



DRAFT DUNGOG SHIRE RURAL LANDS STRATEGY

Dungog Shire Council 2025



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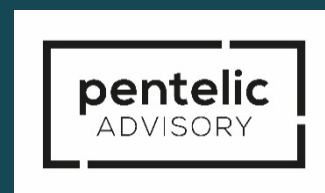
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Atlas Economics



**ALWAYS
COLLECTIVE**



Acknowledgement of Country

Dungog Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Cultural Custodians of Country in the Dungog Shire, including the Gringai, Geawegal / Gaewal, Wanaruah / Wonnarua, and Worimi peoples. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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A Message from the Mayor

At the heart of Dungog Shire are its rural lands - the foundation of our community and way of life. Stretching across the fertile Williams and Paterson River valleys and into the surrounding hills, they support our communities, shape our local identity, and provide the landscapes we all cherish.

This draft Rural Lands Strategy sets out a shared vision for how we can protect what we value while adapting to the realities of modern rural life. It recognises that farming alone is no longer enough for many families to sustain their livelihoods. Diversified income streams, from small-scale enterprises and agritourism to on-farm accommodation and value-adding, are now essential for keeping our rural communities strong.

The draft Strategy is built on extensive local input. Our community told us that they want fairer, simpler planning rules that support rural enterprise, allow people to age in place, and ensure future generations can continue to live and work on the land.

This document reflects that shared aspiration, to sustain working rural landscapes, protect our natural environment, and enable the flexibility our community needs to thrive.

I would like to thank all who contributed their time, knowledge, and lived experience. Together, we are ensuring Dungog Shire's rural lands continue to provide opportunity and belonging for generations to come.

Digby Rayward

Mayor, Dungog Shire Council



A Message from the General Manager

Our rural lands are at the heart of Dungog Shire - shaping our identity, lifestyle, and economy. This draft Strategy is our opportunity to plan for their future, supporting the people and enterprises that keep our countryside thriving.

The draft Rural Lands Strategy provides a clear, modern framework for managing the diverse working landscapes that define Dungog Shire. It addresses today's rural challenges and opportunities, from changing markets and flexible living needs to water protection and climate adaptation, through evidence-based planning and local insight.

Taking a place-based approach, the draft Strategy aligns land capability, soil quality, and landscape character with appropriate land uses. It supports a range of rural enterprises while protecting our rivers, bushland, and scenic values that make Dungog Shire special.

Shaped through extensive community input, the draft Strategy responds to calls for simpler, fairer, and more transparent planning rules. It introduces greater flexibility for rural housing and dual occupancies in suitable areas, encourages small-scale enterprises and agritourism, and ensures planning reflects local conditions rather than a one-size-fits-all model.

Implementation will involve close collaboration with landowners, State agencies, and the community to align zoning, lot sizes, and infrastructure with the draft Strategy's vision. Regular monitoring will ensure our approach remains adaptable as needs evolve.

At its heart, this draft Strategy is about balance, protecting the Shire's rural character while supporting livelihoods to grow and thrive. It sets a strong foundation for sustainable and prosperous rural communities across Dungog Shire.

Gareth Curtis

General Manager, Dungog Shire Council



Plan on a page

What is the draft Rural Lands Strategy

The draft Rural Lands Strategy is a guiding document that sets the vision and framework for how rural land will be managed and developed into the future. It sets clear direction for stewardship and decision-making on rezoning proposals and day-to-day development decisions, so change is guided by a shared vision rather than happening in a piecemeal approach.

The draft Strategy includes practical principles and focus areas with straightforward objectives and actions. Together, these provide a firm framework and room to adapt so rural land can be managed effectively into the future.

Why we have a draft Rural Lands Strategy

Rural lands are uniquely vital for Dungog Shire. The countryside carries many roles at once, from growing food, supporting local jobs, and providing a valued rural way of life. In many ways, the rural lands support the economic

prosperity and wellbeing of communities of the Shire. This means we need to continue to balance the pressures from changing land uses and housing demand in the Shire.

Having a draft Rural Lands Strategy will ensure decisions about rural land are proactive, evidence-based and reflect community aspirations. It will also align local planning with State and regional policies, providing a clear pathway for sustainable land use and development in the future.

Our Big Ideas

The draft Rural Lands Strategy is built around four goals that capture the long-term aspirations for Dungog Shire's rural areas: productive landscapes, a resilient economy, sustainable environments, and balanced rural living.

Each outcome is intended to guide success, and by strategies that set out the practical steps to get there. Together, these layers create a clear framework to guide decisions about rural land use in Dungog Shire.

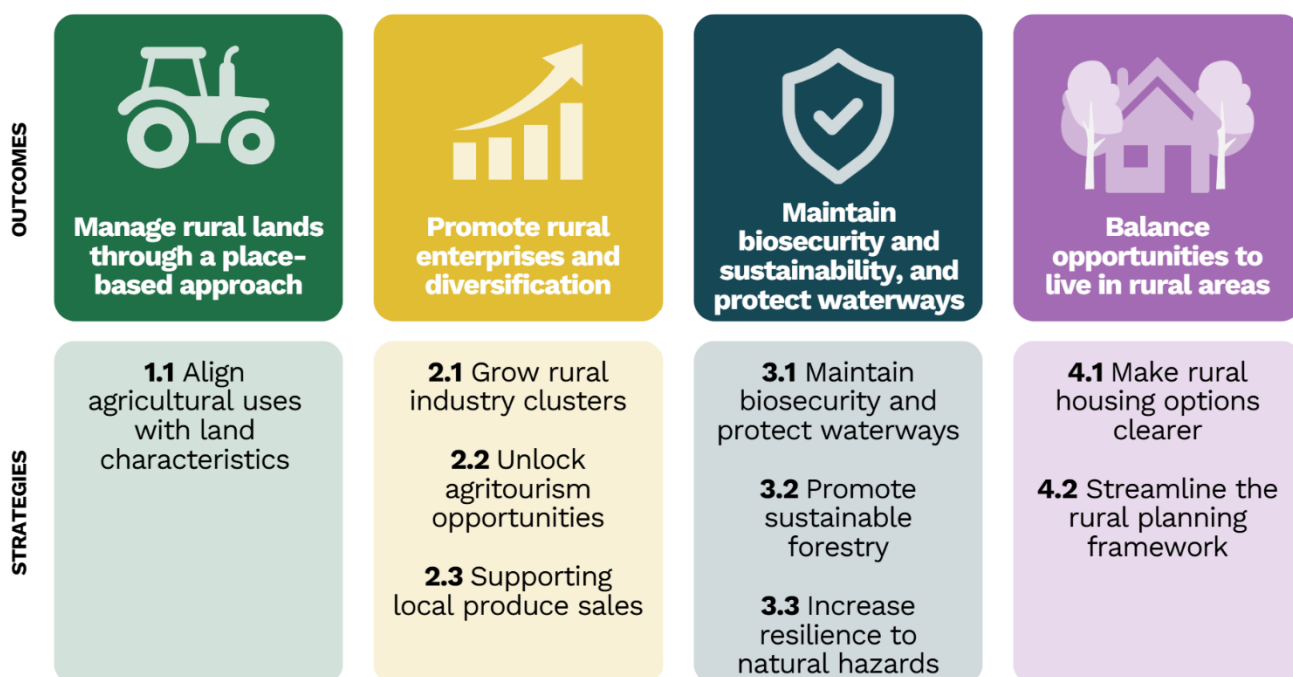




Image source: Persona Communications

Introduction

The draft Rural Lands Strategy (**Strategy**) is being delivered as part of the Housing and Infrastructure Master Plan (**Master Plan**) and will guide future planning and management of rural lands in the Dungog Shire Local Government Area (**LGA**).

A draft Rural Lands Strategy for Dungog Shire

Managing rural land in Dungog Shire is not simple. The countryside carries many roles at once, from growing food, protecting rivers and bush, supporting local jobs, and providing a valued rural way of life.

The draft Strategy sets a clear direction for stewardship and decision-making on future rezoning proposals and day-to-day development decisions, so change is guided by a shared vision rather than happening in a piecemeal approach.

Rural areas are not static; they shift with seasons, markets and community needs. The draft Strategy aims for balance; keeping what matters most while allowing the right kind of change in the right places. It focuses on the environmental, social and economic benefits of rural land and ensures planning rules have enough flexibility to adapt over time. It also considers where land is best suited to farming, rural enterprises and lifestyles, and how those uses can work well together.

By setting clear directions, Council supports sustainable rural growth and builds resilience to overcome future challenges such as climate, water and market changes.

The draft Strategy includes practical principles and focus areas with straightforward objectives and actions. Together, these provide a firm framework and room to adapt so rural land can be managed effectively into the future.

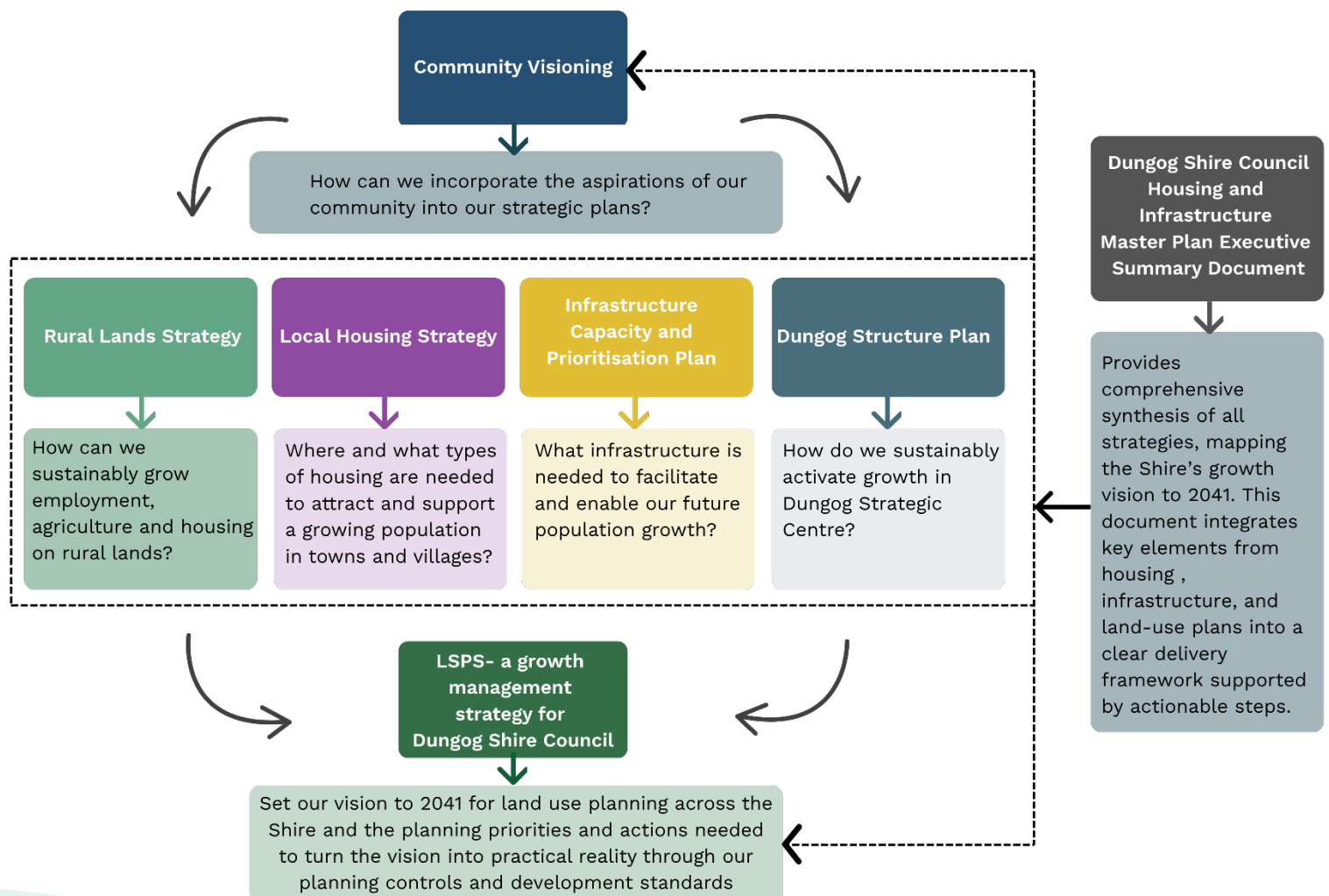




Image source: Persona Communications

Where the draft Strategy applies

The term “rural land” for the purposes of the draft Strategy applies to the following zones, under the *Dungog Local Environmental Plan 2014*, and shown in the following map. It is noted that currently only two rural zones apply in Dungog Shire, being RU1 Primary Production and RU3 Forestry.

Table 1 Rural land use zones the draft Strategy applies to

Zone	Objective
RU1 Primary Production	The zone is primarily focused on commercial primary production, such as extensive agriculture, intensive livestock and plant agriculture, as well as forestry, mining, and extractive industries. The overarching aim of this zone is to utilise natural resources sustainably, while minimising fragmentation and land use conflicts.
RU2 Rural Landscape	The zone is a new Land Use Zone for Dungog Shire. The zone is for rural land used for commercial primary production compatible with ecological or scenic landscape qualities, often preserved due to topography. It accommodates grazing, extensive agriculture, and intensive plant agriculture. As the focus of this zone is not limited to primary production, it can also accommodate more extensive land uses that do not conflict with intensive agricultural operations. While it supports commercial primary production compatible with ecological or scenic landscape qualities, it can also allow for complementary uses such as community facilities and tourism-related development, provided these remain consistent with the zone’s rural character and landscape values. The zone is currently not contained within the <i>Dungog Local Environmental Plan 2014</i> .
RU3 Forestry	The zone seeks to facilitate development specifically for forestry purposes, and secondly, to enable other developments that align with and complement forestry activities.
RU4 Primary Production Small Lots	The zone is a new Land Use Zone for Dungog Shire. The zone is for commercial primary industry production, including emerging and small-scale agriculture. The purpose of the zone is agriculture, rather than rural lifestyle developments. The zone is currently not contained within the <i>Dungog Local Environmental Plan 2014</i> .

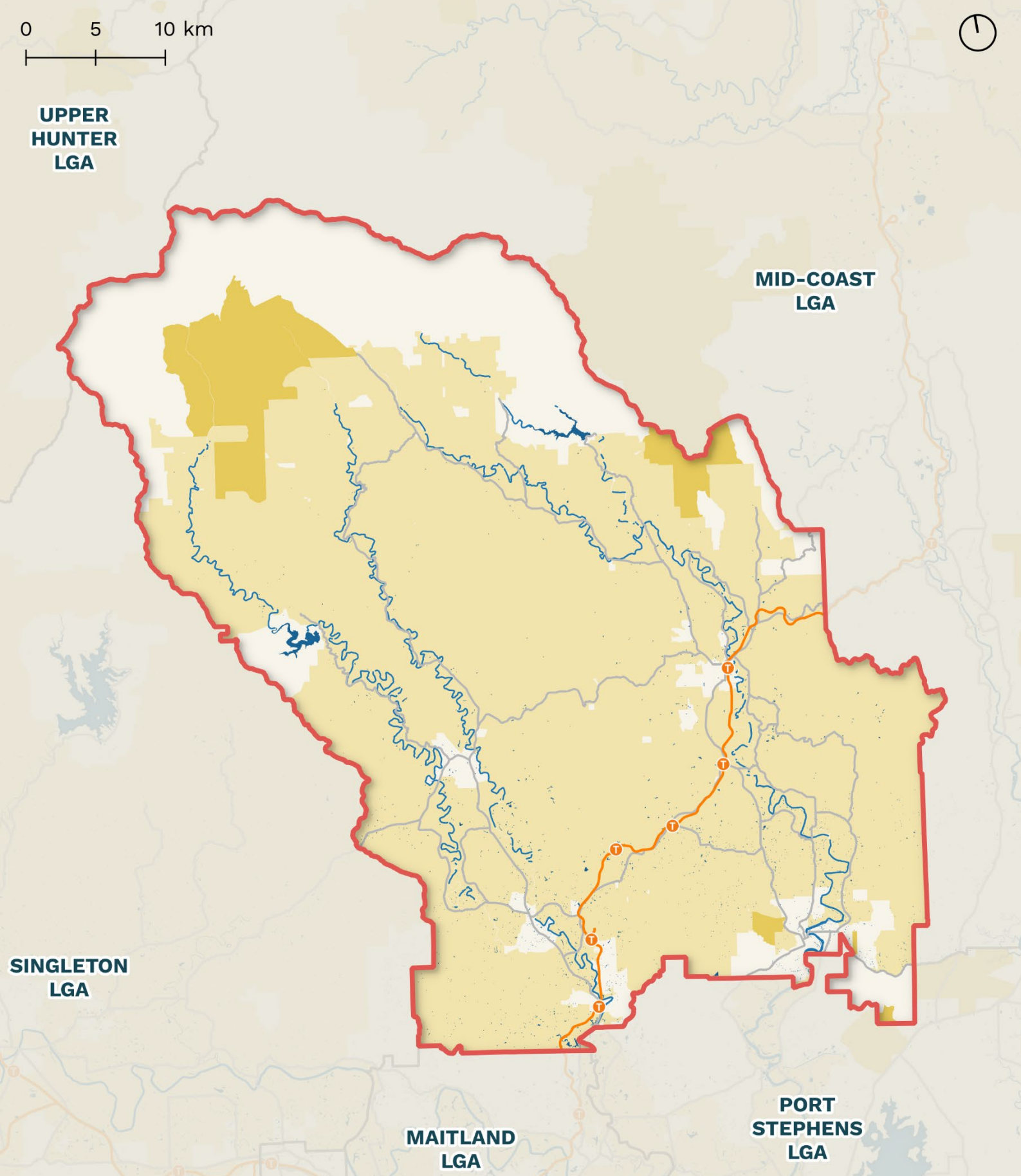


Figure 1 Existing Rural Land Use Zoning (excluding RU5 – Rural Village, change areas and other zones)

Legend

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
|  Dungog LGA |  Train Line |  RU3 Forestry |
|  Train Station |  RU1 Primary Production |  Water |

The journey to date

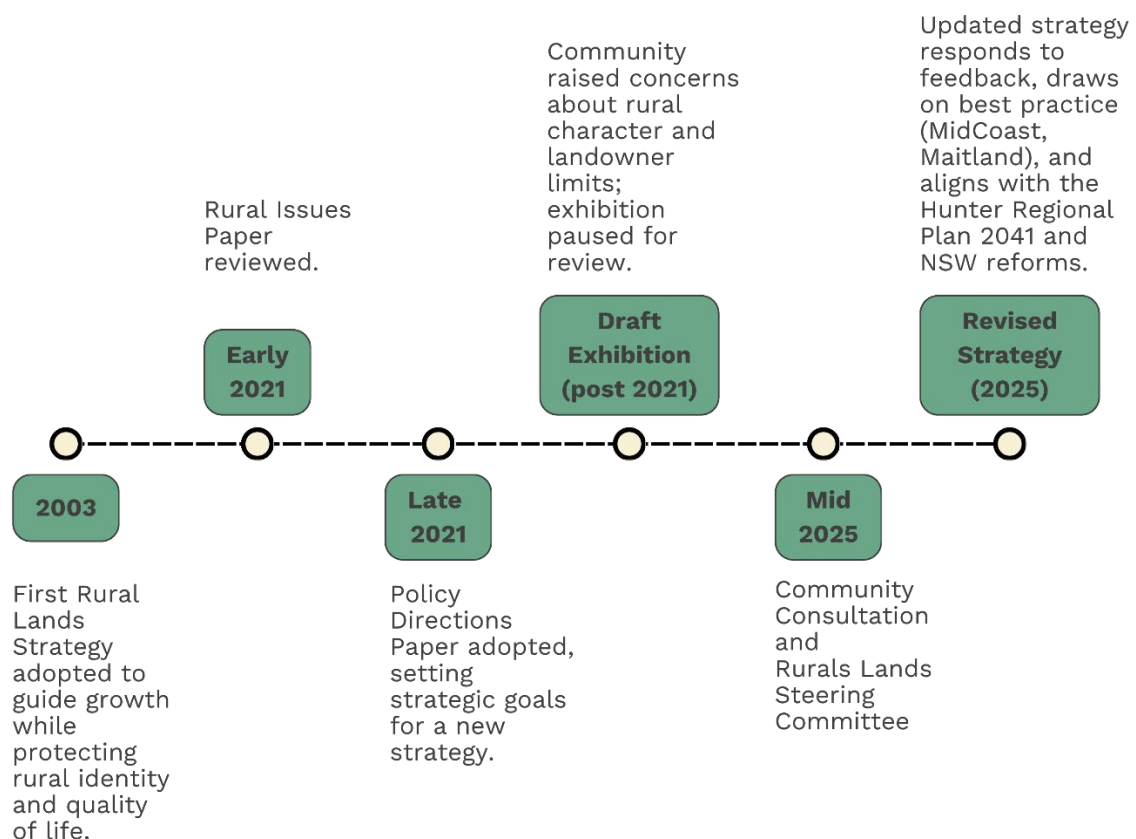
Since 2003, the existing Rural Lands Strategy has helped guide land use across Dungog Shire. It set the groundwork for how the Shire could grow while keeping its rural identity, supporting sustainable land use, and protecting quality of life.

In early 2021, a *Rural Issues Paper* took stock of new challenges and fed into a policy directions paper adopted later that year. That paper set the strategic goals for a new draft Rural Lands Strategy.

When the previous draft Rural Lands Strategy went on public exhibition, many community members raised concerns. Council considered that the community should be more fully informed and consulted, and that the maps should be updated to clearly illustrate the proposed planning control changes. The exhibition was paused to allow more review and reflection.

This revised draft Strategy responds to that feedback. It draws on best-practice approaches used by nearby councils such as MidCoast and Maitland and aligns with the *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* and NSW Government planning reforms.

It has been based on early engagement undertaken with the community in mid-2025, with the aim is a more balanced, transparent and locally appropriate approach to managing rural land into the future.



What we heard from the community

An extensive consultation process with the Dungog Shire community has been completed to ensure this draft Strategy is informed by community aspirations and priorities. This process has involved engaging with the community early in the planning stages to seek input to shape the housing vision, key directions, and housing preferences.

Across all engagement methods, we spoke to more than 150 residents directly with a further 200+ responses received through online mediums (including the community

survey). Full detail on the engagement process and findings is available in the Early Engagement Outcomes Report.

There were many other individual points of feedback that have helped to inform the development of the draft Strategy and will be referenced by Council where relevant to future stages of work (e.g. more detailed stages relating to the implementation of the draft Strategy through the LEP, DCP and Contributions Plan).

From these early engagement activities, we heard the following from the community:

Table 2 Summary of community feedback themes and key points from early engagement activities

Theme	Key Points
Our rural lands as our asset – maintaining rural character	- The community expressed a strong desire to preserve the rural feel and visual beauty of the area, believing that this is key to attracting new residents and visitors. Rural lands were seen not just as a resource, but as a destination. - Maintaining rural character was consistently identified as a community priority. There were concerns that poorly managed development could erode the lifestyle and environment that residents value. - Many participants noted that they had chosen to live in the area specifically for a lifestyle distinct from that of more densely populated urban LGAs like Maitland and Cessnock. - Residents expressed that they would like to maintain the qualities that define rural living, including larger lot sizes, wider streets, open spaces, and the presence of local businesses that support the community fabric. - There was a strong expectation that future development should be carefully managed to balance necessary growth with the preservation of these defining characteristics, ensuring the area retains its sense of space and community identity.
Diversifying farmers' economic base	- Residents identified increasing pressures on primary producers in the Shire due to rising labour and material costs, council rates and taxes, and growing competition from larger producers in other parts of the State. - To help mitigate these pressures, the community expressed a strong desire to diversify income streams available to property owners. - Encouraging short-term rental opportunities on rural properties, as a secondary, not primary, income source, was consistently raised by many residents.

Theme	Key Points
	• Several residents also highlighted the need for a fairer allocation of Council rates across different property types and sizes, noting that rising rates contribute significantly to financial pressure on rural landholders. • The potential role of carbon credits was mentioned, with some residents suggesting that Council could facilitate local landowner collaboration in this space.
Enabling secondary dwellings	• Community members generally supported clearer planning controls that allow secondary dwellings on rural properties. These dwellings are valued for their ability to accommodate extended family members, allow for easier construction of worker accommodation, and support an additional revenue stream through short term holiday rentals, while maintaining the existing character of properties. • Some residents suggested reviewing current setback requirements to allow for more dwellings near existing towns and villages. • There was general agreement that development of secondary dwellings should follow clear and sensible rules, including distance from primary dwelling, size of secondary dwelling relative to primary dwelling, and other siting and design parameters.
Subdivision and changes to minimum lot sizes	• There was generally strong support for reducing the minimum lot size from 150 to 100 acres (approximately 60 ha to 40 ha). • Some residents suggested that a minimum lot size of 20 ha, or even smaller, could be appropriate closer to towns and villages, pending relevant technical investigations. • Support for reducing minimum lot sizes was driven by a desire to align with neighbouring LGAs such as Port Stephens, provide more flexibility and affordability for succession planning, and enable more residents to engage in farming within the LGA. • A few community members expressed the importance of ensuring larger landholdings remain viable into the future. This will depend on market forces and affordability. • There was a clear call for a responsible and tailored approach to subdivision, particularly to protect the most highly productive agricultural lands from excessive subdivision that could compromise their primary production potential. • Residents also sought clearer definitions of productive, intensive, and high-value agricultural land through the draft Rural Lands Strategy. • Residents expressed a desire for smaller, more manageable and affordable lots.
Managing potential conflicts between development for housing and existing rural land use	• Community members stressed the importance of ensuring that future residential or industrial developments do not negatively impact existing primary agricultural uses. • For example, locating residential developments too close to active farms may result in land-use conflicts and strained neighbour relations. • Martins Creek was cited as an example where land-use conflicts, among residential subdivisions, productive rural land, and the quarry, were not effectively managed.

Activities undertaken during the early engagement phase are summarised below.



2 market pop-ups and distribution of **150 project flyers** around the Shire.



Community visioning survey receiving **179** responses.



Online notification and social media campaign.



99 attendees across **2 x online** information sessions and **5 x in-person** information sessions held in Dungog, Clarence Town, Vacy, Paterson and Gresford.



79 attendees across **5 x in-person** community focus groups held in Dungog, Clarence Town, Vacy, Paterson and Gresford.



A youth planning forum with **33 participants** (students and teachers) across **6 schools**, accompanied by the distribution of lesson plans and worksheets as part of the local school curriculum.



30 attendees across **2 x structure plan workshops** including walking tours of Dungog Strategic Centre.

