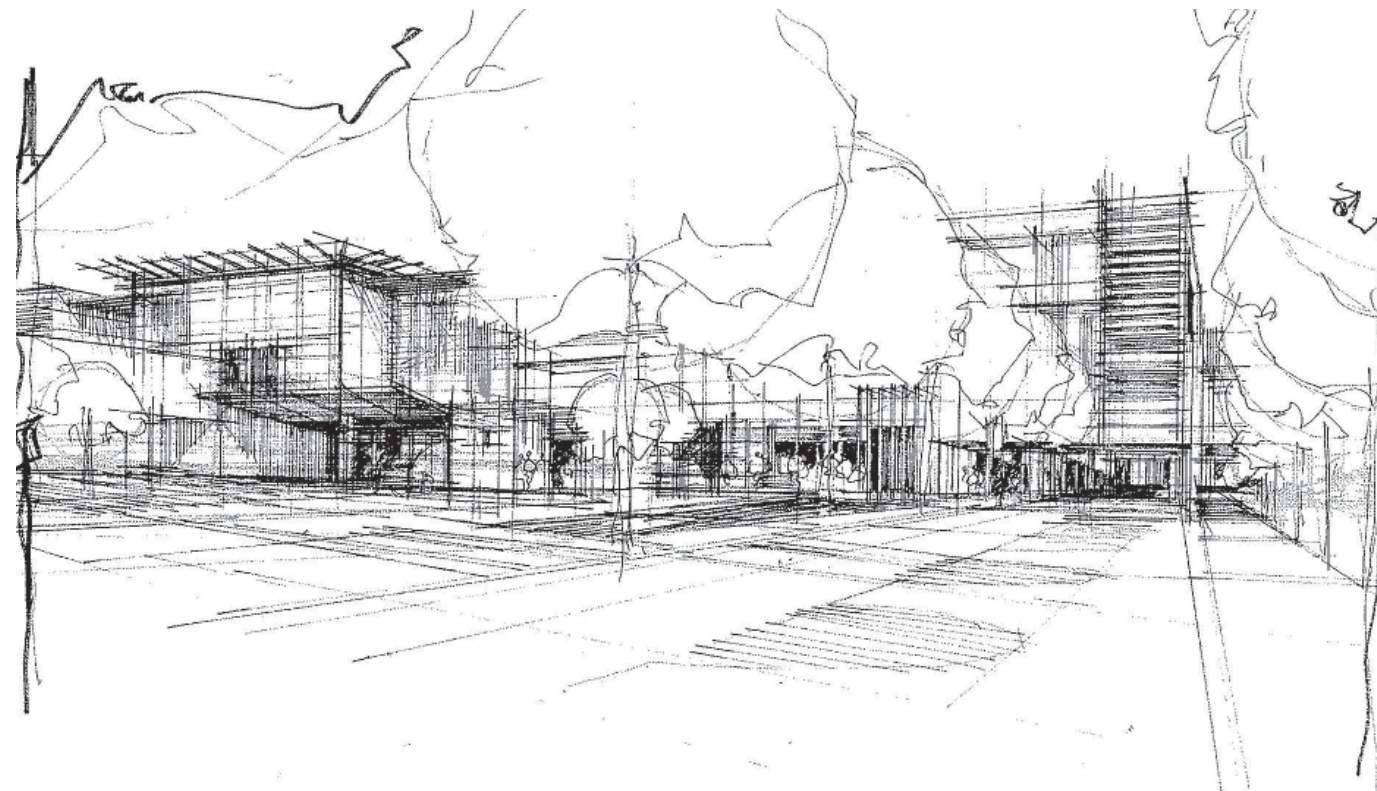


Wagga Wagga Integrated Regional Health Service Development

Preliminary
Environmental Assessment

March 2009



prepared by

LFA (Pacific) Pty Ltd

for

NSW Health



CAPITAL INSIGHT

Feasibility & Planning • Project Strategy • Delivery



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Wagga Wagga Regional Integrated
Health Service Redevelopment
Preliminary Environmental Assessment
(March 2009)
Prepared for



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Wagga Wagga is a major commercial centre within the greater southern region of New South Wales. Wagga Wagga Base Hospital is one of three primary medical facilities within this region, which serve six centres of population and 39 Local Government Areas.

