same time, food culture in Wollondilly is relatively undeveloped aside from some small nodes. Further investigation into paddock to plate strategies is required. The 'paddock to plate' story, builds social connection between producers and urban consumers, and helps consumers who want to feel positive about their food choices to do so. This will also help diversify local producers. There is therefore an opportunity to significantly improve the food offering through the development of local produce supply chains. This would include the promotion of the Wollondilly Harvest food trail, development of farmers markets and other local service providers.

In addition, peri-urban farmers located close to a large consumer base such as the Greater Sydney Region, have more practical opportunities to build these connections than those located in inland NSW. Supporting and encouraging investment in these activities adds value to farming activities and provides related 'off-farm' income for farming families, diversifying the tourism offering of the LGA, and increasing the returns to the land.

Traditional Custodians in Wollondilly have a variety of landholdings. There may be an opportunity to investigate how these landholdings can best be planned, managed and developed for the benefit of the local Aboriginal community. This may also assist in the development of Aboriginal tourism opportunities such as tours to sites of significance or a bush tucker prospects.

### Yerranderie

Surrounded by National Parks and Yerranderie State Conservation Area, this state heritage area is a remote historical silver mining village. There is a total of 78 properties in private ownership with the remainder of lots are owned by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The village is not publicly accessible through the Wollondilly LGA (except via escorted access for residents) but through the neighbouring Oberon LGA via the 4WD Oberon Colong historic stock route. This area, with its remote location and historic features, holds unique tourism potential. One such opportunity may be in the growing trend for wellness tourism that demands destinations that deliver physical, emotional, spiritual and environmental health. These offerings are typically in locations away from the reminders of a city lifestyle.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

It is a common misperception that only agricultural land uses should be allowed in rural areas. The planning system can present barriers to encouraging tourism facilities in rural areas and provide opportunities for innovation and diversification. For example, while land uses such as farm stays and bed and breakfast accommodation are permissible with consent in rural areas, other tourism uses are not defined.

This situation requires the development of a suitable planning pathway to enable Council to adequately respond to these opportunities. As such, Council is currently in the process of amending the Wollondilly LEP 2011 which includes amending the land use table to permit a variety of compatible tourism uses in the rural areas.

It is important however that the competing demands of tourism development and ensuring the productivity of agricultural land are balanced appropriately. It is recognised that tourism uses within a rural area have the potential for incompatibility with surrounding agricultural land use. It will be important to develop a rural tourism policy with clear strategic direction that considers a set of objectives and principles for tourism uses in the rural areas.

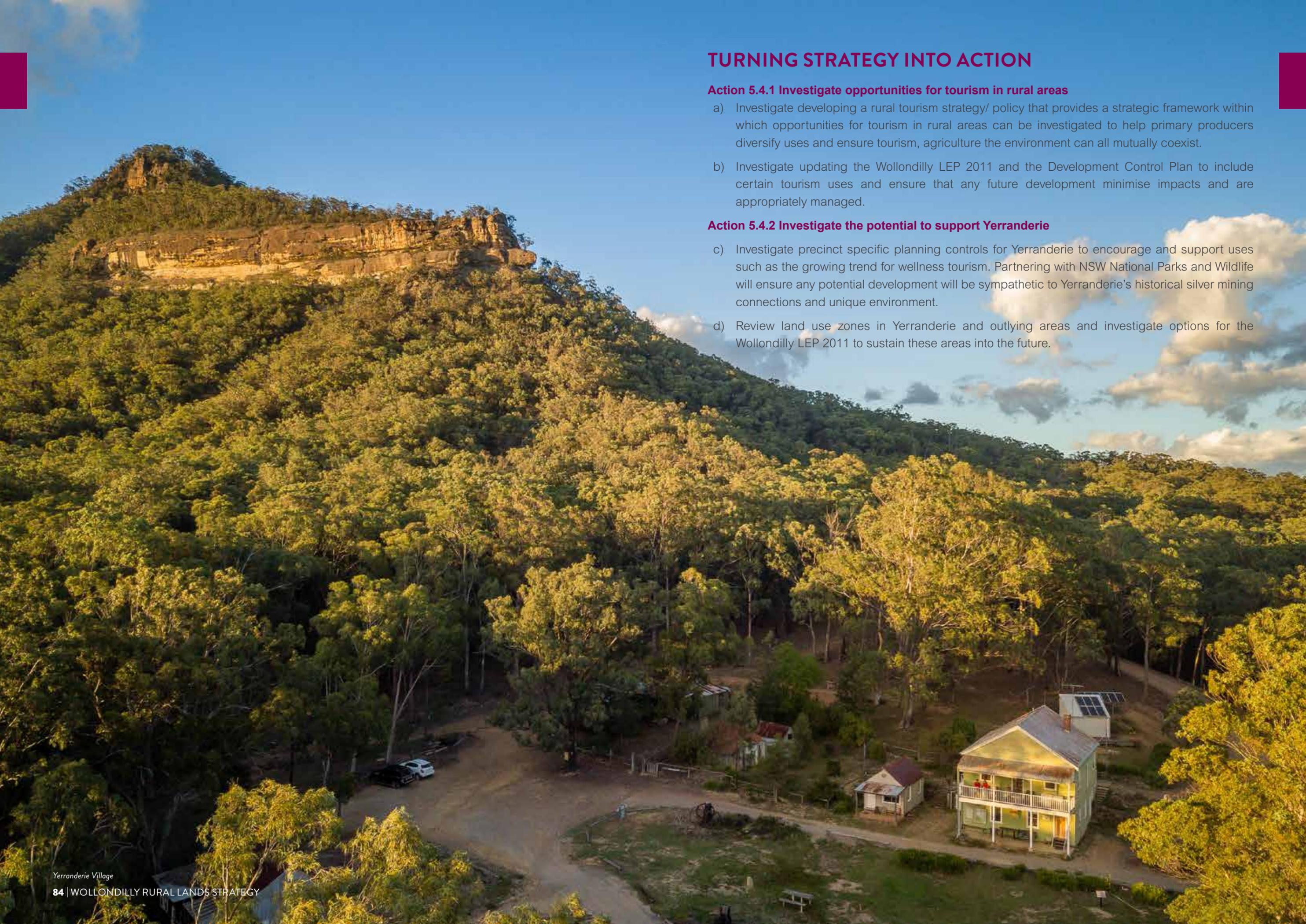
As part of the LEP review, consider tourism as legitimate land uses that may supplement traditional agricultural farming practices, encouraging a variety of tourism uses.

The *Wollondilly Destination Management Plan* highlights the opportunity to better showcase and develop Wollondilly food and produce. There may be opportunities to assist local producers to exploit value add opportunities by better connecting consumers with food producers. This may include updating the *Wollondilly Economic Development Strategy (2015)* to better reflect the economic opportunities of tourism including opportunities to assisting interested producers to invest in capital upgrades to brand and package farm produce as high value boutique products or helping businesses understand how to deliver meaningful tourism experiences, and tap into related demand, from the domestic and international tourist markets. Council can also act as a facilitator to connect farmers to sources of business advice, funding and events for tourism purposes.

### Yerranderie

The remote, privately held land at Yerranderie is currently zoned E3 Environmental Conservation under Wollondilly LEP 2011. There is a need to provide precinct specific planning controls for this unique location to encourage and support uses such as tourism Partnering with NSW National Parks and Wildlife and developing village specific controls for Yerranderie is recommended.

An additional local provision will ensure any potential development will be sympathetic to Yerranderie's historical silver mining connections and unique environment.



## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

### Action 5.4.1 Investigate opportunities for tourism in rural areas

- a) Investigate developing a rural tourism strategy/ policy that provides a strategic framework within which opportunities for tourism in rural areas can be investigated to help primary producers diversify uses and ensure tourism, agriculture the environment can all mutually coexist.
- b) Investigate updating the Wollondilly LEP 2011 and the Development Control Plan to include certain tourism uses and ensure that any future development minimise impacts and are appropriately managed.

### Action 5.4.2 Investigate the potential to support Yerranderie

- c) Investigate precinct specific planning controls for Yerranderie to encourage and support uses such as the growing trend for wellness tourism. Partnering with NSW National Parks and Wildlife will ensure any potential development will be sympathetic to Yerranderie's historical silver mining connections and unique environment.
- d) Review land use zones in Yerranderie and outlying areas and investigate options for the Wollondilly LEP 2011 to sustain these areas into the future.



**PART 6**  
FOCUS AREA 4

*Managing*  
PRESSURE FOR  
RURAL LIVING  
OPPORTUNITIES

**Focus Area 4 - Key Outcome**

Provide direction on the preferred form and location of any long-term residential growth on rural lands

## 6.1 MANAGING RURAL RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Develop a principle-based assessment to rural residential develop to ensure it supports balanced and sustainable growth in Wollondilly

### BACKGROUND

A key issue for this Strategy is the balance between 'development' and 'proliferation' of dwellings within rural areas. This is both an area where there is considerable pressure for development but also where the impact of such development can have the greatest repercussions.

Where a disconnect exists between strong policy and decisions, there is potential for residential development in rural areas to have significant cumulative impacts on the environment and in terms of lost agricultural productivity. Rural residential areas are zoned R5 Large Lot Residential under Wollondilly LEP 2011 and are unique as they are residential development in a rural setting. These areas commonly have larger sized dwellings in contrast to other urban residential development and are generally not associated with agriculture. Rural residential differs from rural housing where agriculture is the primary land use and the dwelling is 'ancillary'.