Strategic drivers of change in rural lands

A hinterland to Australia's 7th largest city

Dungog Shire sits as a hinterland to Greater Newcastle; between the rural and coastal lands of MidCoast and the rural and mining areas of Singleton. The Shire links high-value rural lands with major economic and transport hubs. This strategic position means Dungog Shire will seek to retain its rural character while providing clear pathways for agricultural, tourism and lifestyle growth.

Dungog Shire's rate of population growth, forecast to surpass the NSW-wide average, is due to the Shire's natural assets and proximity to Greater Newcastle, which will grow by 30,400 homes over the next 5 years and projected 74,360 new homes by 2041.

Key connections supporting rural land growth in Dungog Shire includes:

Maitland

The second fastest growing regional city in NSW and an urban centre for employment, health, retail and education, Maitland is easily accessible by rail and road, providing Dungog residents with services and farmers and tourism operators with access to larger markets.

M1 Pacific and New England Highways

Key regional arterial roads supporting freight movement of agricultural products and visitor access to the Shire's rural tourism.

Newcastle Airport

The expanded terminal has opened for new domestic and international services, creating opportunities for local agriculture and tourism businesses.

Port of Newcastle

Australia's largest East Coast deepwater port provides an export gateway for Dungog's agricultural, forestry and manufactured products.

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* sets a minimum target of 2,400 new homes for Dungog Shire over the next 15 years. It also sets objectives to sustain and balance working rural landscapes. Council is tasked with achieving a balance between these two priorities, ensuring we can provide for the housing needs of our future population, whilst supporting rural enterprises and growing the agricultural sector.

Rural residential living continues to be in high demand across Dungog Shire, especially in peri-urban areas where people are drawn to the lifestyle and natural setting. However, in the absence of a clear planning framework, this demand risks leading to ad hoc rezoning proposals, placing pressure on infrastructure, and creating potential conflicts with surrounding agricultural or environmental land uses.

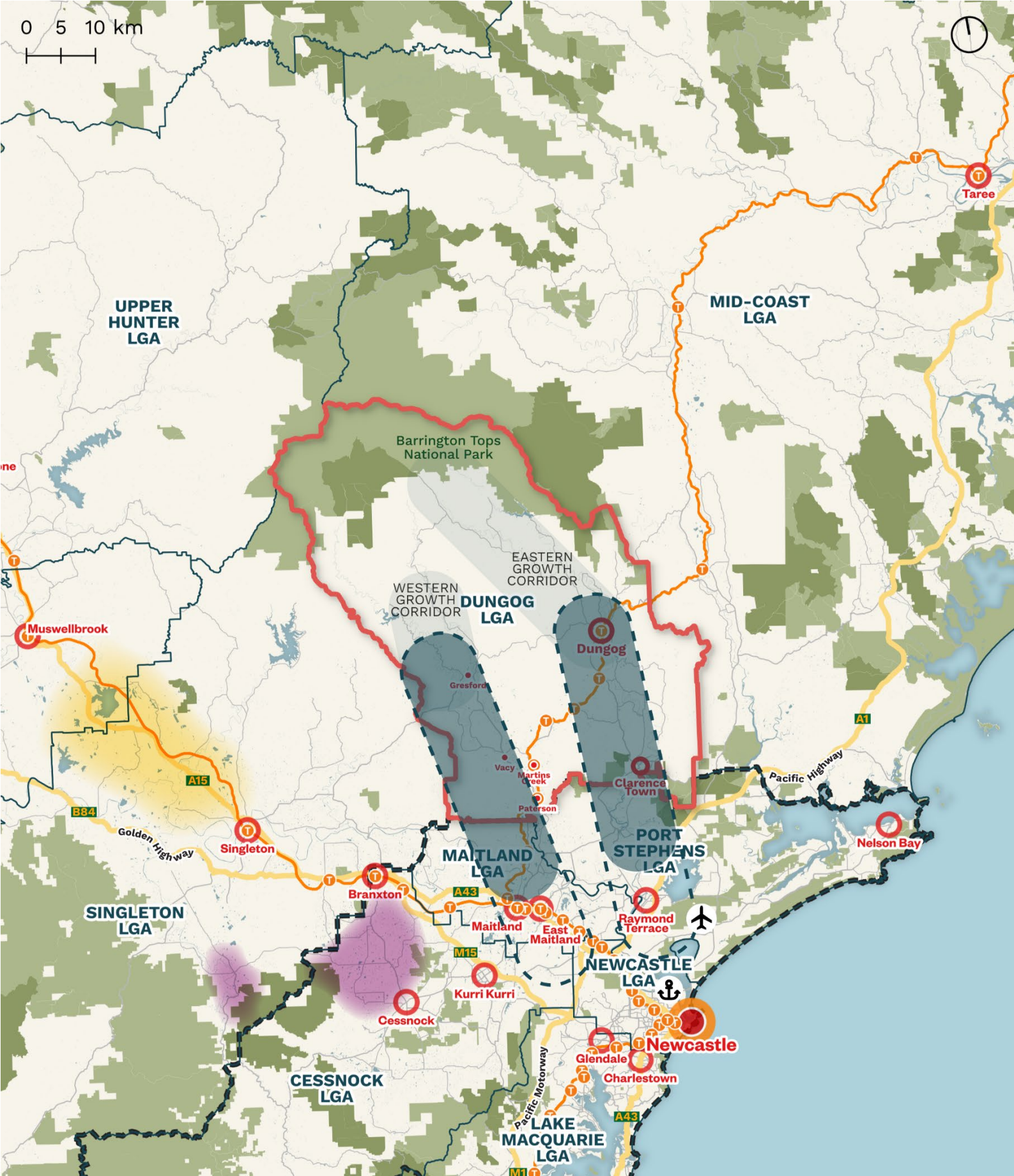


Figure 2 Regional Context Map

Legend

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Greater Newcastle | Metropolitan City | Train Station | Water | Vineyards |
| Dungog LGA | Strategic Centre | Train Line | National Parks and Reserves | |
| Surrounding LGAs | Centre | Highways and motorways | State Forests | |
| Newcastle Airport | Village | Housing Growth Corridors | Mining | |
| Newcastle Port | | | | |

Drinking water catchments shape future agriculture options

Dungog Shire plays a critical role in the Lower Hunter's prosperity by storing and supplying 65% of its water supply. This comprises:

- Chichester Dam - provides about 35% of the total Lower Hunter supply.
- Grahamstown Dam - provides about 60% of the total Lower Hunter supply, of which approx. 50% is harvested from the Williams River.
- Plus a relatively minor volume from the Paterson/Allyn Rivers 'run of river' Gresford water supply system.'

Currently, planning controls make it challenging to plan for rural land developments in drinking water catchments. In practice, this has meant tension between agricultural and farming activities that risk water quality, and supporting land uses compatible with catchment protection.

Hunter Water Corporation has identified that some agricultural and farming activities pose higher risks to water quality. Nutrient, sediment and chemical runoff from certain intensive uses can affect rivers and creeks. As a result, these higher-risk industries face greater challenges in establishing or expanding operations locally.

These areas need careful land management to reduce pollution, erosion and sedimentation, keeping water safe and reliable for the long term. Planning in these places must balance economic productivity with water quality protection.

This draft Strategy takes a place-based approach by encouraging lower-risk, value-adding and focusing on diversifying land uses in the right locations. This approach will help farming evolve while safeguarding the drinking water catchments.

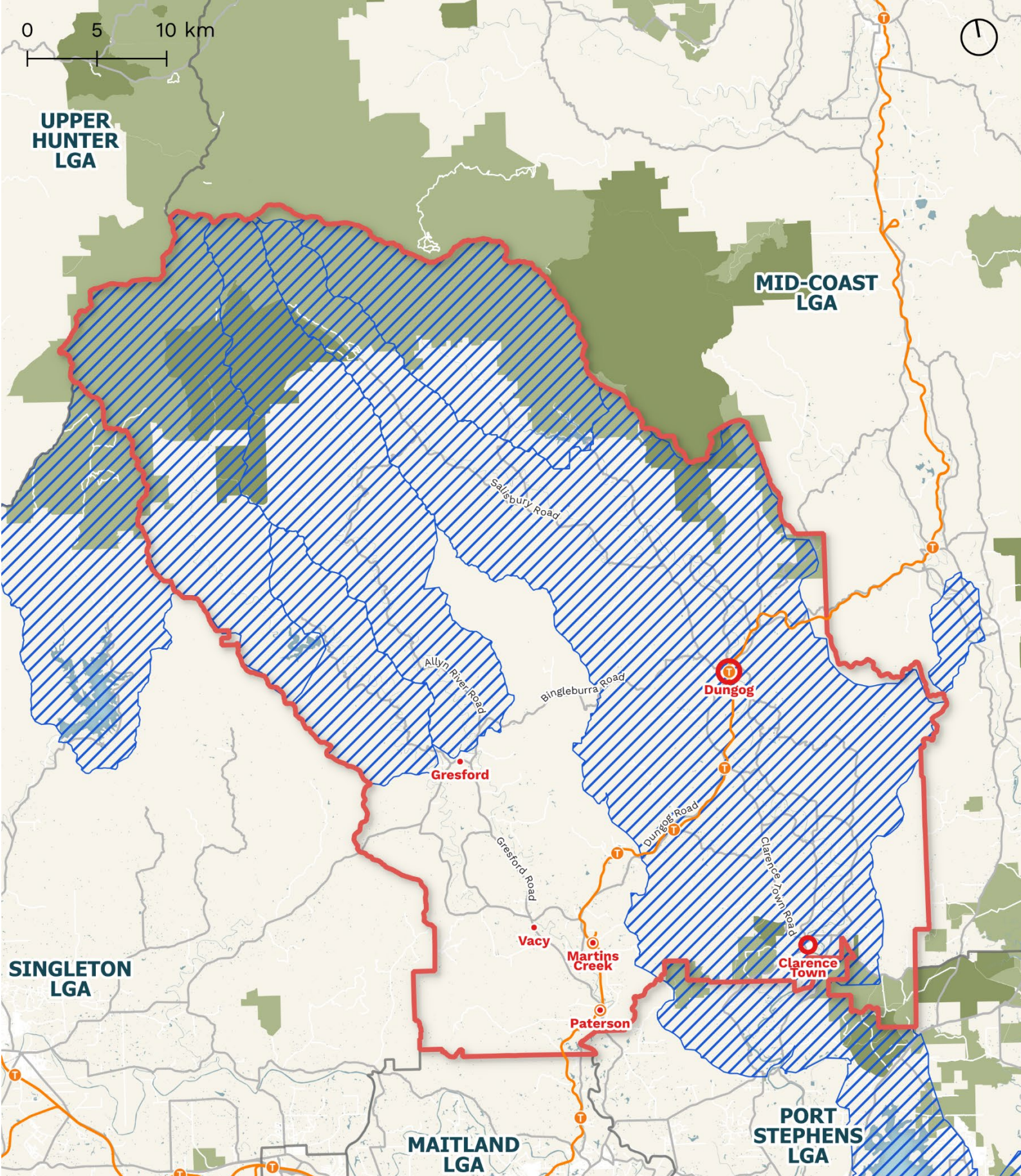


Figure 3 Drinking Water Catchments

Legend

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dungog LGA | Strategic Centre | Drinking water catchments |
| Train Station | Town Centre | Water |
| Train Line | Village | National Parks and Reserves |
| | | State Forests |

Enabling a “farming-plus” future

Farms stay stronger when income doesn't rely on a single commodity. A farming-plus approach encourages low-impact, value-adding activities, farm-gate sales, small-scale processing, on-farm tastings, agritourism and short-stay accommodation. This supports businesses to diversify and build resilience through the seasons and market cycles.

Tourism and agriculture work hand-in-hand in Dungog Shire. Visitors are drawn to mountain-biking, bushwalking and camping, heritage streetscapes and riverside reserves, with standout destinations like Chichester State Forest and Barrington Tops National Park. Key markets include day-trippers, adult couples and small groups, mountain bikers, event-goers, people visiting friends and relatives, and campers, RV and caravan users. Short stay, cycling and camping/caravanning are all on the rise.

Investment is following this momentum. New farm stays, cabins and visitor attractions are in the pipeline, alongside recent projects such as the addition of 18 rooms to a Pub-Hotel in Dungog Strategic Centre and upgrades to Dungog Common Recreation Reserve, including a competition-level BMX track.

The result is a positive loop: visitor spending supports local jobs and helps maintain rural landscapes, while a thriving agricultural base sustains the scenery, hospitality and cultural events that attract visitors in the first place, and a practical pathway to a farming-plus future.

Ensure rural lands planning reflects conditions on the ground

Rural land within the Shire differs in its ability to sustain various activities. This

draft Strategy looks at how land is currently divided: there are about 4,692 rural lots zoned RU1 Primary Production. While the average lot size is just under 34 hectares (ha), the median lot size is just 16ha.

When considering the existing RU1 Primary Production, RU3 Forestry and RU5 Village zoned lots, the average minimum is even smaller, at just under 32ha, with the most common parcel being 10-20ha, followed by 20-50ha. In practice, some properties sit within larger landholdings even if individual lot sizes are smaller.



The analysis also shows that **82%** of RU1 lots are smaller than the minimum lot size of **60ha** set in the local environmental plan.

Most of this subdivision occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, before today's controls were introduced. The result is a patchwork of undersized lots that can make it harder to run agriculture or coordinate other rural activities that benefit from larger, continuous areas. The prevalence of these smaller holdings makes it more difficult to justify applying a uniform 60-hectare minimum lot size, as the existing subdivision pattern has already reduced the capacity for larger, continuous rural land uses.

Given these differences, diversification needs to be tailored to the landscape:

- Low-impact uses with stronger buffers are the priority in riverlands and creek corridors.
- A wider range of options can be considered on valley slopes and foothills with sensible safeguards.
- The broadest set of uses suits tablelands and ridgelines, subject to general standards.

This approach matches land use to place, rather than applying a single rule everywhere.

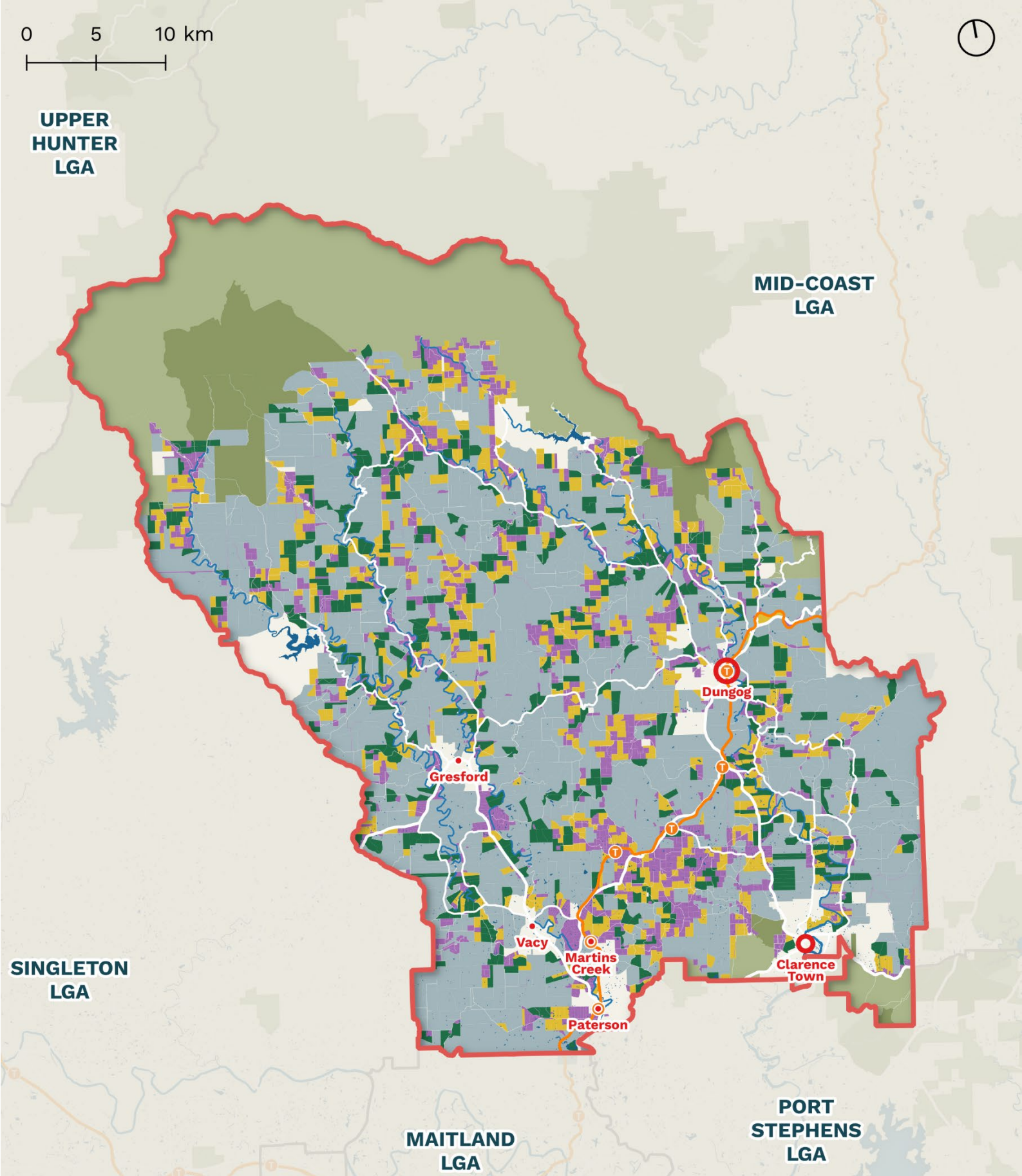


Figure 4 Distribution of Rural Lot Sizes

Legend

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Dungog LGA | Strategic Centre | Rural Lot Size Distribution (In RU1 & RU3 Zones) | National Parks and Reserves |
| Train Station | Town Centre | | State Forests |
| Train Line | Village | | Water |
| | | | 0 - 20ha |
| | | | 20 - 40ha |
| | | 40 - 60ha | |
| | | 60+ ha | |

Delivering on the Rural Lands Strategy

Rural Lands Steering Committee

The Rural Lands Steering Committee (Committee) guides the future of rural planning in Dungog Shire. Its role is to provide strategic direction on the Rural Lands Strategy by reviewing zoning, minimum lot sizes and other key planning controls. The committee has been involved throughout drafting and will continue to advise through to implementation, helping ensure the plans reflect local priorities and the needs of rural industries.

Made up of representatives from rural communities and industry sectors, the committee brings practical knowledge to Council decision-making. Members provide constructive advice on planning approaches, flag emerging issues affecting the rural sector, and help shape priorities in line with best practice.

The Committee also acts as a bridge between Council and the wider community. Members represent the broader interests of their sector, attend meetings, review documents and share insights on rural needs and challenges. While the committee offers valuable input, it forms part of a broader consultation program and complements other ways Council engages with the community on rural issues.

Making rural development simpler and smarter

The draft Rural Lands Strategy is about making it easier for people to get on with straightforward projects, like building sheds, carports, decks, or farm structures without the need for a lengthy approval process. Currently, many simple developments consume a significant

amount of Council's time despite being routine and low-impact.

This is because much of the Shire is located within a drinking water catchment, meaning that many otherwise simple developments, such as farm buildings over 200 square metres, require a development application. In other areas, these types of developments would not typically require development consent and could instead proceed as exempt development (that is no formal approval would be required from Council) or under a simpler complying development pathway (a less complex approval pathway than a development application) under *SEPP (Exempt and Complying) 2008*.

By working with State Government and Hunter Water Corporation to expand the list of works that can be done without a full development application, we can save time, cut costs, and let Council focus on bigger, long-term planning issues.

For farmers and landowners, this means more flexibility to improve their properties while still protecting their neighbours and the environment. The draft Strategy looks at simple changes, such as allowing slightly larger sheds, more practical fencing options, or minor home improvements while making sure important safeguards remain in place.

We also know how important clean drinking water is in Dungog Shire. That is why any new rules will still follow Hunter Water Corporation's guidelines and include sensible measures, such as setbacks and stormwater management, to protect catchments and waterways. These changes aim to strike a balance, giving the community more freedom and less red tape, while ensuring that the Shire's rural character and environment are looked after for the future.

Planning Approaches

The implementation of the Strategy will require an amendment to Dungog Shire's local planning framework in the future to give effect to the rural lands vision and support rural growth.

The Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP) will be reviewed and updated as appropriate. These changes will be implemented on a place-based approach, matching the land's farming potential whilst allowing flexibility for rural activities over time.

Mechanisms to Delivery

The actions within the draft Strategy will be implemented in accordance with the Implementation Plan that supports Dungog Shire Housing and Infrastructure Master Plan (pending budget and resourcing availability).

The broader minimum lot size changes for rural zones and other general amendments in the rural areas to the LEP and DCP are envisaged to be facilitated through a Council-initiated planning proposal. This will then enable landowners to submit development applications as and when they require.

Any future planning proposals will be reviewed against the relevant Section 9.1 Ministerial Planning Directions (including 9.1 and 9.2) for rural land use planning, as well as alignment with the *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* rural land use objectives (Objective 9). See Appendix 1.

Ministerial Direction 9.1 'Rural Zones'



Ministerial Direction 9.2 'Rural Lands'



Hunter Regional Plan 2041 Objective 9 'Sustain and balance productive rural landscapes'



Monitoring and review

Council will monitor this Rural Lands Strategy annually and use it to inform future reviews. This Strategy will seek to be exhibited and re-adopted every 7 years (in line with the LSPS) to ensure that planning outcomes are aligned with state policy directions.

First Nations engagement

As late as the 1950s, First Nations people were being dispossessed and removed from their land. The legacy of these policies has resulted in First Nations people being excluded from land management opportunities and decision-making processes.

The draft Rural Lands Strategy represents an opportunity to both modernise the planning framework with place-based controls to support an evolving agricultural sector and consider how First Nations people can be more involved in land management practices.

Council is committed to ongoing engagement and collaboration with First Nations people and Traditional Owners to better embed connecting with country in our planning and decision making.

Strategic outcomes

The draft Rural Lands Strategy recognises the challenges being experienced in rural areas. It sets out strategies for how to address these challenges and embrace opportunities for the future.

The directions and strategies in this section are grouped into four key themes for the future of rural lands.



1 Manage rural lands through a place-based approach



2 Promote rural enterprises and diversification



3 Maintain biosecurity and sustainability, and protect waterways



4 Balance opportunities to live in rural areas



Image source: Persona Communications



Outcome 1: Manage rural lands through a place-based approach

The draft Strategy aims to adopt a place-based approach for rural lands. This means matching planning rules to the lands farming potential while allowing flexibility to keep farms sustainable and viable over time.

Dungog Shire spans about 2,250 km² of fertile farmland, rolling hills, villages and native forests, with Barrington Tops as a scenic backdrop. These landscapes shape a strong rural identity and attract visitors, so new development needs to fit the setting and support farming.

Lot patterns are mixed. Many areas, especially around Clarence Town, Vacy and Gresford, have lots smaller than the local environmental plan minimum requirements, reflecting older subdivisions and limiting its active use for commercial farming without the challenge of consolidation across neighbours. Central and western areas often exceed the minimum, offering more scope for intensified or extensive agriculture where it aligns with planning goals.

Local constraints, such as soil quality, slope, existing lot fragmentation and floodplains, affect where agriculture thrives and what infrastructure is needed. Recognising these factors enables informed choices that protect rural values and support sustainable growth.

The draft Strategy preserves large farming areas, limits incompatible uses, prevents fragmentation and avoids inappropriate dwelling entitlements. Reflecting evolving rural industries and State policy, it proposes three rural zones based on soil, landscape constraints and market access, putting the right activities in the right locations. It has also considered proximity to centres and transport connectivity, providing broader market access across the region, particularly with respect to the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone.



A blanket approach to zoning and minimum lot sizes does not reflect the diversity of Dungog's rural lands. Instead, a tailored approach is needed that considers the distinct environmental values, agricultural capacity and ownership patterns across the Shire.

It is proposed that rural areas be planned in three broad landscapes, including the **Tablelands**, the **Riverlands**, and **Intensive Productive Agriculture**. This approach ensures planning controls are fit for purpose and safeguard both rural character and agricultural productivity.

Strategy 1.1 Aligning agricultural uses with land characteristics

Soil capability across the Shire

Soil Capability Classes describe how much land can be used for rural activities without damaging the soil. A simple rule of thumb is the higher the class number, the lower the land's capability and the greater the care needed to avoid erosion and degradation.

In the north of the Shire, most land sits in Classes 6–8, which means very severe to extreme limitations. These areas are often steep (greater than 18% slope) and have unstable soils, so they are less suited to many farming activities and need careful management to prevent erosion.

In the south, soils are generally Classes 2–5, which means slight to severe limitations but overall better capability for agriculture. The most productive rural lands are found around Dungog Strategic Centre, Gresford, Vacy, Martins Creek, Paterson, Wirragulla and Brookfield, where a wider range of rural uses can be supported with appropriate safeguards.

The valley's fertile soils led to widespread clearing and cultivation during early European settlement. These changes altered traditional land uses, hydrology and biodiversity patterns, creating long-term challenges for the landscape. Over time, farming has often emphasised short-term productivity, which has increased exposure to risks such as flooding, land degradation and ecological decline. A more sustainable outlook is now needed, one that balances productive agriculture with practices that restore soil health, strengthen resilience, and support the long-term viability of farming and the landscape as a whole.

