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Social Impact Study Minmi & Link Road South

Prepared for Rio Tinto Coal and
Allied

November 2008

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Executive Summary.....	i
1 Background.....	1
1.1 Structure	1
2 Consultation Process	2
2.1 Recreation Facilities.....	2
2.2 Section 94 contributions.....	3
2.3 Health Care Facilities	4
2.4 Aged Care (including Disability Care) Facilities.....	5
3 Projected Population Growth.....	6
4 Gap Analysis	8
4.1 Housing diversity.....	8
4.2 Housing for older persons	9
4.3 Health	9
4.4 Recreation and community facilities	9
4.4.1 Newcastle City Council (Blue Gum Hills) development area	10
4.4.2 Lake Macquarie City Council development area	10
4.5 Community transport.....	11
5 Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations.....	12
Appendix A Consultation Log	
Appendix B Data Calculations	

TABLES:

Table 1 – Summary of Recommendations: Open Space.....	2
Table 2 –Sub catchments of Minmi and Maryland:	3
Table 3 – Lake Macquarie Section 94 Contributions Plan – Northlakes (2004)	3
Table 4 – Suburbs in Northern Ward, Lake Macquarie City Council LGA.....	6
Table 5 – Suburbs in Ward 4, Newcastle City Council LGA	6
Table 6 – Projected lot yield and population projections – highest growth scenario, Minmi	7

Executive Summary

Urbis has been commissioned by Rio Tinto Coal and Allied to carry out a Social Impact Study of the proposed Minmi and Link Road development ('the development') and its context within immediately surrounding suburbs ('the wider study area') in both the Lake Macquarie and Newcastle Local Government Areas, i.e. the sub-region. The purpose of this study is to derive recommendations in relation to the provision of social infrastructure including recreational and community facility provision in this development area. These recommendations are to inform the Masterplan design process and to address social infrastructure requirements for the Director-General's requirements for Environmental Assessment. The report has been informed by public consultation exercises undertaken by Urbis and the findings of the *Hunter Northern Lands Social Infrastructure Study* produced in February 2008.

This report is a summary of the findings of this assessment.

Methodology

The following tasks have been undertaken (in June 2008):

- Gathering and review of key background documents and relevant Council strategies and policy documents.
- Forecasts of estimated resident population of the Minmi development broken down by stage of development.
- Consultations with Council officers and other stakeholders (Refer to Appendix A for stakeholder consultation list).
- Assessment of current and planned provision against identified needs and populations forecasts in order to derive provision recommendations.

Conclusions and Summary of Recommendations

The following table provides a summary of the recommendations that have been derived from this assessment for open space, recreational and community facilities at Minmi, tabled as 'on-site' recommendations.

The increased residential population of Minmi as the result of the redevelopment will also increase pressure on open spaces and facilities in the wider area surrounding the development and therefore 'off-site' recommendations have also been included for further discussion with Council.

These recommendations have been developed in the context of:

- Relevant planning policy, statutory requirements and Council guidelines (bid requirements, Environmental Assessment requirements, Council policy documents and sub regional strategies).
- Current supply of facilities and open space at the development site and in the wider study area, including the need to consider locational issues around infrastructure with relation to known site constraints.
- Stakeholder's perspectives of current and future needs and demand.
- Best practice in terms of developing a cohesive, vibrant and sustainable community and place to live.

In addition to identifying space and facility provision in broad terms, it is essential to remain mindful of the need to address the range of social needs within both the existing and incoming community within the detailed designs of the built form and landscaping of spaces. For example in terms of physical access to facilities for those who may be disabled or for older people with limited mobility; appropriateness

will be required in terms of addressing these needs, and those of other users of infrastructure within the community (e.g. young people, women, cultural and linguistically diverse people, etc).

Table 1 – Summary of Recommendations: Open Space

Key Issue	Impact of Redevelopment	Recommendation
Open Space and Community Facilities		
Quantity of open space provision within the development region	<p>Up to 80% of lands are to be reserved for passive recreation, biodiversity and conservation purposes. In addition, the following recreational space is to be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two sports fields incorporating rugby, soccer pitches and cricket wickets), Four netball courts, Two double-court tennis courts Three parks (with dog exercising areas) Contributions toward a BMX track and skate park located in the Blue Gum Hills Regional Park or another regional facility 	<p>It is noted that the majority of land in the development plan is dedicated to nature conservation and passive open space, which strongly exceeds Growth Centres Commission standard of 2.83 Ha per 1,000 population</p>
Timing of upgrade works to open spaces within region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that the provision of open space be gradually increased as the development takes place and the population increases. Importance is placed around works beginning early so as to foster the creation of social and recreational environments that assist in community building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of open space on the Estate during the construction phase of the development should remain at an appropriate level of provision. Residents should have access to open space within walking distance throughout the construction phase of the development and on completion.
Accessibility and equity of open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns over the need for accessibility for all to the new open spaces. These open spaces may have increased importance in areas here smaller housing lot sizes are proposed; smaller household sizes may place heightened importance around these spaces for sociability and community building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed designs for open spaces to take into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> physical accessibility to spaces for all including disabled, wheelchair users, young children and elderly cultural inclusiveness through appropriate and sensitive design, use of art works and nature of features offered issues around the co-existence of a variety of features aimed at different sections of the community and how to mitigate against any risks/challenges that may arise catering for access to spaces via differing modes of transport i.e on foot, cycling, private car and public transport.
Off-site open space: Impacts on Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased population as a result of redevelopment is likely to put additional cumulative pressure on off-site open spaces and some community/recreation facilities. Provision of new open space within Estate will provide additional recreational resource for the wider community, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement to works-in-kind where appropriate. Proportional contribution for off-site recreation and open space embellishments. Provision of new and upgraded open space within the development area to be recognised as a new recreational