The Rural Lands Findings Report conducted a supply and demand analysis which investigated how much rural residential land is required in Wollondilly. The analysis showed there are nine localities zoned R5 Large Lot Residential under Wollondilly LEP 2011 covering a total of 824.6 hectares with an undeveloped supply is 112 hectares. There are also several sites that are currently being assessed for rezoning to R5 Rural Residential zone. These rezoning proposals, if approved, will add to the existing supply of rural residential land to a total of 168.9 hectares.

With an estimated demand of between 6.8 hectares and 14 hectares per year this equates to an immediate supply of between 8 to 16 years and a potential supply (if the current rezoning applications are approved) of between 20 to 41 years of rural residential dwellings.

The motivations for rural residential development are generally for the lifestyle benefits of rural areas such as the amenity, tranquility and landscape. Consequently, rural residential development has major implications for the productivity of rural lands. The slow encroachment into agricultural lands has led to the direct loss and fragmentation. Further rezoning of rural residential land in Wollondilly, even after the current supply, will come at a cost to rural productivity. This Strategy aims to consider the demand for rural residential land and balance these interests against broader policy and regulatory considerations to safeguard productive agricultural land.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Rural residential development can have the potential to degrade the very features that purchasers have come to the rural environment for - such as privacy, open 'natural' surroundings and quiet. Rural residential development also comes at a cost to agricultural productivity through land use conflict, as well as to Council and other providers in servicing the land.

The large lot sizes are a relatively inefficient use of land to accommodate residential development compared to more intensive land use zones such as R2 Low Density Residential or RU5 Village. The opportunity exists to focus housing choice to recognised Growth Areas and villages rather than expanding into sensitive rural lands. In addition, the clear preference of the State Government as stated in the Western City District Plan is not to support any further rural residential land.

To prevent the encroachment of urban or residential land into rural land which can be used for primary production activities and scenic landscapes, it is recommended that no further rezoning for rural residential purposes be undertaken, and future residential land be restricted to town/ villages or Growth Areas. Council may however, be able to support rural residential development where it is in areas and forms identified as suitable for such purposes in the agricultural viability study and is consistent with Council's adopted Local Housing Strategy.

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTIONS

### Action 6.1.1 Managing rural residential growth to preserve the viability of primary production

- a) Prevent the encroachment of urban or residential lands into areas rural areas outside the identified growth areas or existing village footprints by not zoning any further land in Wollondilly for residential (excluding rural housing) unless clearly identified for these uses in the Local Housing strategy.
- b) Not zoning any further land outside the existing village footprints for rural residential purposes until the completion of the agricultural viability study, and once that study is completed only support rural residential development where:
  - i) it is in areas and forms identified as suitable for such purposes in the agricultural viability study and;
  - ii) is consistent with the adopted local housing strategy.
- c) That after the completion of the agricultural viability study the local housing strategy be updated at its next review specifically with regards to potential rural residential development within the shire.

## 6.2 DELIVER WELL PLANNED RURAL DWELLING OPTIONS

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Provide a clear direction, transparency and certainty for presence of dwelling entitlements on rural lands
- Continue to provide new dwelling options for some rural properties through dual occupancies (attached), secondary dwellings and rural workers dwellings

### BACKGROUND

Rural dwellings are dwellings predominantly located on rural lands that are generally required to conduct agricultural activities on the land. In most instances, rural dwellings are essential on-farm properties that are the place of residence of the farmer and/or family members.

Rural dwellings that are not related to agricultural activities are generally a less sustainable form of development. These often-isolated dwellings lead to car-dependency, generates more travel than urban settlements, and can lead to the clearing of vegetation and poor environmental outcomes.

The minimum lot size, amongst other planning considerations such as flooding, is the main determinant as to whether a lot is entitled to the development of a dwelling in rural zones. It should be noted that a rural dwelling can be approved without Council's planning consent under provisions of the State Government's SEPP (Exempt and Complying).

### Rural Dwellings Definitions

*The Wollondilly LEP 2011 contains the definitions for different types of rural dwellings including the following:*

**Attached dual occupancy** means 2 dwellings on one lot of land that are attached to each other, but does not include a secondary dwelling

**Detached dual occupancy means** 2 detached dwellings on one lot of land, but does not include a secondary dwelling

**Rural worker's dwelling** means a building or place that is additional to a dwelling house on the same lot and that is used predominantly as a place of residence by persons employed, whether on a long-term or short-term basis, for the purpose of agriculture or a rural industry on that land.

**Secondary dwelling** means a self-contained dwelling that-

- a) is established in conjunction with another dwelling (the principal dwelling), and
- b) is on the same lot of land as the principal dwelling, and
- c) is located within, or is attached to, or is separate from, the principal dwelling.



Wollondilly LEP 2011 includes a provision for certain land mapped under the 'Original Holding Map' in the Zone E4 Environmental Living zone (Clause 4.1B). The objective of this provision is to ensure that land is not subdivided and fragmented beyond the density that was originally envisaged for that land.

### **Existing allotment/dwelling entitlement**

On land which is at or greater than the minimum lot size for that zone in the Wollondilly LEP 2011, the ability to lodge a development application for construction of a dwelling is automatically assumed.

**Existing allotments** have usually been described as a lot as at a specified date by the same person.

**Dwelling entitlement** is a right to build a house on a property, because the property is above the legal minimum lot size or is an existing holding.

On land that is below the minimum lot size, it must meet the requirements under Clause 4.2A - Erection of dwelling houses on land in certain residential, rural and environmental protection zones in Wollondilly LEP 2011 to establish if the land has the opportunity to develop a dwelling. This clause is the historical use of a dwelling entitlement.

It is acknowledged that the use of a dwelling entitlement provides flexibility, it also places Council under pressure to permit dwellings on land that may not be suitable due to its characteristics, location or lack of infrastructure and services and increases fragmentation of productive agricultural land. The use of a dwelling entitlement clause is also complex and often relies on historical information and local knowledge of the area.

### **Dual occupancy and secondary dwellings**

Secondary dwellings are essentially a form of dual occupancy but must be secondary to the Principal Dwelling on the land. Within the rural land zones, Wollondilly LEP 2011 permits dual occupancy (attached) and secondary dwellings in the RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape, RU4 Primary Production Small Lots and E4 Environmental Living. Detached dual occupancy are prohibited in the rural areas.

Dual occupancies and secondary dwellings can provide rental income for a farm and can be used to house family members (such as retired farmers seeking to remain on the family land). Secondary dwellings are a way of providing for limited dual occupancy development without encouraging over capitalisation of rural land. It can also assist in providing low cost housing in rural areas. The potential for pressure for subdivision following the development of dual occupancy or secondary dwellings can also be reduced if the dwellings are accessed from the same driveway and are held on the same lot.

Given dual occupancy (attached) and secondary dwellings are already permitted on rural lands, and that demand is relatively low, then retention is recommended to provide affordable or alternative housing options.

### **Rural workers dwellings**

The large distances between towns and villages and some parts of the rural areas in Wollondilly are a legitimate basis for rural workers dwellings. The farming that occurs in the rural areas and the need for workers to be available for long hours during certain seasons is another reason to support this development type.

### **Temporary workers dwellings**

A farm may require some additional labour on a periodic or seasonal basis (say planting or harvesting) but not enough to meet the rural workers dwelling requirements of Wollondilly LEP 2011 and associated policy. There are significant large-scale horticultural enterprises that have been successfully established on land in Wollondilly. The lack of appropriate accommodation and the ability to develop temporary workers' accommodation is also an issue for future enterprises may need to house substantial numbers of workers on a seasonal or temporary basis. Temporary workers dwelling is not a defined term in the Wollondilly LEP 2011 and therefore not currently a permissible use.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

### **Existing holdings/dwelling entitlement**

Streamlining procedures for the determination of dwelling entitlements is seen as a contribution to a better planning process and practice. This will be where all known dwelling entitlements be registered on a 'Dwelling Opportunity Map'. An associated clause can then be drafted into the Clause 4.2A to contain a specific definition of an existing allotments from the date of the Wollondilly Planning Scheme Ordinance which was gazetted on 6 August 1971. This option would also mean removing amending Clause 4.2A to enable a dwelling opportunity map.

Owners of lots where Council has confirmed having a dwelling entitlement subject to consent would be added to the LEP 'Dwelling Opportunity Map'. The amendment could also include preparation of local provisions for its application as well as identifying the existence of any "paper subdivisions" (excluding around Yerranderie) which could allow significantly greater density of dwellings in parts of the rural areas than anticipated.

### **Dual occupancy and secondary dwellings**

Dual occupancy (attached), secondary dwellings and rural workers dwellings will continue to provide feasible dwelling options for some rural properties. It is important that the development of additional dwellings is consistent with the primary use of the land and does not place unrealistic additional demands for infrastructure upon Council. It is also imperative that dual occupancy, secondary dwellings and rural workers dwelling are developed in such a way that the design is rural in style, materials and fabric.

### Rural workers dwellings

Many councils utilise a principle development standard (Part 4 in the Wollondilly LEP 2011) or as a local provision (Part 7 in the Wollondilly LEP 2011) for rural workers' dwellings in rural zones. This clause requires a proponent to demonstrate that the existing agriculture use of the land is sufficient to justify the need for a rural workers dwelling. The dwelling needs to occur on the same lot as an existing lawfully erected dwelling house and allows Council to restrict the number of rural worker dwellings on each lot.

