

Infrastructure Opportunities Plan

Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle

February 2026

Newcastle CBD street scape





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Introduction

Background

The NSW Government is delivering increased housing choice for the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle Region. More diverse and affordable homes are being delivered in well-located areas close to transport, services, and amenities.

Increasingly, development will be built within existing centres, making up a growing share of the region's overall housing supply. This approach makes better use of existing infrastructure, gives people easier access to jobs and services, and offers more diverse housing options.

The introduction of planning reforms such as the Transport Oriented Development program to support development at Cardiff, Hamilton, Morisset, and Newcastle Interchange, the Low and Mid-Rise Housing policy, and the state-led rezoning of the Broadmeadow Precinct have created significant opportunities for infill development.

At the same time, both emerging and established greenfield areas such as Huntlee, Gillieston Heights, Cliftleigh, Cooranbong, and Thornton North have the capacity to support additional housing. These areas benefit from good accessibility to key transport corridors such as the Hunter Expressway and New England Highway, but typically need staged delivery

of new and upgraded infrastructure to enable and support planned growth.

The NSW Government has committed \$111.5 billion in the 2025-26 Budget towards capital expenditure over the next 4 years to support growth across the state. This includes investment in the state's essential infrastructure including schools, transport, hospitals, and critical services like water and energy.

Through the Urban Development Program, the NSW Government is working with state agencies, councils, and the development industry to align plans for housing development and infrastructure delivery, to share data, and to resolve critical issues and delays to delivery.

Purpose

The purpose of the 2026 Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle Infrastructure Opportunities Plan (the plan) is to provide a list of state and regional projects that are eligible to be delivered as Works-in-Kind under the Housing and Productivity Contribution Works in Kind Guideline to support housing delivery.

The plan forms part of a holistic NSW Government approach to infrastructure planning, investment, and provision. This approach enables structured and transparent decision-making, providing greater certainty for communities, councils, and the development industry.

Structure of the Plan

The plan contains the following sections:

Section 1 – Introduction includes background on the purpose of the plan.

Section 2 – Infrastructure Opportunities Plan details the process for developing the plan, the types of infrastructure included in the plan, and pathways for this infrastructure to be delivered.

Section 3 – Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle Infrastructure Opportunities, identifies the state and regional infrastructure projects needed to enable and support planned housing over the next 5 years.

Further information

For more information about the Urban Development Program and Housing and Productivity Contribution scheme visit:

- [Urban Development Program](#)
- [Housing and Productivity Contribution Works-in-Kind Guideline](#)

Infrastructure Opportunities Plan

Development of the Plan

The 2026 Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle Infrastructure Opportunities Plan (the plan) was developed with NSW state agencies, councils and utility providers through the Urban Development Program.

The Urban Development Program is the NSW Government's program for monitoring and coordinating housing development, land supply, and infrastructure delivery. It brings together state agencies, local councils, and the development industry to inform NSW Government priorities for planning and infrastructure investment to ensure a strong pipeline of new housing supply alongside the timely delivery of infrastructure to support growing communities.

Infrastructure Opportunities Plans have been developed for each Housing and Productivity Contribution area – Greater Sydney, Illawarra-Shoalhaven, Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle, and the Central Coast.

Using the latest housing data, through the Urban Development Program, state agencies and councils have identified the infrastructure projects which will enable

and support planned housing growth over the short to medium term.

This first version of the plan was informed by a range of NSW Government land use and infrastructure plans, including:

- the 5-year State Infrastructure Plan
- agency infrastructure programs
- Special Infrastructure Contributions (SICs) and draft SICs
- state-led rezonings
- region plans
- place strategies and structure plans

This first version of the plan is not an exhaustive list of all infrastructure projects required for communities. Infrastructure Opportunities Plans will be reviewed and updated annually through the Urban Development Program. This ensures that emerging infrastructure needs arising from new rezonings and housing development are captured and reflected in future updates.

Infrastructure schedule

The infrastructure schedule is presented in two tables:

- Projects funded for delivery
- Infrastructure opportunities for works in kind under the Housing and Productivity Contributions scheme

Projects funded for delivery

These are committed projects currently in delivery or funded for delivery through the state budget or other funding sources.

Infrastructure types include public transport, roads, education, health, emergency services, open space, active transport, as well as utility infrastructure like electricity, water, and wastewater.

Infrastructure opportunities for Works in Kind under the Housing and Productivity Contributions scheme

These are projects in planning or business case stages that are eligible to be delivered as works in kind under the Housing and Productivity Contributions Works in Kind Guideline.

Eligible infrastructure types for works-in-kind include:

- State / regional roads
- Transport infrastructure (including active transport and bus infrastructure)
- Regional open space
- Land dedication

Projects are further classified as either enabling or supporting infrastructure.