Key Issue	Impact of Redevelopment	Recommendation
	potentially including development of an Interpretive Centre.	resource for wider community as well as Minmi development residents.
Multi-purpose community facility (MPCF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The MPCF, along the proposed Interpretive Centre, will be critical to community building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Early provision is recommended.
Indoor sports facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increased population as a result of redevelopment is likely to put additional cumulative pressure on off-site indoor sports facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Proportional contribution for off-site community facilities; directed at the Wallsend Swimming Pools (Newcastle City Council LGA) and an indoor sports facility located in the Lake Macquarie LGA.

1 Background

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of social impacts associated with proposed development of Link Road South and Minmi for residential housing. This report is intended to be read in conjunction with the *Hunter Northern Lands Social Infrastructure Study* also produced by Urbis (February 2008) which has also been produced to address social infrastructure requirements for the Director-General's requirements for Environmental Assessment.

As the Hunter Northern Lands Social Infrastructure Study provided baseline data, this report functions as a supplement to that study including information not previously provided or available, providing for further analysis based on consultations with Councils, service providers, and relevant agencies in the government sector, including the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, NSW Health and the Department of Planning.

Particular attention is made to the staging of the proposed development, the likely impacts of this staging and the potential for timely social infrastructure provision to be seen as a mitigating measure in the staging process, with early identification and provision of sporting facilities likely to help signal a commitment to the existing and incoming community and curb the high expectation of Councils to help provide such facilities.

The report also provides an opportunity to identify clear opportunities for local and regional community facility provision through staging and leveraging off the Coal and Allied development and other regional developments.

1.1 Structure

The structure of this report accounts for

1. Consultation with local government representatives in areas of urban planning, recreation planning and social planning, representatives from state government departments and agencies, including NSW Health, Department of Planning and Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care.
2. A methodology which locates the proposed development within the surrounding region, to provide an assessment of population growth associated with the proposal to develop 3,600 residential lots at Minmi.
3. Identification of community facility and recreation opportunities, community health, aged housing and housing diversity associated with the development; and,
4. The provision of additional recommendations to the Director General with relation to the proposed development.

The methodology for this work included allowances for:

- A briefing meeting with the Department of Planning to clarify its requirements
- A limited document review, including, the draft regional strategy, revised Council Section 94 Schedules and any new Council reports issued since the Charette process.
- An update of the existing socio-demographic profile developed for the Social Infrastructure Report, in the light of any new information in Council or Department of Planning documents.
- Undertaking further interviews with key stakeholders with specific reference to community and sporting facilities, aged housing, community health facilities and housing diversity, to identify gaps or opportunities in service provision.
- Completing the analysis of social impacts upon facilities for Link Road South, Minmi and for communities in the sub-region.
- Assessing provision against available standards and benchmarks.

2 Consultation Process

In May 2008 Urbis' National Social Planning and Research unit undertook consultation with a number of stakeholders with relation to various social aspects of the proposed Minmi development. Stakeholders consulted included representatives from Lake Macquarie City Council, Newcastle City Council, NSW Health (Hunter New England region), the NSW Department for Ageing Disability and Home Care and representatives from the non-government sector, including aged care providers such as the Royal Freemasons Benevolent Institution. A full list of stakeholders consulted is held at Appendix A of this report.

The following section provides an overview of the consultation outcomes and recommendations to the developer with relation to various aspects of social infrastructure provision.

2.1 Recreation Facilities

The consultation undertaken by Urbis to determine the level of provision required for recreation and community facilities involved meeting with representatives of Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) and Newcastle City Council (NCC) at facilities provided by the Department of Planning, Newcastle in May 2008. The results of this consultation were as follows:

- A voluntary planning agreement (VPA) will likely be required between the developer and both Councils. There is potential for a boundary adjustment between Lake Macquarie and Newcastle City Councils, however the timing for this is unknown and this would be most unlikely to occur within the timeframe of the development application.
- Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Councils agreed that issues of scale would be important determinants of the future population of the Minmi development area, in that average household sizes and tenure patterns would reflect those of the sub-region rather than averages measured across the LGA by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- The subregion can be defined as comprising both the Northern Ward of the Lake Macquarie Council area and the more rural, westernmost areas of the Newcastle City Council area ("Ward 4"). The suburbs of Glendale and Argenton, which are not part of the Northern Ward but are part of the Lake Macquarie LGA, have also been included as they are within close proximity to Minmi.
- Section 94 contribution plans would provide an indicative reflection of the quantity of recreation space and facilities required. Urbis should refer to the Northlakes Section 94 Contributions Plan for the Lake Macquarie Council area, while for Newcastle documentation such as the Blue Gum Hills Sports Feasibility Study (prepared by consultants Strategic Leisure) would be a helpful guide.
- There was agreement between the Councils that the allocation of recreation facilities between both the LMCC and NCC areas would be unequal, and there would be a natural skew toward providing services in the most accessible and site-appropriate locations to meet community need.
- Both Councils expressed the view that pocket parks, particularly smaller parks adjoining residential land uses, should be avoided as a basic rule. It was noted that there are no pocket park style developments of recreational space proposed in the master plan.
- Councils both noted that there was no need for new swimming pool facilities, but there may be potential to upgrade the Wallsend Swimming Centre, which was the closest swimming facility with relation to the site.
- Cycle paths would be a key expectation of both Councils for the development. LMCC and NCC noted the potential to locate cycle paths in conservation lands within the Blue Gum Hills reserve, with the potential to join up cycle paths to the Wallsend to Glendale Bike Path (currently under development), and potential future bike paths linking Minmi with Hexham (off road) and Fletcher (on road). To this end, any bike paths developed should finish at existing nodes (such as roads and existing paths) where they can later be joined up to these new developments when they come online.

Lake Macquarie City Council representatives indicated that Council is presently exploring the acquisition of lands at Edgeworth for the development of a regional outdoor sports centre. This centre would involve up to eight (8) playing fields which is likely to accommodate sports such as soccer and Australian Rules football. It is noted that there is currently an indoor sports centre and youth centre facilities in Cameron Park, south of the proposed development area.

2.2 Section 94 contributions

Urbis notes that the requirements tabled in each respective Section 94 Plan (for Newcastle City Council and Lake Macquarie City Council) have the potential to change over time as new Plans are prepared by Councils to align with new population projections and community demands for as needed community infrastructure

It is understood that the following contributions will be allocated on the basis of 50% to each Council.

The City of Newcastle has set development contributions for the Blue Gum Hills region which are as follows:

Transport facilities: \$1955.41 per separate allotment or per large dwelling unit of 3 or more in multi housing development
 \$977.41 per small dwelling unit of two bedrooms or less in multi housing development.

Note: The transport contribution rates should be regarded in the context of a regional levy which will apply for public transport, contributions to be negotiated in consultation with the Councils and Ministry of Transport.

Table 2 –Sub catchments of Minmi and Maryland:

	Per 3+ bedroom dwelling/lot
Community facilities	\$1,820.19
Open space and recreation	\$8,963.5
Foreshore promenade	\$124.29
S94 management	\$354.95
BGH place management	\$248.59
Total	\$11,511.52

This does not account for contributions toward transport facilities which would be negotiated in consultation with both Lake Macquarie and Newcastle City Council's and the NSW Ministry of Transport.

Table 3 – Lake Macquarie Section 94 Contributions Plan – Northlakes (2004)

Rates apply from the time the development plan is determined not when it is lodged.

Facility	Person	1 /2 Bed Dwelling (Medium Density)	3+ Bed Dwelling (Medium Density)	Lot	Hectare	Dedication Per Person (m2)	Dedication Per Lot (m2)	Dedication Per Hectare (m2)
Open Space and Recreation	\$4,293	\$8,586	\$11,162	\$12,879	N/A	51.02	153.06	N/A

Community Facilities	\$793	\$1,586	\$2,062	\$2,379	N/A	0.70	2.10	N/A
Management	N/A	\$100	\$130	\$150	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The Lake Macquarie City Council charge is composed of contributions of \$12,879 per lot toward open space and recreation infrastructure, \$2,379 per lot toward community facilities, and \$150 per lot toward management costs.

It is understood that contributions to site acquisition and road enhancements may also need to be made, and the latter are likely to be accounted for through negotiation with both Councils and the NSW Ministry of Transport.

Coal & Allied will negotiate with both Councils in regard to the level of works in kind for open space, recreation and community facilities as the Concept Plan includes extensive open space areas, parks sports facilities and community activity accommodation within the village centres. It is anticipated that Coal & Allied will enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement with each Council that will provide the framework for contributions and works in kind.

2.3 Health Care Facilities

The consultation undertaken by Urbis to determine the level of provision required for health and allied care facilities involved meeting with representatives of Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) and Newcastle City Council (NCC) at facilities provided by the Department of Planning, Newcastle in May 2008.

At the conclusion of the Charette, the component of the report dealing with projected social infrastructure for health noted that NSW Health was keen to promote integrated primary health care models, where doctors, dentist and allied health care professionals would be co-located, and where service delivery and resource management of primary health services could be further enhanced.