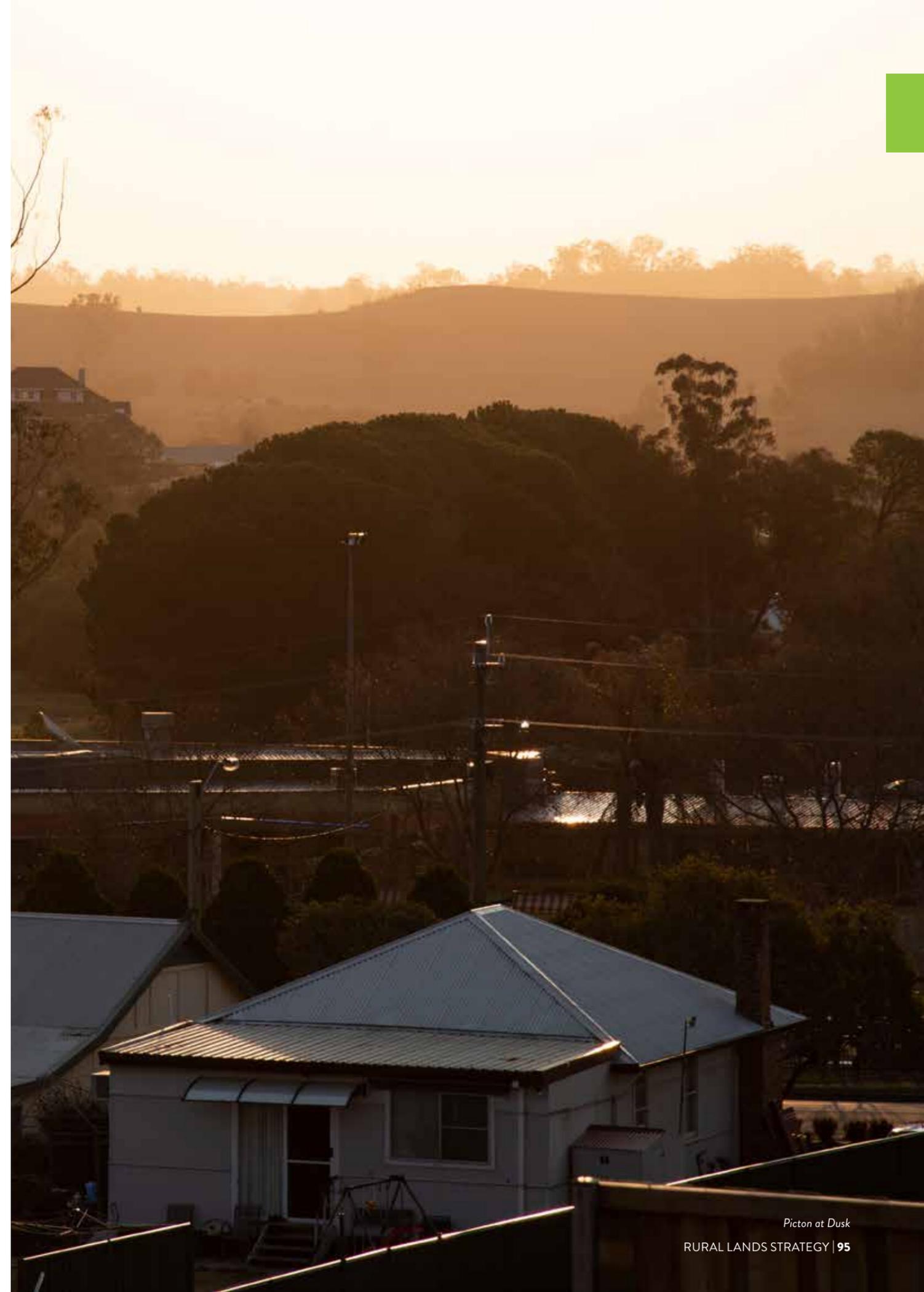
### Temporary workers

Acknowledging that additional labour during peak periods is sometimes required for primary production, an amendment to the Wollondilly LEP 2011 to enable the use of temporary workers dwellings is recommended.

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTIONS

### Action 6.2.1 Review planning policy for rural dwellings

- a) Investigate amending Clause 4.2A of the Wollondilly LEP 2011 to include the following:
  - a 'Dwelling Opportunity Map' upon which all known dwelling entitlements are registered.
  - Identification of any "paper subdivisions" (excluding around Yerranderie) which could allow significantly greater density of dwellings in parts of the rural areas than anticipated.
  - a specific definition of an existing holding from the date of the Wollondilly Planning Scheme Ordinance which was gazetted on 6 August 1971.
- b) Investigate amending Wollondilly LEP 2011 to include a 'Temporary Workers Dwellings' clause to increase accommodation options for seasonal farm workers aiming to:
  - if there is a demonstrated need to accommodate employees due to the nature of the work or the location of the land on which that work is carried out,
  - ensure that temporary workers' accommodation is appropriately located,
  - ensure that the erection of temporary workers' accommodation is not likely to have a detrimental impact on the future use of the land or to conflict with an existing land use,
  - minimise the impact of temporary workers' accommodation on local roads and infrastructure.





## PART 7 FOCUS AREA 5

# *Managing* PLACES WITH SPECIAL LANDSCAPE, RURAL OR SCENIC VALUE

### **Focus Area 5 - Key outcome**

Strengthen and promote the unique landscape, natural, cultural and rural values of Wollondilly's rural areas whilst not impeding the agricultural use of the land.

## 7.1 RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF RURAL LANDSCAPE

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Manage and enhance the rural landscape recognising prevailing native vegetation and topography as important landscape features through the local planning framework and decision-making whilst also not impeding the agricultural use of rural lands

### BACKGROUND

Wollondilly's scenic and natural beauty, its culture, its rural communities, rich heritage and history inspire to plan for a sustainable future that builds on and enhances these special values.

Wollondilly is the traditional lands of the Dharawal and Gundungurra people. The Dharawal and Gundungurra people's long history of settlement has naturally resulted in both tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage within the landscape. This cultural landscape understanding, and the wishes of the Aboriginal community, provide a further rationale for the important values of this landscape.

Identifying landscape, rural and scenic values will assist landowners to plan for a sustainable future that builds on and enhances these assets. Rural character is made up of several components which contribute to the sense of openness and natural beauty experienced in peri-urban areas.

The landscape provides a backdrop for the enjoyment of recreation and tourism participants, contributing to these experiences. Agriculture also plays an important role in protecting the open spaces which exist between settlements. Agricultural landscapes help to define the character and liveability of rural towns with residents in these areas benefitting from this rural amenity. It is also acknowledged that agricultural producers and other rural landowners largely shoulder the costs associated with providing this rural amenity which the community enjoys, and this fact should be reflected in council policies and land rating strategies.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Identifying landscape, rural and scenic values will assist Council and landowners to plan for and recognise these important assets in the planning system. The development of landscape, rural and scenic values management objectives and Rural Locality Values Character Statements' for localities will assist in assessing R5 (Large Lot Residential), significant Rural residential or other large development which may impact these values. These statements (which will not apply to agricultural land uses), will be the first step to protecting and enhancing the rural landscape, recognising prevailing native vegetation, agricultural uses and topography as important landscape features.

The need to ensure the conservation of rural landscape and scenic values must also be balanced against the needs of the shire's agricultural producers to be able to productively work their land, including being able to expand or intensify their operations. Consequently any strategy or action specifically aimed at protecting rural landscapes or scenic values shall not impede upon the use of RU1, RU2 or RU4 land for agriculture or related ancillary uses.

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTIONS

### Action 7.1.1. Investigate protecting the rural landscape

- a) Investigate developing landscape, rural and scenic values management objectives that consider the compatibility and impact of new R5 or large scale Rural Residential development to the scale, character and visual quality of the existing rural fabric. The objectives could form part of a local provision for scenic amenity in the Wollondilly LEP 2011 or part of a DCP amendment for scenic values through any future landscape study.
- b) Investigate developing 'Rural Landscape Character Statements' to specifically address the unique value of natural, man-made and cultural features which contribute to a sense of place and the local identity of rural localities through any future landscape study.
- c) Ensure any strategy or action specifically aimed at protecting rural landscapes or scenic values does not impede upon the use of RU1, RU2 or RU4 land for agriculture or related ancillary uses.
- d) Review the Council's rating strategy and other council policies to better recognise the contributions made by agricultural producers in providing the rural amenity enjoyed by the shire's residents.



**PART 8**  
FOCUS AREA 6

*Balancing*  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
OUTCOMES  
ON RURAL LANDS

**Focus Area 6 - Key outcome**

Ensure that development on rural land responds to extreme weather events, avoids hazards, and retains important biodiversity values of the land.

## 8.1 RESPOND TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS BY AVOIDING HAZARDS

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Ensure future use and development applies the precautionary principle to avoid bushfire and flooding risks

### BACKGROUND

Wollondilly's rural lands are vulnerable to both flooding and bushfires. These hazards are already identified in the Wollondilly LEP 2011 as well as the Wollondilly DCP 2016.

There are two known flood plains in Wollondilly that have been identified including Stonequarry Creek (Picton) and the Wallacia floodplain. Flooding in Picton can occur as a result of flow breaking out of the main channel of Stonequarry Creek and inundating the surrounding floodplain. *The Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Regional Flood Study (2019)*, identified the Wallacia floodplain as a relatively small catchment but has the potential for the deepest flooding in Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley. A flood study has not been undertaken for the whole LGA.

Bushfires are an inherent part of the environment within Wollondilly. This was recently demonstrated in the 2019/2020 bushfires that impacted many rural areas in Wollondilly, especially areas such as Bargo. Significant portions of the rural areas in Wollondilly are mapped as bushfire prone land. The Wollondilly LSPS stated 88% of the Shire is identified as being prone to bush fires.

*Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019*, developed by the NSW Rural Fire Service, provides development standards for designing and building on bush fire prone land. The guidelines now include a procedure for strategic planning in bushfire prone lands, as well as for development assessment. The guidelines propose that any proposal in bushfire prone areas need to undertake a Strategic Bush Fire Study.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The risks of flooding and bushfire are important considerations when identifying potential areas for intensive agriculture, such as poultry farms, and value-adding infrastructure and facilities, such as on-farm processing.

Understanding where flooding occurs in the LGA is the first step to managing the risk. The development of an LGA wide study was recognised as an action in the Wollondilly LSPS (Action 18.4). This Strategy supports the developments of an LGA wide flood study.

This Strategy also supports the requirement prescribed in *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* to require any strategic planning proposal in bushfire prone areas to undertake a Strategic Bush Fire Study.

The development of the studies will give the opportunity to assess whether new development is appropriate in the bush fire hazard context at an early stage. It is particularly important that bushfire hazard be considered in relation to any proposed rural dwellings or large rural businesses. These need to ensure that the proposed development is either not within a hazard area, or if it is, then the hazard can be managed responsibly and without loss of ecologically significant vegetation.

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

### Action 8.1.1 Investigate reviewing background studies and maps for hazards

- a) Investigate developing a comprehensive LGA wide flood study
- b) Review and update the Bush Fire Prone Lands map

## 8.2 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND LIVING WITH A CHANGING CLIMATE

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Respond to extreme weather events and the challenges of a changing climate
- Support rural landholders to build resilience to the challenges of a changing climate

### BACKGROUND

The impacts of a changing climate and extreme weather events are already been recognised and responded to by the Wollondilly community, especially since the 2019/2020 bushfires season. Living with climate impacts include increased risk of summer storms, higher average temperatures and reduced growing season rainfall.

Extreme weather events and limited access to reliable water supplies have the potential to limit some agricultural development in Wollondilly. Irrigation provides a buffer against unseasonal conditions, albeit the area with irrigation development potential is limited.

Increased frequency and severity of droughts will also be a challenge for dryland livestock and cropping enterprises. Vegetable and fruit producers may need to consider changing varieties and greater use of crop protection measures such as netting, to adjust to changing climate conditions. A lack of water access is already a significant issue for the majority of the Wollondilly area, with this expected to become even more acute into the near future.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Council will continue to monitor the local impacts of a changing climate, assisting communities through adaptation support and education, whilst participating in whole of government climate leadership responses. This will be important in assisting communities develop resilience to these impacts.

Rural land use, infrastructure plans and related decisions will also need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and take account of up-to-date modelling about weather conditions. There are a number of possible actions that may be taken including:

- Embed living with climate impacts into local policy and decision making about farming activities across Wollondilly
- Ensure future use and development applies the precautionary principle to avoid bushfire and flooding risks
- Support the adaptation of agricultural practices to the impacts of a changing climate through appropriate local policy that supports such things as crop protection measures and subdivision sizes suited to future agricultural practices

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

### Action 8.2.1 Investigate impacts of a changing climate and suitable adaption measures

- a) Support and encourage changing climate adaptation measures in association with Local Land Services in the use and management of rural land (including, but not limited to, regenerative agriculture, hydroponic and greenhouse ventures, water retention techniques and carbon sequestration).
- b) Continue working with the community to ensure resilience to extreme climatic events and increase awareness of extreme weather events on land use through social media and other Council educational programs.

## 8.3 PROTECT AREAS WITH BIODIVERSITY VALUES

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Significant aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity values are protected throughout the rural land through decision-making and policy development at local level

## BACKGROUND

Biodiversity is a term that describes the variety of nature and embraces the various living parts of the world around us. Natural values are important to the sense of place experienced in Wollondilly's rural areas and featured strongly in community feedback. The management and protection of these features will ensure they can continue to be appreciated by residents and visitors.

The land use planning framework currently has various environmental policy at a local, regional and state level. In addition to the application of environmental protection zones, the Wollondilly LEP 2011 includes environmental constraints mapping and local provisions addressing terrestrial biodiversity and riparian corridors.

Private rural land provides an important role in supporting ecological processes and biodiversity. Clearing of native vegetation on rural land is legislated by the *Local Land Services Act 2013* and the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Often, Local Land Services assess and approve the clearing of native vegetation which depends on the purpose, nature, location and extent of the clearing.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Land management issues are a challenge for rural landowners and Council will support landowners through a range of practical education, training and policy directions that support effective land management.

Council will also continue to manage environmental reserves and roadsides in rural areas prioritising actions that enhance aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity and provide opportunities for recreation. Council will explore the creation of walking trails to provide recreation and link reserves where possible.

Given Local Land Services manage native vegetation on rural lands Councils options are limited. However, as the pressure for residential development in rural lands continues it will be important to protect biodiversity values in Wollondilly.

## TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

### Action 8.3.1 Investigate the development of a framework for the protection of biodiversity

- a) Investigate updating the Biodiversity Strategy to provide an overall framework for the protection and management of biodiversity.

## 8.4 PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### Strategic aims to work towards by 2040 -

- Promote the sustainable use and management of rural land through land management practices in rural areas.

### BACKGROUND

Good land management, including grazing, prevents the escalation of weeds, pest animals and issues of soil erosion, as well as promoting waterway health and biodiversity values. Good land management also has an economic benefit in promoting livestock health.

The main forms of land degradation relevant to rural areas in Wollondilly are nutrient loss and soil loss through water or wind erosion. In addition to inputs from septic tank systems and urban runoff, loss of nutrients applied as fertiliser to the land and their subsequent accumulation within natural water bodies can be a significant environmental problem due to the effects on riverine, estuarine or wetland ecology.

Soil structure decline from excessive tillage can adversely affect seedling emergence, root growth, infiltration, water storage, aeration and soil workability, all of which can reduce crop yields. Water repellence can also reduce crop yields and is caused by organic matter or 'waxy' coatings of hydrophobic material on soil particles. These affect the wetting pattern of sandy soils in particular.

Due to the complexity of land uses and the influence of land management requirements and resources on productivity, strict land use controls and narrow strategic objectives often cannot effectively resolve planning issues in rural areas.

The planning system has traditionally been developed to deal with urban land uses through the development assessment process. However, this approach cannot be applied the same way in rural lands as many land uses within rural lands do not require consent.

Agricultural and rural land uses are constantly evolving with the advancement of rural technology and land management practices, environmental and health considerations, such as buffer requirements for certain rural industries due to biosecurity reasons. The *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015* as well as Department of Primary Industry's various policies regarding biosecurity measures provide primary producers with significant guidance.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Future strategies must focus on achieving sustainability of agricultural productivity and rural land uses focusing on land management principles rather than tight land use controls, whilst acknowledging prevailing social, economic and environmental issues. For instance, regenerative farming is becoming increasingly popular on all farm sizes in response to landowners struggles with land management and agricultural viability. The approach seeks to increase native vegetation, including tree cover and native grasses.

Both good and poor standards of land management are observed on both small and large lots in Wollondilly and to a large degree depend on the resources, capability, attitude, interest or understanding of landowners and land managers.

Council will continue to support landowners and land managers through grants, rebate schemes and other incentives. Council currently has a program run by the community nursery which offers five free native plants per quarter, 20 plants per year, to all Wollondilly households. Programs run through organisations such as Local Land Services have been set up to support agricultural land uses, encourage sustainable land use and good land management.

Council has also developed the *Wollondilly Biosecurity (Weed Management) Strategy 2020 – 2025 and Biosecurity (Weed Management) Policy*. These documents provide a framework for the management of weeds that will achieve the greatest outcomes in terms of preventing weeds from establishing, eradicating new weeds and minimising the impact of established weeds.

They also provide both support and advice about managing issues such as weeds, pests and environmental values to landowners. The policy explores improvements that better support sustainable agriculture and land management.

### TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

#### Action 8.4.1 Implement land and resource management practices

- a) Continue working with Local Land Services and landholders to provide education and assistance where possible to implement good land management practices.
- b) Investigate implementing a Biosecurity Policy.





## PART 9

# Implementation

Implementation of this Strategy will occur progressively over time. It is the nature of this Strategy that it sets the broad direction for Wollondilly and will guide future Wollondilly LEP 2011 amendments as well as other planning investigations.

This Strategy will be referred to by Council on an ongoing and frequent basis – particularly in relation to informing the planning proposals or proposed developments in rural land areas. The actions specified in this Strategy will guide Councils' decisions relating to the following as they apply to rural land areas:

- Council's ongoing program of internal strategic planning
- Council's ongoing program of introducing or improving specific policies and guidelines
- existing statutory responsibilities, including applications for development and subdivision approval
- support for initiatives undertaken by other organisations and individuals
- establishment of formal arrangements, agreements and intergovernmental responsibilities for future decision making
- liaison with external parties to improve land use planning, development and management
- Council's ongoing programs relating to infrastructure and service provision, and the delivery of economic and social services

## 9.1 STATUTORY IMPLEMENTATION

Wollondilly Shire Council and the NSW Government will continue to work together to implement this Strategy. The Strategy actions and mapping will directly influence the LEP, related development control plans and other statutory documents.

The Wollondilly LEP 2011 and Wollondilly DCP 2016, along with other associated strategies, plans and policies, provide the means of ensuring that development of rural lands is consistent with the long-term land use vision and guiding principles identified in this Strategy

## 9.2 IMPLEMENTING THE ACTIONS

Council will utilise the following tools when implementing the actions contained in this Strategy.