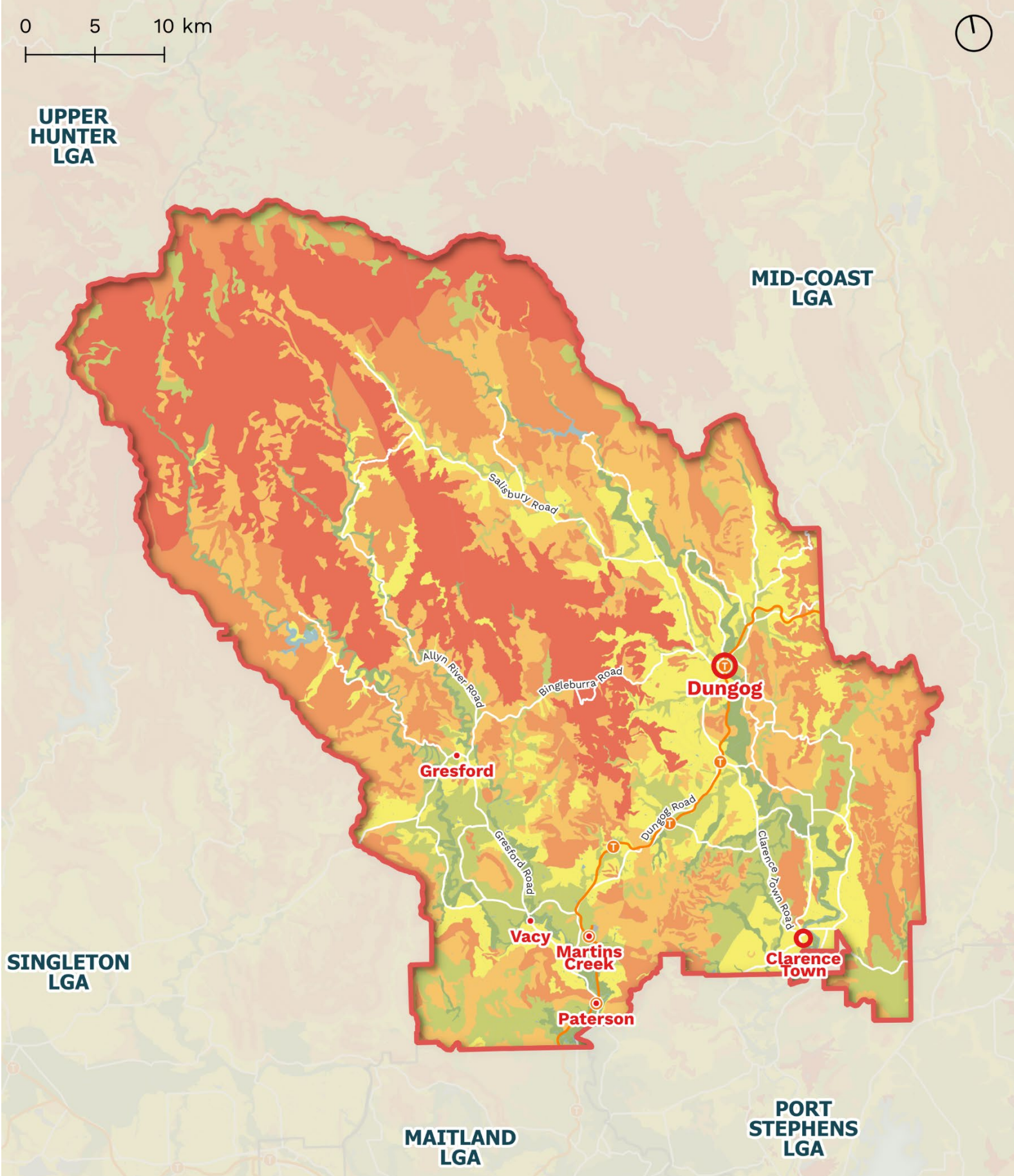


Figure 5 Soil and Land Capability

Legend

 Dungog LGA	Soil and land capability	 6 - Very severe limitations
 Strategic Centre	 2 - Slight but significant limitations	 7 - Extremely severe limitations
 Town Centre	 3 - Moderate limitations	 8 - Extreme limitations
 Village	 4 - Moderate to severe limitations	 Not assessed
	 5 - Severe limitations	 Water

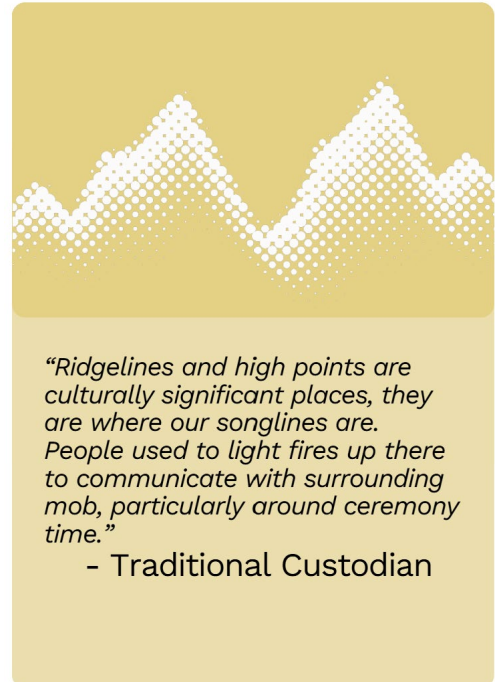
Steep lands across the Shire

Steep slopes and uneven terrain shape parts of the Shire. Mapping shows most land with gradients above 18% is concentrated in the north, easing toward the centre. These areas are generally less suited to agricultural production because steep ground limits farm efficiency and often aligns with lower soil capability. The 18% threshold is important as it signals where it becomes more difficult to undertake agricultural activities.

High points have traditionally been used for ceremonies, strategic lookout places and communication across the landscape. It is not uncommon for steep land to contain cultural heritage sites and remnant vegetation due to limited disturbance. This can be attributed to steep land's incompatibility with some agricultural practices.

Restricted accessibility, coupled with uncoordinated management, can result in high fuel loads that increase bushfire risk and threaten cultural heritage sites. Culturally informed management of these landscapes could protect cultural heritage sites, reduce fuel loads and enhance biodiversity networks.

Some of the steepest northern landscapes are also designated Conservation Lands (e.g. adjacent to the Barrington Tops National Park), adding environmental protections. While these places can limit agricultural output, they contribute strongly to scenic character and ecological value, important assets to be protected alongside productive rural land.



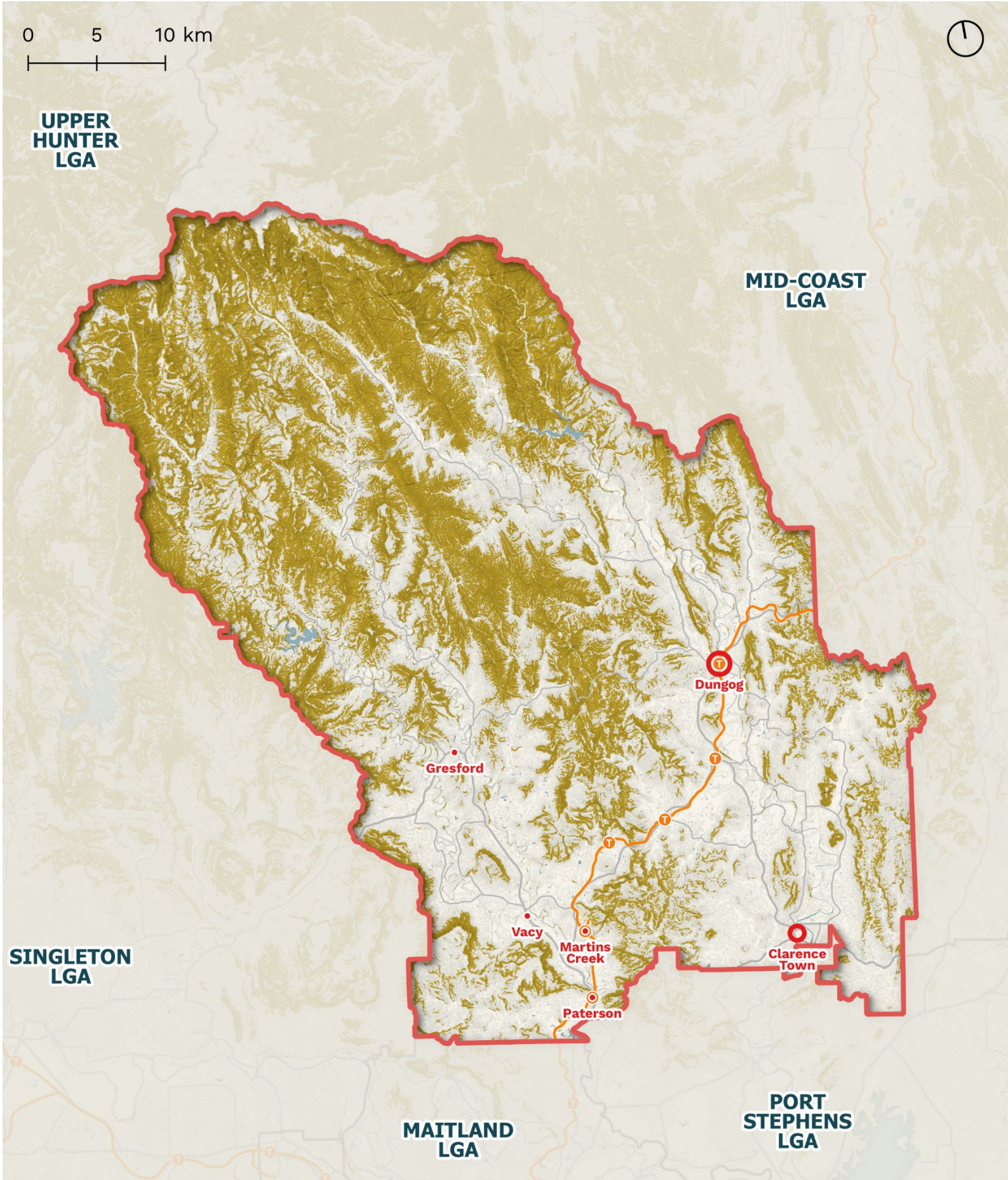


Figure 6 Steep Land Map

Legend

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Dungog LGA | Strategic Centre | Steep Land (18%+) |
| T Train Station | <div style="position: absolute; top: 50%; left: 50%; transform: translate(-50%, -50%); width: 3px; height: 3px; background-color: red;"></div> Town Centre | |
| Train Line | • Village | |

Lot Size Comparison

Across NSW, 98 LGAs include land zoned as RU1 Primary Production. Of these LGAs, only Dungog Shire has a minimum lot size of 60ha applied to the RU1 zone.

MidCoast are proposing to introduce a minimum lot size of 60ha as a transition to rural lands with a minimum lot size of 100ha.

Fewer LGAs include land zoned as RU2 Rural Landscape and RU4 Primary Production Small Lots. However, where these zonings apply, the 40ha minimum lot size is applied more than a 20ha or 60ha minimum lot size.

Below is an overview of the minimum lot size applied to rural land zones in the Hunter. Across the rural zoned land, 40ha is the most common of the three minimum lot sizes reviewed.

The proposed RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zoned land is highly fragmented, with two-thirds of the existing lots below the proposed 20ha minimum lot size.

The proposed 20ha minimum lot size in the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone would provide capacity for the subdivision of approximately 756 additional lots, which would cater for 869 dwellings, assuming a full take-up plus 15% of the lots incorporating a dual occupancy. The fragmented nature of this area reduces the likelihood of subdivision.

The productivity of farming land is influenced by a range of factors that are independent of the size of a farm. These factors include climate, soil fertility, the availability of water, as well as feed quality and pasture management for grazing. As such the size of a farm to support intensive agriculture can vary depending on these factors.

Other intensive agricultural uses, such as turf farms, nurseries, and vegetable crops can be supported on smaller farms. For example, a local farm near Dungog grows cut flowers, garlic and other seasonal produce in an area less than 2ha.

Table 3: Comparison of Rural Zoned Land and Minimum Lot Sizes across NSW

Zoning	Total No. Councils	Minimum Lot Size		
		20ha	40ha	60ha
RU1 Primary Production	98	23	60	1
RU2 Rural Landscape	49	16	36	1
RU4 Primary Production Small Lots	52	10	21	0

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Proposed Rural Zoned Land and Minimum Lot Sizes across the Hunter

Location	RU1			RU2			RU4		
	20ha	40ha	60ha	20ha	40ha	60ha	20ha	40ha	60ha
Cessnock									
Dungog Shire (Existing)									
Dungog Shire (Proposed)									
Lake Macquarie ¹									
Maitland									
MidCoast existing ²									
MidCoast proposed ^{3, 4}									
Muswellbrook									
Newcastle									
Port Stephens									
Singleton									
Upper Hunter									

¹ Land zoned RU4 in Lake Macquarie LGA has a minimum lot size of 1ha, significantly less than the 20ha proposed for Dungog Shire

² Current planning controls under the Gloucester, Great Lakes and Greater Taree LEP

³ Proposed planning controls under a consolidated LEP for MidCoast

⁴ Some areas of MidCoast Council (within the former Gloucester LGA) will retain the 100ha MLS in the RU1 zone.

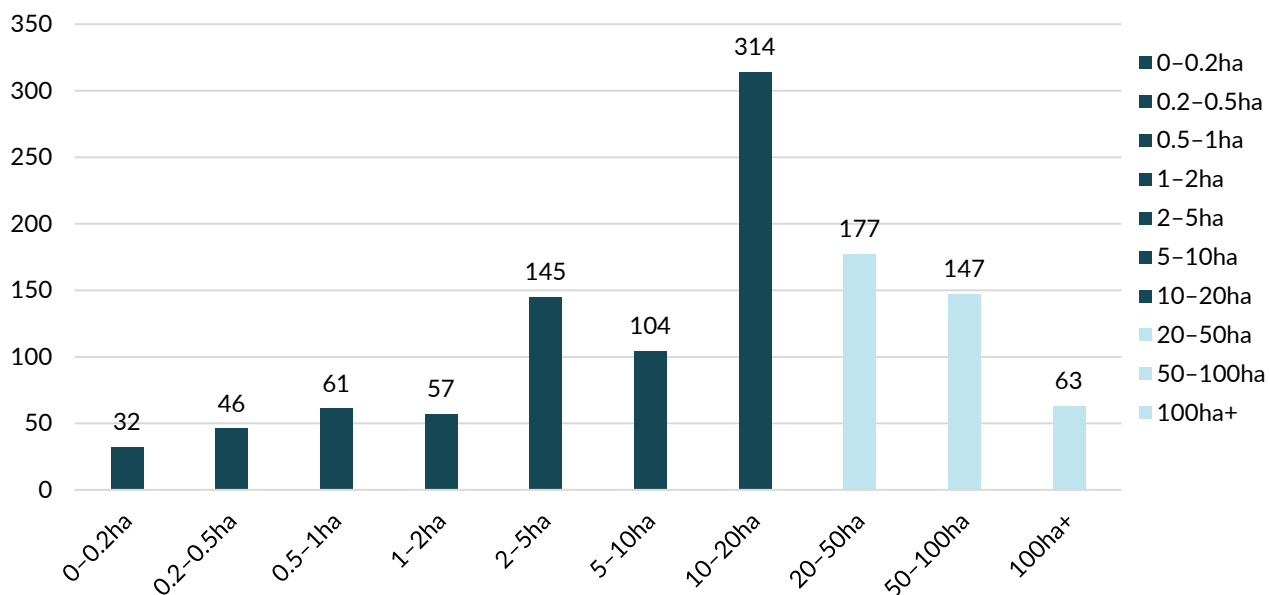


Figure 7 Lot Size Composition of Rural Lots in Dungog LGA

Primary Production Riverlands

Description

Dungog Shire's Riverlands are a productive mix of fertile flats, steep hills, healthy vegetation and working farms. This variety supports traditional agriculture as well as diversified ventures, with good access to Greater Newcastle's markets and services.

The proposal is to retain the RU1 Primary Production zone so farming remains the core land use, while reducing the minimum lot size to 40 hectares. This creates more flexibility for landholders to establish or expand rural enterprises without undermining productive capacity.

Setting a 40-hectare minimum strikes a balance: it protects high-value agricultural land from ad hoc fragmentation, encourages sensible investment and diversification, and helps river-land businesses stay productive and adaptable into the future.

It also makes Dungog Shire consistent with surrounding LGAs. Aligning with the minimum lot size standards of surrounding LGAs will help ensure the area remains competitive and attractive for rural investment. A 40-hectare minimum can generally be more affordable and manageable for landholders, providing greater flexibility to establish or expand rural enterprises. It is noted that the suitability and affordability of minimum lot sizes is context-specific, depending on land capability, market conditions, and location. This adjustment will support productive land use while encouraging new buyers and long-term farm viability.

Statement of intent

- To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base.
- To encourage diversity in primary industry enterprises and systems appropriate for the area.
- To minimise the fragmentation and alienation of resource lands.
- To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and land uses within adjoining zones.
- To facilitate a variety of tourist and visitor-orientated land uses that complement and promote a stronger rural sector appropriate for the area.

Implementation

Update local policy of the Dungog Shire planning scheme to reflect the intent of the draft Strategy and primary production Riverlands to:

- Apply an RU1 Primary Production zone to the primary production Riverlands
- Apply a minimum lot size of 40 hectares
- Amend the permitted with consent and prohibited land uses as outlined in the Appendices.

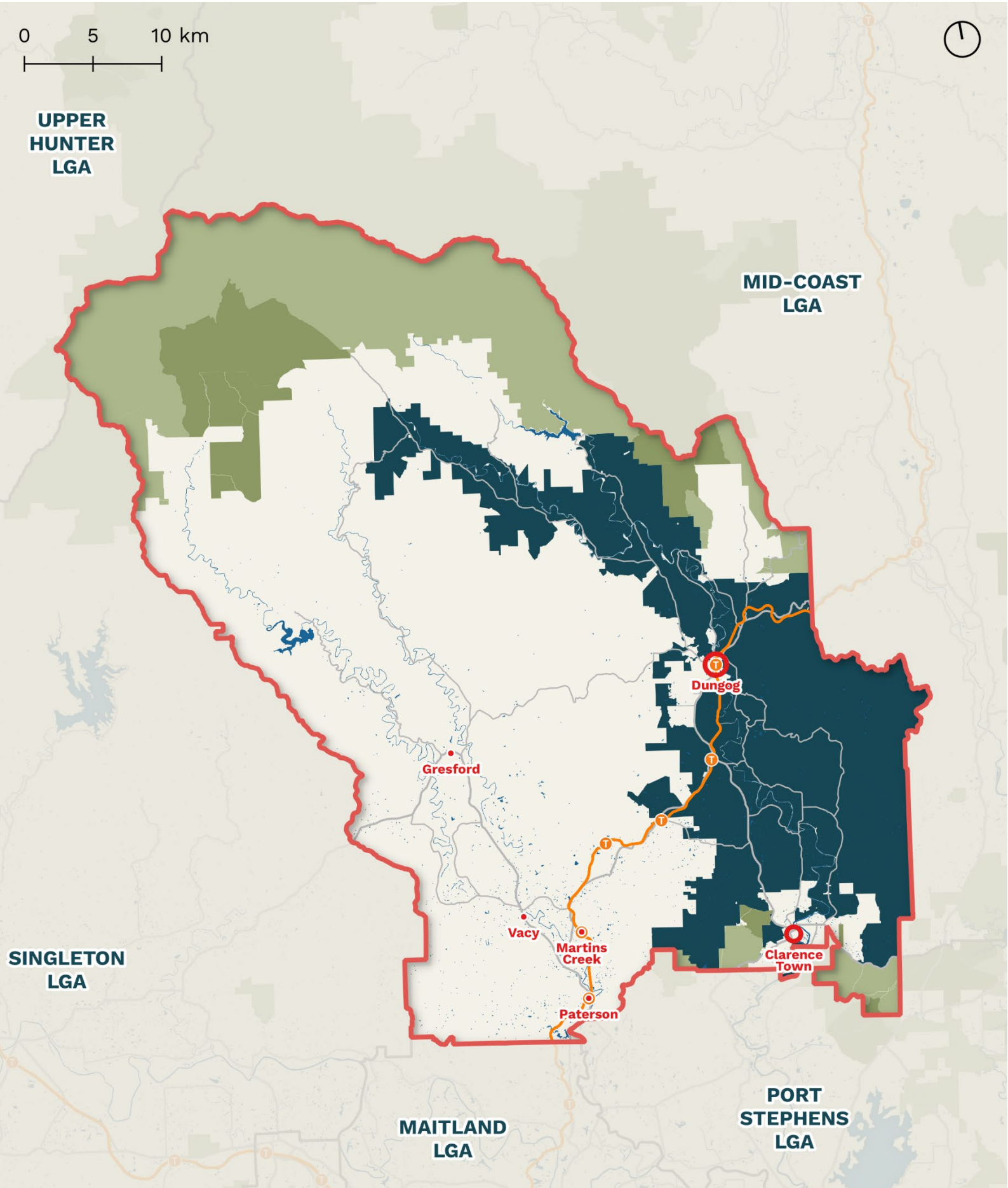


Figure 8 Proposed Primary Production Riverlands (RU1)

Legend

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
|  Dungog LGA |  Strategic Centre |  Primary Production Riverlands (RU1) |
|  Train Station |  Town Centre |  National Parks and Reserves |
|  Train Line |  Village |  State Forests |
| | |  Water |

Rural Landscape Tablelands

Description

Given the steep terrain and generally poorer soils in parts of this area, inclusion in the RU2 Rural Landscape zone is proposed, with a new 40-hectare minimum lot size. This standard enables viable extensive agriculture and compatible rural uses without fragmenting the landscape. This zoning recognises commercial primary production that fits the area's ecological and scenic qualities while also allowing complementary activities, such as tourism, visitor accommodation, and community-oriented uses, that can provide additional income streams for landholders.

RU2 Rural Landscape zoned land is best suited to more extensive agriculture, such as grazing where the landscape limits intensive farming. This approach protects visual character and environmental values while still enabling productive rural uses that work with the terrain and natural features.

Statement of intent

- To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base.
- To maintain the rural landscape character of the land.
- To provide for a range of compatible land uses, including extensive agriculture.
- To facilitate a variety of tourist and visitor land uses that complement and promote a stronger rural sector appropriate for the area.
- To secure a future for agriculture in the area by minimising the fragmentation of rural land and loss of potential agricultural productivity.

Implementation

Update local policy of the Dungog Shire planning scheme to reflect the intent of the draft Strategy and rural landscape table lands to:

- Apply an RU2 Rural Landscape Zone to the Tablelands
- Apply a minimum lot size of 40 hectares
- Amend the permitted with consent and prohibited land uses as outlined in the Appendices.

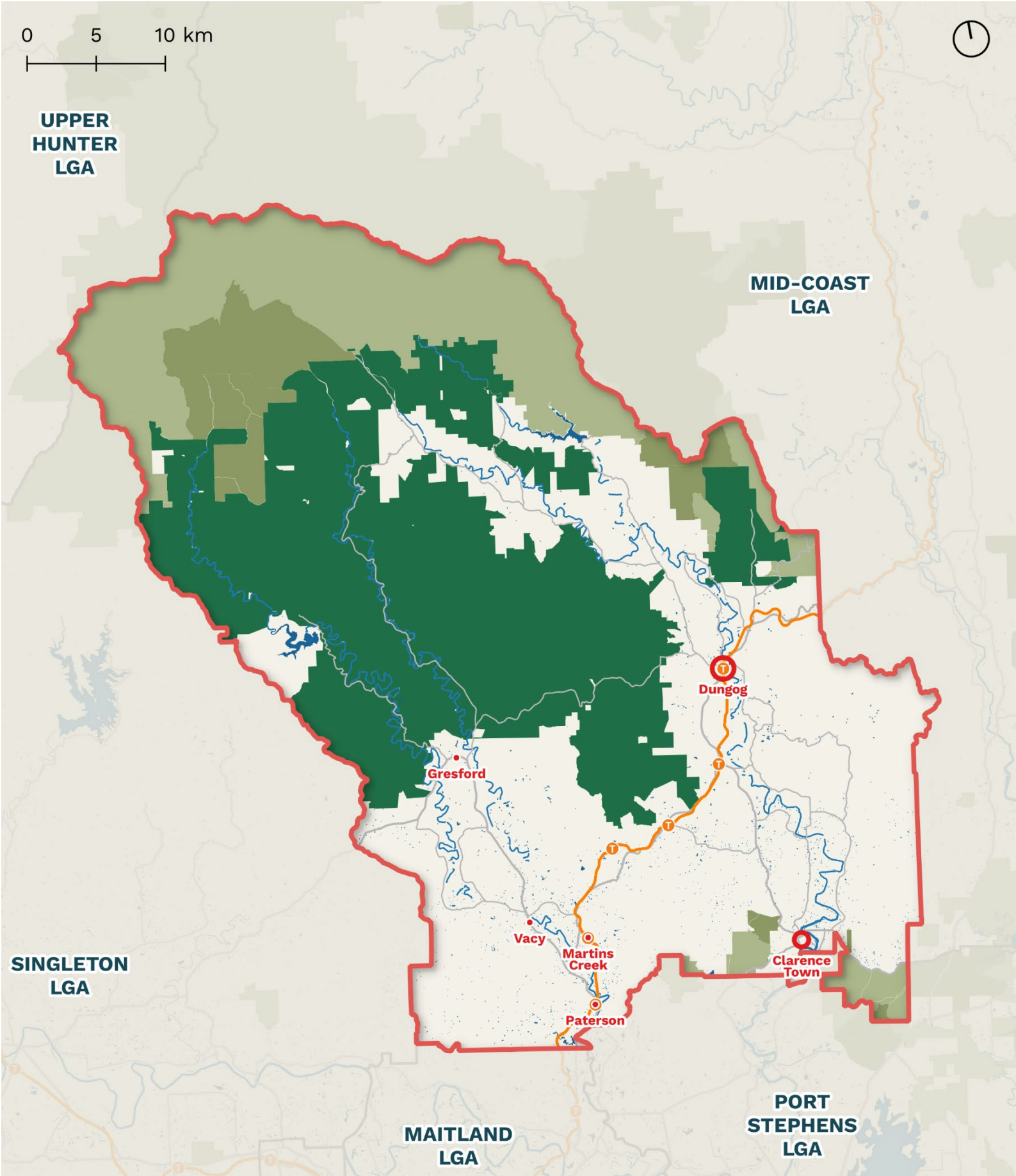


Figure 9 Proposed Rural Landscape Tablelands (RU2) Zoning

Legend

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dungog LGA | Strategic Centre | Rural Landscape Tablelands (RU2) |
| Train Station | Town Centre | National Parks and Reserves |
| Train Line | Village | State Forests |
| | | Water |

Small-scale commercial farming

Description

The RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone supports primary industry on smaller holdings, particularly where higher-quality soils, proximity to town centres, and access to regional markets create opportunities for intensive or value-adding agriculture. The RU4 zone provides a transition between larger rural production lands and village areas, supporting a diverse and economically active rural landscape.

Within Dungog Shire, the RU4 zone is proposed in selected areas around Vacy, Paterson, and Martins Creek, where land capability, soil fertility, and market accessibility support smaller-scale but commercially viable rural enterprises. These areas contain higher-quality soils that are well suited to horticulture, poultry, niche livestock, and value-adding activities, and their proximity to road networks and markets in Maitland and Newcastle provides strong economic viability.

Proposing a 20-hectare minimum lot size (MLS) in the RU4 zone helps sustain agricultural use and prevents further fragmentation of productive land. Most land within these areas already sits below 20 ha, so the proposed MLS will not result in additional subdivision pressure but will instead help maintain existing parcel patterns and protect the agricultural function of the land. This scale supports ongoing productivity, ensures holdings remain large enough to manage biosecurity and land management obligations, and provides flexibility for enterprises to diversify or intensify production. Development Control Plan (DCP) provisions will reinforce this by guiding buffers, siting, and design standards to minimise conflict between agricultural and residential uses.

The rationale for applying the RU4 zone in these locations is to preserve and enhance agricultural activity on smaller, high-quality lots near villages, while avoiding the loss of productive soils to non-agricultural use. This approach maintains the land's primary agricultural function while enabling small-scale rural enterprise development close to existing settlements. It balances economic opportunity and land stewardship, ensuring that RU4 areas around Vacy, Paterson, and Martins Creek continue to contribute to the Shire's agricultural economy rather than transitioning toward lifestyle or residential use.