The Wagga Wagga Integrated Regional Health Service (WWIRHS) on the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site represents an important major health development for the region.

Both the Wagga Wagga City Council and the NSW State Government have identified the development of the WWIRHS as important to their strategic plans. The Government acknowledges the need to improve access to quality healthcare, whilst the Council equates its economic growth with the provision of infrastructure and employment opportunities that will result from the hospital development.

For the Greater Southern Area Health Service (GSAHS), the development of the WWIRHS will provide a modern healthcare facility suited to the current and future needs of the region and consolidate the most appropriate health services on a single site.

The WWIRHS development will incorporate staged construction, decanting, temporary parking and accommodation and demolition to enable the existing hospital to continuing functioning whilst the new hospital is progressively built.

The adoption of best practice health service provision at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital for the WWIRHS is fundamental to the wellbeing of the people in the greater southern region of NSW.



Fig. 01 - Site Aerial

In accordance with Part 3A of the EP&A Act and associated guidelines, this Preliminary Environmental Assessment has been prepared to provide an overview of the WWIRHS development project and to inform consultation with relevant agencies.

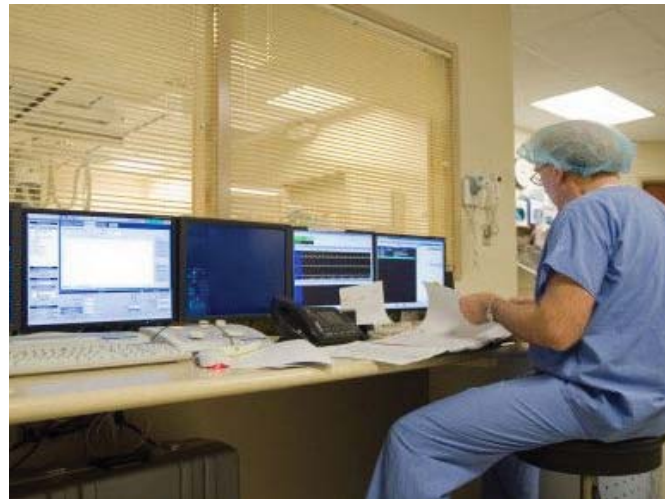
In summary, the project will provide a modern healthcare facility suited to the current and future needs of the central sector of the GSAHS.

The project involves development of a new health facilities building incorporating primary health, mental health, and acute clinical, educational and asset management services; and maintenance of existing buildings currently incorporating the UNSW School of Rural Health and Hydrotherapy Pool.

The project may facilitate opportunities for the development of complementary office, retail and residential schemes by the private sector; as well as additional health facilities for the Defence Force's nearby Army Recruitment Training Facility and RAAF Base.

The key drivers of the WWIRHS development project are:

- To develop more integrated models of care.
- To expand the range of specialised diagnostic and treatment services available.
- To expand provision of ambulatory care for chronic and complex conditions.
- To increase the focus on priority service areas.
- To guarantee the viability of the WWIRHS.
- To improve recruitment and retention of health professionals.
- To strengthen clinical networks.
- To effectively use information management and technology.
- To optimise efficiencies through co-location.
- To improve hospital and community health facilities.



Images sourced from, www.gettyimages.com

The objectives of the WWIRHS development project are to:

- Provide new 'state of the art' hospital facilities with high quality care standards.
- Facilitate the delivery of improved health, education, research and community facilities on site.
- Provide improved access to and between different health and community services on site.
- Provide flexible building design to allow for future modification and expansion to meet anticipated growth in demand for services and changes in clinical practice.
- Encourage supplementary and support private hospital health facilities core to the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital service provision.
- Ensure development provides harmony and balance with the surrounding areas.
- Facilitate a wide range of uses in the broader site context, including educational, commercial, retail and residential uses, whilst maintaining, as a dominant element, the hospital and complementary health activities.
- Provide a high quality urban environment through careful design of buildings, enhanced landscaping and a well designed public domain.
- Improve and enhance the public domain, including a variety of public areas and pedestrian and vehicular connections through the site.
- Maintain and enhance, where possible, a green environment.
- Record any significant heritage items that are required to be demolished.
- Encourage public transport use by enhancing access to walking, cycling and bus networks.
- Provide adequate car parking on site.
- Provide improved access to the site and minimise or manage appropriately any adverse impacts on the surrounding main and local streets.
- Manage traffic through the site so that pedestrians can move freely and safely within an appropriate amenity.
- Adopt the principles of Environmentally Sustainable Development in accordance with NSW Health and State Government policy.
- Identify opportunities for private commercial development to fund procurement and/or accommodate new health and related facilities.
- Meet the objectives of wider strategic planning initiatives such as 'acceler8_Wagga Wagga - a blueprint for economic growth in 2008'.

