

6 REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

6.1 Hunter Regional Environmental Plan, 1989

Dungog LGA is currently subject to the provisions of the Hunter Regional Environmental Plan, 1989 (HREP), a regional environmental plan prepared under the Act. The HREP sets out a comprehensive framework for local planning and regulation of development. It identifies social, economic, settlement, accessibility, natural resources and economic issues affecting the Region and reflecting these into the future. The plan includes objectives for land use, natural resource management and environmental protection.

6.2 Lower Hunter Regional Strategy

The Dungog LGA is not a part of the Lower Hunter (as defined by DoP in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (LHRS)), however the region's close proximity means growth stemming from the LHRS may have repercussions on the Dungog LGA. The LHRS provides for a population increase of 160,000 people; increased housing in the order of 115,000 new dwellings; and an increase in employment of 66,000 jobs. Maitland and Raymond Terrace are nominated as major regional centres, and Newcastle is identified as the Regional City. Major new urban areas are proposed in nearby Maitland and Port Stephen's LGA's. An important factor for Dungog LGA is the LHRS's limited provision for additional rural small holdings and rural residential subdivision.

The following issues for consideration arise from the LHRS's implementation;

- Spill-over urban pressures in Paterson and Clarence Town
- Increased demand for a semi-rural lifestyle closer to urban centres especially on the southern edge of the LGA
- Increased demand for rural small holdings and large lot residential that is not able to be accommodated in the Lower Hunter
- Potential increased tourism and recreation demand stemming from increased populations in the Lower Hunter
- Possible relocation of rural and agricultural activities from the Lower Hunter to Dungog LGA, due to displacement by urban growth
- Increased infrastructure (i.e. Tillegra Dam) required to service the Lower Hunter, and the Central Coast

6.3 Williams River Catchment Regional Environmental Study, Regional Environmental Strategy and Regional Environmental Plan

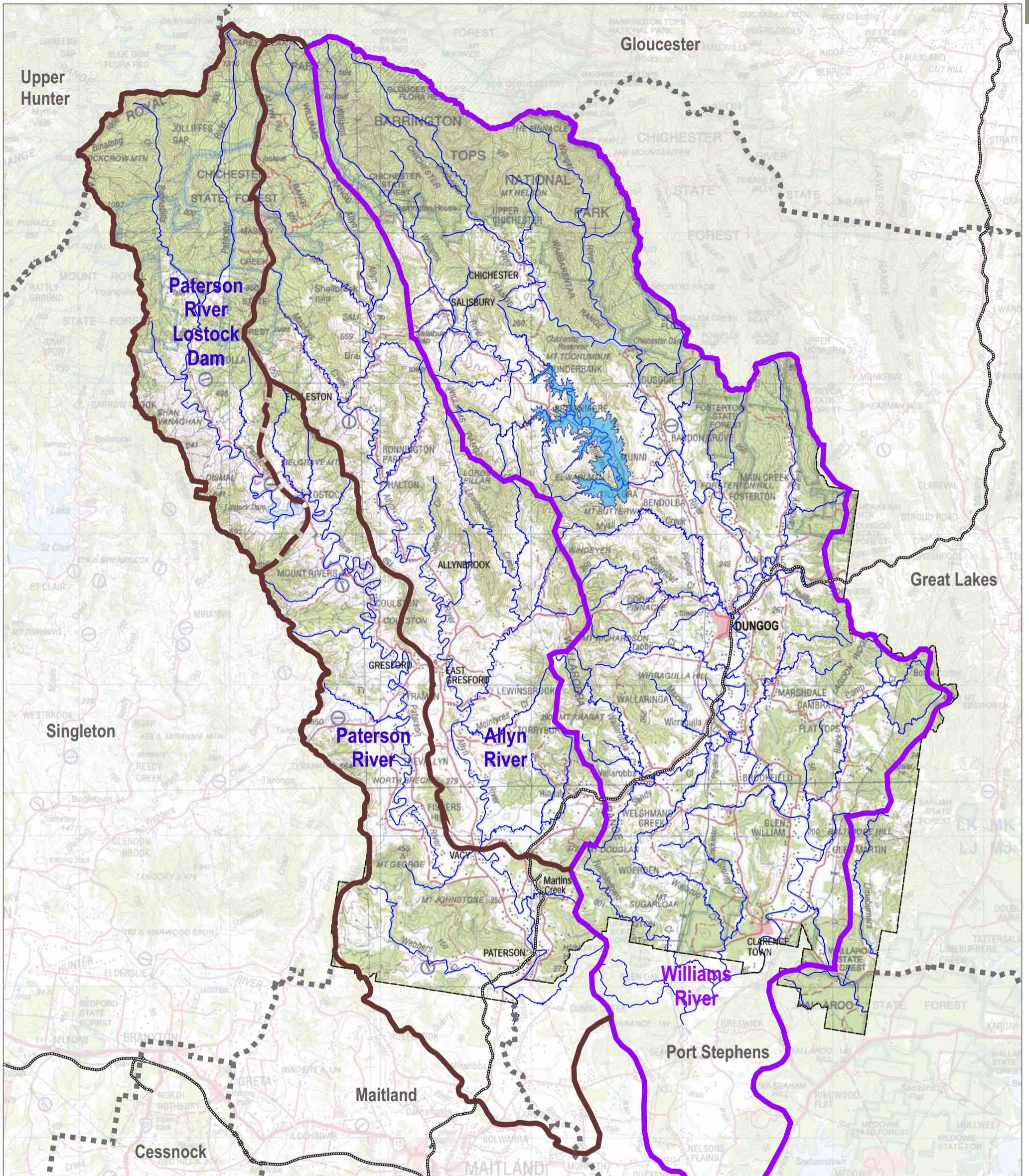
The proposed Tillegra Dam is located on the upper reaches of the Williams River.