Solutions would include provision for GP services and allied health associated with multi-purpose community facilities in the short term would be accessed in adjacent suburbs to Minmi, and the potential for 'service enhancement' of facilities in places such as Maitland and Thornton which can be accessed relatively easily by Minmi residents. NSW Health suggests that Maitland Hospital is a suitable alternative hospital destination for Minmi residents. There is also a private hospital in Maitland.

The following results capture the recommendations provided as part of Urbis' consultations with representatives from NSW Health Hunter New England region:

- Existing community health facilities are located at Wallsend and East Maitland, and development of Minmi would likely add to the quantum of services that need to be provided for at these hubs.
- Within Minmi, it was recommended that the development or Councils provide for a general purpose facility that could be used to accommodate specialist services including a family health clinic, continence nursing and speech pathology, which may be required by a community over intervals of time rather than permanently located in Minmi. The Centre will provide a base for flexible service provision as required by the community and as can be provided.
- There is a need to ensure that any facilities dedicated to community health in the development plan (if any are dedicated) retain this function across the lifecycle of the development, including after the commissioning of buildings to Council. Historically, it was cited that many Councils in NSW have tried to charge NSW Health for tenancy in community health buildings, and this has significant impacts on the delivery of specialist and allied health services to local residents and broader regional communities.
- The attraction of General Practitioners (GPs) to the area will need to be considered. GPs operate as private businesses, and as such, any attraction of general practitioner services may require

marketing. There may also be the potential to attract other allied health services, including dental services, pharmacy and physiotherapy.

- Access to emergency services after hours will need to be considered with relation to access rather than provision. This may include ensuring that ambulance services have ready access to dwellings and public places across the development.

It is noted that the proposed development will also encourage healthy living through the promotion of physical activity by providing landscaped cycle paths, water courses, and improved access to pedestrian footpaths and open spaces. The retention of 80% of Coal and Allied land as conservation land has a direct benefit on the biodiversity of the area, and also an indirect health benefit for residents (through improved air, noise abatement and visual quality)."

2.4 Aged Care (including Disability Care) Facilities

The consultation with DADHC noted that demand for community care from older people and people with a disability and their carers tends to exceed supply, and that appropriate accommodation for disabled persons in Newcastle in general is relatively limited. To this end, group homes are likely to be sought in the broader region (including Wallsend, Fletcher and Maryland) in the form of larger residential properties (4 to 5 bedrooms in size). These properties are to be used by DADHC to mainstream the accommodation for persons with a disability in the community and allow opportunities for greater independence while also providing for a supportive living environment.

A number of aged care accommodation places are available in the sub-region. The largest provider in this area is the Royal Freemasons Benevolent Institution of NSW, which operates 130 places at a complex at Northville Drive, Edgeworth, seven kilometres south of Minmi. The Northville Drive complex is split into three campuses - the Hawkins Masonic Village Nursing Home, Acacia House Hostel and the Jacaranda Hostel, which together provide for:

- 29 High Care Residential Places, and
- 101 Low Care Residential Places.

Aged care facilities are also available at Wallsend including the large Wallsend Aged Care Facility which offers 103 High Care Residential Places, and Woodlands Lodge, which caters for 72 Residential Low Care Places.

DADHC currently coordinates home visits for all regional allied health services provided to disabled persons, with third-party venues only used in instances where a risk to the service provider has been established (e.g.: alcohol or drug dependent clients, clients with severe mental illness, and so on). Given that this model of service delivery does not require for the provision of space outside the home, there are likely to be no additional community health needs by way of facilities for disabled and aged persons in Minmi.

With relation to health and its promotion, urban design and planning that provides for desirable and accessible paths of access for persons walking and those in wheelchairs may be an important consideration, including the choice of flat pavement materials (e.g.: concrete) and an avoidance of materials which make access difficult for those in wheelchairs or motorised equipment, and those using walking frames (e.g.: gravel).

Community transport was identified as a significant issue for disabled persons in the more regional areas of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. It is noted that Newcastle Community Transport currently provides for services in the area as part of an alliance with DADHC; however, the consultation also noted that the quality and quantity of public transport services should also be expected to improve with any population increase.

It is noted that proposals are being developed for a retirement village in the Village Centre Precinct.

3 Projected Population Growth

This section of the report provides a detailed overview of the methodology applied by Urbis to determine projected population growth in the proposed development area. The basis for projected growth was informed by average household sizes recorded in suburbs adjoining Minmi in both the more rural residential areas of Lake Macquarie City Council (Northern Ward) and Newcastle City Council (Ward 4), which were expected to be higher than the average aggregate provided for households in the Newcastle (2.3 persons per household) and Lake Macquarie (2.5 persons per household) local government areas. The scale of this analysis was informed by the request of both Councils to ensure that population growth was appropriately accounted for and reflected sub-regional conditions. A meeting between Urbis, City Councils and the Department of Planning in May 2008 further confirmed the importance of this sense of scale by way of application of Section 94 Contributions Plan standards from appropriate sub-regions within both Council areas where these had been developed, namely with relation to the application of the Northlakes Section 94 Contributions Plan before standards in the Citywide s94 Plan were to be considered.