This Preliminary Environmental Assessment has been prepared on behalf of NSW Health and GSAHS, the proponents of the WWIRHS development project. This preliminary report draws on planning, design and specialist studies conducted for the Services Procurement Plan and Project Definition Plan prepared for this project which identified the WWIHRs proposal as the preferred and recommended option.

The spatial extent of the GSAHS is shown in Figure 03.

The principal consultant team for the project includes:

- Capital Insight Pty Ltd – Project Director/Management.
- Rice Daubney – Principal Design Consultant.
- LFA (Pacific) – Urban Planning.
- SKM - Engineering Design Consultant (incl. civil, hydraulics, electrical, lift, mechanical, cogeneration and ESD).

Specialist consultants will be engaged for the project implementation and preparation of the Environmental Assessment. It is anticipated that the following consultants will be required:

- Traffic and transport planning.
- Geotechnical and environmental assessment.
- Conservation, heritage and archaeology.
- Acoustic.

4.1 Regional Context

Wagga Wagga is a major commercial centre with a population of nearly 60,000 located within the greater southern region of New South Wales.

Topographically Wagga Wagga is located at the eastern end of the Riverina region where the slopes of the Great Dividing Range flatten and form the Riverina plain.

Wagga Wagga Base Hospital is one of three primary medical facilities within the GSAHS which serve six centres of population: Albury, Deniliquin, Goulburn, Griffith, Queanbeyan and Wagga Wagga, and 39 Local Government Areas. The GSAHS area contains a total population in the order of 468,000.