The Williams River Catchment is the major source of drinking water for the urban centres of the Lower Hunter including Maitland, Cessnock, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and part of Port Stephens.

6.3.1 Williams River Catchment Regional Environmental Study

The Williams River Catchment Regional Environmental Study (DUAP, 1996) is one component of a four-part package which aims to protect water quality within the Williams River Catchment, and to achieve sustainable land use and land management practices over the longer term.

The Williams River, together with its major tributary, the Chichester River, drains a catchment approximately 131,200 hectares in size. This catchment is shown in Map 6.1 below.



DISCLAIMER:
 This map has been produced to assist individuals in determining land details within Dungog Shire Council, the information contained is made in good faith but on the basis that Council or its staff are not liable (wether by reason of negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person for any damage or loss whatsoever which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking or not taking (as the case may be) action in respect of representation, statement or advice referred to above.

Source & Copyright: Dungog Shire Council (2008)
 LPI(2008), DNR(2008), RFS(2008), HCED(2008)

This map has been prepared for Dungog Shire Council for the purposes of the Tillegra Dam Situation Analysis and should be read in conjunction with the report.

- LEGEND**
- ▬ WILLIAMS RIVER CATCHMENTS
 - ▬ PROPOSED TILLEGRA DAM
 - ▬ RIVERS AND CREEKS

Williams River Catchment



The Study concluded that although the catchment was regarded as reasonably healthy, the Williams River was showing signs of stress from the many demands being placed on it and that the cumulative impact of activities such as clearing and burning of vegetation, logging, cropping, urban settlement, draining of wetlands, and the impoundment and diversion of water, has led to significant changes in the landscape and in a deterioration of water quality.

The purpose of the Study was to identify planning and management issues relating to water quality in the Williams River and the actions needed to address the concerns raised. Given the site of the proposed Tillegra Dam, these issues are of particular importance in the upper reaches of the catchment. Fortunately, because of its location high in the catchment, the pressures on water quality associated with the proposed dam can be managed more effectively than if it were located further down the catchment. Key management issues within the catchment are the regulation of clearing and land uses. Planning controls alone cannot adequately achieve sustainable land management. The majority of environmental issues present within the catchment do not require town planning consent. The Study states that what is needed is *'an approach based not only on legal requirements, but one that also promotes the adoption of more sustainable practices at the 'grass roots' level. This can be achieved by increasing knowledge about the catchment and changing behaviour by improving access to information'*. (DUAP, 1996: p 6)

6.3.2 Williams River Catchment Regional Environmental Plan and Regional Planning Strategy

Williams River Catchment Regional Environmental Plan

The Williams River Catchment Regional Environmental Plan (WRCREP) applies to certain parts of the Dungog LGA and Port Stephens Local Government Areas (to the extent of the Williams River Catchment, illustrated in Map 6.1).