Additionally, the effects of population ageing and the trend toward smaller average household sizes have been taken into account. It is projected that these trends would occur over the lifecycle of development over a staggered period to 2030. Methodologically, this may require the application of a penalty to average reductions in household sizes of 0.05 persons per household, taking into account:

- Demographic trends over the window of 2008-2030, including significant population ageing, patterns of retirement migration, and generally lower birth rates, especially in the metropolitan areas of NSW including the greater Sydney region; and,
- Greater levels of housing diversity, including smaller courtyard blocks in more centrally located areas to facilitate housing styles that also accommodate families without children, workers and single persons.

Lake Macquarie Council advised that the analysis should reflect the sub-regional scale within which the Minmi site is located. Rather than rely on aggregate data for each LGA area, there was a need to consider issues of scale and provide an analysis which reflected this scale. For this reason, Urbis has been asked to consider the analysis using data for suburbs from the North Ward of the Lake Macquarie LGA. Suburbs included in the North Ward of the Lake Macquarie LGA included:

Table 4 – Suburbs in Northern Ward, Lake Macquarie City Council LGA

Adamstown Heights	Barnsley	Cameron Park	Cardiff
Charlestown	Dudley	Edgeworth	Garden Suburb
Highfields	Hillsborough	Holmesville	Kahibah
Mount Hutton	New Lambton Heights	Seahampton	Warners Bay
West Wallsend	Whitebridge		

Similarly, there was a need to situate the analysis within the relevant subregion of Newcastle City Council, and to use a scale of analysis that could correspond to the scale provided for the Lake Macquarie Council area. Ward 4 of the Newcastle LGA contained the suburb of Minmi and the majority of suburbs that bordered onto the Lake Macquarie Council area. Ward 4 was also the most rural in character of all sub-regions within the Newcastle LGA, and as such, was expected to correspond most closely with the environment in which Minmi is located.

Suburbs in Ward 4 of the Newcastle LGA include:

Table 5 – Suburbs in Ward 4, Newcastle City Council LGA

Minmi	Fletcher	Tarro	Beresfield
-------	----------	-------	------------

Elmore Vale	Birmingham Gardens	Wallsend	Hexham
Maryland	Shortland		

The results of this provided for an expected household occupancy rate of 2.6 persons per dwelling (2.65 before penalty), informing an expected growth rate of 8,580 additional residents.

Table 6 – Projected lot yield and population projections – highest growth scenario, Minmi

	2006	2010	2015	2020	2021	2030
Existing ¹ and Projected Population ²	732	735	739	742	743	749
No of C&A dwelling units built per year (cumulative) ³	0	165	825	1650	1815	3300
Population resulting from C&A development (cumulative) ⁴	0	429	2145	4290	4719	8580
Population resulting from C&A development plus existing population (cumulative) ⁵	732	1164	2884	5032	5462	9329

Appendix B provides an overview of population and household composition data for each suburb located within the Northern Ward and Ward 4 sub-regions of the area.

Assumptions behind projections:

¹ The existing population of Minmi is from the 2006 ABS Census for “Minmi State Suburb”.

² Projected populations are not available from NSW Department of Planning at suburb level. Therefore an average of the growth rates (0.5%) for “Newcastle (C) Statistical Local Area (SLA) – Remainder” and “Lake Macquarie (C) Statistical Local Area” for each five year period from 2006-2026 have been applied to the Minmi suburb base population. The growth rates are sourced from NSW Government Department of Planning, NSW SLA Population Projections, 2001-2031, 2005 Release.

³ It is anticipated that a total of 3,300 Coal and Allied dwelling units will be built commencing in 2010 with approximately 165 lots being built each year. Based on this rate, the 1,815 dwelling units will be built by 2021.

⁴ The average number of persons per household in Newcastle LGA is 2.3 and in Lake Macquarie LGA is 2.5 (This compares with 2.6 in Australia as a whole). An average rounded figure of 2.6 persons per household was applied to calculate the number of people expected per household in relation to the number of lots being built each year based on calculations of the surrounding sub region. Considerations of demographic change, as reflected in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy for average household sizes (to 2.1 persons per household by 2031) and the scholarly literature, defining smaller household sizes, higher life expectancies and lower birth rates also need to be accounted for.

⁵ The population resulting from the new development has been added to the existing (and projected) natural population of Minmi to show that by 2030, a population of 9,329 projected. This is a predicted increase of 8,580 people in to Minmi over the period from 2006-2030.

4 Gap Analysis

The following section provides an overview of gaps identified with relation to social infrastructure in Minmi for anticipated population growth of up to 8,580 persons over the lifecycle of development. These recommendations have been developed to respond to identified sub-regional issues affecting provision and access around services.

4.1 Housing diversity

Significant stocks of public housing in the region (up to 10,000 dwellings) are referenced in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy. Albeit this volume is large and the region has higher than average rates of homeownership, opportunities to ensure high levels of housing diversity and opportunities for expansion of public and assisted housing offerings on a regional level are important.