Statement of intent

- To enable sustainable primary industry and other compatible land uses.
- To encourage and promote diversity and employment opportunities in relation to primary industry enterprises, particularly those that require smaller lots or that are more intensive in nature.
- To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and land uses within adjoining zones.
- To ensure land with high potential for agricultural activity is conserved for intensive plant and livestock agriculture activities.

Implementation

Update local policy of the Dungog Shire planning scheme to reflect the intent of the strategy and intensive commercial farming near homes to:

- Introduce an RU4 – Primary Production Small Lots Zone in Dungog Shire
- Apply a minimum lot size of 20 hectares
- Amend the permitted with consent and prohibited land uses as outlined in the Appendices.



Additional local provision relating to dwelling houses in RU4 zone

To reinforce the role of the RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone as a focus for productive rural land use, an additional local provision is proposed to ensure that dwelling houses are only developed where they directly support the permitted agricultural use of the land.

Under the potential new clause, development consent must not be granted for a dwelling house within the RU4 zone unless Council, as the consent authority, is satisfied regarding factors such as:

- that the land is, or is intended to be, used for agriculture;
- the dwelling is required to support agriculture or the irrigation of pasture and fodder crops;
- the proposal is not likely to cause land use conflict with existing agricultural activities; and
- adequate water and electricity services are available or arrangements have been made to provide them.

This approach ensures that the RU4 zone continues to deliver agricultural uses rather than rural residential development, consistent with the zone's objectives and the broader strategic direction of the Rural Lands Strategy.

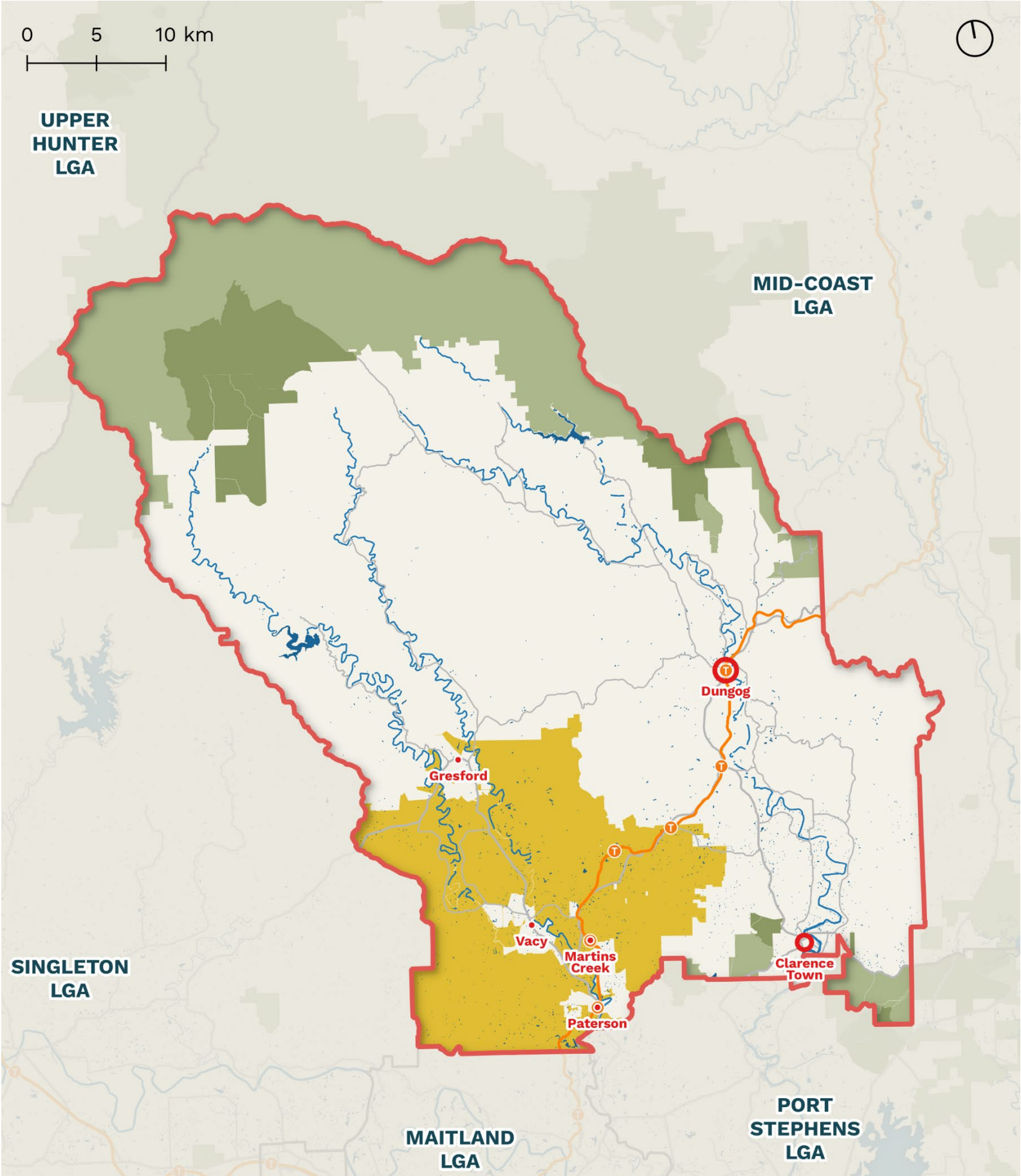


Figure 10 Proposed Primary Production Small Lot Zoning (RU4)

Legend

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Dungog LGA | Strategic Centre | Primary Production Small Lot (RU4) |
| T Train Station | Town Centre | National Parks and Reserves |
| — Train Line | • Village | State Forests |
| | | Water |

Table 5 Key Actions – Manage rural lands through a place-based approach

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Prepare a Planning Proposal to amend the Dungog LEP 2014 to revise rural zoning and minimum lot-size provisions, implementing a place-based framework aligned with land capability, farming potential and market access. This includes reducing the RU1 Primary Production MLS from 60 ha to 40 ha, introducing the RU2 Rural Landscape zone with a 40 ha Minimum Lot Size and establishing an RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone with a 20 ha Minimum Lot Size. The action is subject to funding and resourcing. Council will also assess and incorporate proponent-led planning proposals that demonstrate alignment with the draft Rural Lands Strategy and the draft LSPS.	Council	Short Term
2	Encourage and assess proponent-led planning proposals that advance diversification or rural-industry cluster objectives, ensuring consistency with the Rural Lands Strategy, LEP objectives and relevant State Environmental Planning Policies.	Council	Ongoing



Image source: Visit NSW



Outcome 2: Promote rural enterprises and diversification

Dungog Shire's rural economy is anchored by farming, with many landholders running agricultural businesses. However, many of these are not sole income businesses, as financial viability often depends on more than just farming. For many households farming is not their sole income, with many supplementing income with off-farm work or small-scale enterprises.

Further, over the last decade, economic output from agricultural industries in Dungog Shire has been in decline. This trend highlights the need for the Shire's rural lands to diversify their economic base to strengthen resilience and long-term viability.

The draft Strategy recognises this reality by providing greater flexibility in land use, helping rural families stay economically independent while continuing to farm.

A central goal is to allow land uses that complement agriculture, avoiding further land fragmentation while opening new opportunities for income generation. This includes home-based enterprises and small rural businesses so long as they do not create excessive noise, traffic, visual or environmental impacts.

Council will also review provisions for home-based businesses to encourage local entrepreneurship while protecting rural amenity. Tailored controls in the Development Control Plan (**DCP**) will guide how diversification proposals are assessed, with consideration of zone objectives, land values, infrastructure access and potential impacts. Collaboration with the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development will ensure local planning rules reflect rural-specific needs.

Proposed amendments to the *Dungog LEP 2014* would enable a wider range and scale of on-farm and tourism activities, including farm stays, food and beverage production, and eco-tourism, while keeping them compatible with rural character.

Together, these changes balance protection of Dungog Shire's farming base with flexibility for landholders to diversify, innovate and build resilient rural businesses into the future.

Strategy 2.1 Growing Rural Industry Clusters

Rural industry clusters help drive regional economic strength. They bring together productive and complementary businesses that support local jobs and build a more resilient and diverse rural economy. When related industries are located near each other, they can share services and lower costs through shared infrastructure such as abattoirs, hemp processing facilities, or specialist veterinary services for breeding operations.

Clusters grow where conditions are supportive. This includes good transport and telecommunications, reliable water for livestock or irrigation, favourable land and climate, minimal environmental constraints, affordable land, and enough space to avoid conflict with nearby homes or conservation areas.

In Dungog Shire, these ideal conditions are mostly found in two key areas:

- The **Gresford to Paterson corridor** in the west, and
- The **Dungog to Clarence Town corridor** in the east

These corridors already support clusters of rural industries. The poultry sector has a strong presence around Vacy, Paterson and Martins Creek. The equine sector is expanding, with notable stud farms such as Torryburn Stud and Cangon Stud, and recreational events hosted by Wirragulla Polo Club.

Dungog Shire is well placed to grow the equine industry further. Proximity to the Upper Hunter, one of the world's leading thoroughbred breeding regions, combined with rich soils, reliable rainfall and a growing equine community, makes the Shire a logical location for future investment and poses great opportunities for equine related economic opportunities such as campdrafting. While a critical mass of equine businesses has not yet formed, the foundations are in place.

There are some emerging players in this space. Supporting these and other clusters brings wide benefits. It builds investor confidence, encourages innovation, reduces conflict with nearby land uses and creates new opportunities for agritourism and value-added production. In doing so, it strengthens the rural economy while maintaining the distinct character of Dungog Shire.

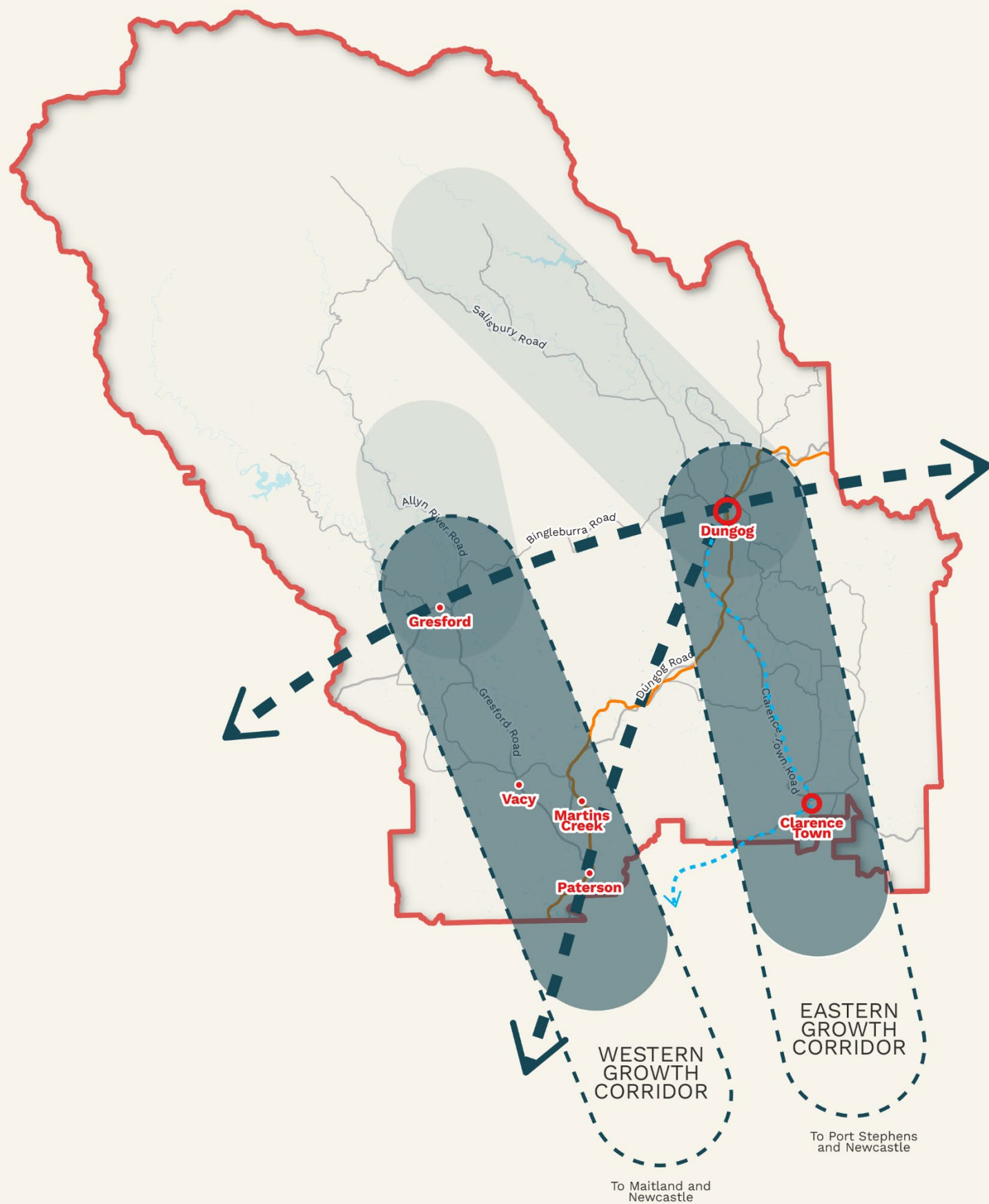


Figure 11 Proposed Housing Growth Corridors

..... Indicative proposed bus route from Dungog to Raymond Terrace via Clarence Town.

Strategy 2.2 Unlocking Agritourism Opportunities

Economic growth in rural areas is supported by encouraging land use diversification and improving financial resilience for landholders and the wider community. Agritourism, which links working farms with visitor experiences, offers a practical way to create new income, attract visitors and strengthen the regional economy. Dungog Shire is already a recognised destination and is well placed to benefit.

Recent NSW Government reforms allow some agritourism activities as exempt or complying development when set standards are met. Proposals that do not meet those standards, or that sit on sensitive land, still require a development application.

To help agritourism grow with minimal land use conflict, the rural lands strategy proposes updates to Clause 5.4 of the LEP.

The goal is to provide flexibility increased allowable floorspace and areas for small-scale rural businesses oriented toward the tourist and visitor economy such as farm stays, tastings or tours, while setting sensible limits to protect rural character, amenity and the ongoing viability of agriculture. These changes aim to give landholders clarity and support to diversify, while ensuring development remains in scale with the rural setting.

To support implementation, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure has released model clauses for development control plans (**DCPs**), which will be integrated into Dungog Shire's updated DCP. With clear planning controls, the right infrastructure and a supportive regulatory approach, agritourism can become a key pillar of a more sustainable and resilient local economy. This will allow Dungog Shire to harness population and visitor growth while protecting its natural assets and rural character.



Table 6 Maximum Floor Areas under Clause 5.4 of the LEP

LEP	Artisan food and drink	Home business	Home industry	Kiosk
Dungog (current)	43% gross floor area or 400 square meters	50 square metres	60 square meters	30 square meters
Dungog (proposed)	45% gross floor area or 400 square meters	50 square meters	120 square meters	65 square meters
MidCoast	43% gross flow area or 400 square meters	50 square meters	120 square meters	65 square meters
Port Stephens	30% gross floor area or 400 square meters	50 square meters	50 square meters	20 square meters
Singleton	40% gross floor area of 400	50 square meters	50 square meters	30 square meters
Bathurst	30% gross floor area or 400 square meters	60 square meters	60 square meters	50 square meters
Richmond Valley	25% gross floor area or 400 square meters	60 square meters	60 square meters	150 square meters
Griffith	40% gross floor area of 400 square meters	100 square meters	100 square meters	40 square meters
Bega Valley	40% gross floor area or 400 square meters	100 square meters	100 square meters	50 square meters

LEP	Bed and breakfast	Farm stay	Roadside stall
Dungog (current)	n/a	5 bedrooms	10 square meters
Dungog (proposed)	5 bedrooms	12 bedrooms*	30 square meters
MidCoast	5 bedrooms	5 bedrooms	10 square meters
Port Stephens	4 bedrooms	12 bedrooms	10 square meters
Singleton	4 bedrooms	4 bedrooms	10 square meters
Bathurst	10 bedrooms	10 bedrooms	20 square meters
Richmond Valley	3 bedrooms	10 bedrooms	10 square meters
Griffith	4 bedrooms	12 bedrooms	40 square meters
Bega Valley	4 bedrooms	6 bedrooms	20 square meters

***Note:** Dwellings containing 12 bedrooms must demonstrate that on-site sewage management systems are fit for purpose. Development Control Plan (DCP) provisions and the Development Assessment Framework will need to be reviewed to ensure clear guidance on design and assessment requirements.

Strategy 2.3 Supporting Local Produce Sales

To encourage small scale rural enterprise, Dungog Shire Council proposes adding roadside stalls to the list of exempt development in Schedule 2 of the Local Environmental Plan, with a higher maximum operational area compared to the State Environmental Planning Policy *SEPP (Exempt and Complying) 2008*.

This would let landholders sell produce grown on their property without a full development application, provided basic requirements are met. The exemption would apply in the RU1 Primary Production, proposed RU2 Rural Landscape and RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zones.

The aim is to make it easier for farms to earn extra income, increase access to fresh local food and support the rural character of the Shire, while keeping clear rules in place for safety and amenity.

This approach is based on successful examples from other councils like Ballina, Byron, and Wollondilly, where roadside stalls have helped support local farming while keeping development low-impact and manageable.

By introducing this change, Council aims to make it easier for farmers and landholders to sell seasonal produce, eggs, flowers, or honey at the farm gate, boosting local business and offering residents and visitors a taste of Dungog Shire's rural character.

Be entirely on private land (not set up on a classified road or public verge)

Have a maximum footprint of 30 square metres

Be limited to one stall per property

Include safe access and parking

Use minimal signage (2.5m² maximum) to avoid visual clutter or traffic risks

Obtain any necessary approvals under the Roads Act 1993 (where relevant)

Table 7 Key Actions – Supporting agritourism

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
3	Include new exempt-development standards in Schedule 2 of the LEP to allow roadside produce stalls up to 30 m ² in RU1, RU2 and RU4 zones, subject to road-safety and amenity criteria, encouraging direct sale of local goods.	Council	Short Term
4	Amend the LEP and DCP to enable low-impact diversification and agritourism consistent with the “farming-plus” approach, including updates to Clause 5.4 to increase permissible floorspace and operational areas for on-farm tourism while maintaining rural character and environmental safeguards.	Council	Short Term



Outcome 3: Maintain biosecurity and sustainability, and protect waterways

Good land management is a legal responsibility and a practical way to keep rural properties productive, safe and healthy. It helps protect the land and supports strong rural businesses and communities, as follows:



Preventing the infestation and spread of weeds on properties and neighbouring land



Managing pest animals and controlling soil erosion



Supporting livestock health and maintaining land values for economic benefits



Protecting waterways and strengthening biodiversity



Reducing bushfire risk

Strategy 3.1 Protecting Biosecurity and Waterways

Strong biosecurity and resilience planning are essential to a sustainable rural economy, a healthy environment, and a supported community in Dungog Shire. Good biosecurity helps producers reach premium markets, lift yields, reduce costs, and keep local food and fibre safe and high quality. This works best through partnerships with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and Local Land Services, and through ongoing community education for both urban and rural residents.

Climate change is increasing exposure to natural hazards, which in turn raises biosecurity risks. Warmer temperatures in the Hunter make it easier for pests, weeds, and diseases to spread, and floods can move these threats quickly across farms and landscapes.

Flood-prone land along the Williams and Paterson Rivers holds highly productive soils yet is more vulnerable after disasters. Planning for these places must balance the protection of farm livelihoods with disaster management so that properties are resilient to both physical damage and longer-term biosecurity threats.

Risks also rise when plants, animals, and pests spread from nearby developments. Buffers and separation distances are therefore a critical tool to reduce conflict between rural and neighbouring uses. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development interim guideline on buffer zones recommends that new development, especially housing, include suitable buffers in design.

Biosecurity in NSW is a shared responsibility between industry, government and the community. Under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* everyone has a general obligation to be aware of their surroundings and take action to prevent the introduction and spread of pests, diseases, weeds and contaminants.

The NSW Government, through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development plays a crucial role in managing biosecurity emergencies. Local Land Services work with local communities to tackle biosecurity threats. Individuals have a General Biosecurity Duty to be aware of their surroundings and take action to prevent the introduction and spread of pests, diseases, weeds and contaminants. This includes reporting biosecurity concerns and using boundary fencing to prevent pest animals from getting onto properties.

Development can also pose risks to water quality, particularly where new dwellings or rural enterprises are located near waterways or within drinking water catchments. WaterNSW and Hunter Water Corporation provide guidelines for buffer distances and site design measures to protect downstream water quality and maintain a Neutral or Beneficial Effect on Water Quality (NorBE). These guidelines help ensure that stormwater, effluent, and other potential contaminants are appropriately managed to safeguard drinking water supplies and ecosystem health.

Building on this approach, Dungog Shire Council and Hunter Water should work collaboratively to refine planning controls that balance growth and water quality protection. The aim is to remove unnecessary 'red tape' for low-risk developments while strengthening safeguards in higher-risk areas through clearer, risk-based standards. This partnership supports the delivery of practical, 'win-win' solutions, enabling sustainable rural development while maintaining NorBE outcomes across the Shire in a way that is cost-effective and reasonable for landowners.

In Dungog Shire, land next to rural zones already has setback requirements and strict controls for weed and pest clearance, with typical distances of 100 metres and up to 500 metres where land adjoins RU5 Village or R5 Large Lot Residential zones.

Recent changes to the NSW planning framework have further strengthened biosecurity protections. In December 2022, Clause 5.18 of the *NSW Standard LEP* was added to the *Dungog LEP 2014*.

These measures help protect agricultural land from encroachment, reduce land use conflict, and keep biosecurity risks in check as development pressure grows. The result is stronger productivity and greater resilience for rural communities.



Strategy 3.2 Promoting sustainable forestry

Forestry is a major employer and revenue source in the Dungog Shire, but it can create tensions for neighbouring properties. Unlike grazing, plantation forestry involves long periods with limited on-site activity, which can allow pest plants and animals to spread. Neighbours may see reduced productivity or face extra costs managing pests that move across boundaries.

Practical steps can reduce these impacts. Dog proof fencing, cleared strips along shared boundaries, and regular monitoring help contain pests and protect stock and crops. Education and investment in tools such as drones and remote cameras make it easier to check fence lines, spot problems early and reduce the physical burden of ongoing management.

Bushfire risk is another key concern. Hotter, drier conditions increase the chance of fires in forested areas. Managing fuel loads and access tracks is essential to protect plantations, nearby farms and communities. Council, the forestry industry and fire authorities should work together on a clear fire management regime and keep it up to date as conditions change.

By balancing the economic benefits of forestry with strong pest control and bushfire management, the Shire can support a productive sector while minimising impacts on neighbours and the wider community.

Forestry activities should align with the provisions set out by *Local Land Services (LLS)* for private native forestry. Currently, there is duplication in the process, with landholders needing both LLS approval and development consent under the LEP. To streamline this, Council may explore opportunities to make forestry permissible without consent, relying instead on the existing LLS approval framework. This approach reduces unnecessary red tape while ensuring that forestry activities continue to meet environmental and land management standards.

Strategy 3.3 Increasing resilience to natural hazards

In recent years, Dungog Shire has been hit by a series of natural disasters that have left lasting impacts on the community, the landscape and the economy.

Major floods in 2015, 2021 and 2022 damaged homes, farmland, roads and community facilities, showing how vulnerable rural towns and transport networks are to extreme weather. Prolonged drought in the late 2010s placed further pressure on farming families, reducing water availability, stressing livestock and affecting crops.

Bushfire has also been a major risk, with the Black Summer fires of 2019–20 affecting parts of the Shire and reminding residents of the need for preparedness and hazard reduction.

Together, these events underline how closely the Shire's wellbeing is tied to the land and climate, and how forward-looking planning is needed to support recovery and strengthen resilience.

Flood-prone areas, particularly along the Williams and Paterson Rivers, contain some of the Shire's most productive farmland but also face the greatest risks. Rich alluvial soils make them highly valuable for agriculture, yet floods can destroy crops, kill livestock, damage infrastructure and create serious health risks.

Recent events across NSW, such as those in Lismore and the Hunter Valley, highlight the need for strong floodplain management. For rural landholders, access to higher ground for infrastructure and livestock is essential, and careful planning is needed to avoid practices, such as filling floodplains or raising house pads, that may worsen flooding elsewhere. These issues will be addressed in upcoming flood studies and through a new Development Control Plan for the Shire.

Recovery from disasters is often slow and made harder when planning rules delay repairs or rebuilding. To support resilience, Council will explore adding a natural disasters clause to the Local Environmental Plan. This would make it easier for residents to repair or replace homes damaged or destroyed by declared disasters, while still ensuring safe and sustainable rebuilding.

The aim is to cut red tape, provide certainty and help people return to their homes and livelihoods more quickly after an event.



Adopt Clause 5.9 to facilitate rebuild and repair following a natural disaster:

In 2020, a new optional clause was added to the Standard Instrument LEP to give landowners greater certainty after a natural disaster. It makes clear that if a lawful dwelling – including a secondary dwelling – is damaged or destroyed by events such as fire, flood or storm, it can be rebuilt or repaired without unnecessary planning hurdles. The intention behind this change is to support quicker recovery for affected communities, reduce the risk of people being displaced long term, and provide confidence that homes can be restored on land where they were already legally established. Council will explore the potential introduction of this clause to all existing zones and the proposed RU2 Rural Landscape zone and RU4 Primary Production Small Lots.