The aims of the WRCREP are to:

- (a) protect and improve water quality in the Williams River; and*
- (b) promote sustainable use of land, water, vegetation, and other natural resources; and*
- (c) coordinate decisions by linking the REP to a regional planning strategy, incorporating total catchment management principles.*

(Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 1995 (a), page 6)

The WRCREP is a consideration in the assessment of applications for development under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Williams River Catchment Regional Planning Strategy

The Williams River Catchment Regional Planning Strategy (Strategy) accompanies the WRREP to achieve the following aims and objectives.

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The aims of the Strategy are to:

- (a) halt and reverse the decline in water quality in the Williams River Catchment; and*
- (b) develop procedures for sustainable long term management*

(DUAP, 1997: p 33)

The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- (a) develop principles and actions to better manage the impacts of existing development and land management practices; and*
- (b) establish principles to guide future development; and*
- (c) coordinate programs and actions, including community-based action; and*
- (d) complement the Williams River Catchment Regional Environmental Plan".*

(DUAP, 1997: p 33))

The Strategy is being implemented using integrated catchment management (Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority) which emphasises best practice principles. The Strategy aims to build on existing structures to strengthen and support community recognition of catchment management, and further promote the role of the community in leading a coordinated plan of action. Water quality is stated as the main issue requiring attention.

Improving the health of the Williams River has also been the focus of an Independent Inquiry into the Williams River (Healthy Rivers Commission of NSW, 1996). The Healthy Rivers Commission (HRC) was established in January 1996 to conduct independent public inquiries into the health of NSW rivers and to recommend to Government longer term environmental objectives and actions for catchments identified as stressed.

6.4 Hunter – Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan

As the Hunter Region continues to grow, the pressures placed on our natural resources also escalate. Decision makers at all levels of government and business are faced with situations in which they need to balance the demands of a growing economy with the need to maintain a quality of life which is attractive and beneficial to the people who live in and visit the Hunter Region.

To assist in achieving this balance, the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA) has developed its 10-year Catchment Action Plan (CAP). This plan is founded on the work of the Central Coast Catchment Management Board, the Hunter Catchment Management Trust and the Lower North Coast Catchment Management Board.

The Boards and Trust had previously prepared Catchment blueprints after extensive community consultation, to guide the management of natural resources in their

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catchments. The CAP has been produced through the combined efforts of these three amalgamated bodies.

The primary objective of the CAP is to identify the key natural resource features of the Hunter Region, which need to be protected or improved, and then to determine the best way to achieve these outcomes. The CAP has been prepared within specific legislative guidelines.

The CAP specifies a number of targets to be achieved by 2015, viz:

- protect an additional 31,000 ha of native vegetation
- regenerate 25,500 ha of native vegetation
- treat 2,400 ha of weed affected lands
- implement priority recovery actions on 800 ha
- manage an additional 52,000 ha of landscapes having physical, cultural or spiritual significance to Aboriginal people
- protect an additional 4,600 ha of wetlands
- enhance 2,600 ha of wetlands
- treat animal pests over 31,000 ha
- manage 200 km of roads that affect sensitive areas using current best practice erosion and sediment control
- revegetate 8,400 ha of highly erodible soils
- stabilise 800 ha of actively eroding soils
- revegetate 1,200 ha of salinity recharge areas with deep-rooted vegetation
- improve nutrient management on 500 ha of land
- stabilise 150 ha of salt affected areas
- implement sustainable grazing management practices on an additional 19,000 ha of grazing land
- develop and implement property plans for an additional 25,000 ha
- protect an additional 1,100 km of native riparian vegetation
- regenerate 550 km of degraded native riparian vegetation
- restore native fish passage to 60 instream barriers
- stabilise 125 km of unstable or degraded stream channels and estuarine shorelines
- improve habitat to 200 km of stream channels
- maintain 420 Lower Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme structures
- retrofit 620 ha of existing developed areas with current best practice urban stormwater management
- improve the management of 120 sewage management systems
- manage 75 estuarine floodgates to increase tidal movement
- treat an additional 5000 ha of acid sulphate soils
- revegetate 240 ha of degraded dune systems
- protect an additional 21,000 ha of priority marine habitat
- 60 industry groups develop, adopt and audit an Environmental Management System
- enhance 130 km of vegetation along coastal lake shorelines
- enhance 250 km of marine shorelines(Hunter Central Rivers CMA, 2006)

Council's land use planning framework should be established and implemented having regard to the Catchment Action Plan.