Fig. 02 - New South Wales Area Health Services

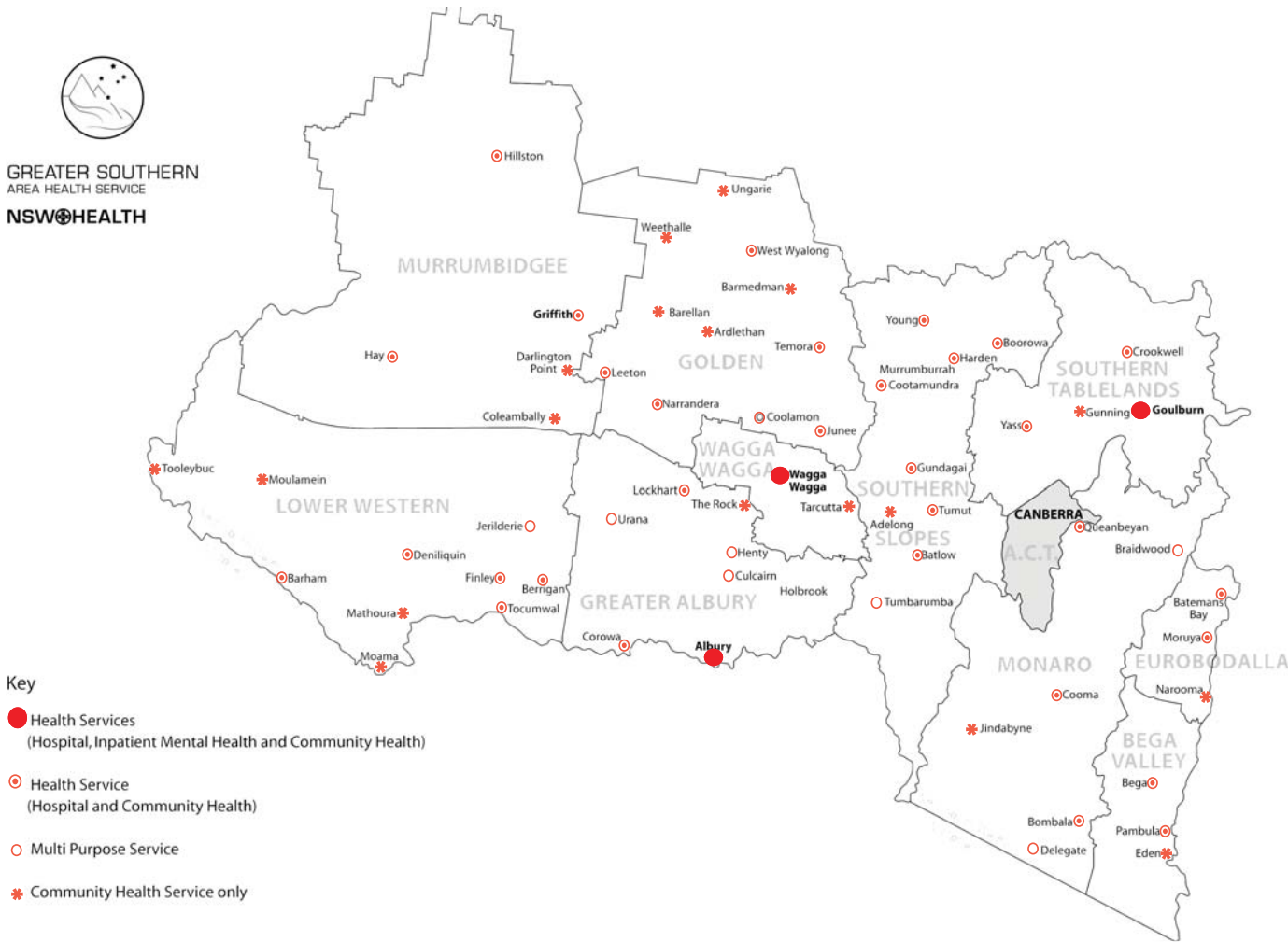


Fig. 03 - Greater Southern Area Health Service

4.2 Local Context

The core elements of the local context are as follows:

- Environmental
 - Murrumbidgee River, Wullundry Lagoon and associated open space.
- Movement
 - Good rail and road connections via the Sydney-Melbourne railway line, and Sturt, Olympic and Hume Highways.
- Land use
 - Business, commercial and retail uses are concentrated in the CBD core.
 - Major industrial areas exist to the north in the suburb of Bomen.
 - Residential growth is primarily on higher ground to the south, however the suburb of North Wagga Wagga is located north of the Murrumbidgee River.
 - Educational services including Charles Sturt University to the north in the suburb of Estella, and the Riverina Institute of TAFE.
 - Defence Force services including the RAAF Base and Army Recruitment Training Facility exist east and south west respectively.



Fig. 04 - Local Context

4.3 Wagga Wagga CBD

The Wagga Wagga CBD is relatively flat, and is located on the southern bank of the Murrumbidgee River, protected by a levee from potential flooding. The CBD is approximately 1km from Wagga Wagga Base Hospital with good access via bus or taxi. Walking time from the CBD is approximately 20-25 minutes. The main vehicular access from the CBD is via Edward Street.

The key attributes of the Wagga Wagga CBD are as follows:

- Its location within the commercial and recreational grid bounded by Best and Tarcutta Streets, the Sturt Highway and the Murrumbidgee River.
- Its main shopping street, Baylis Street which becomes Fitzmaurice Street at the northern end.
- Its proximity to Wollundry Lagoon which provides a water focus for the city centre.
- Its proximity to the cultural precinct on the banks of Wollundry Lagoon.
- Its accessibility via a dedicated local bus service.

See Fig. 04 - Local Context, pp. 6.



Town centre



Baylis Street



Cultural precinct

4.4 Wagga Wagga Base Hospital

Wagga Wagga Base Hospital is located within a health precinct which includes Calvary Hospital and existing private clinics and doctors' surgeries.

The site is surrounded by a wide variety of land uses which are predominately residential but also include ovals to the north west; primary schools, high schools, and the Riverina TAFE to the east; and showgrounds to the south.

The site is in reasonable proximity to the Wagga Wagga CBD and within walking distance of the Wagga Wagga Railway Station and Bus and Coach Terminal. The site is accessible from both the Sturt and Olympic Highways, and the Main Southern Railway. The site offers transport connections to major shopping complexes, offices, educational facilities, open space and residential areas.

See Fig. 04 - Local Context, pp. 6.