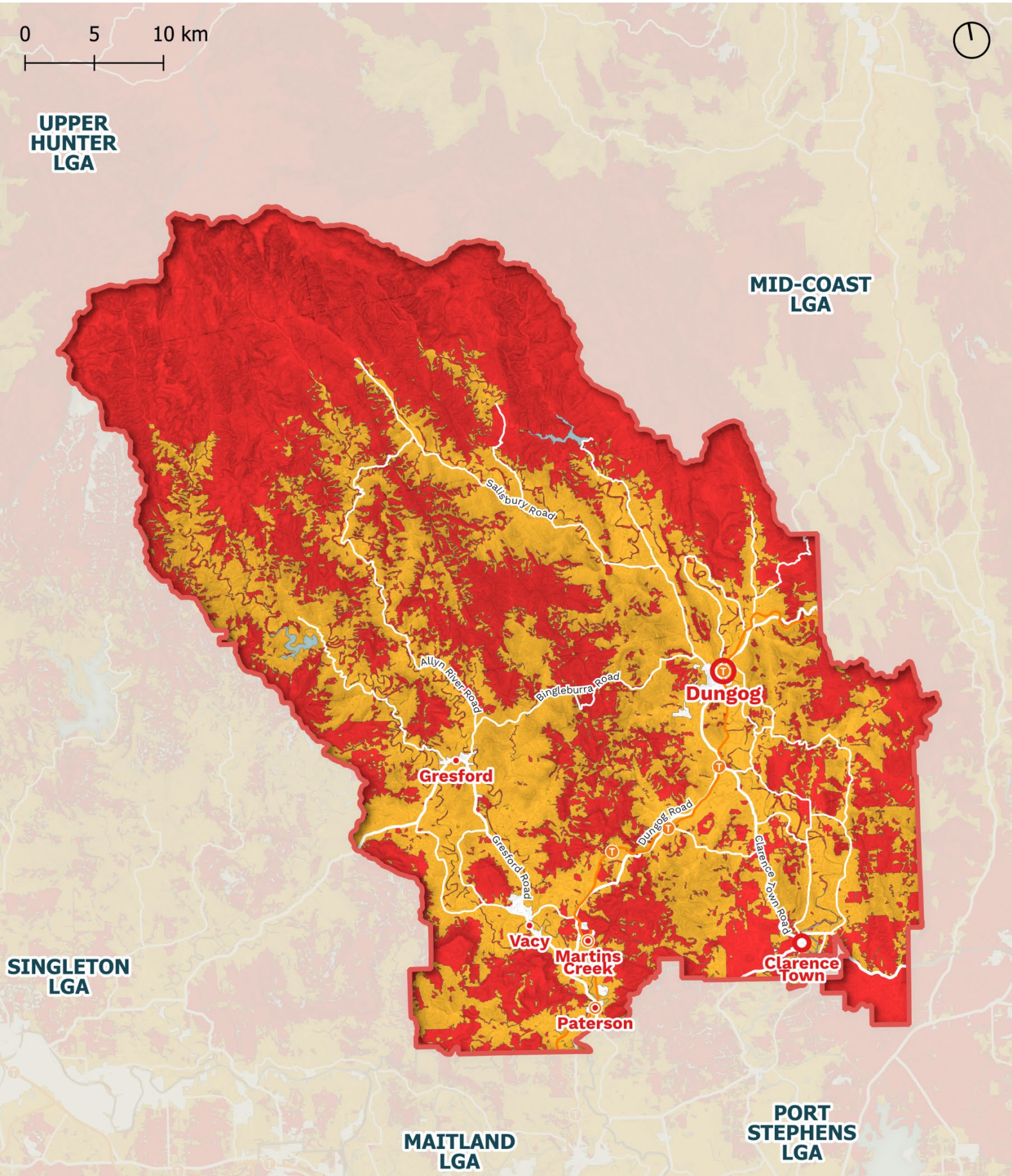


Figure 12 Bushfire Prone Land

Legend

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
|  Dungog LGA |  Strategic Centre | NSW Bush Fire Prone Lands |
|  Train Line |  Town Centre | |
|  Village |  Category 1: Highest risk | |
| | |  Category 3: Medium risk |

Table 8 Key Actions – Maintain biosecurity and sustainability

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
5	Review and update the DCP to maintain rural buffers and right-to-farm protections between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, supported by DCP setback and buffer design controls. This ensures biosecurity, limits conflict, and safeguards ongoing agricultural operations.	Council	Medium Term
6	Adopt Clause 5.9 (Rebuild after Natural Disaster) to the LEP to enable residents to rebuild and repair following declared natural disasters, reducing delays and ensuring safe, resilient recovery.	Council	Short Term
7	Amend the LEP to make private native forestry and plantation forestry permitted without consent in rural zones (RU1, RU2 and RU4) where approvals are already regulated under the Local Land Services Act 2013. This removes dual-approval duplication and ensures consistency with the LLS regulatory framework.	Council	Short Term





Outcome 4: Balance opportunities to live in rural areas

Rural families often find it hard to add an extra home on their property, which can make it difficult for generations to live together or to earn extra income. The NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (**DPIRD**) has cautioned that too many additional dwellings can reduce future farming potential, conflict with rural zone objectives and weaken broader planning strategies.

More residents in rural settings can also lead to conflict with normal farm practices such as noise, dust and odour, and over time scattered rural housing can erode high value agricultural and environmental land.

There are environmental and safety considerations as well. New buildings and services can affect sensitive landscapes, increase floodplain constraints and heighten bushfire risk. In some cases, building on higher ground has removed areas that farms rely on during floods for moving stock and protecting machinery.

Strategy 4.1 Making rural housing options clearer

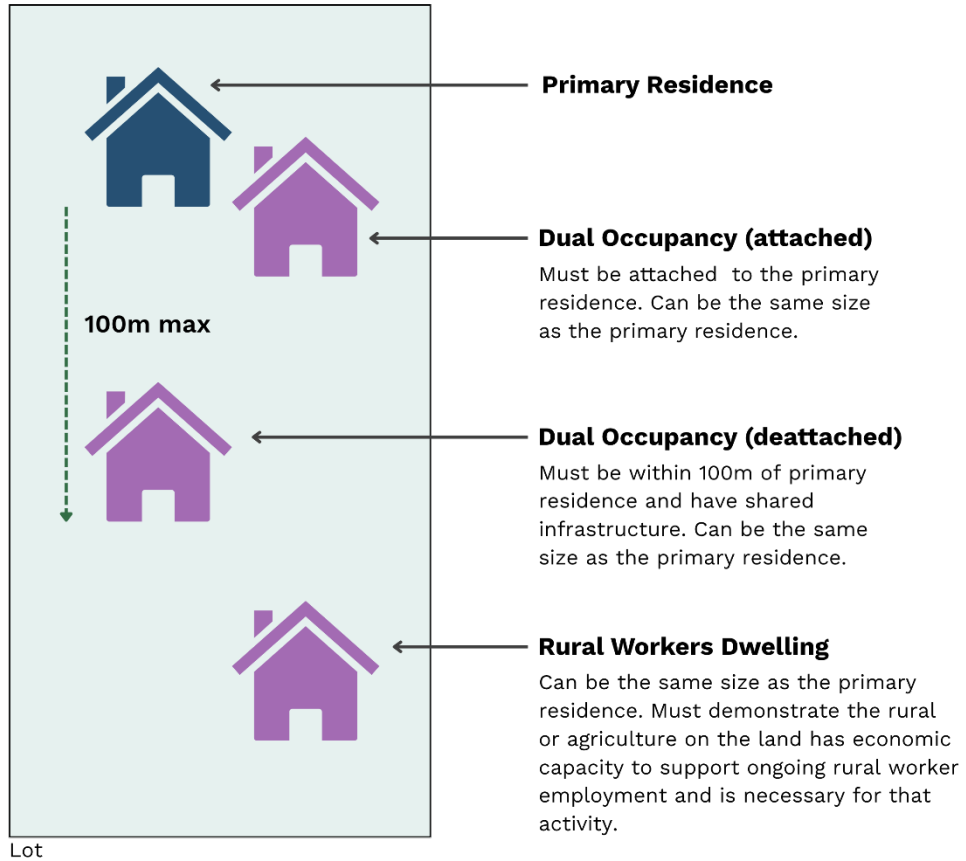
The Strategy proposes a practical reform to make rural housing options clearer while keeping agriculture front and centre. It seeks to introduce a simple pathway for a second dwelling (a dual occupancy) in the RU1 Primary Production and proposed RU2 Rural Landscape zones, where the second house can be sited away from the existing dwelling if that produces better outcomes for farming, amenity and the environment.

This approach responds to how rural life is changing, with families needing flexibility for succession, seasonal work ebbs and flows, and people wanting to stay on the land without fragmenting the landscape. Importantly, the proposal does not imply subdivision. A dual occupancy means two dwellings (attached or detached) on one lot and does not include a secondary dwelling. Any future subdivision would require a separate merit assessment against the local environmental plan.

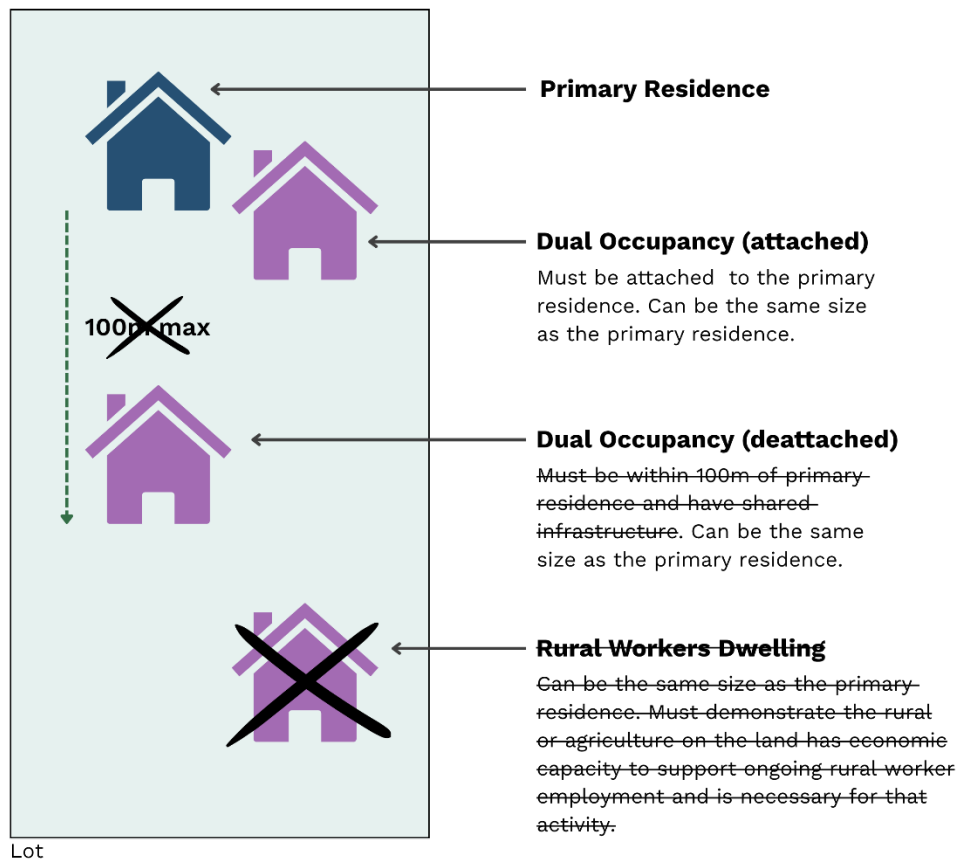
The reform also proposes to remove the rural workers dwelling provision. In practice, that pathway has become unwieldy and expensive to justify, often requiring agricultural viability or agronomy reports when the real need is commonly intergenerational living, farm succession, or periodic on-farm assistance. Consolidating into a single, clearer dual occupancy pathway reduces red tape and better aligns with contemporary rural housing needs.

Safeguards are built into the local planning framework so agriculture remains the primary use. Consent cannot be granted unless the proposal does not impair agriculture on the site or adjoining land, both dwellings share a single vehicular access to a public road, the land is physically suitable, and on-site sewage management can be safely accommodated for each dwelling. These are straightforward, enforceable tests aimed at preventing conflict and protecting productive land.

Rural Housing Options - Current



Rural Housing Options - Proposed



Allowing the second dwelling to be sited independently of the first enables better design and lower conflict. Houses can be placed to respect farming layouts, avoid spray drift and noise, protect significant views and ridgelines, and minimise cut and fill. This flexibility is especially valuable for farm succession, where a retiring farmer can remain on the property while the next generation takes over day-to-day operations; for seasonal labour, where short-term accommodation can be provided without cumbersome worker-specific provisions; and for farm viability, where lawful rental income can support operations without splitting up land.

To give applicants and assessors practical guidance, a new DCP chapter will be prepared alongside the reforms, applying to dual occupancies in RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape, RU5 Village and R5 Large Lot Residential zones. The DCP will steer siting and design to: protect good quality agricultural land and farm layouts; buffer dwellings from noise, dust, odour and other rural activities; minimise visual and landscape impacts; limit earthworks; safeguard biodiversity and waterways; address natural hazards and contamination; and ensure appropriate access and servicing via a single shared driveway. These measures translate the policy intent into clear, predictable outcomes on the ground.



Flexible Approach to Dual Occupancy Clustering

The Dungog LEP requires a dual occupancy to be within one hundred metres of the principal dwelling on the land. This requirement aims to cluster dwellings to limit land use conflict and visual impacts. It also allows reasonable privacy and can work as a starting point for assessment. However, across the Shire's rolling hills a strict one hundred metres does not always make sense, which has driven frequent clause 4.6 variations. For example, on steep sites or undulating landforms, a dwelling located 120–150 metres away may be the only option to achieve safe access, avoid flooding or bushfire risk, and minimise earthworks, while still maintaining the intent of clustered rural development. It is therefore better expressed as a desired standard in the Development Control Plan rather than a fixed Local Environmental Plan control, to allow site-specific nuances to be considered without the need for a formal clause 4.6 variation process.

Strict numerical rules can be blunt tools. A proposal may meet the objectives of the plan even if it does not match a fixed distance. Here, the objectives are to provide extra rural accommodation while avoiding conflict with agriculture and protecting the viability of rural industries.

A single shared driveway and a single point of access to a public road should be required for both dwellings to limit traffic and visual clutter. Council must also be satisfied that any proposal is in the public interest and consistent with the objectives of the zone.

Servicing remains critical. On-site sewage management will strongly influence siting, water supply will usually be self-sufficient, and power and telecommunications will typically connect to the primary dwelling. A shared driveway reduces impacts on public roads. Given dual occupancies are already permitted in the RU1 zone, these refinements are unlikely to create unreasonable demand for public infrastructure.

To give effect to this approach, the Local Environmental Plan clause will set clear objectives: to provide alternative accommodation for rural families, to protect primary production potential, and to ensure development matches the environmental capacity of the land. Consent will not be granted unless agriculture on the site and nearby land is not impaired, both dwellings share the same vehicular access, the land is physically suitable, and the site can accommodate on-site sewage management.

Council will seek to repeal Clause 6.11 of the LEP and replace it with a merit-based provision, modelled on Clause 4.2A of the Ballina LEP 2012, to ensure dual occupancies are assessed on their impact to agricultural operations rather than a fixed 100-metre separation rule.



Repeal Clause 6.11 to remove separation requirement for dual occupancies

Council will seek to repeal **Clause 6.11** of the **Dungog LEP 2014**, which currently requires a strict 100-metre separation between a dual occupancy and the principal dwelling and shared services. This blanket requirement is overly rigid and does not always reflect the realities of rural land use and farm management. In its place, we recommend introducing a new clause that takes a more merit-based approach, consistent with **Clause 4.2A of the Ballina LEP 2012**.

Under this approach, assessment would focus on whether the proposed dual occupancy would have an adverse impact on the ongoing use of the land for agriculture, rather than applying a fixed distance control. This will provide greater flexibility for landowners while still safeguarding agricultural operations and rural character.

Rural workers dwellings

Rural workers dwellings have proven difficult for landowners to navigate and for council to regulate. They are defined as an additional residence on the same lot used mainly by people employed for agriculture or a rural industry on that land, whether on a long term or short-term basis. Clause 6.7 of the LEP sets strict consent tests, including no impairment to agriculture, proof that the farm can support ongoing employment, a demonstrated necessity due to the nature of the enterprise or the remoteness of the site, and a limit of one rural workers dwelling per lot.

The original intent was sound. Rural workers dwellings were meant to house workers close to isolated agricultural operations so they did not need to travel long distances, and to ensure ready access to animal welfare and farm management tasks. The Department of Primary Industries advises these dwellings are most appropriate in isolated areas far from major population centres and typically for large scale enterprises that require on site managers or workers.

These criteria are rarely met in Dungog Shire. Most farms do not require workers to live on site, the road network and nearby settlements reduce remoteness, and production levels are often low or sporadic.

As a result, very few rural workers dwellings have been approved, and this is unlikely to change. There are also inconsistencies in how different councils interpret and apply the clause. There are practical compliance issues as well. Once approved, it is difficult to ensure the dwelling is actually occupied by a rural worker over time. In some places the provision has been used as a substitute for a second dwelling, and has been cited to justify later subdivision, which was never the intent.

A clearer and more transparent path is to focus rural housing on detached dual occupancies in the RU1 and RU2 zones. This allows a second dwelling on one lot without prescribing who must live in it, while keeping strict tests to protect agriculture, share access, and manage on site servicing. It meets common needs such as intergenerational living, seasonal assistance and farm succession without creating unnecessary red tape.

Given the policy guidance from the Department of Primary Industries and the local context of Dungog Shire, removing rural workers dwellings as a permitted use in the LEP is justified. The provision is not well suited to local conditions, is difficult to administer, and is largely redundant where dual occupancy already provides a simpler and more effective way to deliver needed rural housing while protecting agriculture.

Table 9 Summary of potential positive impacts and disadvantages for additional dwellings in rural areas

Potential Positive Impacts	Challenges and Mitigation Approaches
1. Support family and farm succession without fragmentation Helps succession planning. Additional dwellings let farmers and older landholders remain on their land while a new farmer takes over, providing physical, social and financial support and reducing the need for fragmentation in succession planning.	1. Risk of more dispersed settlement and pressure to subdivide over time May increase dispersed rural settlement and create pressure for subdivision over time. This can lead to further fragmentation and land use conflict. However, the LEP contains objectives which ensures dual occupancies are located in a way that does not adversely impact on agricultural operations
2. Supports a flexible, modern rural economy A flexible land use planning framework is essential to achieving sustainable development outcomes, as it enables rural land to accommodate a greater mix of compatible activities such as agribusiness, eco-tourism, small-scale enterprises, and innovative housing models. This approach better reflects the realities of contemporary rural areas, provides additional income streams for landowners, and creates housing opportunities that remain consistent with environmental and agricultural values.	2. Potential for land-use conflict with farm operations There is a risk of land-use conflict where agriculture remains the primary purpose of rural land. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring that both dwellings on rural properties share the same vehicular access from a public road and by applying appropriate buffer and separation distances between agricultural activities and sensitive uses. Development Assessment processes can help ensure new dwellings or rural enterprises are suitably located to minimise conflict, protect farm operations, and maintain biosecurity and land management outcomes.
3. Boosts local services and community life Increased population can support local community facilities and organisations such as community halls, rural fire service, and businesses such as 'corner store's'.	3. No extra rates on the same lot Rates are based on land value, not dwelling count. A revenue consideration for Council, partly offset by contributions and wider local spend.
4. Adds a housing option on existing rural lots Adds a housing option on existing rural land, which may reduce longer term pressure for new rural residential estates	4. Change to rural character and views Increased number of dwellings can adversely affect rural character and the landscape. Assessment can manage impacts but some change over time is likely.
5. Improves land stewardship Provide additional income to property owners and increase in residents both of which can support improved land management including conservation works.	

Sunset Repeal of the Existing Landholding Clause

Dungog LEP includes Clause 4.2A, *Erection of dwelling houses and dual occupancies on land in certain rural and conservation zones*. This clause sets the conditions under which new dwellings can be approved in rural zones under the minimum lot size, if they contain an 'existing holding' (being held in the same ownership title) since 1 July 2003. In practice, this clause allows landowners of historic lots, often smaller than the current minimum lot size, to retain a dwelling entitlement despite the lot not meeting present-day planning standards.

Ad hoc development of houses on undersized lots in rural areas undermines strategic planning efforts and introduces potentially incompatible land uses into the agricultural landscape. This practice increases the risk of land use conflicts and generates uncertainty for industries investing in rural regions. The historical planning provisions allowing for the ad hoc emergence of dwellings on rural land pose a significant risk to the rural economy by introducing sensitive receptors in proximity to agricultural businesses. Sensitive receptors can impair the production, effectively sterilising rural land and reducing the critical viable land mass for productive agricultural uses.

Applying the two dates of historic existing holding provisions is problematic, given the length of time and the historic records that need to be investigated to determine if the entitlement is applicable or not. Consideration should be given to removing the existing holding provisions within Dungog LEP 2014. It is important to note that landowners have had opportunities since 2003 to establish dwelling eligibilities on these properties and build a house.

The NSW Agricultural Commissioner has recommended measures to enhance rural zoning effectiveness to prevent the fragmentation of rural land and phase out the ad hoc development of dwelling

houses on undersized lots. The NSW Agricultural Commissioner recommends that Councils should phase out concessional dwelling eligibility and clauses related to existing holdings within rural zones. It is noted that there are other councils across NSW taking action to phase out this clause, such as MidCoast and Narrabri.

To facilitate this transition, landholders currently eligible for dwellings under these provisions should be granted a five-year period to submit their development applications, after which their eligibility will expire. Introduction of a sunset clause would enable the community to utilise the existing holdings provision to lodge a development application for a brief period prior to it ceasing to have effect and removal. It is acknowledged that existing holdings and dwelling eligibilities are an ongoing challenge for many rural and regional local governments. It is important to clearly communicate to the community about any proposed changes to dwelling eligibilities.

Requiring landowners and Council officers to research and confirm dwelling entitlements creates unnecessary administrative complexity. By lowering the minimum lot size in the rural zones as previously proposed, the number of vacant lots requiring entitlement verification (currently below the Minimum Lot Size of 60ha in the RU1 zone) would theoretically be reduced.

This change would streamline assessment processes, lessen administrative burden, and provide greater clarity and certainty for landowners, while maintaining appropriate planning controls. It would therefore offset the need for a separate dwelling entitlements clause.

It is anticipated that a sunset period would apply that would mean landowners would have 5 years to lodge a development application and a further 5 years to physically commence construction. This will provide a staged approach after any LEP amendment.

Caravan parks and manufactured home estates

Caravan parks and manufactured home estates can provide practical housing, but they also bring specific challenges. These developments are usually higher density and need reliable water, sewer and safe road access. Many residents are older or on lower incomes, which can make them more vulnerable during natural disasters, especially in flood or bushfire prone areas.

Under the *State Environmental Planning Policy Housing 2021*, manufactured home estates are allowed where caravan parks are already permitted, but recent changes restrict them in high-risk locations.

In Dungog Shire, caravan parks are allowed in several zones under the *Local Environmental Plan 2014*, yet many of these places are not ideal because of flood or fire hazards or limited access if roads are cut in emergencies. Extending water and sewer to rural sites can also be costly, place pressure on government services and affect sensitive environments.

A clearer approach is to focus new caravan parks in zones such as RE1 Public Recreation and RE2 Private Recreation (rather than rural zones), where parks already exist and can be expanded. This improves safety for residents, reduces environmental risk and gives developers and landowners certainty about suitable locations. A savings provision could ensure any current development applications are assessed under the updated rules for consistency. Concentrating parks in the right places also makes infrastructure planning more efficient, protects fragile ecosystems and helps keep communities safe, balancing housing needs with protection of the Shire's natural landscapes.

Strategy 4.2 Streamlining the rural planning framework

The Strategy aims to create more opportunities for exempt development, helping to reduce the workload on the Council's planning assessment team and simplify development approval processes. By expanding the types of development that can occur without a full application, the strategy will make it easier to construct appropriate rural infrastructure with minimal impact on neighbouring properties or the environment.

Increasingly complex planning requirements are placing pressure on local government staff. Many smaller applications are straightforward and routine, yet they consume a disproportionate amount of staff time. The NSW Government's SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development) 2008 already provides exemptions for minor developments, but its generic list is not always well-suited to the needs of a rural shire with large landholdings. The Rural Lands Strategy seeks to expand this list to include a wider range of developments, allowing Council to focus more on long-term strategic planning initiatives. This also aims to remove planning constraints for landowners, residents and developers to make planning pathways simpler and more straightforward.

By adding more items to the exempt development list, straightforward projects like sheds, carports, and other ancillary structures can proceed without a formal development application, reducing costs and delays. Agriculture, as a key industry in Dungog Shire, already benefits from exemptions for many farm-related buildings. On larger properties, this list could be extended to include more substantial structures while still protecting neighbours' amenity.

Given the importance of drinking water catchments in the Shire, any exempt development provisions should also consider the requirements of the Hunter Water Corporation, as outlined in their Guidelines for Developments in Drinking Water Catchments. Potential impacts of a more flexible approach to exempt development can be managed through measures such as setbacks and site-specific conditions. Many existing state policy conditions, such as mandatory connections to piped drainage, are often irrelevant in rural areas and currently limit the use of exemptions.

Currently land in the drinking water catchment as identified in the LEP is not eligible for complying development pathways under the Codes SEPP. A preliminary review undertaken by Council officers of around 300 shed development applications over the past five years shows that approximately 80% were for sheds smaller than 200 square metres. Since sheds of this size do not require referral to Hunter Water Corporation under their guidelines, there is significant potential to pursue an exempt and complying development pathway with tailored exempt development standards in the LEP that could further streamline approvals, support rural productivity, and ensure design and siting controls are responsive to Dungog Shire's climatic conditions and land use context. In updating the Local Environmental Plan, considerations should also include the presence of wet areas (such as bathrooms or laundries), which may constrain certain types of exempt development.

Council will work with DPHI and Hunter Water Corporation to amend 1.19(4)(b) of the Codes SEPP to enable more simple developments to occur as complying development provided they are 250m² or under. Council will explore potential amendments to the planning framework

which requires support from State Government and Hunter Water to make development on rural and certain residential land more flexible while ensuring that stormwater management and overland flow are appropriately managed.

Key changes include removing restrictive height and floor area limits for farm buildings and ancillary structures, increasing allowable floor areas for cabanas, garden sheds, carports, and other minor developments, and simplifying rules for balconies, decks, patios, and pathways. For properties without stormwater drainage systems, the proposals emphasise that roof water should be managed in a way that does not increase overland flow beyond the property boundary.

Other amendments focus on improving practicality and usability of rural and residential properties. For example, fencing rules are being relaxed to allow entrance gates to swing outwards, remove the requirement for partial openings on fences along primary or secondary roads, and allow slightly higher fencing along secondary road frontages. Together, these changes are designed to reduce red tape.



Managing Rural Residential Living

Rural-residential housing remains a popular lifestyle choice across the Shire, with strong demand from those seeking rural lifestyle living close to towns and villages. However, this form of housing can create land use conflicts when located within or adjacent to areas of agricultural production. These conflicts can constrain legitimate agricultural operations, reduce investment confidence, and ultimately diminish the viability of productive rural land.

To manage these risks, new R5 housing will be directed to the edges of towns and villages, as identified in the Local Housing Strategy. This approach ensures residents are located close to services and community facilities while limiting encroachment into farmland and reducing the potential for land use conflict.