The public housing stock of the Newcastle LGA contains 434 bedsits, 1,292 one bedroom dwellings, 1,334 two bedroom dwellings, 1,019 three bedroom dwellings, 68 four bedroom properties and 9 properties with five or more bedrooms for larger families, available as units/apartment, townhouse, villa unit and cottage accommodation across all precincts of the LGA. Figures for the Lake Macquarie area were not available at the time of writing, albeit evidence from the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggests there were approximately 3,380 tenants in the LGA in 2006. The suburb of Glendale in the Lake Macquarie LGA, and the suburbs of Hamilton South, Wallsend, Cooks Hill/Bar Beach and Newcastle/Newcastle East in the Newcastle LGA are more prominent locations for public housing in the Lower Hunter region.

By way of affordable housing, there is potential for the NSW Department of Housing to purchase suitable properties when complete, which are more effectively integrated into the streetscape of the development and may provide housing for families, older persons, and persons with a disability.

With relation to housing diversity, the development clearly attempts to address guidelines contained in the Lifestyle 2020 Strategy prepared by Lake Macquarie City Council with relation to equitable and well serviced urban development (section 5.2.1, pp.9), including:

- Provision for a mixture of lot sizes and [hence] housing types that will allow residents to meet their housing needs at different stages of their lifecycle in one area, if they so choose.
- Providing a mixture of housing types to serve a range of income levels; and,
- Encouraging a wide range of tenures to provide choice in housing.

The NSW chapter of the Urban Development Institute of Australia¹ has commented that the current supply of housing lots in the Newcastle and Port Stephens local government areas is readily being exhausted and that demand for development is therefore shifting to the Lake Macquarie, Cessnock and Maitland LGAs (2006:12). Newcastle will continue to remain a key activity centre for the Lower Hunter region and offers significant attractions by way of educational, cultural and entertainment opportunities, which will ensure strong links between Minmi and the central Newcastle area. It is important to recognise the value of this relationship with relation to development of the region, in that allowances for future development recognise the need to facilitate a diversity of lot sizes and hence housing styles to ensure high levels of appeal and accessibility to new residents.

Minmi Final 141108

¹ UDIA. 2006. Lower Hunter Regional Strategy: Submission paper of the Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW to the Department of Planning.

4.2 Housing for older persons

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy identifies that average housing occupancy rates will continue to decline from levels of 2.5 persons per dwelling in 2001 to 2.1 persons per dwelling in 2031, with the trend toward smaller household sizes remaining consistent with national trends and reflecting a growing number of lone person and single parent households, as well as a decline in the number of couples with dependent children.

Opportunities to provide for aged care facilities in the region may be possible in the southern precinct of the development area. There are currently a number of aged care facilities in the sub-region, including the Masonic Village complex at Edgeworth and additional facilities at Wallsend, which include both independent living and assisted care accommodation places. Wherever possible, housing developments should provide an emphasis on choice and inclusion of opportunities older persons, including opportunities for ageing in place. It is recognised that smaller lot sizes contained in the development may hold a high level of appeal in this regard.

It is noted that there are opportunities for the provision of adaptable housing types for seniors identified close to the proposed town centre where services and amenities (including transport) are within walkable distance. Housing blocks located in close proximity to the town centre may also have the greatest flexibility to accommodate smaller courtyard-style housing developments.

4.3 Health

It is understood that there are presently no GP services at Minmi, the closest being located at Edgeworth, West Wallsend, Maryland and Thornton. The Hunter Northern Lands Social Infrastructure Study has acknowledged that major regional public hospitals in Newcastle and Maitland, and Child and Family Health Centres are located at Wallsend, Maryland and Beresfield, are readily accessible to residents.

It was identified that facilities to accommodate visiting community and allied health services would be required in the development, and that these would need to provide a flexible space that could appropriately cater for both a diversity of health uses and a variety of target audiences, including children and families, older persons, persons with a disability and indigenous health clients. Provision of flexible accommodation that can support the needs of visiting community health services will address a number of community health issues and provide the focus for health promotion to be extended to a community setting.

There is a need for a clause in the Multi-Purpose Centre charter to secure access for the ongoing use of the facility by visiting/consulting community and allied health services. It is recommended that such access provisions be reviewed at regular intervals (5 years) to ensure that the balance between service demand and facility provision is appropriately maintained.

4.4 Recreation and community facilities

In addition to advice and information obtained from the Councils, Urbis has developed its recommendations for community facilities and open space with relation to the Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Planning Guidelines for Local Government (1992) produced by the NSW Department of Planning. These guidelines set out the processes to be followed by local government in the preparation of open space plans, and provide guidance in the development of such infrastructure in settings including developed areas, infill areas and new release areas. Notable features of the Guidelines include:

- Supporting the philosophy of dual use of drainage open space, reducing non-residential landtake and therefore cost associated with open space and outdoor recreation facilities.
- Recommending a classification system for settlements (spaces) and facilities, including regional, district and local level classification of open space assets and facilities; and,

- Consideration of maintenance conditions and costing; with maintenance comprising the dominant expense for Council recreation budgets and with opportunities to review maintenance standards following earlier examples from Canberra (1970s) and more recently Melbourne and Adelaide.