Main Building



Heritage Motor Inn to the east of site



Lewis House, Community Health



Sandwich Bar to the south of site



Harvey House, UNSW School of Rural Health



Residential property near to site

4.5 Zoning

Under the Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1985 the WWIRHS development project occupies an area zoned both 5a Special Uses Hospital and 2c Medium Density Residential. The Development Control Plan 2005 Residential Landuse Guide notes that construction of a hospital on land zoned 2c requires 'council consideration'. The surrounding land uses include:

- 2a General Residential
- 2c Medium Density Residential
- 3a General Commercial
- 4b Light Industry
- 5a Special Uses
- 6a Recreation

Under the Draft LEP 2008 these zones are defined as SP2 (Special Uses Zone) and R3 (Medium Density Residential). The proposed R3 zoning in the Draft LEP, which prohibits the development of 'health services facilities', extends into the proposed hospital development site. The Draft LEP surrounding land uses include:

- B3 Commercial Core
- R1 General Residential
- R3 Medium Density Residential
- RE1 Public Recreation
- SP2 Infrastructure

Initial discussions have been held with Council who are supportive of the project. Under the current LEP Council can 'consider' the project which would allow it to be approved.

Conversely, under the Draft LEP a critical part of the project would be prohibited. Council has recommended that a submission be made requesting the zoning boundary be amended.

NSW Health intends to make a submission to Council in response to the public exhibition of the Draft LEP. The submission will address the impact of the proposed R3 zoning on the WWIRHS development project and recommend that the SP2 zoning be extended to include the hospital development site.