Table 10 Key Actions – Balance opportunities to live in rural areas

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
8	Review and amend the Dungog LEP to permit a broader range of compatible rural-enterprise and value-adding land uses in the RU1, RU2 and RU4 zones, supported by DCP controls to mitigate adverse environmental impacts.	Council	Short Term
9	Amend the Dungog LEP to introduce a merit-based local clause allowing attached and detached dual occupancies in the RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape zones, where consistent with rural character and ensuring minimal adverse impacts to the agricultural operations of the land. This allows Council to assess proposals on their suitability for the site, consistency with rural character, and potential impacts on agricultural operations without being constrained by overly prescriptive or rigid criteria.	Council	Short Term
10	Prepare supporting DCP controls to guide siting, design and servicing of dual occupancies in the rural land use zones to ensure no adverse impacts on rural amenity, agricultural operations or environmental values.	Council	Short Term
11	Repeal the existing dwelling entitlement provision in clause (Clause 4.2A), whilst introducing a 5 year sunset clause for landowners with existing dwelling entitlements.	Council	Short Term
12	Review and amend the Dungog LEP, DCP, and related planning controls to simplify low-impact rural development and enable greater flexibility for landowners, including expanded exempt and complying development provisions for small-scale rural structures such as sheds, carports, decks, and farm buildings, while ensuring no adverse impacts on rural character, environmental values, or infrastructure.	Council	Short Term
13	Review and update DCP controls to ensure development achieves a Neutral or Beneficial Effect on Water Quality (NorBE) in a practical and proportionate manner, in collaboration with Hunter Water Corporation. The review should ensure that design and siting requirements are reasonable and cost-effective for landowners.	Council and Hunter Water Corporation	Short Term

Appendices

Appendix 1: Evaluation against Ministerial Planning Directions and Hunter Regional Plan 2041

Table 11 Evaluation against Relevant Ministerial Planning Directions and Hunter Regional Plan 2041

Relevant Planning Provision	Evaluation	Consistency
Ministerial Direction 9.1 ‘Rural Zones’	The objective of this direction is to protect the agricultural production value of rural land. This direction applies when a relevant planning authority prepares a planning proposal that will affect land within an existing or proposed rural zone (including the alteration of any existing rural zone boundary). Inconsistency with this direction is considered justified in the context of this Dungog Rural Lands Strategy, which is intended to provide a Council-adopted framework for managing the future use of rural land across the Shire. The Strategy identifies that selective conversion of rural land to residential use is necessary to help meet the NSW Government’s housing targets and support the continued growth and resilience of Dungog Shire’s towns and villages. It also recommends where appropriate, reducing minimum lot sizes to boost housing supply and provide more diverse housing options suited to changing community needs. Importantly, future landowner-initiated planning proposals will build on this Strategy to implement the outcomes identified by Council. This approach to rural lands is consistent with, and gives effect to, the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, which encourages local strategies that balance the protection of productive rural land with the need to deliver housing and economic opportunities in well-located rural settlements. On this basis, any inconsistency with the direction is justified, as the proposal is aligned with regional and state planning objectives.	Justifiably Inconsistent
Ministerial Direction 9.2 ‘Rural Lands’	The objectives of this direction are to protect the agricultural production value of rural land and promote its orderly and economic use for rural and related purposes. It seeks to ensure the proper management, development, and protection of rural areas to support the State’s social, economic, and environmental welfare. The direction aims to minimise land fragmentation and potential land use conflicts between rural and residential activities, encourage sustainable land management practices, and maintain the long-term viability of	Justifiably Inconsistent

Relevant Planning Provision	Evaluation	Consistency
	agriculture. It also supports the implementation of actions under the NSW <i>Right to Farm Policy</i>, reinforcing the importance of protecting rural industries and farming operations from encroachment and incompatible development. The following is pertinent when considering this draft Strategies consistency with this direction: • Reduced minimum lot sizes within certain rural zones are proposed based on detailed analysis undertaken through the Dungog Rural Lands Strategy. The review considered existing subdivision patterns, agricultural capability, landscape character, and topography, demonstrating that the proposed changes will have minimal impact on agricultural productivity and State Significant Agricultural Land (SSAL). The proposed lot sizes are consistent with those applied in adjoining Hunter region LGAs. • This Strategy has carefully assessed strategically important agricultural industries and agricultural lands at the local, regional, and state level, ensuring that existing operations and future agricultural viability are protected. This will also be further substantiated as part of a future planning proposal. • The planning proposal promotes opportunities for investment in productive, diversified, and sustainable rural economic activity and supports farmers' "right to farm" consistent with the NSW Right to Farm Policy. • Land use zones and associated development standards, including the rationale for lot sizes, have been informed by the extent of the draft SSAL mapping prepared by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (Agriculture). • Land use conflict will be minimised through the application of appropriate zoning and future development controls, including provisions to be embedded in the Dungog Development Control Plan. Given the proposed changes are evidence based and form part of this draft Rural Lands Strategy, which aligns with the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and relevant State policy, the planning proposal is considered to be justifiably inconsistent with this direction.	

Relevant Planning Provision	Evaluation	Consistency
Hunter Regional Plan 2041 Objective 9 ‘Sustain and balance productive rural landscapes’	The draft Strategy proposes no changes that would impact on the operation of existing mineral and energy resources, mines or quarries. Therefore, it is consistent with Strategy 9.1. The proposed approach is in keeping with Strategy 9.5, as this draft Rural Lands Strategy identifies appropriate opportunities for rural town and village expansion based on a detailed understanding of agricultural capability, environmental sensitivity, and landscape character. The supporting draft Local Housing Strategy and draft LSPS establish a clear settlement hierarchy and defined growth boundaries for Dungog Shire’s towns and villages to ensure that new residential and rural-residential development occurs in areas that are well-located, serviceable, and outside land of high agricultural, ecological, scenic, or heritage value. This approach protects the integrity of productive rural land and environmentally significant areas while supporting sustainable growth and maintaining the distinct rural character of Dungog Shire’s settlements. The draft Strategy is consistent with this requirement as the evidence base has been informed by the Department of Primary Industries’ Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) Guide. This draft Strategy explores potential conflicts between proposed residential or rural-residential uses and adjoining agricultural operations, which will ultimately be further evaluated as part of any future planning proposals. It is considered that the identified areas for rural town and village expansion within the draft Local Housing Strategy and draft LSPS are appropriately located to minimise or avoid land use conflict, maintain suitable separation between incompatible uses, and protect the operational viability of surrounding agricultural enterprises. This evidence-based approach ensures that future growth occurs in a manner that balances housing and economic needs with the protection of Dungog Shire’s productive rural land and farming industries. Strategy 9.4 is not applicable, as there are no identified critical equine and viticultural cluster within the Dungog Shire.	Consistent

Appendix 2: Strategic and Policy Context

The Rural Lands Strategy will play a central role in shaping Dungog Shire's future, feeding directly into the rural lands section of the Local Strategic Planning Statement. It will also inform future changes to the Local Environmental Plan (**LEP**) and Development Control Plan (**DCP**), ensuring that our planning rules reflect the community's vision for how rural areas should grow and change over time.

Recent reforms by the NSW Government have introduced a fresh land use term, being 'agritourism' – into the planning system. This captures activities like farm gate sales, farm experiences, farm stay accommodation, cellar doors, and roadside stalls. These changes recognise that rural lands are not just places of production, but also destinations for visitors and drivers of local economies. For Dungog Shire, with its strong connections to the broader Hunter Region, this opens new opportunities for diversification,

resilience, and economic growth while maintaining the rural character people value.

The NSW Government sets the overarching planning framework through Local Planning Directions and State Environmental Planning Policies (**SEPPs**). These state-level rules guide how councils make planning decisions and must be applied when translating the Rural Lands Strategy into practical controls within the Dungog LEP 2014. By working within this framework, the strategy will ensure that local priorities – from protecting agricultural productivity to embracing new opportunities – are supported by planning controls that are both forward-looking and consistent with state policy.

Appendix 3: Data Snapshot of Dungog Shire's Rural Lands

The following data snapshot provides an overview of Dungog Shire’s rural lands, drawing on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 Census and agricultural production data. It highlights the scale and composition of agricultural output, employment characteristics, and land use patterns across the Shire. This information offers an evidence base for understanding the economic contribution of rural industries and the role of Dungog Shire’s landscapes in supporting both local livelihoods and the broader regional economy.

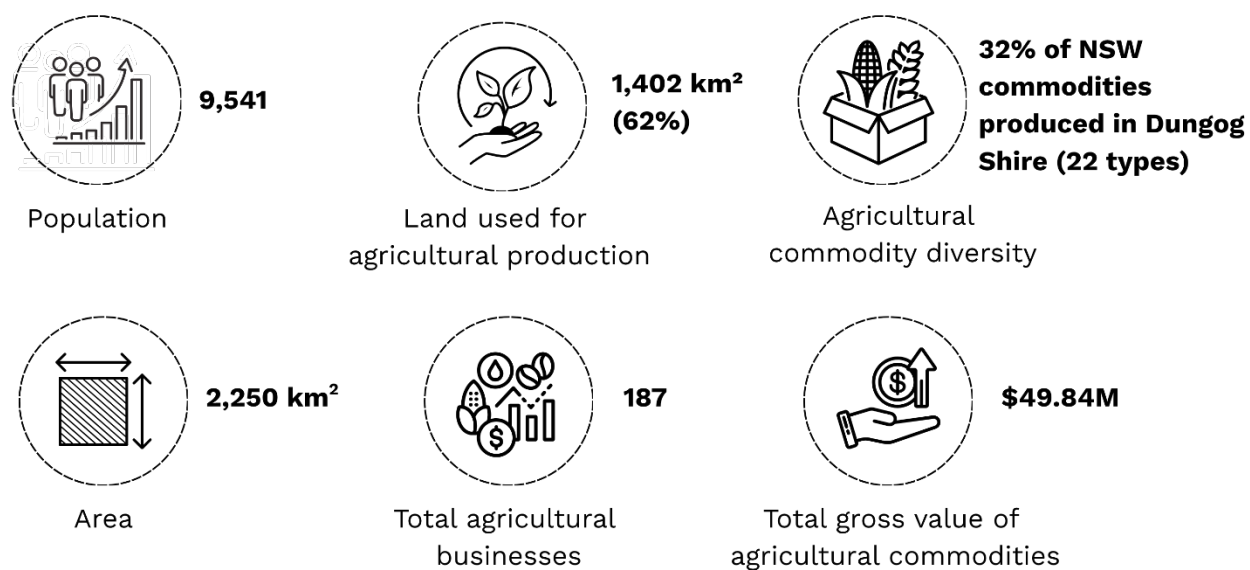


Figure 13 Snapshot of Dungog Shire's Rural Lands (ABS 2021)

Source: ABS 2021

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION BY VALUE

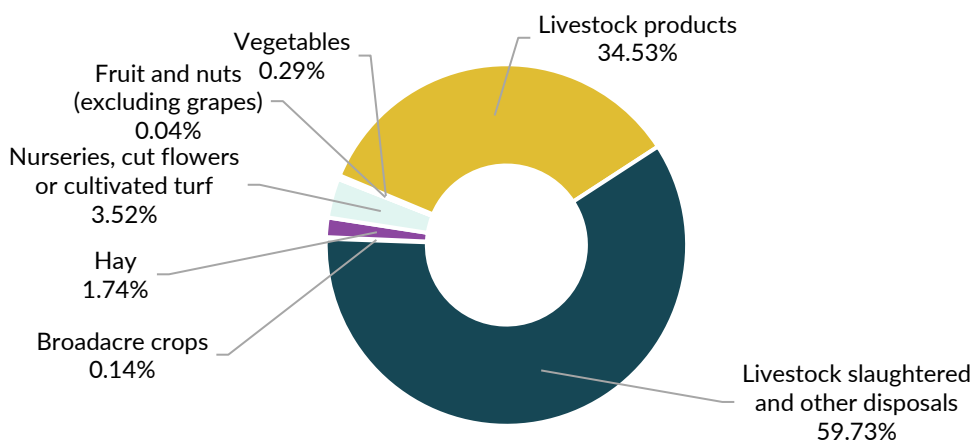


Figure 14 Agricultural production by value (ABS 2021)

Source: ABS 2021

Table 12 Type of commodity with value (ABS 2021)

Livestock slaughtered and other disposals	\$29,765,557.96
Livestock products	\$17,210,265.89
Nurseries, cut flowers or cultivated turf	\$1,752,923.83
Hay	\$867,996.06
Vegetables	\$146,125.28
Broadacre crops	\$72,131.93
Fruit and nuts (excluding grapes)	\$21,285.77

Source: ABS 2021

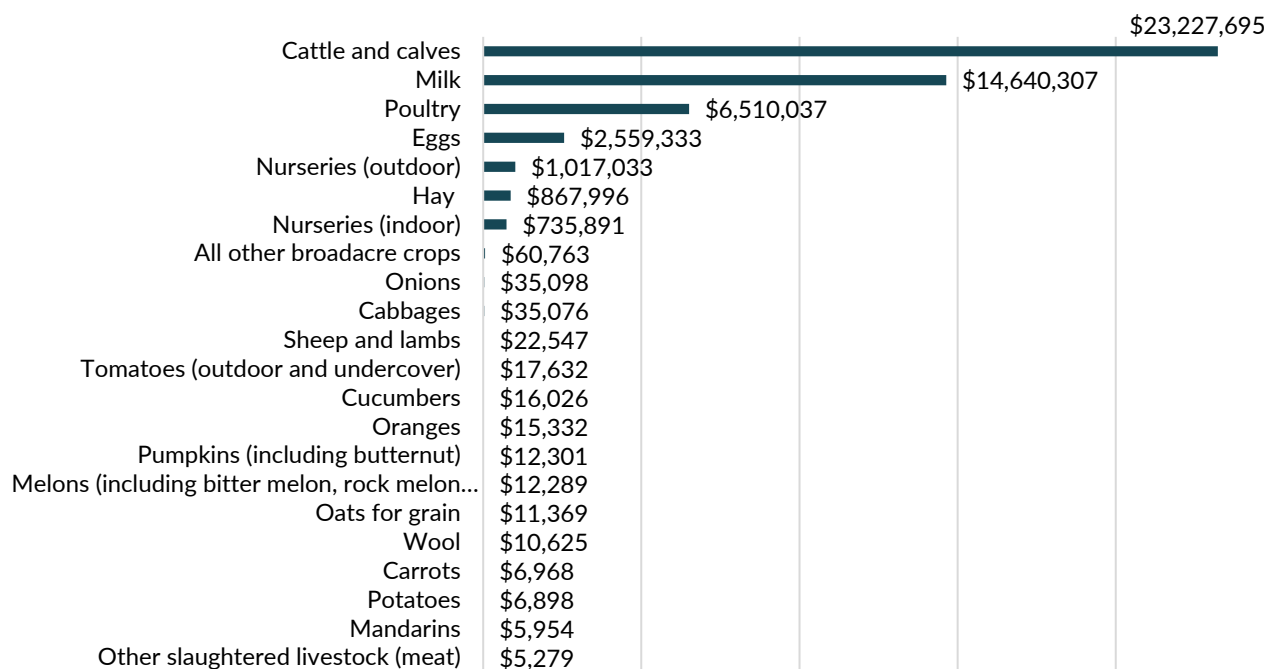


Figure 15 Industry value distribution (ABS 2021)

EMPLOYMENT BREAKDOWN ACROSS AGRICULTURE AND RELATED PRIMARY PRODUCTION SECTORS

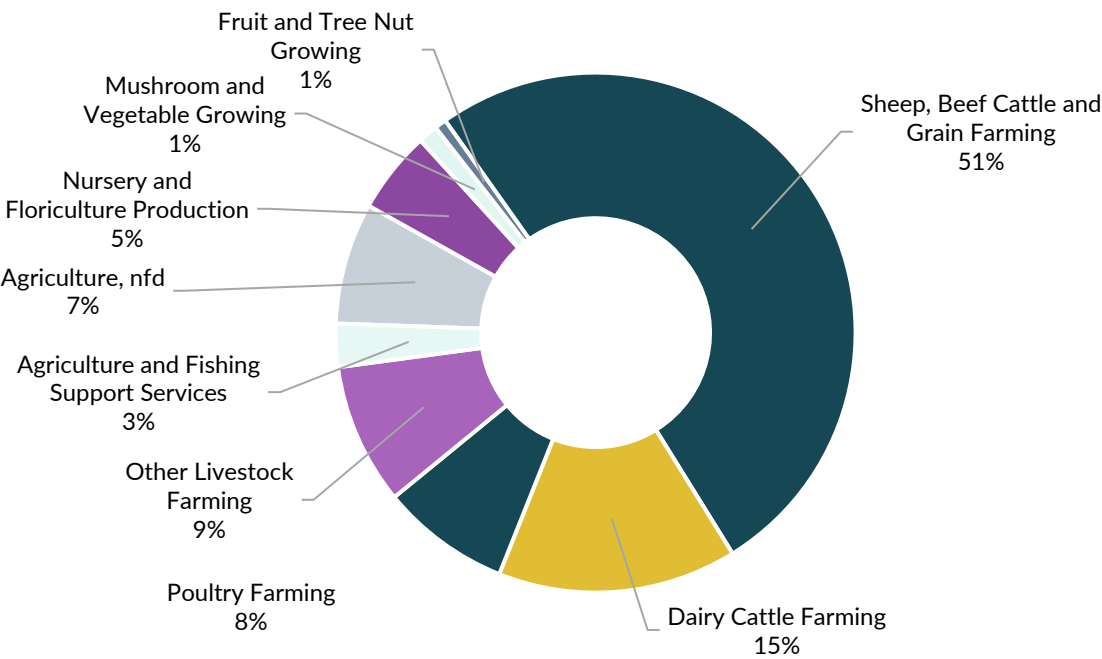


Figure 16 Employment breakdown across agriculture and related primary production sectors (ABS 2021)

Source: ABS 2021

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE BY CATEGORY

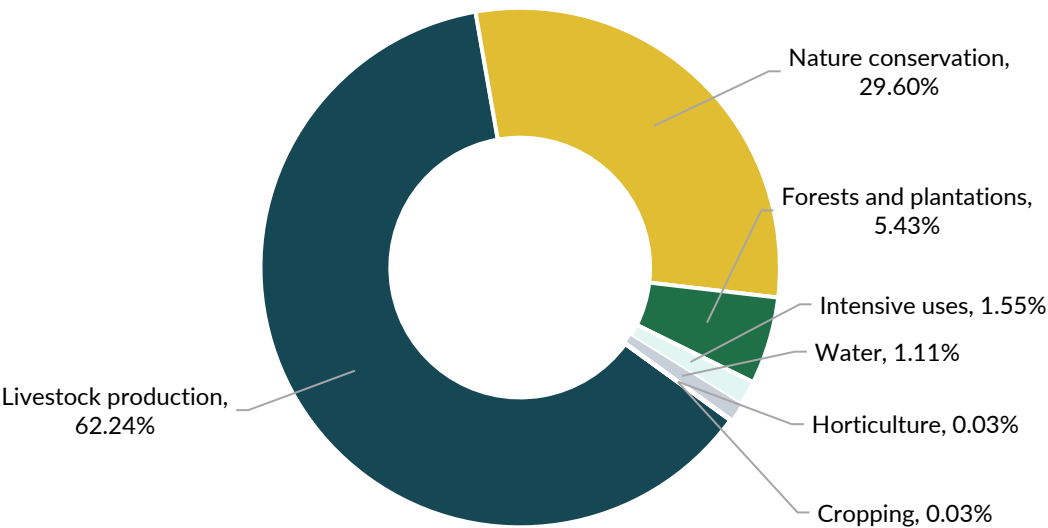


Figure 17 Agricultural land use by category (ABS 2021)

Source: ABS 2021

Appendix 4: Data and Evidence on Our Rural Lands

Overview of Dungog Shire's Rural Lands

Dungog Shire is a mostly rural area in the Hunter Region of New South Wales, sitting about 240 kilometres north of Sydney and roughly 70 kilometres from Newcastle. Covering around 2,250 square kilometres, the Shire is known for its beautiful mix of landscapes – from fertile farmland and rolling hills to peaceful villages and large stretches of native forest.

At the heart of the community is Dungog Strategic Centre, along with smaller rural towns and villages like Clarence Town, Gresford, East Gresford, Paterson, Vacy, and Martins Creek. Agriculture is a big part of life here, with local farms focusing on dairy, beef cattle, grazing, and horses. In recent years, there's also been a rise in niche farming and tourism ventures.

The rural lands are not just vital for the economy – they also support local jobs, help preserve biodiversity, shape the natural beauty of the region, and contribute to food production. With its scenic views, heritage charm, and easy access to both Newcastle and the Upper Hunter, Dungog Shire has become a popular spot for those seeking a relaxed lifestyle, agritourism experiences, or opportunities to start a rural business.

Lately, more people have been drawn to the area, looking for affordable land and the appeal of a tight-knit country community. While this growth brings fresh energy and new ideas, it also means the Shire needs to carefully manage its farmland, protect the environment, and make sure rural infrastructure keeps up with changing needs.

Existing rural land use patterns

The Strategy explores how rural land across the Shire is currently divided up. In total, there are about 5,200 rural (RU1, RU3 and RU5) lots. While the average minimum lot size is just over 26 hectares, the most common lot size is between 10 and 20 hectares, followed by 20 to 40 hectares. This means that, overall, most rural properties are on the smaller side and form part of smaller landholdings.

The analysis shows that about 84% of RU1-zoned lots are smaller than the minimum lot size of 60ha set under current planning rules (the LEP). That is, much of the land has already been subdivided into smaller parcels and is now quite fragmented. However, this does not consider land ownership patterns, where some of the small lots are owned in an agglomeration by a single landowner.

Across RU1 zoned rural lots, **84%** of land is below the 60ha LEP minimum lot size requirement.



Most of this subdivision happened in the 1980s and 1990s, before today's minimum lot size rules were introduced. The result is that there are now many undersized lots, which makes it harder to support farming and other rural activities that usually need larger, more continuous areas of land.

When looking at the current lot sizes distribution across Dungog Shire, there is a real mix of how land is actually being used compared to what the planning rules allow. In many areas – especially around towns like Clarence Town, Vacy, and Gresford – there is a high number of lots that are smaller than what the LEP technically permits.

This highlights some long-standing development patterns and could pose challenges if landowners want to further subdivide or develop their properties in line with current planning controls.

Conversely, large parts of the LGA – particularly through the central and western areas – have lots that are bigger than the minimum lot size. These areas might offer more flexibility for future subdivision or intensification of agricultural uses, provided it

is done thoughtfully and in line with broader planning goals.

This following figure provides insights into where current rules are working, where they may need updating, and how we can better plan for growth while protecting the rural character and natural environment of the Hunter Region.

When looking at the lot sizes across the RU1 Primary Production, RU3 Forestry and RU5 Village zones, it is clear that RU1 has the highest count of rural lands.

In the RU5 Village zone, the average lot size is approximately 1,750 square metres.

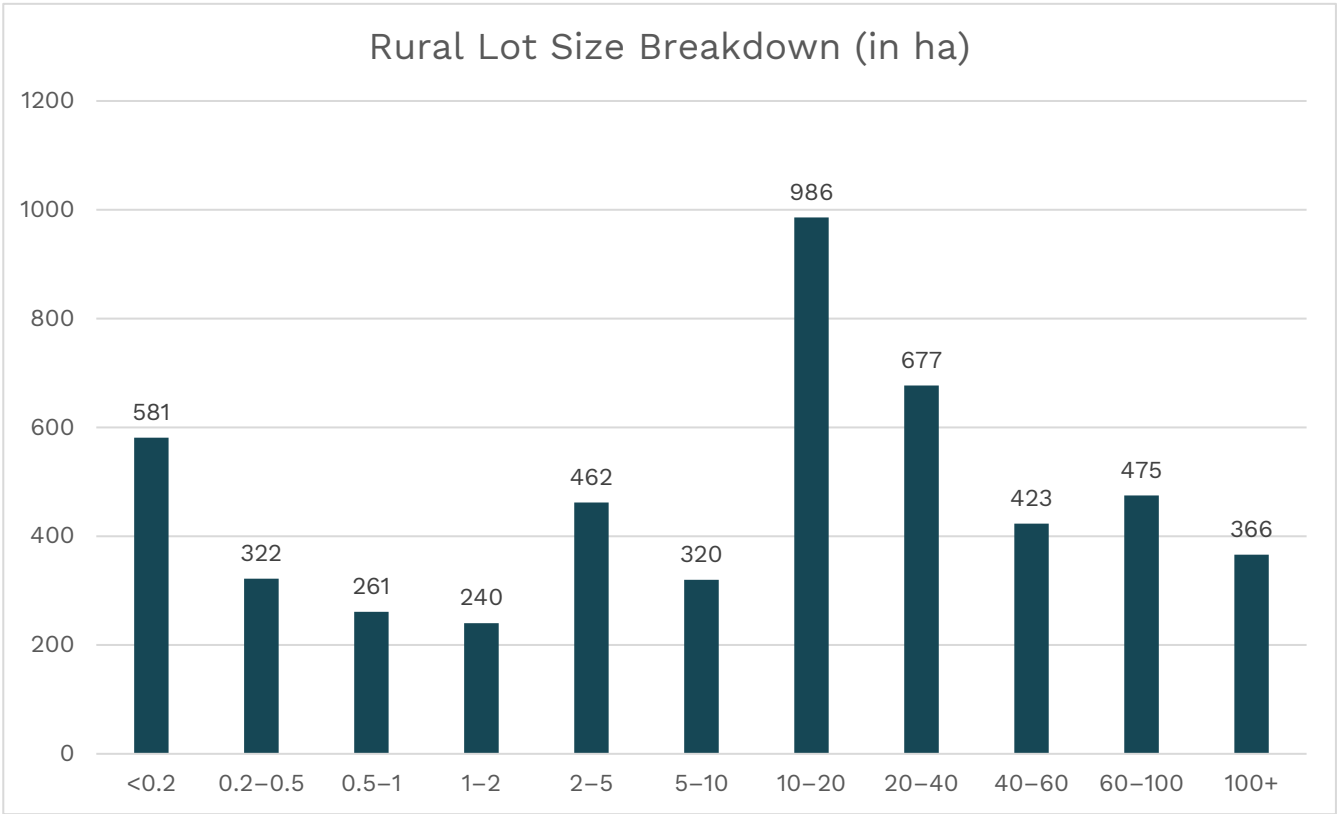


Figure 18: Rural (RU1, RU3, RU5) lot size breakdown by count

The average rural lot size in the Shire is **approx. 30 ha**.

The most common rural lot size is **10-20 ha**, followed by **20-40 ha lots**.