These definitions are not used to group types of infrastructure, but to differentiate where projects are essential if land is to be developed or not, on a site-by-site basis.

Enabling infrastructure typically refers to projects which unlock the delivery of more

homes. These projects are typically public transport, roads, and schools.

Supporting infrastructure typically refers to projects that support the development of liveable, productive and sustainable communities such as active transport and open space.

Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle Infrastructure Opportunities

The Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle region encompasses the local government areas of Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle and Port Stephens. These local government areas have a combined five-year housing target of 30,400 new homes by June 2029 as part of the National Housing Accord. New housing will be delivered across the wider region under a range of growth scenarios, focusing on key areas such as:

Greenfield Housing Areas

- Anambah to Branxton (including the Anambah, Lochinvar, Greta-Anvil Creek and Huntlee New Town release areas)
- Maitland – New England Growth Corridor (including the Thornton release area)
- Kurri Kurri – Maitland Growth Corridor (including Gillieston Heights, Cliftleigh, Heddon Greta, Avery’s Village release areas)
- Southwest Lake Macquarie Growth Area (including new release areas at Cooranbong, Wyee and Morisset)

- Newcastle Link Road Corridor growth corridor
- Cessnock growth corridor (including Bellbird and Bellbird Heights, Mount View Road – Millfield)
- Post Stephens (including new release areas at Kings Hill, Karuah, Fern Bay and Medowie)

Strategic Centres and Infill Housing Areas

- Newcastle Urban Renewal Corridors (including Islington and Mayfield)
- Broadmeadow Regionally Significant Growth Area
- Transport Oriented Development Precincts including at Adamstown, Booragul, Cardiff, Cockle Creek, Hamilton, Kotara, Morisset, Newcastle Interchange and Teralba
- Low and Mid Rise Housing Areas of the 19 nominated stations & town centres.

State and regional infrastructure supporting housing targets

Major infrastructure projects are helping to unlock new housing opportunities across the region. These include transformative developments such as the Hunter Expressway, and the \$2.1 billion extension of the M1 Pacific Motorway to Raymond Terrace, as well as the next stage of the inner-city bypass from Rankin Park to Jesmond Park.

These large-scale projects, along with upgrades to key intersections on the New England Highway and Raymond Terrace Road, are enabling new housing in growing communities such as Lochinvar, Thornton and Huntlee.

Investment in the light rail has also played a key role in transforming the Newcastle CBD. This transformation continues to support new housing with more than 2,000 new dwellings in the pipeline.

The NSW Government is also delivering education and hospital projects to support growing communities.

Projects underway or recently completed include:

- a \$36 million upgrade of the Hunter River High School at Heatherbrae
 - a \$106 million upgrade of the Newcastle High School.
-
- a \$835 million Health and Innovation Precinct at John Hunter Hospital featuring new and upgraded facilities
 - a \$29 million upgrade of the Irrawang Public High School at Raymond Terrace

Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle infrastructure projects

The following section outlines the state and regional infrastructure projects which will support new housing in the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle over the short to medium term:

- projects funded for delivery (table 1)
- infrastructure opportunities for works in kind under the Housing and Productivity Contribution scheme (table 2)

Projects funded for delivery

Table 1 includes projects that are either in delivery or funding is committed by the NSW Government.

Table 1: Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle – committed state and regional infrastructure projects

Infrastructure Type	Project	Description	Delivery Stage	Delivery Agency
Education	New high school in Medowie	Construction of a new high school to cater to growth in Medowie	In delivery	NSW Department of Education
Education	Gillieston Public School upgrade	Redevelopment of Gillieston Public School by replacing the demountable on the existing site with modern classrooms and ancillary spaces	In delivery	NSW Department of Education
Education	Thornton Public School redevelopment and new public preschool	Major upgrade comprising 16 new contemporary classrooms, a new library, new student and staff bathrooms, additional parking and a covered outdoor learning area	Funded for delivery	NSW Department of Education
Education	New high school in Huntlee	New high school to cater to growth at Huntlee and surrounds	Funded for delivery	NSW Department of Education
Education	New primary school in Huntlee	New primary school to cater to growth at Huntlee and surrounds	Funded for delivery	NSW Department of Education
Road	Hillsborough Road upgrade (Stage 1)	Upgrade to the Crockett Street intersection, including the installation of traffic lights	In delivery	Transport for NSW
Road	Pacific Highway corridor - M1 to Raymond Terrace and Hexham Straight Widening	Continuing construction of the upgrade to connect the M1 Pacific Motorway and the Pacific Highway, and major construction on the Hexham Straight upgrade between Newcastle Inner City Bypass and Hexham Bridge	In delivery	Transport for NSW
Road	Rankin Park to Jesmond - Newcastle Inner City Bypass	Construction of a 3.4km bypass between Rankin Park and Jesmond, to the west of John Hunter Hospital	In delivery	Transport for NSW
Road	Intersection upgrade of Five Islands Road, T.C. Frith Avenue and the Esplanade, Speers Point	Upgrade of roundabout to increase capacity	Funded for delivery	Transport for NSW
Road	Nelson Bay Road Duplication - Williamtown to Bobs Farm	Road upgrades to provide better connectivity for residents, businesses and the community and improve traffic flow, journey times and safety for motorists on Nelson Bay Road	Funded for delivery	Transport for NSW
Road	New England Highway upgrade- West bound upgrade	Westbound overpass for new England Highway at Cessnock Road and Church Street roundabout	Funded for delivery	Transport for NSW