- Community engagement - Council will engage with the community and stakeholders to raise awareness and encourage community involvement in rural issues or actions contained in this Strategy. This will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Participation Plan.
- Capacity building - Council will provide information, education and resources to develop internal capacity and to support capacity-building in the community as well as the rural sector.
- Collaboration - Council will collaborate with neighbouring councils, government agencies, business and community organisations through formal and informal partnerships to deliver initiatives and advocate for change.
- Policy development - Council will develop policies based on the actions contained in this Strategy. The policies will draw on the evidence-base provided in the Rural Findings Report, best practice and innovative approaches to address rural issues.

## 9.3 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

This Strategy identifies a number of actions which involve participation and collaboration with State and local organisations to enable their realisation. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
- Department of Primary Industries
- Western Sydney Airport Authority
- Sydney Water
- Water NSW
- Transport NSW
- Local Land Services
- Tharawal LALC
- Gundungurra LALC
- Geological Survey NSW
- NSW Subsidence Board
- Research institutions
- Adjoining Councils

The Rural Lands Reference Group were a significant resource to the development of this Strategy and it is recommended that this group continue to meet on a quarterly basis for the next two years to provide progress on the implementation of the Strategy and collaborate on the delivery of key initiatives.

## 9.4 REVIEW

While the Rural Strategy sets out a 20-year vision for the management of Wollondilly's rural lands, it is likely that characteristics of the Shire and the demands placed on it will continue to change over time.

As a result, this strategy shall be reviewed at least once per term of council to ensure that it still reflects contemporary planning practice while maintaining the needs and requirements of the local community.



# APPENDIX A

## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

## STRATEGY ACTION SUMMARY - OVERVIEW

To further develop the approach as a response to the local rural context, each of the six focus area is underpinned by a number of supporting actions as outlined throughout Part 2 of this Strategy.

To assist in the implementation of these actions, a consolidated summary of all actions are provided in the following pages. The actions have been divided into two areas:

- **LEP Amendment Actions:** These actions will result in amendment to the Wollondilly LEP 2011
- **General Actions:** These actions will be developed under other mechanisms including further Council investigations or is not a core responsibility of Wollondilly Shire Council

The summary also establishes the role of Council in the delivery of each action. While Council is taking a leading role in balancing the rural land use and setting planning controls generally, there are also actions where rural land use issues are not contained within the boundaries of the Wollondilly LGA or under Council's control. For these reasons, Council's role may sometimes take a different form as shown below.

The summary also identifies relative priorities of actions as well as prerequisite actions that need to be completed prior to that action being implemented.

Actions will not be considered for implementation unless/until all prerequisite actions have been completed.

### Council's Role is broken into five key areas of responsibility

<b>Lead</b>	Council lead action
<b>Collaborate</b>	Council as an equal partner
<b>Support</b>	Council as an enabler
<b>Advocate</b>	Council taking an advocacy role
<b>Investigate</b>	Council conducting research and feasibility studies

### The Priority of each action sits in one of three categories

<b>High</b>	1 - 3 Years for completion
<b>Medium</b>	3 - 6 Years for completion
<b>Low</b>	6 - 10 Years for completion

## STRATEGY ACTIONS - SUMMARY

### FOCUS AREA 1 - MANAGING RURAL ZONES BUILDING A STRONG DIVERSE AND VIABLE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

#### 3.1 GROWING A STRONG, VIABLE AND DIVERSE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
3.1.1	Undertake as a priority action an Agricultural Viability study for sustainable agricultural production, both current and into the future.	Undertake as a priority action an Agricultural Viability Study that analyses the mechanisms needed for the future viability of primary production including an assessment of short and long term viability of a number of models outlined in Action 3.1.1 of this Strategy.	Lead	None	High
3.1.2	Create and promote opportunities for existing and new forms of agriculture and potential new enterprises in rural areas.	a) Investigate the subdivision and development of identified small holdings rural land where there is a demonstrable opportunity to diversify or intensify productivity of the land.	Lead	None	Medium
		b) In conjunction with part a) above, investigate 'small scale' or affordable farming opportunities on RU1 and RU2 land that support agricultural viability and affordability, whilst ensuring any potential development for 'small scale' farming satisfies strict requirements for the land to be used solely for agricultural purposes.	Lead	None	Medium
		c) Consider alternative systems for primary production such as collective farming and agricultural cooperatives in development of future land use planning policy, subdivision assessment and development application.	Lead	None	Medium

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
		d) Continue to review and amend the Local Environmental Plan to ensure that intensification and diversification of agricultural production can occur, including the need for support infrastructure (e.g. water storages) and emerging opportunities (e.g. solar energy), while managing potential land use conflicts.	Lead	None	Medium
3.1.3	Investigate the development of an Agricultural business development framework.	<p>a) Develop an 'Agricultural Business Development Framework' (collaborating with adjoining councils) to assist primary producers including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitate business relocation into the rural zones of the Wollondilly LGA particularly from the poultry, horticulture and horse industries</li> <li>• develop a primary production prospectus with the potential of attracting new investment into primary production.</li> </ul>	Lead	None	Medium
		b) Develop a local business newsletter to facilitate farming connections that would allow Council to send out information about grant opportunities, workshops and networking events.	Lead	None	Low
		c) Lobby the federal government to include Wollondilly LGA in the pilot program for seasonal workers.	Advocate	None	High
		d) Lobby the federal government for Wollondilly to be included in the second year visa scheme.	Advocate	None	High

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
3.1.4	Advocate for and explore the implementation of an agricultural enterprise credit scheme.	a) Continue to work with the Institute for Sustainable Futures and the Rural Industry Advisory Committee (RICAC) to investigate mechanisms whereby an Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme (AECS) can be applied within the planning framework to rezonings and/or certain development applications.	Lead/Support	None	High
		b) Advocate for a tradeable credit scheme or other incentives to be incorporated into the NSW Planning system as a means of incentivising agricultural production on rural lands and minimising the land lost to urban encroachment.	Advocate	None	High
		c) Investigate amending Wollondilly LEP 2011 to include a local provision that would enable the operation of a trial Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme in identified areas of the shire.	Lead	None	High
		d) Advocate for DPIE to review SEPP (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006 to include a provision that would enable the operation of a trial Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme in those areas under the SEPP that fall within Wollondilly.	Lead	None	High
3.1.5	Investigate ways in which generation changes in ownership can be best facilitated and managed within the Planning Framework	a) Investigate opportunities and mechanisms to effectively manage generational change in ownership and operation of agricultural properties and enterprises that doesn't also create unintended consequences.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
3.1.6	Investigate LEP changes to encourage greater horticultural production	a) <b>Review</b> Wollondilly LEP 2011 with a view to allowing intensive Plant Horticulture and construction/operation of associated infrastructure such as greenhouses, hothouses, polytunnels, igloos and hydroponic systems as exempt development within areas zoned RU1 Primary Production	Lead	None	Medium
		b) <b>Review</b> Wollondilly LEP 2011 with a view to allowing intensive Plant Horticulture and construction/operation of associated infrastructure such as greenhouses, hothouses, polytunnels, igloos and hydroponic systems as exempt development or complying development within areas zoned RU2 Rural Landscape.	Lead	None	Medium
		c) <b>Review</b> Wollondilly LEP 2011 with a view to allowing intensive Plant Horticulture and construction/operation of associated infrastructure such as greenhouses, hothouses, polytunnels, igloos and hydroponic systems as either complying development or permitted with consent within areas zoned RU4 Primary Production Small Lots and other appropriate zones.	Lead	None	Low
		d) <b>Investigate amending</b> Wollondilly DCP 2016 to encourage greater horticultural production within the shire and streamline controls and approval pathways.	Lead	None	High

### 3.2 SAFEGUARD THE PRODUCTIVE CAPABILITY OF GREATER SYDNEY REGION'S PERI-URBAN AGRICULTURE

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
3.2.1	Investigate LEP changes for important agricultural land (following the completion of an Agricultural Viability Study for the Shire as required by Action 3.1.1)	a) Investigate amending Wollondilly LEP 2011 to include a local provision, with the assistance of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The aim of the clause is to ensure that existing agricultural land remains available for agricultural purposes and prevents subdivision for urban purposes unless it is prescribed in a Council endorsed Strategy.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium
		b) Develop an overlay map that identifies important peri urban agricultural land	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium
3.2.2	Investigate developing rural subdivision guidelines	a) Investigate the development of a guideline that considers when and where rural subdivision is acceptable for both small lot agricultural purposes (under Clause 4.2 Wollondilly LEP 2011) or for the purposes of rural lifestyle lots. This would contain comprehensive, clear guidance for rural land subdivision and be in a plain English, user friendly format.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1. Completion of Action 3.2.3 below requiring review of Council's Development Control Plan.	Medium
3.2.3	Review the Development Control Plan for rural dwelling, rural industries and other rural enterprises	a) Amend the Wollondilly Development Control Plan (DCP) 2016 to include new guidelines, controls, objectives and principles for effective and appropriate planning, development and management for Rural Dwellings, Agricultural uses, Rural Industries and other rural enterprises.	Lead	None	High