(Note: The lot size ranges are measured to the nearest 0.0001 ha and have been rounded up for the purpose of this graph and does not contain overlap, for example: “5.0001-10.0”; “10.0001-20.0” and so on)

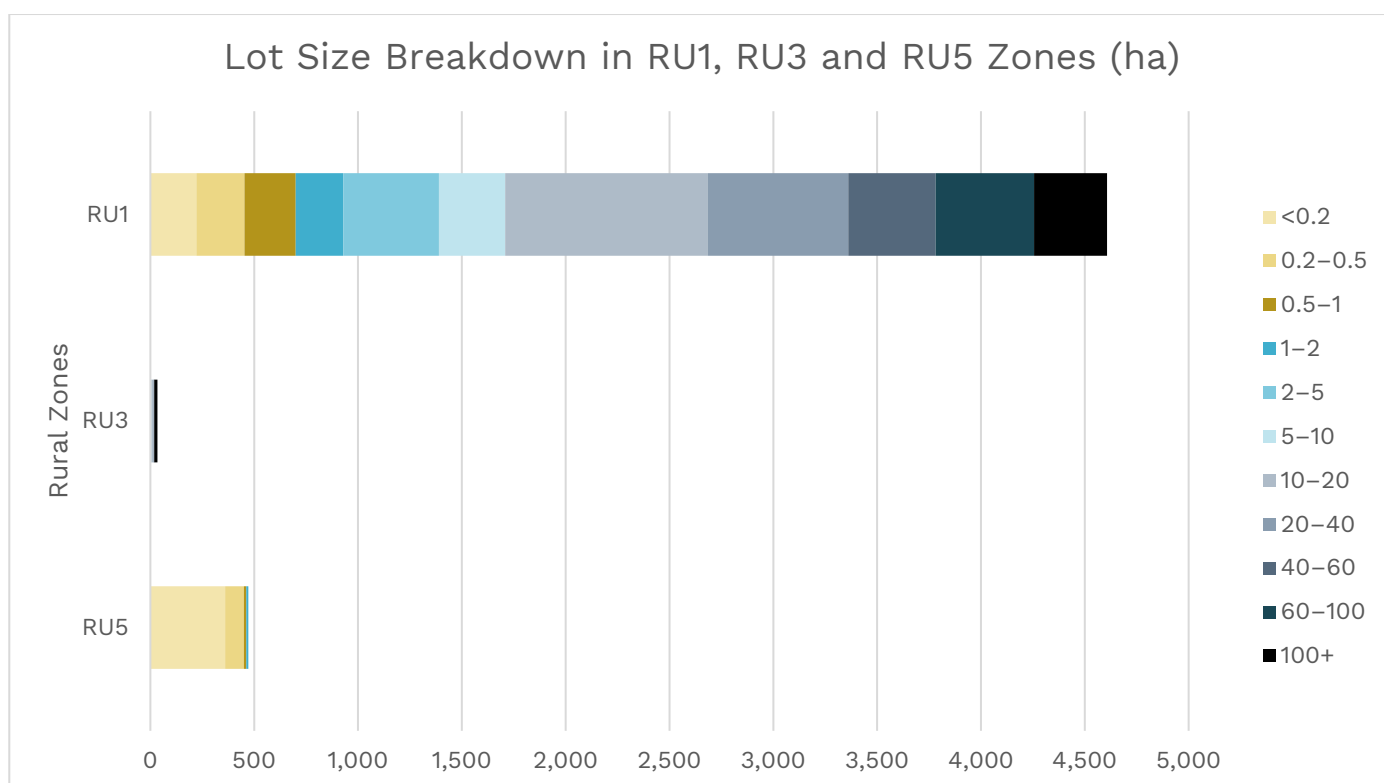


Figure 19: Lot size breakdown by RU1, RU3 and RU5 zones

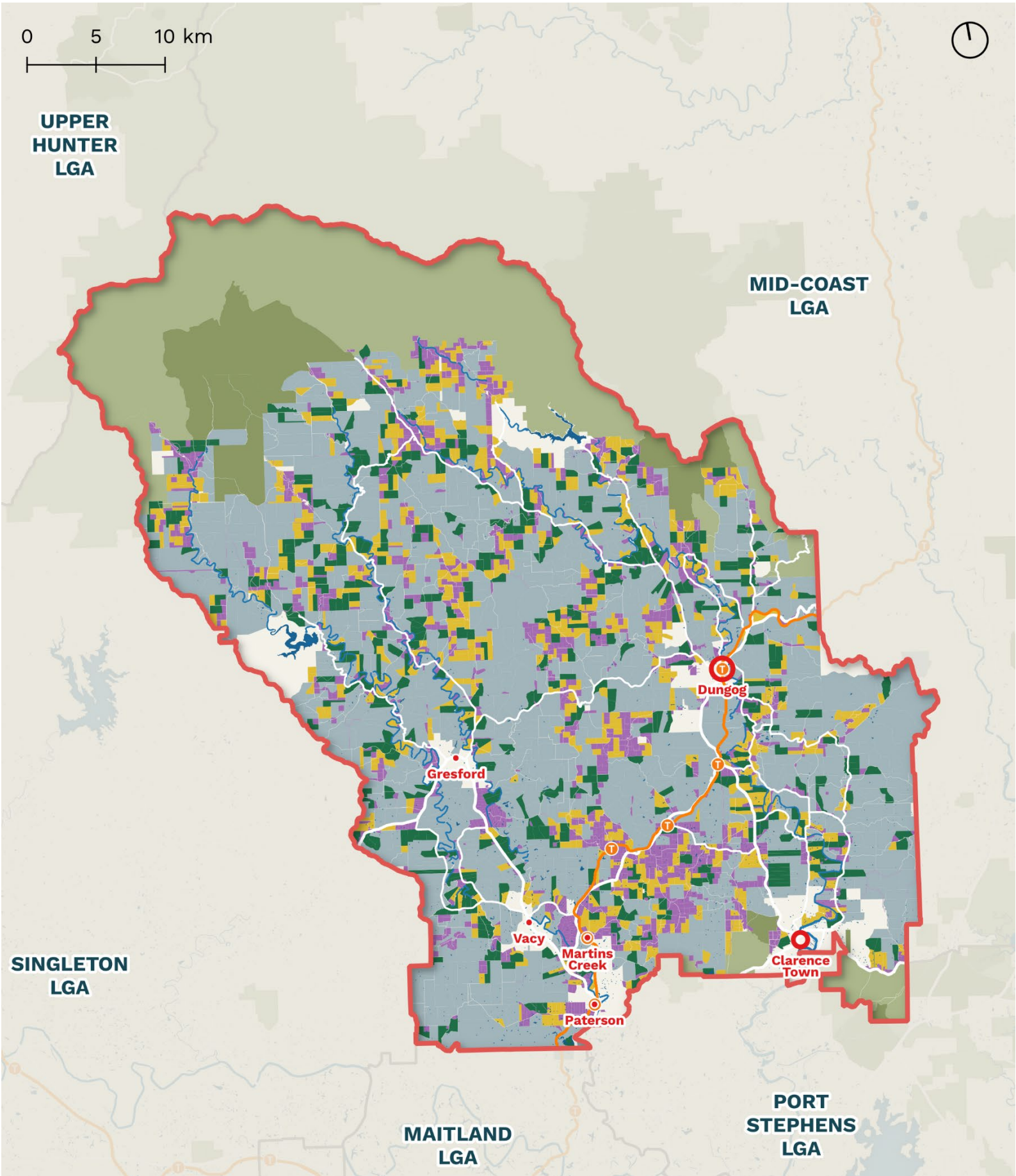


Figure 20 Rural Lot Size Distribution

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Dungog LGA | Strategic Centre | Rural Lot Size Distribution
(In RU1 & RU3 Zones) | National Parks and Reserves |
| T Train Station | Town Centre | | State Forests |
| — Train Line | • Village | | Water |
| | 0 - 20ha | | |
| | 20 - 40ha | | |
| | 40 - 60ha | | |
| | 60+ ha | | |

Fragmentation and Ownership Patterns

Understanding lot ownership patterns is essential for shaping rural land-use planning and development decisions in the Shire.

A large amount of lots in the Shire are under the same ownership who own multiple properties across the Shire.

The ownership analysis shows that approximately 13% of owners across the Shire own more than one lot. The ownership analysis also shows that almost 40% of registered lots in the Shire are under a multi-property ownership by the same owner.

The highest number of lots owned by a single owner are those owned by Council and Hunter Water.

Most of the Council owned land are used for community facilities and services, parks and open spaces, environmental protection, or future planned developments.

Land owned by Hunter Water are primarily used for water supply, storage, treatment and protection purposes.

There are also a number of lots owned by the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) for the purposes of supporting the social, cultural and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people in the Shire.

Together these public landholdings influence how rural areas can grow, where development is suitable, and which environmental or infrastructure corridors must be protected.

Recognising these ownership patterns in the Strategy ensures that planning decisions respect public assets, protect critical natural resources, and guide rural development in a way that complements existing community and infrastructure needs.

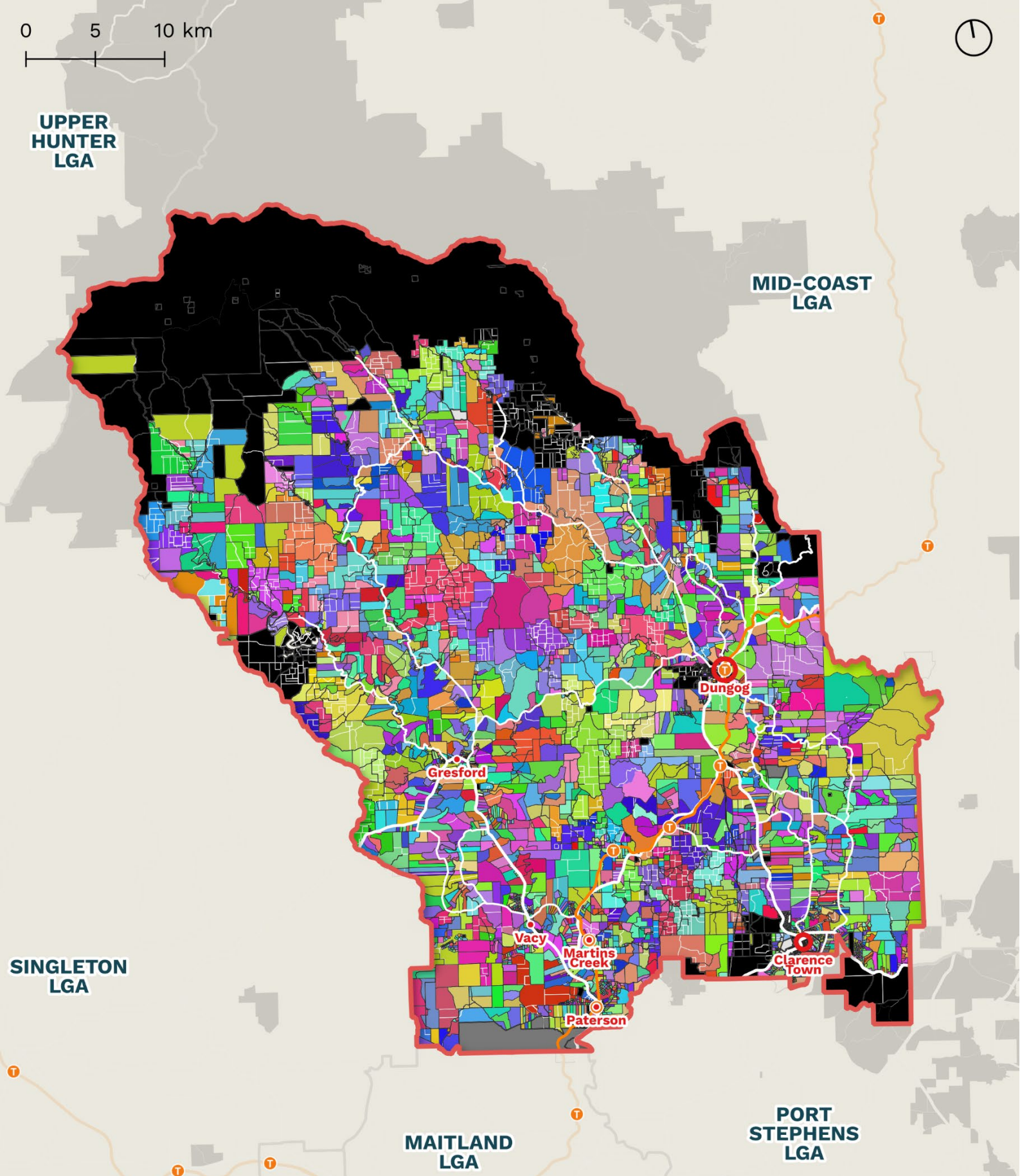


Figure 21 Lot Ownership Distribution

Legend

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Dungog LGA | Strategic Centre | Organisational Land Ownership | Individual Land Owners |
| Train Station | Town Centre | Council | |
| Light Rail Line | Village | LALC | |
| Train Line | | Non-Profit | |
| | | State | |

Rural and Residential precinct typologies

The rural and edge-of-town landscapes of Dungog Shire are characterised by a diversity of settlement patterns, lot sizes, and land uses that respond to both natural constraints and community aspirations. Across the Shire, four broad typologies define the future approach to rural precincts.

1. Rural Landscape Precincts

These areas are dominated by productive agricultural lands (RU1) and associated rural land use patterns including paddocks, silos, stock routes, and homesteads

They contribute significantly to the Shire's cultural and scenic identity. The priority is to retain these landscapes for agricultural use, with only limited opportunities for new industrial or residential activity at the fringes where servicing is feasible and landscape impacts can be managed.

2. Natural Landscape Precincts

National Parks, steep ranges, river corridors, and biodiversity areas form a distinct typology where ecological and scenic values dominate. These precincts are generally within conservation zones C1 National Parks and Nature Reserves, C2 Environmental Conservation and C4 Environmental Living, and are managed to protect waterway health, habitat, and ridgelines. Future change is minimal, with only limited scope for eco-tourism or visitor nodes consistent with conservation outcomes.

3. Peri-Urban Living Precincts (Large Lot Residential)

Situated on the outskirts of towns and villages including Dungog Strategic Centre, Clarence Town, Paterson, Vacy, Gresford/East Gresford, and Martins Creek, these precincts provide a semi-rural lifestyle on large lots typically above 8,000m². They are characterised by hobby farms, sheds, and long driveways, with landscape remaining the dominant feature. While limited infrastructure constrains further intensification, these precincts play an important role in accommodating demand for rural lifestyle living.

4. Traditional Residential Garden Neighbourhoods (Village-Edge Precincts)

These precincts are located within and around existing towns and villages such as Dungog Strategic Centre, Clarence Town, Martins Creek, Paterson, Gresford/East Gresford and Vacy. They are defined by detached dwellings on medium-to-large lots (800–2,000m²), landscaped gardens, and mature street trees.

As part of the Clarence Town Structure Plan, Clarence Town's sub-precincts demonstrate how different settlement edges require tailored approaches: for example, Clarence Town South seeks a mix of large lot subdivisions with improved river access while Clarence Town North and Boatfall Creek are identified for

longer-term large lot residential growth, subject to servicing, flood, and bushfire constraints.

Across all typologies, future planning will balance the need for housing diversity with the protection of agricultural production, ecological values, and scenic character. Reduced minimum lot sizes may be considered in select precincts (e.g. Clarence Town South and town-adjacent areas) where constraints are low and infrastructure is available while more remote or constrained rural precincts will maintain larger lot sizes to preserve landscape and manage hazards.

Rural character can be understood as more than a visual amenity, it reflects the living **relationship between people, land and culture**. While planning frameworks have often relied on Western traditions of assessing landscape character, there is now an opportunity to broaden this approach. Future planning can celebrate the **diverse cultural stories of Dungog**, ensuring that rural character is understood in ways that are inclusive and sustainable.

As Dungog Shire's identity continues to evolve, **incorporating First Nations perspectives** into this conversation can enrich our understanding of landscape values, strengthen cultural representation, and create a shared sense of place. This more collaborative approach to defining character helps **ensure that future planning decisions are respectful, inclusive, and support an identity the whole community can connect with**.

Economic role of rural land

Dungog Shire's rural lands are a cornerstone of the local economy, shaping land use, supporting jobs, and contributing significantly to regional output. With global population growth, particularly in overseas markets, set to increase demand for agricultural products in the coming decades, the Shire is well placed to support a diverse mix of farming activities.

Agriculture already plays a central role in the local economy, generating a gross production value of \$49.84 million, is one of the largest employment sectors and sustaining 187 agricultural businesses. This highlights not only the sector's pivotal role in the Shire's economy, but also its importance to the Shire's identity and way of life.

While the sector faces emerging challenges, such as shifting market demands, environmental constraints, and land-use conflicts, the economic outlook also points to new opportunities. Demand for locally produced, niche, and high-quality food and beverage products is expected to grow alongside rising education and income levels. Many of these artisanal operators also play a key role in attracting visitors, and further growth in agritourism could in turn drive demand for industrial land or premises to support processing, packaging, and distribution.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the validity of First Nations traditional ecological knowledge (**TEK**) and its incorporation into mainstream land management practices. Numerous organisations across several sectors have embraced the inclusion of traditional ecological knowledge and partnering with First Nations People's in the delivery of programs including CSIRO, Landcare, Farmers for Climate Action, NSW Local

Land Services and Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, among many other industry leaders.

To remain a relevant leader in agricultural production and driver in the innovation sector, Council may explore opportunities to invest in First Nations perspectives as part of their agricultural aspirations and pursue partnerships to build resilience into their economic future.

Similarly, cultural layers can be incorporated to enhance agritourism opportunities highlighted in the Strategy. A cultural lens can enrich paddock to plate or farm stay experiences through the inclusion of cultural activities, bush foods or educational talks. At a broader scale, Council can leverage its proximity to Barrington Tops and explore culturally informed tours, informational signage, public art or a visitor centre.

Agricultural production

Dungog Shire has historically relied on Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing as key drivers of its local economy. However, recent economic data shows a notable decline in output from these industries, with a drop of \$43 million recorded between 2013/14 and 2023/24, highlighting a shift in economic dynamics across the Shire. While fishing is not a major industry in Dungog, 'Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing' is a category used by the ABS.

In 2023/24, Dungog Shire's total Industry Value Add (IVA) reached \$307 million, accounting for around 45% of total economic output. The largest contributors to IVA were Construction (\$55 million), Agriculture, forestry and fishing (\$44 million), and Education and training (\$30 million). These sectors also broadly align with the main sources of output generated in the local economy. Importantly, the IVA in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing has

declined from ~\$64 million to ~\$44 million between 2013/14 and 2023/24, further demonstrating the shifting economic dynamic away from primary production.

According to the latest available ABS data (2021) on Agricultural Commodities Produced (ACP), Dungog Shire recorded an overall agricultural production value of \$49 million. The bulk of this came from livestock, including slaughtered animals and other disposals (\$29.7 million), followed by livestock products such as wool and milk (\$17.2 million), with crops making up a smaller share (\$2.8 million).

Net exports in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing – while still very significant to the total exports of the LGA – have declined from ~\$100 million to \$60 million between 2013/14 and 2023/24.

While the Shire's economy continues to show concentrated activity within several key sectors, particularly those reliant on natural resources and labour, notable

declines in IVA and exports have been the result of a range of local and regional shifts. This includes:

- Australia and region-wide declines in agricultural earnings reflecting lower commodity prices and production volumes due to adverse weather and global economic changes. Across Australia, Agriculture, forestry, and fishing earnings declined \$9.6b (-35.4%)¹ between 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years.
- Impacts from climate change – including more extreme rainfall, drought and extreme heat events which can negatively impact growing conditions and animal stress².
- Ongoing impacts of younger demographics' increasing propensity to seek high earning potential roles away from family properties³.

¹ ABS (2025), *Australian Industry*

² AdaptNSW, (2025), *Climate change impacts on our agriculture*

³ Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (2025), *Snapshot of Australian Agriculture 2025*

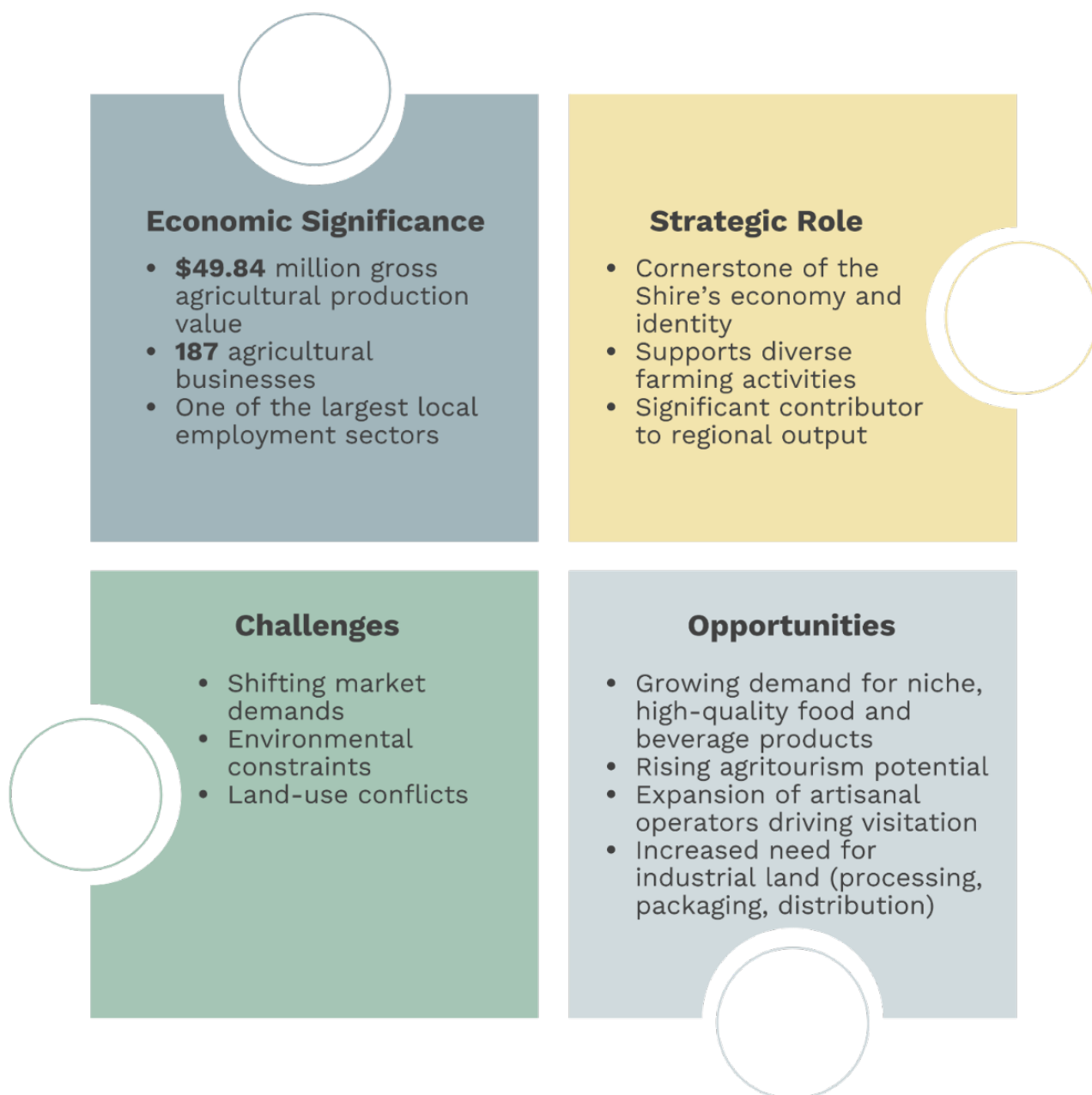


Figure 22: Economic role of rural lands in Dungog Shire

Agricultural Employment

As of 2023/24, around 4,400 residents of the Shire were employed, representing almost the entire labour force (96.7%). Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is a particularly important industry locally. At the time of the last Census, in 2021, it was the Shire's third largest employer^{4 5 6}.

More recent estimates show it has since grown to become the second largest employer, accounting for about 495 jobs, or 15% of the workforce as of 2023/24⁷.

When compared with the wider region, the importance of this sector is even more

striking. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing makes up only 1.9% of the Hunter Region's workforce, and 5.1% across Regional NSW. This highlights how central agriculture is to the Shire's economy and identity, far exceeding regional averages.

It is noted that of the approximately 2,900 people employed in the Dungog Shire, 440 work in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector (2023/24 data).

Jobs by sector (2021)

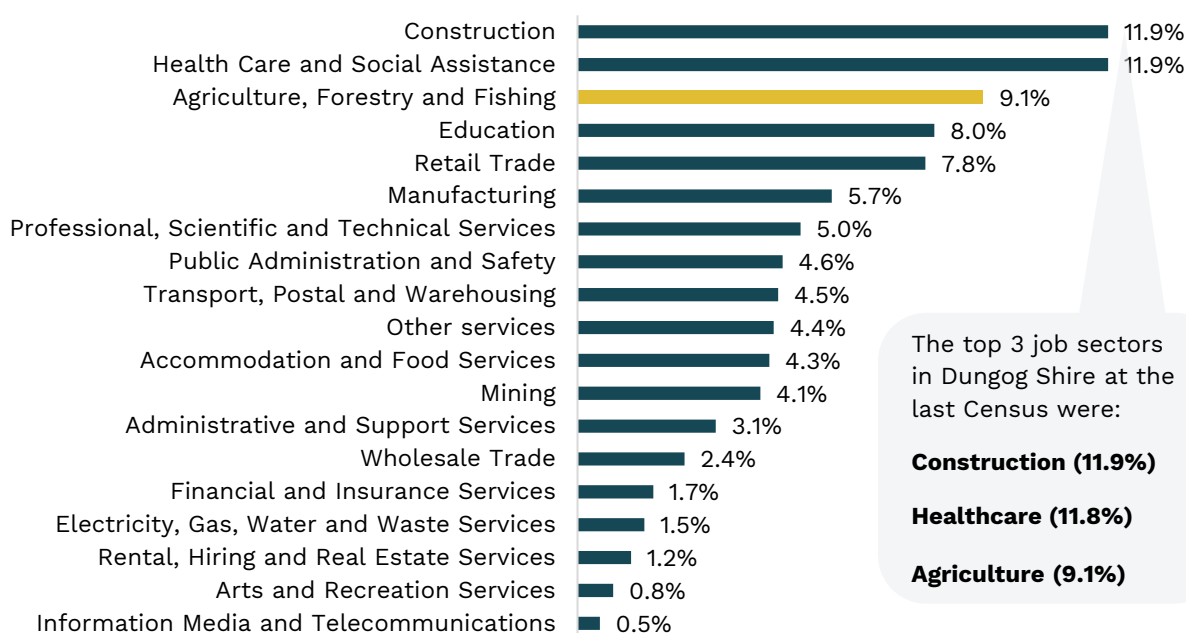


Figure 23: Employment by industry, 2021

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics Census. 2025.

<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA12700>

⁵ Economic ID. 2025.

<https://economy.id.com.au/dungog/employment-by-industry-fte>

⁶ Profile ID. 2025.

<https://profile.id.com.au/dungog/industries>

⁷ Profile ID. 2025. Economic profile – Dungog Shire – Employment by industry.