Road	Mandalong Road / Freemans Drive intersection upgrade	Upgrade to the intersection of Freemans Drive with Mandalong Road	Funded for delivery	Transport for NSW
Road	Thornton Rail Bridge (Stage 2 - duplication)	Duplication of the Thornton rail bridge, along with intersections connecting to New England Highway	Funded for delivery	Transport for NSW
Water	Cessnock trunk main upgrade	Duplication of existing water mains to increase capacity	In delivery	Hunter Water
Water	Cooranbong water trunk main upgrade	Duplication of existing water mains at Dora Creek. This provides increased capacity for new growth	In delivery	Hunter Water
Water	Desalination plant - Belmont	Construction of a desalination plant at Belmont to support a resilient a sustainable water supply for the region	In delivery	Hunter Water
Water	Network trunk main upgrades associated with Belmont desalination plant	Major trunk main upgrades associated with the Belmont desalination plant are proposed to augment the existing water distribution network	In delivery	Hunter Water
Emergency services	New Fire Station - Charlestown	New fire station facility at Charlestown to include additional training facilities, storage areas and workspaces	Funded for delivery	NSW Fire and Rescue
Health	Cessnock Hospital redevelopment	Redevelopment of the Cessnock Hospital including delivery of contemporary health facilities	Funded for delivery	NSW Health
Health	Maitland Integrated Community and Community Mental Health Service	Provision of a purpose-built mental health facility at the Maitland Hospital campus in Metford	Funded for delivery	NSW Health
Sports and Recreation	Morisset Sports Facility	Construction of a new sports and recreation centre at the old Morisset Hospital site, to replace the old Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre and to support the needs of the local community.	Funded for delivery	NSW Office of Sport

Highlighted projects were previously identified in the *DRAFT Environmental Planning and Assessment (Special Infrastructure Contribution – Hunter Region) Determination 2018*

Infrastructure opportunities for works in kind under the Housing and Productivity Contribution scheme

Table 2 includes state and regional infrastructure projects in early planning or business case stages eligible to be considered for works in kind under the Housing and Productivity Contribution Works in Kind Guideline. Inclusion on this schedule does not constitute a government commitment to enter into a works in kind agreement.

Table 2: Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle – Infrastructure opportunities for works in kind under the HPC scheme

Enabling infrastructure projects

Infrastructure Type	Project	Description	Delivery Stage	Delivery Agency
Road	Anambah Road upgrade and New England Highway intersection, and upgrades	Early works for intersection capacity upgrades. This project will help deliver housing in Anambah	Planning required	Transport for NSW
Road	Intersection of New England Highway and Terriere Drive (Known as the Western Intersection)	Further upgrade of the intersection of the Terriere Drive and New England Highway. This project will help deliver housing in Lochinvar	Planning required	Maitland City Council / Transport for NSW
Road	Haussman Drive upgrade (Stage 2) from Raymond	Upgrade of Raymond Terrace Road and Haussman Drive, including upgrade to signalised intersection with an increased number of lanes. This project would help deliver housing in Thornton and Haussman Drive	Business case in progress	Maitland City Council