### 3.3 MANAGING RURAL LAND USE CONFLICTS

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
3.3.1	Manage sensitive uses and agricultural land	a) Investigate developing a set of land suitability criteria to be utilised in the assessment of a non-farming activity such as rural lifestyle dwelling or subdivision	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium
		b) Investigate developing a 'sensitive agricultural land use' map which identifies areas of potential land use conflict that may trigger the use of the criteria. The map will include uses such as poultry sheds and extractive industries. Require all Planning Proposals affected by the 'sensitive agricultural land use', especially in areas that have a significant number of intensive livestock agriculture, to include a Land Use Conflict Study.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium
		c) Continuing the application of Wollondilly Shire Council's <i>Good Neighbour Charter for the Wollondilly Poultry Industry</i> to assist in good neighbour procedures and practices.	Collaborate	None	High (ongoing)
3.3.2	Provide ongoing protection of productive agriculture through buffers	a) Continued use of the Clause 5.18 'Intensive livestock agriculture' and the Clause 7.6 'Development within a designated buffer area' of the Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011.	Lead	None	High (ongoing)
		a) Review as an interim measure, <i>Buffer Zones to Reduce Land Use Conflict with Agriculture</i> (DPI 2018) when assessing applications and planning proposal for sensitive uses.	Lead	Completion of Action 3.2.3 below requiring review of Council's Development Control Plan.	High

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
3.3.3	Develop a right to farm framework	a) Develop a local right to farm framework or guidelines that mediates complaints, or a complaint register to effectively manage activities over time.	Lead	None	High
		b) Develop a media strategy for the regular distribution of Council and community information to assist in educating all residents regarding rural issues.	Lead	None	Medium
		c) Advocate for DPI to review Managing Biosecurity Risks in Land Use Planning and Development Guide, October 2020 and revise the types and size of buffer zones for farms on the Eastern side of the Great Dividing Range to better reflect the smaller size and more intensive nature of these operations.	Advocate	None	Medium

### 3.4 SUSTAINABLY MANAGE AND CONSERVE WATER RESOURCES

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
3.4.1	Review local policies regarding water protection and security	a) Continue to protect riparian areas through Clause 7.3 Water Protection, Wollondilly LEP 2011.	Lead	None	High (ongoing)
		b) Review policy within Wollondilly DCP to promote the efficient use and re-use of water in agricultural and other rural land uses as well as any urban development that has the potential to supply water to rural areas. The policy may also include incentives for the sustainable use of water.	Lead	None	High
		c) Investigate finalising and implementing integrated water management policy, strategy and waster sensitive urban design (WSUD) guidelines.	Lead	None	Completed
		d) Review Wollondilly Development Control Plan for high impact development to consider the integrated water management policy, strategy and WSUD guidelines once finalised.	Lead	None	High
3.4.2	Coordinate and advocate sustainably manage water resources for primary producers.	a) Lobby WaterNSW regarding the issuing of water licenses within the catchment and the economic viability of farms in the LGA.	Advocate	None	High (ongoing)
		b) Continue working with the Sydney Water to provide secure, sustainable and long-term water supply solutions including the expansion of its water recycling plant to support food production.	Support/ Advocate	None	High (ongoing)

### FOCUS AREA 2 - MANAGING RURAL ZONES

#### 4.1 DEVELOP CLEAR AND COORDINATED ZONING

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
<b>LEP Amendment Actions</b>					
4.1.1	Review the RU1 Primary Production zone	a) Review the objectives and direction in the RU1 Primary Production zone that safeguards primary production.	Lead	None	Medium
		b) Review all permissible land uses within the RU1 Primary Production zone to limit the encroachment of non-agricultural or incompatible land uses which may conflict with agriculture and provide more flexibility for primary producers. This shall include consideration of allowing intensive plant agriculture to be permissible without consent.	Lead	None	High
		c) Review the minimum lot size for all areas in the Wollondilly LEP 2011. This may involve developing a range of criteria influencing agricultural outputs (water supply, soil type, buffer requirements and existing environmental and/or biodiversity constraints).	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium
		d) Investigate adjusting zone boundaries for minor changes to better reflect existing land use.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
4.1.2	Review the RU2 Rural Landscape zone	a) Review the objectives in the RU2 Rural Landscape zone that identify the clear land use purpose of this zone including having a landscape and scenic value as well as a primary production purpose.	Lead	None	Medium
		b) Review all permissible land uses within the RU2 Rural Landscape zone to reflect landscape and scenic values, with a more rural lifestyle value. Consider removal of intensive animal agricultural uses as permissible with consent in this zone and revise with possible overlays as part of a future scenic and landscapes study (refer to chapter 7 for more information).	Lead	None	Medium
		c) Review the minimum lot size for all areas in the Wollondilly LEP 2011.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium
		d) Investigate the feasibility and need for any RU3 Forestry zoned land in the Shire or the inclusion of these land uses within other rural zones.	Lead	None	Medium

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
4.1.3	Review the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone	a) Develop a set of criteria to review the RU4 Primary Production Small Lot zone to better reflect existing clusters of land use. This will include criteria for a transition to the following zones, E4 Environmental Living zone, RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape zone or RU6 Transition zone.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium
		b) Review the objectives in the RU4 Primary Production Small Lot zone that identify the clear land use purpose of this zone including having a landscape and scenic value as well as a primary production purpose.	Lead	None	Medium
		c) Review all permissible land uses within the RU4 Primary Production Small Lot zone to ensure it reflects contemporary small lot farming needs.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium
4.1.4	Investigate the use of the RU6 Transition Zone in the Shire.	a) Investigate introducing the RU6 Transition zone with a minimum lot size that reflects the average lot size (or minimum lot size) in each area. The transition zone is to be used in special circumstances only in order to provide a transition between rural land uses (including intensive agriculture, landfills, mining and extractive industries) and other areas supporting more intensive settlement or environmental sensitivities. This zone is not to be used to identify future urban land.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
4.1.5	Review the E4 Environmental Living zone	a) Review objectives and permissible land uses within the E4 Environmental Living zone ( <i>note: this may require a place-based approach</i> )	Lead	None	Medium
		b) Investigate through a local provision overlay in the E4 Environmental Living zone the archaeological, landscape, and ecological, cultural or scientific values, to ensure any sensitive areas are protected and celebrated. This should be revised as part of any future rural landscapes study.	Lead	None	Medium
4.1.6	Action 4.1.6 Review the Rural Land use Zones	a) Review land zoned for each of the RU land use zones across the Shire following the completion of the agricultural viability strategy to ensure that the land use zoning and the characteristics of the land are consistent. (noting that this requirement does not extend to the part of action 4.1.1 to give consideration to allowing intensive plant agriculture to be permissible without consent in the RU1 Primary Production Zone).	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1 (this pre-requisite does not extend to the part of Action 4.1.1 to give consideration to allowing intensive plant agriculture to be permissible without consent in the RU1 Primary Production Zone).	Medium
4.1.7	Develop provisions for truck and transport depots in rural zones	a) Develop a local provision to limit the size of truck and transport depots operations in the RU1 Primary Production and/or RU2 Rural Landscape zones	Lead	None	High

## FOCUS AREA 3 - MANAGE THE RURAL COMMUNITY, ECONOMY AND SERVICES

### 5.1 SUSTAINABLY MANAGE MINERAL RESOURCES

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
5.1.1	Protect mineral resources and manage risks	a) Consider the development of maps for high-risk areas with potential subsidence issues and develop policies to minimise the number of structures on a site-by-site basis until such time as the mining activity is complete, in partnership with the Subsidence Advisory NSW.	Lead/ Collaborate	None	High
		b) Investigate identifying typical haulage routes for extractive resources and ensure that these are considered in planning controls and planning decisions, including contributions and infrastructure plans, for relevant development in the locality.	Lead/ Collaborate	None	High

## 5.2 LEVERAGING EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES OF THE WESTERN SYDNEY AEROTROPOLIS

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
5.2.1	Investigate protection of airport safety	a) Investigate developing a local provision in the Wollondilly LEP 2011 to protect airport safety, if it is not protected under a SEPP, in consultation with Western Sydney Airport and the Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment.	Lead	None	Medium
5.2.2	Investigate leveraging opportunities for the primary production sector as part of the Agricultural Viability Study to include the agribusiness sector	a) Investigate leveraging opportunities for the primary production sector as part of the Agricultural Viability Study (Action 3.1.1). This should include investigating mechanisms to promote rural Wollondilly as a place for primary production as through 'paddock to plate' opportunities.	Lead/ Collaborate	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	Medium
5.2.3	Support research opportunities	a) Support any research opportunities scheduled for the Aerotropolis with the University of Sydney Institute of Agriculture and EMAI and the relevant state agencies	Support/ Advocate	None	Medium (Ongoing)
5.2.4	Investigate and advocate for improved links for freight and logistics	a) Advocate with Transport NSW and Western Sydney Airport to ensure improved links for freight and logistics to Silverdale and surrounds.	Support/ Advocate	None	Medium

## 5.3 SUPPORT STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT NETWORKS

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
5.3.1	Support the provision of transport infrastructure	a) Advocate the State and Federal Government to identify, coordinate, prioritise and fund road projects that help support the regional transport network and the function of rural industries in Wollondilly.	Collaborate	None	High
		b) Review Wollondilly's Section 7.11 contributions and other contributions mechanisms to fund the necessary local infrastructure for the expected traffic generated from rural development (such as mining and farm-based businesses).	Lead	None	High
		c) Consider undertaking a rural road and bridge assessment when deemed necessary for major rural development so that Council is not required to bring forward major replacement of infrastructure that it has not budgeted for.	Investigate	None	High