In considering development in Minmi, it is appropriate to consider the location of the development and the scale and mass of building work proposed when contemplating the provision of recreation and community facilities. Urbis notes, for example that the Growth Centres Commission model for development at Riverstone - a Greenfield development in Sydney's North Western Growth Centre - makes recommendation for the provision of one sportsground per 10,000 people.

Urbis notes that the requirements for community facilities and open space reserves provided in the respective Section 94 Plans of both Newcastle City Council and Lake Macquarie City Council have the potential to change over time, and there would likely be opportunities to further develop proposals for community facility and open space provision in the development area.

4.4.1 Newcastle City Council (Blue Gum Hills) development area

By way of recreation facilities, the Newcastle Development Contributions Plan No. 1 2005 for the Blue Gum Hills Contributions Catchment provides a standard for the development of district court and field based activities:

Facility	Standard
District court and field based activities	0.7 Ha 1,000 residents

The provisions of the Newcastle City Council Development Contributions Plan (2005) only make provision for new residents (rather than the total number of residents) in Minmi. This would mean factoring for 8,580 residents for a 2.6 pph development scenario, and would require reservation of 6.0 ha of land within the region for court and field based activities.

4.4.2 Lake Macquarie City Council development area

Requirements for recreational facility provision for development occurring within the Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) area would be guided by the Section 94 Contributions Plan for the Northlakes area.

Facility	Design Standard	Facilities required for Popn of 12,372 residents
Informal Parkland	1,000	12.37
Park (with facilities)	1,000	12.37
Play equipment	1,000	12.37
Multi-courts	12,000	1.03
Skate parks	12,000	1.03
BMX	12,000	1.03
Playing fields	1,200	10.31
Roo ball fields	25,000	0.49
Cricket wickets	3,000	4.12
Cricket practice nets	3,500	3.53
Tennis courts	2,000	6.19

Netball courts	1,500	8.25
Petanque piste	14,500	0.85
Patrolled beaches	45,000	0.27
Swimming centres	35,000	0.35
Public wharf/jetty	6,000	2.06
Public boat ramp	6,000	2.06
Dog exercise areas	6,000	2.06

The types of fields recommended include accommodation for rugby, soccer and cricket, with a total of two sports fields provided, in addition to four netball courts and two double-court tennis courts with relation to court based activities.

By way of unstructured or passive recreation spaces, it is recommended that three parks (with dog exercising areas) are provided in the development area, in addition to contributions toward a BMX track and skate park located in a regional facility.

For community facilities, a community hall/centre or similar building that may accommodate flexible uses, including visiting health services such as baby and child health, community nursing and allied health services should also be provided.

Early development of recreation and community facilities is recommended so as to support community building and cohesion in the suburb from the earliest possible stage.

Coal and Allied does not in-principle object to works in kind, and it is Councils' preference for this works in kind to be provided with relation to the provision of some facilities. It was identified in meetings with Lake Macquarie and Newcastle Councils that the upkeep of swimming facilities will be an important area of consideration in social infrastructure provision. Councils' identified that a swimming facility at Wallsend (within the Newcastle City Council area) would be the likely target for future improvements as this facility was in closest proximity to the site. It was identified that improvements would likely include the modernisation of existing facilities rather than the development or construction of new swimming facilities.

It will also be important to ensure that lighting and signage are of a high standard so as to facilitate ambulance access to community areas.

4.5 Community transport

Sustainable and non-motorised transport opportunities should be captured at the earliest possible stage in site development, to facilitate the commissioning of infrastructure that supports community building, active health and wellbeing.

Cycling facilities have been identified by both Councils with relation to the sub-region, including opportunities to provide linkages to existing on- and off-road cycle paths, and the potential to explore development of a community cycling trail in the Blue Gum Hills regional park. There is potential to link on- and off-road cycle paths through Fletcher to Wallsend, allowing for cycling facilities to be joined up with the existing public transport interchange located here, and supplementing current levels of bus service to Minmi.

It is expected that the frequency of bus services will improve over the course of the development as population growth dictates, with that future bus routing will also accommodate urban development through greater coverage of the suburb and additional route options, including the potential for Minmi-Newcastle express services during the morning and evening peak.

5 Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

This report has identified the need for social infrastructure with relation to the proposed development of lands at Minmi. These social infrastructure needs reflect the requirements of the additional 8,580 residents expected to reside in the area by 2031, and may include Section 94 contributions to off-site recreation centres and facilities likely to be utilised by residents, such as swim facilities at Wallsend and indoor recreational facilities at Glendale. We understand that Coal and Allied has a preference to provide a range of social infrastructure works in kind, and will enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement and that the provision of these would occur in a timely fashion in consultation with Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Councils and the Department of Planning encompassing Section 94 and Regional contributions to ensure infrastructure provision occurs commensurate with project staging.