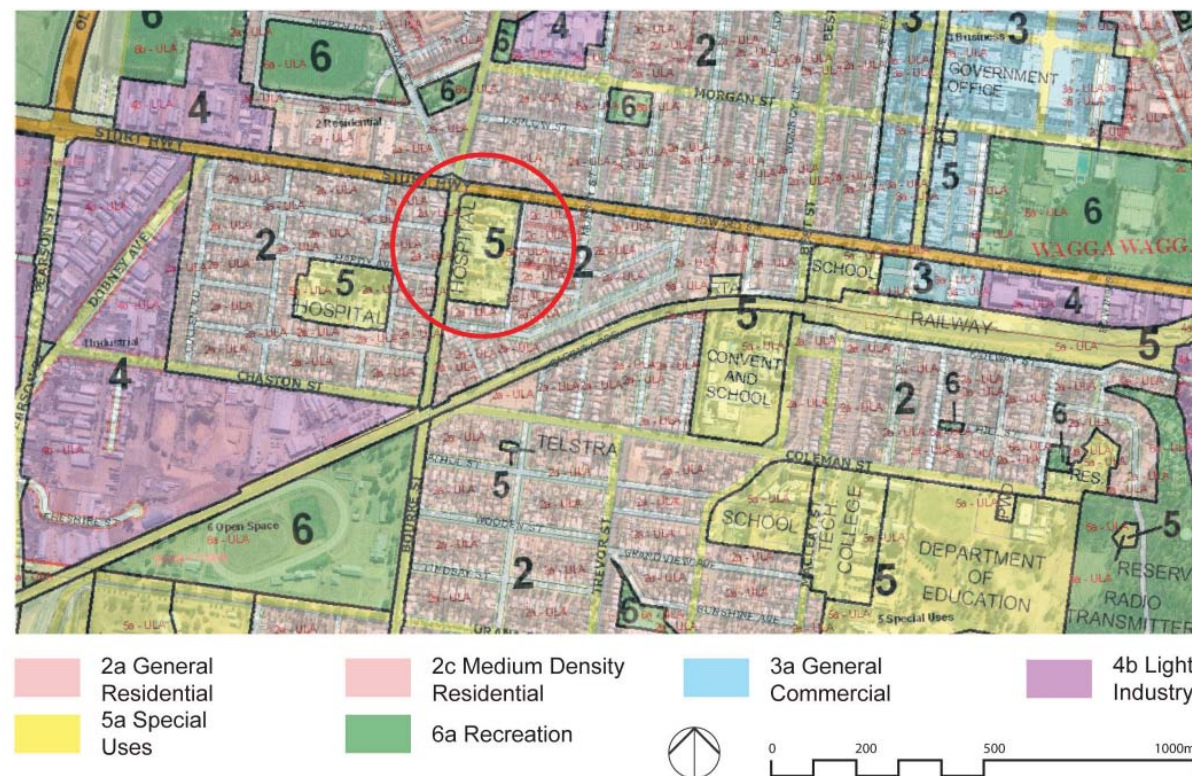


Fig. 05 - LEP 1985 Zoning

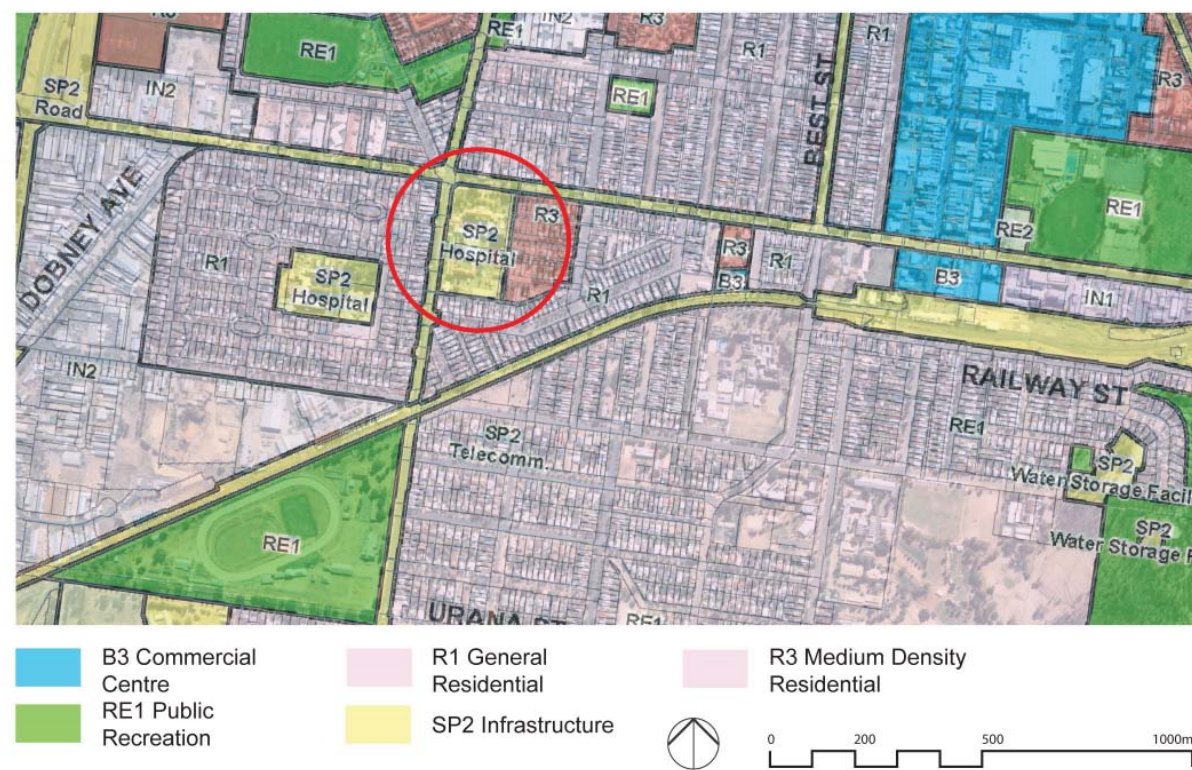


Fig. 06 - Draft LEP 2008 Zoning

4.6 Existing Development

Wagga Wagga Base Hospital is part of a wider existing health facility precinct which includes Calvary Hospital, private health facilities, and specialist practices and clinics. Almost all of the specialist practices and clinics are housed in Docker and Edward Streets, which adjoin the WWIRHS site, whilst Calvary Hospital is located south west of Docker Street.

The principal hospital site covers an area of approximately 4.2 ha and is generally known as Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. Hospital car parking is provided on adjacent lands and covers an area of approximately 1.5 ha. The lands on which the WWIRHS development project is proposed, are owned by the GSAHS or the Health Administration Corporation of NSW Health, or are currently proposed to be purchased by NSW Health.

The site currently houses many diverse, old and ad-hoc buildings which have numerous extensions. These vary from the state heritage listed Old Hospital Building to the multistorey, 1960s Main Building.