## 5.4 EXPAND RURAL TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
5.4.1	Investigate opportunities for tourism in rural areas	a) Investigate developing a rural tourism strategy/ policy that provides a strategic framework within which opportunities for tourism in rural areas can be investigated to help primary producers diversify uses and ensure tourism, agriculture the environment can all mutually coexist.	Lead	Completion of Stage 1A and Stage 2 Visitor Economy Planning Proposals to expand tourism uses in the Shire	High
		b) Investigate updating the Wollondilly LEP 2011 and the Development Control Plan to include certain tourism uses and ensure that any future development minimise impacts and are appropriately managed.	Lead	None	High
5.4.2	Investigate the potential to support Yerranderie	a) Investigate precinct specific planning controls for Yerranderie to encourage and support uses such as the growing trend for wellness tourism. Partnering with NSW National Parks and Wildlife will ensure any potential development will be sympathetic to Yerranderie's historical silver mining connections and unique environment.	Lead	None	Medium
		b) Review land use zones in Yerranderie and outlying areas and investigate options for the Wollondilly LEP 2011 to sustain these areas into the future.	Lead	None	High

## FOCUS AREA 4 - MANAGING PRESSURE FOR RURAL LIVING OPPORTUNITIES

### 6.1 MANAGING RURAL RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
6.1.1	Managing rural residential growth to preserve the viability of primary production	a) Prevent the encroachment of urban or residential lands into areas rural areas outside the identified growth areas or existing village footprints by not zoning any further land in Wollondilly for residential (excluding rural housing) unless clearly identified for these uses in the Local Housing strategy.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	High
		b) Not zoning any further land outside the existing village footprints for rural residential purposes until the completion of the agricultural viability study, and once that study is completed only support rural residential development where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) it is in areas and forms identified as suitable for such purposes in the agricultural viability study and;</li> <li>i) is consistent with the adopted local housing strategy.</li> </ul>	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	High
		c) That after the completion of the agricultural viability study the Local Housing Strategy be updated at its next review specifically with regards to potential rural residential development within the shire.	Lead	Completion of Agricultural Viability Study required by Action 3.1.1	High

## 6.2 DELIVER WELL PLANNED RURAL OPTIONS

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
6.2.1	Review planning policy for rural dwellings	a) Investigate amending Wollondilly LEP 2011 for dwelling entitlements to be registered on a Dwelling Opportunity Map and amend Clause 4.2A.	Lead	None	High
		b) Investigate amending Wollondilly LEP 2011 to include a temporary workers dwellings clause to increase accommodation options for seasonal farm workers	Lead	None	High

## FOCUS AREA 5 - MANAGING PLACES WITH SPECIAL LANDSCAPE, RURAL AND SCENIC VALUE

### 7.1 RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF THE RURAL LANDSCAPE

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
7.1.1	Investigate protecting the rural landscape	a) Investigate developing landscape, rural and scenic values management objectives that consider the compatibility and impact of new R5 or large scale Rural Residential development to the scale, character and visual quality of the existing rural fabric. The objectives could form part of a local provision for scenic amenity in the Wollondilly LEP 2011 or part of a DCP amendment for scenic values through any future landscape study.	Lead	None	Medium
		b) Investigate developing 'Rural Landscape Character Statements' to specifically address the unique value of natural, man-made and cultural features which contribute to a sense of place and the local identity of rural localities through any future landscape study.	Lead	Completion of Scenic Landscapes Study and Management Strategy.	Medium
		c) Ensure any strategy or action specifically aimed at protecting rural landscapes or scenic values does not impede upon the use of RU1, RU2 or RU4 land for agriculture or related ancillary uses.	Lead	None	High
		d) Review the Council's rating strategy and other council policies to better recognise the contributions made by agricultural producers in providing the rural amenity enjoyed by the shire's residents.	Lead	None	High

## FOCUS AREA 6 - BALANCING ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES ON RURAL LANDS

### 8.1 RESPOND TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS BY AVOIDING HAZARDS

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
8.1.1	Investigate reviewing background studies and maps for hazards	a) Investigate developing a comprehensive LGA wide flood study.	Lead	None	High
		b) Review and update the Bush Fire Prone Lands map	Lead	None	High

### 8.2 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND LIVING WITH A CHANGING CLIMATE

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
8.2.1	Investigate impacts of a changing climate and suitable adaption measures	a) Support and encourage changing climate adaptation measures in association with Local Land Services in the use and management of rural land (such as but not limited to, regenerative agriculture, hydroponic and greenhouse ventures, water retention techniques and carbon sequestration).	Advocate	None	Medium (ongoing)
		b) Continue working with the community to ensure resilience to extreme climatic events and increase awareness of extreme weather events on land use through social media and other Council educational programs.	Investigate	None	Medium (ongoing)

### 8.3 PROTECT AREAS WITH BIODIVERSITY VALUES

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
8.3.1	Investigate the development of a framework for the protection of biodiversity	a) Investigate updating the <i>Biodiversity Strategy</i> to provide an overall framework for the protection and management of biodiversity.	Lead	None	Medium

### 8.4 PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

No.	Action	Recommendation	Council's Role	Pre-requisites	Priority
8.4.1	Implement land and resource management practices	a) Continue working with Local Land Services and landholders to provide education and assistance where possible to implement good land management practices.	Lead	None	Medium
		b) Investigate implementing a Biosecurity Policy. management practices.	Lead	None	Medium

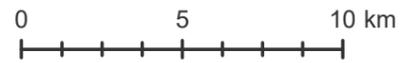


# APPENDIX B

# MAPPING

**Legend**

- Towns/ Villages
- Native Vegetation
- Native and Exotic Pastures
- Irrigated Pastures
- Turf
- Horticulture
- Intensive Animal Production
- Urban Residential
- Rural Dwellings with Agriculture
- Roads
- Dams
- Wollondilly Local Government Area
- Local Government Areas



Map produced by Riverina Agriconsultants and EMAP Consulting  
Date: 7/05/2020  
Coordinate System: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 56  
Wollondilly Rural Lands Strategy  
Wollondilly Shire Council v[2]

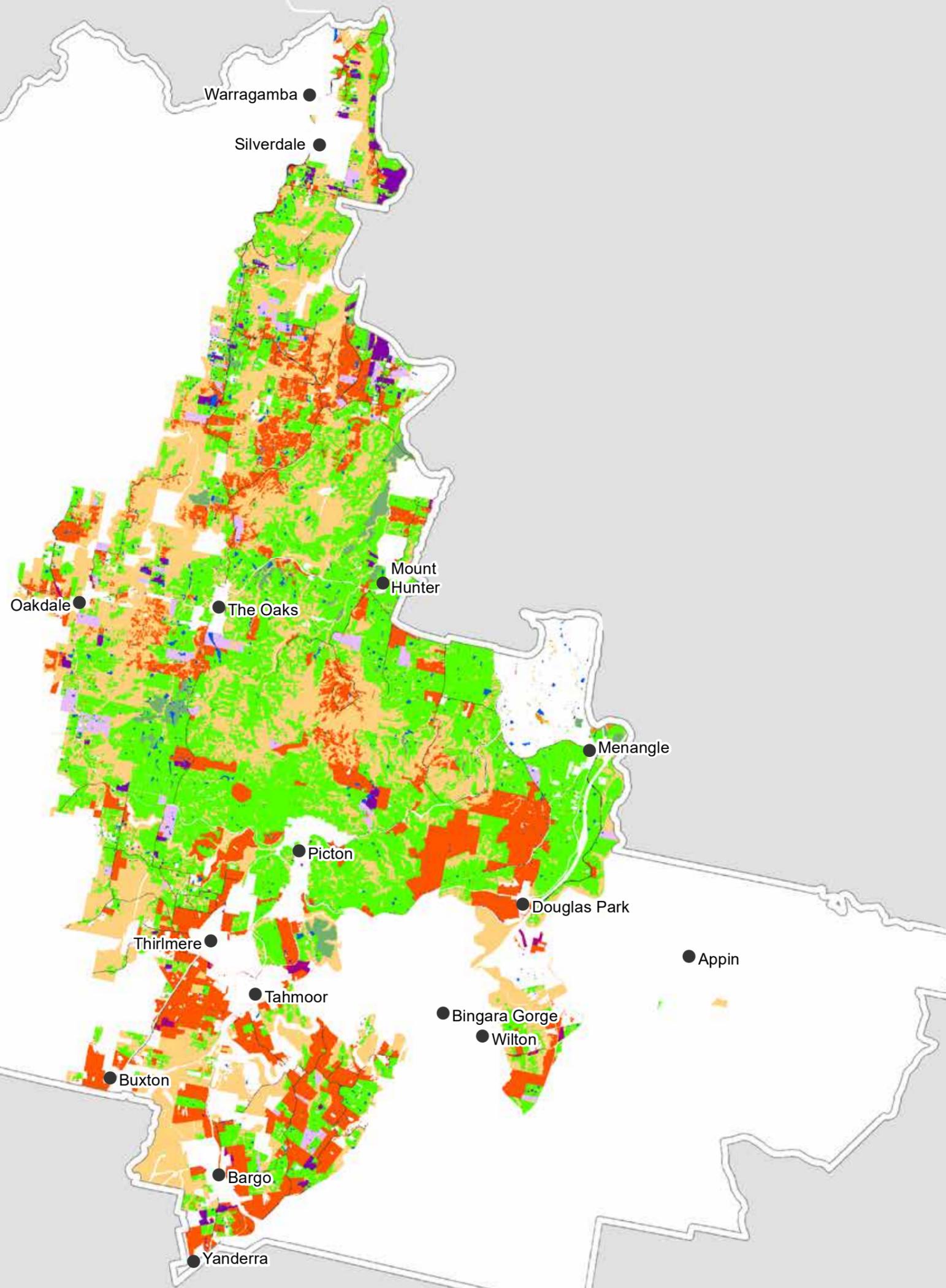


Figure 3: Land use in rural lands in Wollondilly (2011)