It is noted that the projected total population of Minmi of 9,329 (accounting for growth of 8,580 new residents and the existing population base, which will grow by only 17 persons in 2031 from current levels) indicates the need for fewer facilities than those proposed by the City of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Councils at the charette, which were based on a population projection of between 14,000 – 15,000 persons. Indications are that it would be reasonable to provide recreational facilities, including youth facilities, close to the existing park lands, to ease accessibility and reduce the need to travel. These should include up to

- Two sets of two sports fields, incorporating one (1) rugby field with cricket wickets, and one (1) soccer pitch with cricket wickets.
- Four netball courts
- Two double-court tennis courts
- Three parks (with dog exercising areas)
- Contributions toward a BMX track and skate park located in the Blue Gum Hills Regional Park or another regional facility
- A community hall/centre or similar building that may accommodate flexible uses, including visiting health services such as baby and child health, community nursing and allied health services.

Additionally, it is recommended that appropriate facilities be provided for in the masterplan for emergency service vehicle access, including emergency vehicle towing and repair areas, as appropriate.

It is noted that the population forecast for the Minmi area of 9,329 has been premised on generous average household sizes (2.6 persons per dwelling), and that even under these circumstances, population growth in the area remains significantly below the City of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Councils recreational infrastructure requirements which have been benchmarked for population growth for 14,000 to 15,000 persons. Moreover, the majority of land in the development plan is dedicated to nature conservation and passive open space, which strongly exceeds Growth Centres Commission standard of 2.83 Ha per 1,000 persons.

The increased residential population of the Minmi area as a result of redevelopment is likely to increase pressure on open spaces and facilities in the wider area surrounding the Estate, and therefore 'off-site' recommendations have also been included for further discussion with Council.

These recommendations have been developed in the context of:

- Relevant planning policy, statutory requirements and Council guidelines, including Section 94 Plans where made available.
- Current supply of facilities and open space at the development site and in the wider study area.
- Stakeholders' perspectives of current and future needs and demand.
- Best practice in terms of developing a cohesive community and 'sense of place'.

In addition to identifying space and facility provision in broad terms, it is essential to remain mindful of the need to address the range of social needs within both the existing and incoming community within the detailed designs of the built form and landscaping of spaces. For example in terms of physical access to facilities for those who may be disabled or for older people with limited mobility; cultural sensitivities and appropriateness in terms of addressing differing needs within the community.

Appendix A Consultation Log

A.1 Stakeholders Consulted

- James Shelton, Department of Planning, Hunter Regional Office
- Johannes Honnef, Newcastle City Council
- Sharon Pope, Lake Macquarie City Council
- Greg Weir, Lake Macquarie City Council
- Sue Carter, Hunter New England Health, NSW Health
- John Bellenden, Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, Newcastle Office

Appendix B Data Calculations

APPENDICES

B.1 Data Analysis

Regional

	Minmi Suburb	Fletcher Suburb	Taro	Beresfield	Elmore Vale Suburb	Birmingham Gardens	Walsend	Hexham	Maryland	Shotland	Adamstown Heights	Barnsley	Charlestown	Hillbrough	Seahampton	Warners Bay	New
Occupied private dwellings	226	596	608	1255	1,670	742	4,819	70	2,590	1,422	1967	597	4707	225	353	2874	
Separate house	220	582	543	1189	1,459	672	3,877	70	2,402	1,280	1884	593	3775	225	353	2190	
Semi, row or terrace house	0	14	65	51	202	17	606	0	130	54	23	0	461	0	0	394	
Flat, unit or apartment	6	0	0	15	6	53	303	0	58	82	54	4	465	0	0	287	
Other dwellings or not stated	0	0	0	0	3	0	33	0	0	6	7	0	6	0	0	3	
No. of households	226	596	608	1255	1670	742	4819	70	2590	1422	1967	597	4707	225	118	2874	
Population	732	1935	1558	3118	4728	1846	11801	152	7603	4179	5190	1799	11725	663	353	7009	
No. of persons per household	3.2	3.2	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.9	2.9	2.6	3	2.5	2.9	3	2.4	3.

	Warners Bay	New Lambton Heights	Kahibah	Holmseville	Garden Suburb	Mount Hutton	Highfields	Whitebridge	Dudley	Cardiff	Cameron Park Suburb	Edgeworth Suburb	West Walsend	Argenton	Glendale	Total
74	580	1040	534	589	1205	270	904	842	2284	1,162	2,262	591	544	1,218		38746
90	567	819	527	586	928	248	802	783	2042	1,127	2,002	568	486	1,087		33886
94	3	161	0	3	267	12	67	54	119	3	225	3	15	57		3006
87	10	60	7	0	10	10	32	5	116	32	32	9	38	67		1761
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	7	0	3	11	5	7		94
74	580	1040	534	589	1205	270	904	842	2284	1162	2262	591	544	1218		38511
09	1793	2475	1542	1716	3107	686	2494	2239	5796	3718	5905	1605	1337	2997		101801
	3.1	2.4	2.9	2.9	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.7	2.5	3.2	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.5		2.65
																Average