<https://economy.id.com.au/dungog/employment-by-industry>

When comparing economic activity and jobs activity for Dungog Shire’s agricultural sector over time, there has been a decline between 2013/2014 and 2023/2024. A number of factors have contributed to this decline including severe drought (2017 - 2020) and floods (2022) which affected agricultural output.

However, since 2021 the sector has been progressively recovering which is evident by the growth in the number of business recorded.

Since 2020, 21 new businesses have started up in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector within Dungog Shire (Dungog Shire Council Annual Report 2020-2021). This shows not only that demand for local products and services is strong, but also that the Shire continues to be an attractive place to establish an agricultural business.

The workforce profile adds another layer to this story. About a third of local workers (32%, or 785 people) are in Skill Level 1 roles, which generally require a university degree or around five years

professional experience⁸. What stands out is that a third of these highly skilled workers—around 255 people—are employed in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. This points to the increasingly specialised and professional nature of farming and related industries in the Shire.

Taken together, this reinforces agriculture as a cornerstone of the Shire’s economy, with an influence that extends beyond local boundaries. With strong market demand, new businesses entering the sector, and a workforce rich in expertise, Dungog Shire is well-placed not only to remain a leader in agricultural production but also to drive innovation in areas such as advanced farm management, agri-technology, and sustainable farming practices.

Specialisation and expertise	Many of these roles are highly skilled, including farm managers, agricultural scientists, veterinarians, forestry managers, and other positions that require tertiary qualifications or extensive professional experience.
Economic significance	The strong presence of top-skill workers highlights agriculture as a knowledge-intensive driver of the local economy, rather than simply a source of manual jobs.
Potential for innovation	A skilled workforce creates opportunities to embrace advanced farming techniques, sustainability practices, and agri-technology, keeping the sector competitive and resilient.

Visitor economy and tourism

Tourism and agriculture in the Shire are closely linked, and the relationship works in both directions – agriculture shapes tourism offerings, leading to boosts in the economy and more investment into preserving rural landscapes. In turn, this will enhance agricultural viability and the feedback continues.

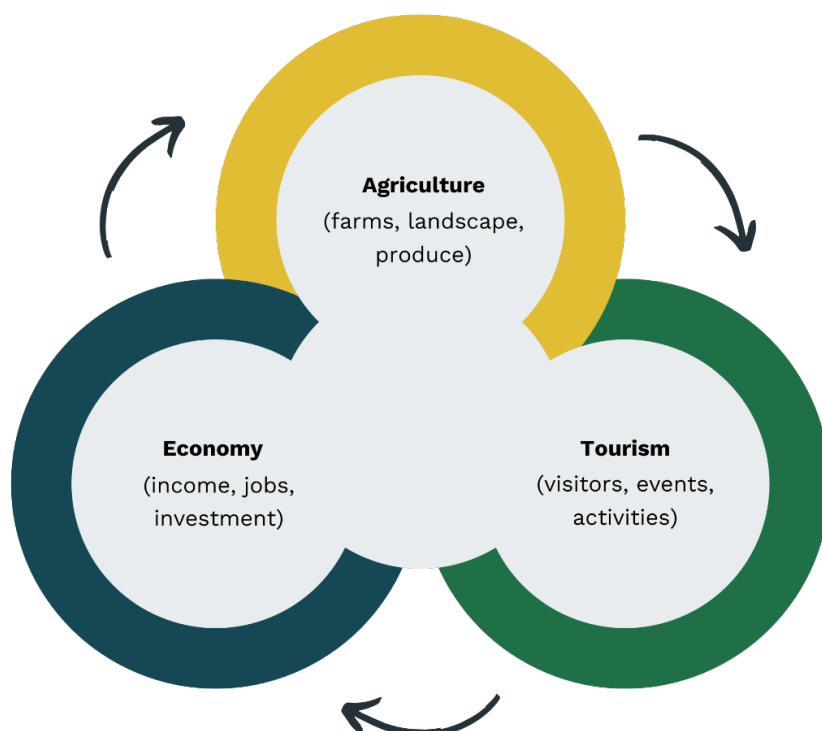


Figure 24 Interrelationship between agriculture, tourism, and the economy in Dungog Shire.

Demographic trends shaping succession

In Dungog Shire, the relationship between population growth and employment in the agricultural is being shaped by changing demographic and technological factors ⁹. Historically, there has been a strong pattern of younger generations from farming families relocating to metropolitan areas in pursuit of wider employment prospects, tertiary education, and varied lifestyle opportunities. This trend has contributed to ongoing challenges in local workforce retention within the agricultural sector.

Recently, some younger residents, often equipped with tertiary education and contemporary skills, have been returning to their family farms to support, modernise, and eventually succeed previous generations in farm management¹⁰. Their return brings in new expertise and underpins opportunities for innovation and long-term farm viability.

Despite these positive developments, employment in agriculture continues to decline at the broader sector level. Strong advances in automation and agri-technology have enabled farms to operate at higher levels of productivity with smaller workforces. While these efficiencies are essential for sector competitiveness, they have also lessened direct employment opportunities.

Maintaining an adequate supply and diversity of local housing is therefore critical to supporting a stable agricultural and rural industry workforce. As population grows and more workers seek to live and work locally, the availability of suitable, affordable housing will be pivotal in sustaining agricultural operations and enabling sector renewal.

⁹ Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation. (2022). Hunter COVID-19 Demographic Study.

¹⁰ *ibid*

Economic trends

Global food demand is projected to surge by 60–70% by 2050, driven by rising incomes and population growth¹¹. At the same time, climate change is creating uncertainty about the reliability of food supply in both established and emerging production areas. In agriculture and intensive farming, automation and mechanisation have been long-standing trends - boosting output and efficiency while reducing the need for raw labour and increasing the demand for specialised skills. Current labour shortages, coupled with the growing adoption of AI and automation, suggest these trends will continue. While this can mean fewer local jobs in traditional roles, it also creates opportunities for upskilling and diversification.

Within Dungog Shire, there is a noticeable pattern of older farming families moving from rural properties into townships such as Clarence Town and Dungog Strategic Centre to be closer to shops, services, and community facilities. Agriculture remains a key economic driver, led by Dungog Shire's cattle farms (cattle, calves and milk) and the Upper Hunter's thoroughbred horse breeding industry. These sectors support a wide range of flow-on industries and employment land uses.

As demand patterns shift and sustainability becomes a priority, there is growing scope for new industries that leverage the Shire's natural resources and infrastructure. Traditional farming often

relies on large parcels of land, while modern agribusiness - such as food processing - can thrive on smaller industrial sites. In practice, cattle raised in Dungog Shire are transported to neighbouring LGAs like Scone or Singleton for processing. Across the region, farm consolidation is creating larger, more efficient operations, particularly where hatcheries, farms, and processing plants are clustered together. Almost 40% of the RU1 Primary Production lots have some of the largest lot sizes in the Shire. The most common lot size is between 50 – 100 hectares, followed by lots over 100 hectares. However, 82% of RU1 Primary Production lots are below the 60ha minimum lot size, indicating prevailing fragmentation.

The proximity between producers and processors maximises productivity and economic return. Beyond agriculture, Dungog Shire's natural landscapes offer a strong platform for eco-tourism, with national parks, wildlife reserves, river systems, and protected areas sitting alongside mountain bike parks, caravan sites, and campgrounds. Since COVID-19, domestic tourism has surged, as Australians seek out smaller villages and authentic local experiences. This has opened up new opportunities for accommodation providers, food and beverage operators, and experience-based tourism businesses. With the right planning, Dungog Shire can position itself

¹¹ NSW Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. (2012). Food demand to 2050 – Opportunities for Australian agriculture.

to capture both agricultural growth and tourism demand, building a resilient and diverse rural economy.

Drinking water catchment requirements

Parts of the Shire play an important role in protecting drinking water catchments that supply communities both within the Shire and further afield. These catchments are critical for maintaining safe, clean water and rely on careful land management to minimise risks from pollution, erosion, and sedimentation.

Stricter planning controls apply in these areas to mitigate adverse impacts on water quality, while permitting only land uses that remain compatible with catchment protection. By safeguarding these areas, the Shire helps ensure a reliable and healthy water supply for current and future generations.

Dungog Shire is home to three major drinking water catchments, including Williams River, Chichester River, and Paterson–Allyn Rivers. These catchments define a network of fertile valleys in the Hunter region and plays a crucial role in supplying water to the rapidly growing population of Greater Newcastle. These catchments overlap significantly with existing rural and agricultural zones, meaning land-use planning must balance economic productivity with water quality protection.

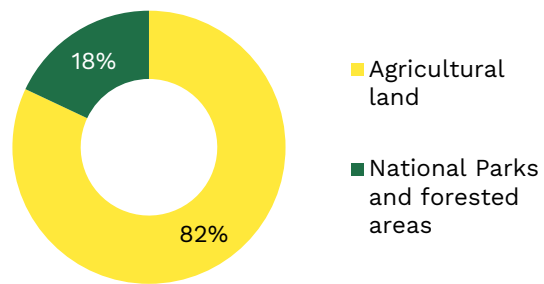
The Paterson and Williams Rivers are the primary water sources, contributing significantly to water security for both local communities and the broader regional network. These rivers are critical components of the Hunter water system, which supplies over 80% of the drinking water for Greater Newcastle, supporting growing urban and industrial demands.



Table 13 Summary of Drinking Water Catchments

Williams River	Major source of drinking water network for the Hunter region spanning from Barrington Tops.	Stricter level of planning controls for low impact developments and agricultural uses which requires full development applications, rather than exempt and complying pathways.						
Special Area under the <i>Hunter Water Act 1991</i>	<u>Land use breakdown within the Catchment:</u> <table><tr><td>Agricultural land</td><td>80%</td></tr><tr><td>National Parks and forested areas</td><td>14%</td></tr><tr><td>Land owned by Hunter Water Corporation</td><td>6%</td></tr></table>	Agricultural land	80%	National Parks and forested areas	14%	Land owned by Hunter Water Corporation	6%	
Agricultural land	80%							
National Parks and forested areas	14%							
Land owned by Hunter Water Corporation	6%							
Chichester River	Major drinking water source for the Lower Hunter region, servicing Dungog, Maitland, Cessnock, Beresfield, and Newcastle LGAs.	Stricter level of planning controls for low impact developments and agricultural uses which requires full development applications, rather than exempt and complying pathways.						
Special Area under the <i>Hunter Water Act 1991</i>	<u>Land use breakdown within the Catchment:</u> <table><tr><td>Rural land</td><td>17%</td></tr><tr><td>Barrington Tops National Park</td><td>76%</td></tr><tr><td>Land owned by Hunter Water Corporation</td><td>7%</td></tr></table>	Rural land	17%	Barrington Tops National Park	76%	Land owned by Hunter Water Corporation	7%	For the rural-residential fringe area, subdivision and tourism should be appropriately managed.
Rural land	17%							
Barrington Tops National Park	76%							
Land owned by Hunter Water Corporation	7%							
Paterson and Allyn Rivers	Mainly servicing Gresford/East Gresford, with the Paterson River being the primary water source (approximately 75% of volume). Lostock Dam is located on the Paterson River. Moderate level of constraint, although overlaps with productive rural lands in Gresford and is used to support agricultural production.	There are limited constraints in Paterson/Vacy/Gresford/East Gresford in relation to water quality planning controls as these areas are primarily outside the Drinking Water Catchment.						

Land use breakdown within the Catchment:



Currently, planning controls make it challenging to plan for rural land developments in drinking water catchments.

The *Exempt and Complying Development SEPP* complicates the complying development pathway for any complying development identified in the SEPP on unsewered land in drinking water catchments. This can discourage development from occurring.

The *Hunter Water Guidelines for Development in the Drinking Water Catchments 2017* requires certain developments, including any development within a constructed area above 2,000 sqm within drinking water catchments to be referred to Hunter Water Corporation for their consideration. Hunter Water's guidelines for development in the drinking water catchments are currently under review, with an updated guideline expected to be published in 2026.

The *Dungog LEP 2014* also contains planning controls including 'Clause 6.5 Drinking Water Catchments' and 'Clause 6.10 Williams River Catchment'. These controls often deter developments due to the complex nature of the controls and additional technical studies to demonstrate that no adverse impacts (or improved impacts) to water quality will occur.

Generally, while drinking water catchments can constrain rural land uses in the Shire, striking the right balance of streamlining development applications can allow us to protect drinking water catchments while providing for the rural livelihoods of the Shire.

Indigenous water rights have been formally recognised since the Mabo High Court ruling on Native Title in 1992¹. However, **opportunities remain to better integrate cultural water values into planning and management**¹.

A key consideration is how to **protect catchments in ways that also enable diverse land uses, while ensuring First Nations perspectives are included**. This approach supports culturally informed care for Country and strengthens community connections with Dungog Shire's waterways.

Appendix 5: Proposed land uses in rural zones

Dungog Local Environmental Plan

Legend

- o permitted without consent [mandated under the Standard Instrument (SI)].
- o permitted without consent.
- c permitted with consent [mandated under the SI].
- c permitted with consent.
- x prohibited [mandated under the SI].
- x prohibited.
- H permitted under SEPP (Housing) 2021.
- TI permitted under SEPP (Transport & Infrastructure) 2021.
- fill colours in green or red mandated under the SI.
- fill colour in purple public infrastructure permitted under a SEPP.

Existing

Proposed

Existing

Proposed

Primary Production

Forestry

Village

Primary Production

Rural Landscape

Forestry

Primary Production Small Lots

Village

RU1

RU3

RU5

RU1

RU2

RU3

RU4

RU5

Is the zone used? [please select Y/N for each zone]

Y

Y

Y

Y

N

Y

N

Y

(LAND USE terms WITHIN agriculture group term)

agriculture

agritourism

x

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

farm experience premises

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

farm gate premises

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

cellar door premises

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

aquaculture

c

c

c

c

c

c

c

c

Oyster aquaculture

c

c

c

c

c

c

c

c

Pond-based aquaculture

c

c

c

c

c

c

c

x

Tank-based aquaculture

c

c

c

c

c

c

c

c

extensive agriculture [eg grazing of livestock etc]

o

x

o

o

o

x

c

c

bee keeping

o

o

o

o

o

o

c

c

dairy (pasture-based)

o

x

x

o

o

x

o

x

intensive livestock agriculture

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

feedlots

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

dairies (restricted)

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

pig farm

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

poultry farm

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

intensive plant agriculture [eg cultivation of irrigated crops]

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

horticulture

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

turf farming

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

viticulture

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

(LAND USE terms OUTSIDE agriculture group term)

animal boarding or training establishments

c

x

x

c

c

x

c

x

farm buildings

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

x

forestry

c

o

x

o

o

o

o

x

(LAND USE terms WITHIN residential accommodation group term)

residential accommodation

attached dwellings

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

boarding houses

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

co-living housing

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

dual occupancies

c

x

c

c

c

x

x

c

dual occupancies (attached)

c

x

c

c

c

x

x

c

dual occupancies (detached)

c

x

c

c

c

x

x

c

dwelling houses

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

group homes

c

x

c

x

x

x

x

x

group homes (permanent)

c

x

c

x

x

x

x

x

group homes (transitional)

c

x

c

x

x

x

x

x

hostels

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

x

multi dwelling housing

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

x

residential flat buildings

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

x

Dungog Local Environmental Plan**Legend**

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Existing

Proposed

Existing

Proposed

Primary Production

Forestry

Village

Primary Production

Rural Landscape

Forestry

Primary Production Small Lots

Village

RU1

RU3

RU5

RU1

RU2

RU3

RU4

RU5

rural worker's dwellings

c

x

x

x

x

x

x

x

secondary dwellings

x

x

x

x

x

x

x

c

semi-detached dwellings

c

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

seniors housing

x

x

H

x

x

x

x

H

independent living units

x

x

H

x

x

x

x

H

residential care facilities

x

x

H

x

x

x

x

H

shop top housing

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

(LAND USE terms OUTSIDE residential accommodation group term)

home business

c

x

c

o

o

x

o

c

home occupations

o

x

o

o

o

x

o

o

home occupation (sex services)

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

(LAND USE terms WITHIN tourist and visitor accommodation group term)**tourist and visitor accommodation**

c

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

backpackers' accommodation

c

x

c

c

c

x

x

c

bed and breakfast accommodation

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

farm stay accommodation

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

hotel or motel accommodation

c

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

serviced apartments

c

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

(LAND USE terms OUTSIDE tourist and visitor accommodation group term)

camping grounds

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

primitive camping grounds

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

caravan parks

c

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

eco-tourist facilities

c

c

c

c

c

c

c

c

(LAND USE terms WITHIN commercial premises group term)**commercial premises**

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

business premises [eg banks, post offices, hairdressers, etc]

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

funeral homes

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

goods repair and reuse premises

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

office premises

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

retail premises

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

food and drink premises

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

pubs

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

restaurants or cafes

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

take away food and drink premises

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

small bars

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

garden centres

x

x

c

x

c

x

c

c

hardware and building supplies

x

x

c

x

c

x

c

c

kiosks

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

landscaping material supplies

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

markets

o

x

o

c

c

x

c

o

plant nurseries

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

roadside stalls

o

x

o

c

c

x

c

o

Dungog Local Environmental Plan

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Land Use Matrix [DPIE version 4.3] - December 2022										
Dungog Local Environmental Plan			Existing			Proposed				
			Existing			Proposed				
Legend - o permitted without consent [mandated under the Standard Instrument (SI)]. - o permitted without consent. - c permitted with consent [mandated under the SI]. - c permitted with consent. - x prohibited [mandated under the SI]. - x prohibited. - H permitted under SEPP (Housing) 2021. - TI permitted under SEPP (Transport & Infrastructure) 2021. fill colours in green or red mandated under the SI. fill colour in purple public infrastructure permitted under a SEPP.			Primary Production	Forestry	Village	Primary Production	Rural Landscape	Forestry	Primary Production Small Lots	Village
			RU1	RU3	RU5	RU1	RU2	RU3	RU4	RU5
	rural supplies		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	shops		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	neighbourhood shops		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	neighbourhood supermarkets		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	specialised retail premises		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	timber yards		c	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
	vehicle sales or hire premises		x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
(LAND USE terms OUTSIDE commercial premises group term)										
	amusement centres		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	entertainment facilities		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	function centres		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	highway service centres		c	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	industrial retail outlets		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	registered clubs		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	restricted premises		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	service stations		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	sex services premises		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	veterinary hospitals		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	wholesale supplies		x	x	c	x	x	x	c	c
(LAND USE terms WITHIN rural industry group term)										
	rural industries [eg use of composting facilities and works]		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	agricultural produce industries		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	livestock processing industries		c	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
	sawmill or log processing industries		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	stock and sale yards		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
(LAND USE terms WITHIN industry group term)										
	industries		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	heavy industries		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	hazardous industries		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	offensive industries		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	light industries		x	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
	artisan food and drink industries		x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	creative industries		x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	high technology industries		x	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
	data centres		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
	home industries		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	general industries		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
(LAND USE terms OUTSIDE industry group term)										
	boat building and repair facilities		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	vehicle body repair workshops		x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
	vehicle repair stations		x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
(LAND USE terms WITHIN heavy industrial storage establishment group term)										

Dungog Local Environmental Plan

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Land Use Matrix [DPIE version 4.3] - December 2022											
Dungog Local Environmental Plan			Existing			Proposed					
			Existing			Proposed					
			Primary Production	Forestry	Village	Primary Production	Rural Landscape	Forestry	Primary Production Small Lots	Village	
Legend			RU1	RU3	RU5	RU1	RU2	RU3	RU4	RU5	
o permitted without consent [mandated under the Standard Instrument (SI)].											
o permitted without consent.											
c permitted with consent [mandated under the SI].											
c permitted with consent.											
x prohibited [mandated under the SI].											
x prohibited.											
H permitted under SEPP (Housing) 2021.											
TI permitted under SEPP (Transport & Infrastructure) 2021.											
fill colours in green or red mandated under the SI.											
fill colour in purple public infrastructure permitted under a SEPP.											
heavy industrial storage establishments			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
hazardous storage establishments			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
liquid fuel depots			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
offensive storage establishments			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
(LAND USE terms WITHIN storage premises group term)											
storage premises			x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c	
self storage units			x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c	
(LAND USE terms OUTSIDE storage premises group term)											
depots			x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c	
warehouse or distribution centres			x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c	
local distribution premises			x	x	c	x	c	x	x	c	
(LAND USE terms WITHIN sewerage system group term)											
sewerage systems			x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c	
biosolids treatment facilities			TI	x	c	TI	TI	x	TI	c	
sewage reticulation systems			TI	x	TI	TI	TI	x	TI	TI	
sewage treatment plants			TI	x	c	TI	TI	x	TI	c	
water recycling facilities			TI	x	c	TI	TI	x	TI	c	
(LAND USE terms WITHIN waste or resource management facility group term)											
waste or resource management facilities			TI	x	c	TI	TI	x	x	c	
resource recovery facilities			TI	x	c	TI	TI	x	x	c	
waste disposal facilities			TI	x	c	TI	TI	x	x	c	
waste or resource transfer stations			TI	x	c	TI	TI	x	x	c	
(LAND USE terms WITHIN water supply system group term)											
water supply systems			x	x	c	c	c	x	x	c	
water reticulation systems			x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c	
water storage facilities			x	x	c	c	c	x	x	c	
water treatment facilities			x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c	
(LAND USE terms WITHIN air transport facility group term)											
air transport facilities			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
airports			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
heliports			c	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
(LAND USE terms OUTSIDE air transport facility group term)											
airstrip			c	x	x	c	c	x	x	x	
helipad			c	x	c	c	c	x	x	c	
(Other LAND USE terms relating to infrastructure)											
car parks			c	x	c	c	c	x	x	c	
electricity generating works			TI	TI	c	TI	TI	TI	TI	c	
freight transport facilities			c	x	c	c	x	x	x	c	
passenger transport facilities			x	x	c	c	c	x	x	c	
port facilities			x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c	
roads			o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	

Dungog Local Environmental Plan

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		Existing			Proposed				
		Existing			Proposed				
		Primary Production	Forestry	Village	Primary Production	Rural Landscape	Forestry	Primary Production Small Lots	Village
		RU1	RU3	RU5	RU1	RU2	RU3	RU4	RU5
transport depots		c	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
truck depots		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
wharf or boating facilities		x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
(LAND USE terms WITHIN educational establishment group term)									
educational establishments [eg TAFE establishment etc]		c	x	TI	c	TI	x	TI	TI
schools		c	x	c	c	TI	x	TI	c
(LAND USE terms WITHIN health services facility group term)									
health services facilities		c	x	TI	x	x	x	TI	TI
hospitals		c	x	TI	x	x	x	TI	TI
medical centres		c	x	TI	x	x	x	TI	TI
health consulting rooms		c	x	TI	x	x	x	TI	TI
(Other LAND USE terms relating to community infrastructure)									
early education and care facilities		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
centre-based child care facilities		x	x	c	x	c	x	x	c
home-based child care		c	x	c	o	o	x	o	c
school-based child care		x	x	TI	x	TI	x	TI	TI
community facilities		c	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
correctional centres		c	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
emergency services facilities		TI	TI	TI	TI	TI	TI	TI	TI
industrial training facilities		c	x	x	c	x	x	x	x
information and education facilities		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
places of public worship		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
public administration building		x	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
research stations		x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
respite day care centres		x	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
(LAND USE terms WITHIN signage group term)									
signage		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
advertising structures		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
building identification signs		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
business identification signs		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
(LAND USE terms relating to recreation)									
boat launching ramps		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
boat sheds		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
charter and tourism boating facilities		c	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
environmental facilities		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
jetties		c	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
marinas		c	x	c	c	x	x	x	c
mooring		c	x	c	c	c	x	x	c
mooring pens		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
recreation areas		c	x	c	c	c	x	c	c
recreation facilities (indoor)		x	x	c	x	x	x	x	c
recreation facilities (major)		x	x	c	x	c	x	x	c

Dungog Local Environmental Plan**Legend**

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Existing

Proposed

Existing

Proposed

Primary Production

Forestry

Village

Primary Production

Rural Landscape

Forestry

Primary Production Small Lots

Village

RU1

RU3

RU5

RU1

RU2

RU3

RU4

RU5

recreation facilities (outdoor)

c

x

c

c

c

x

c

c

water recreation structures

c

x

c

c

c

x

x

c

(Other miscellaneous LAND USE terms)

cemeteries

c

x

c

c

c

x

x

c

crematoria

c

x

c

x

c

x

x

c

environmental protection works

o

x

c

o

o

x

o

c

exhibition homes

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

exhibition villages

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

extractive industries

c

x

c

c

c

x

x

c

flood mitigation works

c

x

c

c

c

x

x

c

mortuaries

x

x

c

x

x

x

x

c

open cut mining

c

x

c

c

x

x

x

x

(OTHER LAND USES)

development which cannot be characterised into any land uses defined in the SI

Note: A type of development referred to in the matrix is a reference to that type of development only to the extent it is not regulated by an applicable State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP). The following SEPPs in particular may be relevant to development on land covered by this Plan:

SEPP (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021

SEPP (Housing) 2021

SEPP (Resources and Energy) 2021

SEPP (Primary Production) 2021

SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021

SEPP (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021

SEPP (Industry and Employment) 2021

Important note:

This information does not constitute legal advice. Users are advised to seek professional advice and refer to the relevant legislation, as necessary.

Disclaimer: While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of publication, the State of New South Wales, its agencies and employees, disclaim any and all liability to any person in respect of anything or the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done in reliance upon the whole or any part of this document.

Appendix 6: Acronyms

Table 14 Acronyms

Term	Full Forms
ABS Census	Australian Bureau of Statistics Census
DCP	Development Control Plans
Dungog LEP 2014	Dungog Local Environmental Plan 2014
FY	Financial Year
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LHS	Local Housing Strategy
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement
NSW	New South Wales
RLS	Rural Lands Strategy
SEIFA	Socio-economic Indexes for Areas
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policies
GPV	Gross Production Value
IVA	Industry Production Value

Appendix 7: Definitions

Table 15 Definitions

Term	Definition
Greenfield development	Developments on new and previously undeveloped land, often located on the periphery of urbanised areas
Infill development	Developments or redevelopments on vacant, underutilised, or previously developed land, often located within established urbanised areas
Master Plan	Dungog Shire Housing and Infrastructure Master Plan
Structure Plan	A document that sets a strategic planning framework to guide the future development and growth of Dungog Shire.
The Shire	Dungog Shire
The Strategy	Rural Lands Strategy
Townships	Includes the townships of Clarence Town, Gresford, Paterson and Vacy
Output (GPV)	Total value of goods and services produced by industry before deducting production costs

Note: Apparent inconsistencies between Output (GPV) and IVA arise because they measure different aspects of economic activity total production versus net contribution.



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