**Legend**

-  Leppington Station
-  Northern Road Realignment (indicative)
-  Rail
-  Obstacle Height Limits

**Australian Noise Exposure Concept (units)\***

-  ANEC between 20 and 25
-  ANEC between 25 and 30
-  ANEC between 30 and 35
-  ANEC exceeding 35

**Western Sydney Aerotropolis**

-  Western Sydney Aerotropolis
-  Western Sydney Airport
-  Freight and Logistics
-  Aerotropolis Precincts
-  Agriculture and Agribusiness
-  South Creek
-  Rural Land
-  Wollondilly Local Government Area

\* Data source:  
SEPP (Western Sydney Aerotropolis)  
DPIE 2020

0 2.5 5 km  


Map produced by EMAP Consulting  
Date: 12/08/2021  
Coordinate System: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 55  
Wollondilly Rural Lands Strategy  
Preliminary Findings Report  
Wollondilly Shire Council v[3]

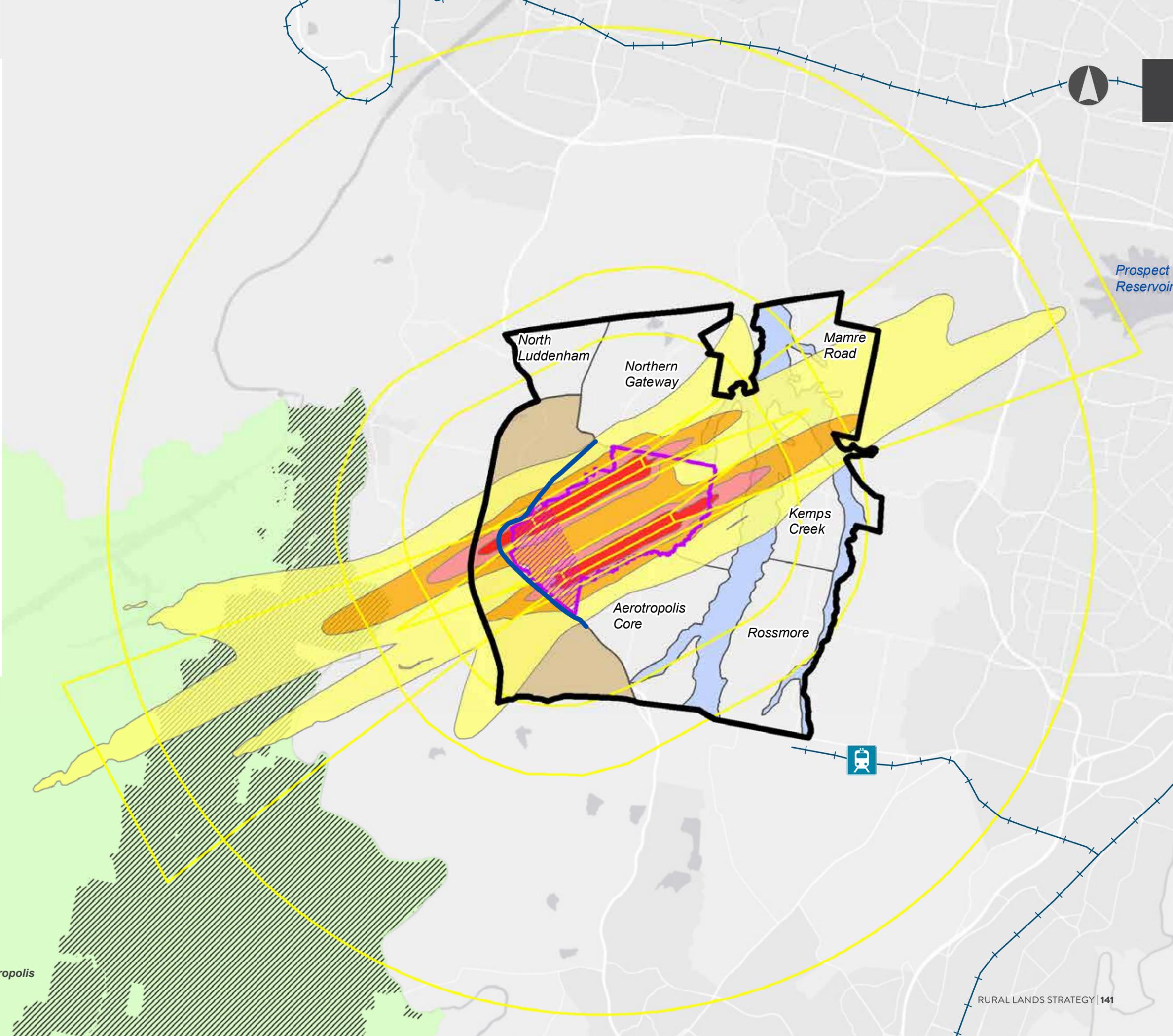


Figure 4: Western Sydney Airport and Aerotropolis



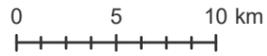
**Legend**

- Towns/ Villages
- Local Gravel and Sand Quarries
- Existing Petroleum Lease
- Existing Coal Lease
- ▨ Rural Land
- Wollondilly Local Government Area

**Operating Mines:**

1	Burrangorang Valley Coal Mine
2	AGL Petroleum Mine
3	Appin and Appin West Colliery
4	West Cliff Colliery
5	Russell Vale Colliery*
6	Dendrobium Colliery
7	Tahmoor Coal Mine

\* Currently under care and maintenance



Map produced by EMAP Consulting  
 Date: 13/08/2021  
 Coordinate System: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 55  
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 Wollondilly Shire Council v[3]

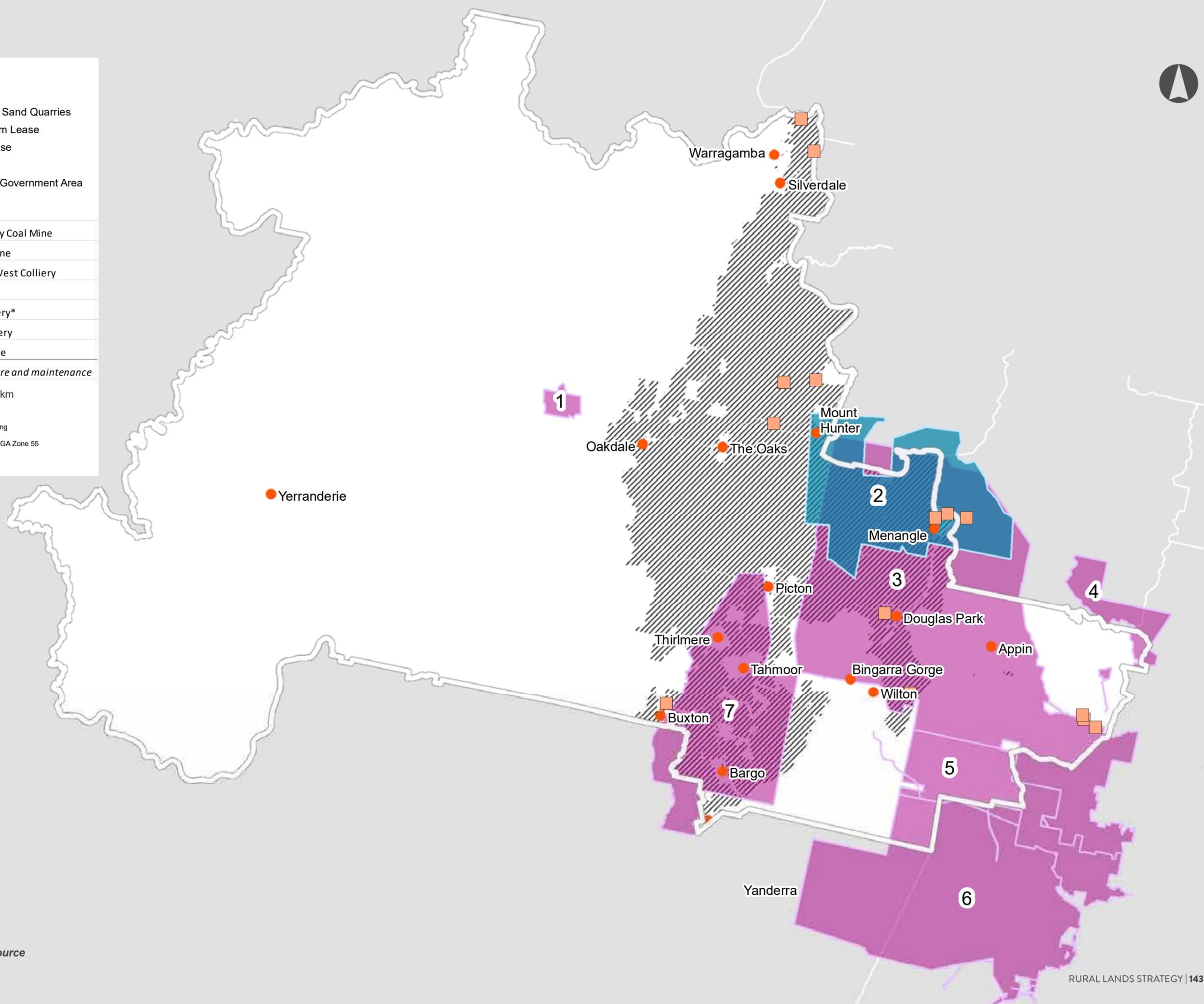


Figure 5: Mineral Resource



[wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](http://wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)