	Terrace Road to Taylor Avenue			
Road	Cessnock CBD Bypass (northern - Mt View Road to Wine Country Drive)	Land dedication and early works for traffic diversion of growth areas (Bellbird) from the Cessnock CBD to the north of the LGA. This project will help deliver housing in Bellbird and Nulkaba	Planning in progress	Cessnock City Council
Road	Newcastle Link Road and Minmi Road intersection upgrade	Intersection upgrade at Minmi Road and Newcastle Link Road in Cameron Park. This project will help deliver housing in Link Road and Minmi	Business case in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	Pacific Highway Upgrade - Raymond Terrace to Karuah (Stage 1 Italia Road safety improvements project)	Development of a grade separated interchange to provide connectivity for hard rock quarries and residential development including the King Hill areas to facilitate growth and improve journey times and safe egress on and off the Pacific Highway for motorists. This project will help deliver housing in Kings Hill	Planning in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	Pacific Highway Upgrade - Raymond Terrace to Karuah (Stage 2 Medowie and the Bucketts Way safety improvements project)	Development of a grade separated interchange to provide connectivity for residential development and businesses to facilitate growth and improve journey times and safe egress on and off the Pacific Highway for motorists. This project will help deliver housing in Kings Hill and Medowie	Planning in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	Pacific Highway / Flowers Drive, Catherine Hill Bay	Intersection upgrade including the provision of traffic signals. This project will help deliver housing in North Wallarah, Murray's Beach and Pinny Beach	Planning required	Transport for NSW
Road	Intersection upgrade of Main Road and Frederick Street, Glendale	To provide for additional capacity at intersection. This project will help deliver housing in Eden Estates	Planning required	Transport for NSW
Road	Main Road and Dora Street intersection upgrade	New alignment and upgrade of the Main Road and Dora Street intersection with traffic lights. Provision for two lanes of travel in each direction along Main Road with indented bus bays, separate left and right turn lanes into Dora Street and Douglass Street and additional works at Walmsley Street. This project will help deliver housing in Gradwells Road, and support growth in Cooranbong	Business case in progress	Transport for NSW
Education	Various	The Department of Education is exploring opportunities for land dedication for preschool, primary and secondary capacity to meet short-term, medium and long-term demand	Planning in progress	Department of Education

Supporting infrastructure projects

Infrastructure Type	Project	Description	Delivery Stage	Delivery Agency
Road	New England Highway upgrade - Anambah Road to Kyle Street	Improve the local road network and connection to the New England movement corridor	Planning required	Transport for NSW
Road	Thornton Road upgrade - Railway Avenue to Glenwood Drive	Road upgrades from Thornton Road to Weakleys Drive and from Railway Avenue to Glenwood Drive	Business case in progress	Maitland City Council
Road	Thornton Road and Glenwood Drive intersection upgrade	Installation of traffic lights at Glenwood Drive and Thornton Road	Business case in progress	Maitland City Council
Road	Thornton Road and Huntingdale drive intersection upgrade	Intersection improvements at Huntingdale Drive	Business case in progress	Maitland City Council

Road	Main Road upgrade - Testers Hollow to Hunter Expressway	Land dedication and early works for capacity upgrades of Main Road between Testers Hollow and Hunter Expressway that include bus priority measures to support continued growth along the corridor	Business case in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	Hillsborough Road upgrade (Stage 2 - duplication)	Delivery of Stage 2 works, including duplication, a new signalised intersection, shared path and upgraded bus stop facilities	Business case in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	John Renshaw Drive upgrades	Early works for additional capacity to the network around John Renshaw Drive and Weakley's Drive	Business case in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	Park and ride at the Cessnock Road and Hunter Expressway Interchange	Provision of a commuter car park to encourage carpooling	Planning in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	Park and ride at the John Renshaw Drive and Hunter Expressway Interchange	Provision of a commuter car park to encourage carpooling	Planning in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	Park and ride at New England Highway/Wine Country Drive intersection	Provision of a commuter car park to encourage carpooling	Planning in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	Main Road Upgrade - Testers Hollow to New England Highway	Land dedication and early works for capacity upgrades of Main Road between Testers Hollow and New England Highway that include bus priority measures to support continued growth along the corridor	Business case in progress	Transport for NSW
Road	Maitland Road and Old Maitland Road intersection upgrade	Land dedication and early works for intersection upgrade at Maitland Road and Old Maitland Road, East Cessnock. Intersection upgrade to accommodate future housing growth and improve pedestrian access	Planning in progress	Transport for NSW
Multimodal	New England Highway upgrade - Rutherford to Lochinvar	Land dedication and early works for duplication, including additional lanes for bus priority measures and a principal bicycle network	Planning required	Transport for NSW
Active Transport	Upgrade of the Esplanade and Park Road	Upgrade to traffic signals to support active transport between the Speers Point local centre and Speers Point Park, sporting, community and cultural facilities	Planning in progress	TBC
Active Transport	Cessnock - Maitland principal cycle network	Provision of a network of cycle lanes between Kurri Kurri and Maitland	Planning in progress	TBC

Highlighted projects were previously identified in the *DRAFT Environmental Planning and Assessment (Special Infrastructure Contribution – Hunter Region) Determination 2018*

Draft Hunter Region State Infrastructure Contribution

In addition to the infrastructure projects listed in Table 1 and 2, as part of the transition to the Housing and Productivity Contribution scheme the infrastructure items within the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle Region that are listed in the *DRAFT Environmental Planning and Assessment (Special Infrastructure Contribution – Hunter Region) Determination 2018* are also eligible for the Housing and Productivity Contribution scheme: Environmental Planning and Assessment (Special Infrastructure Contribution – Hunter Region) Determination 2018.

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