Vehicular access to car parking, the Main Building and the Emergency Department is directly off Edward Street via Lewis Drive. Vehicular access to the existing Hydrotherapy Pool is directly off Docker Street but parking is limited and shared with the UNSW School of Rural Health. Vehicular access to the Dental Unit, Community Health and the Australian Red Cross Blood Service Donor Centre is via the rear of the site, off Rawson Lane; and the Renal Unit and Yathong Lodge are accessed via Yathong Street and Lewis Drive.

Staff access is via Lewis Drive, to the main car park, and an additional staff car park can be accessed via Yathong Street or Rawson Lane.

Service vehicles enter the site via Lewis Drive, Yathong Street and Rawson Lane.



Fig. 07 - Existing Development

4.7 EP&A Act and Relevant Environmental Planning Instruments

EP&A Act

Part 3A of the Act came into force on 1 August 2005. It established assessment procedures for various forms of 'major development' of state or regional significance. Under Regulation 6 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005, 'Identification of Part 3A projects', such significance can be established if:

*"(1) Development that, in the opinion of the Minister, is development of a kind:
(a) that is described in Schedule 1 or 2, or..."*

Group 7 of Schedule 1 of the SEPP (Major Projects) 2005 lists 'Health and public service facilities – Hospitals'. It states in respect to hospitals:

"(1) Development that has a capital investment value of more than \$15 million for the purpose of providing professional health care services to people admitted as in-patients (whether or not out-patients are also cared for or treated there),..."

The WWIRHS development project conforms to the Group 7 class of development given capital investment value of the project is approximately \$185 million.

NSW Health is seeking the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements for the project. A Concept Plan will be prepared in accordance with the matters outlined in the DG's requirements.

The Concept Plan approval process provides for the Minister to undertake a coordinated, whole of government assessment of the merits of the concept of a project of significance to the state, and to establish procedures for the subsequent approval of detailed aspects of the project.

State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP)

- SEPP (Major Projects) 2005 came into force on 25 May 2005 and was subsequently amended on 31 October 2005. The SEPP defines development that is state significant development and is determined by the Minister of Planning. NSW Health has requested that the DoP confirm in writing that the WWIRHS development project will be declared a 'Major Project' pursuant to Regulation 6 of the SEPP.
- SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007 came into force on 21 December 2007 and aims to facilitate the effective delivery of infrastructure across the state. It includes the provision of infrastructure such as airports, schools, hospitals, roads and railways, sewer, stormwater, water, electricity and gas services, telecommunications, waste management, forestry, emergency services, group homes, parks, ports, waterways, research stations, traveling stock reserves, public buildings and correctional centres.
- SEPP 55 – Remediation of Land states that land must not be rezoned or developed unless contamination has been considered and, where relevant, land has been appropriately remediated.
- SEPP 64 – Advertising and Signage aims to improve the amenity of urban and natural settings by managing the impact of outdoor advertising. The policy responded to growing concerns from the community, the advertising industry and local government that existing controls and guidelines were not effective.

Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan 1985

Under the Wagga Wagga LEP 1985 the WWIRHS development project occupies an area zoned both Special Uses and Residential. The objectives of land zoned Special Uses include allowing development for 'public or community purposes'. Land zoned Residential 'will allow development for purposes other than housing within the zone only if it does not detrimentally affect the character or amenity of the locality'.

Draft Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan 2008

Under the Draft LEP 2008 the WWIRHS development project occupies an area within SP2 (Special Uses Zone) and R3 (Medium Density Residential). The objectives of SP2 include, 'providing for infrastructure and related uses' and development is permitted with consent provided this objective is met.

In R3 'health services facilities' are prohibited however 'health consulting rooms' and 'medical centres' are permitted with consent. In addition, under SEPP (Major Projects) 2005, provided the project is not 'wholly' prohibited in either zone, then the project can be approved by the Minister. It is also noted that the objectives of R3 include, 'enabling other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents'.

Other Relevant Legislation

- Floodplain Development Manual 2005 – Wagga Wagga Council abides by and implements the New South Wales Government's Floodplain Development Manual which was gazetted on 6 May 2005. The Manual aims to reduce the impact of and losses from flooding, but recognises the benefits of use, occupation and development of flood prone land.

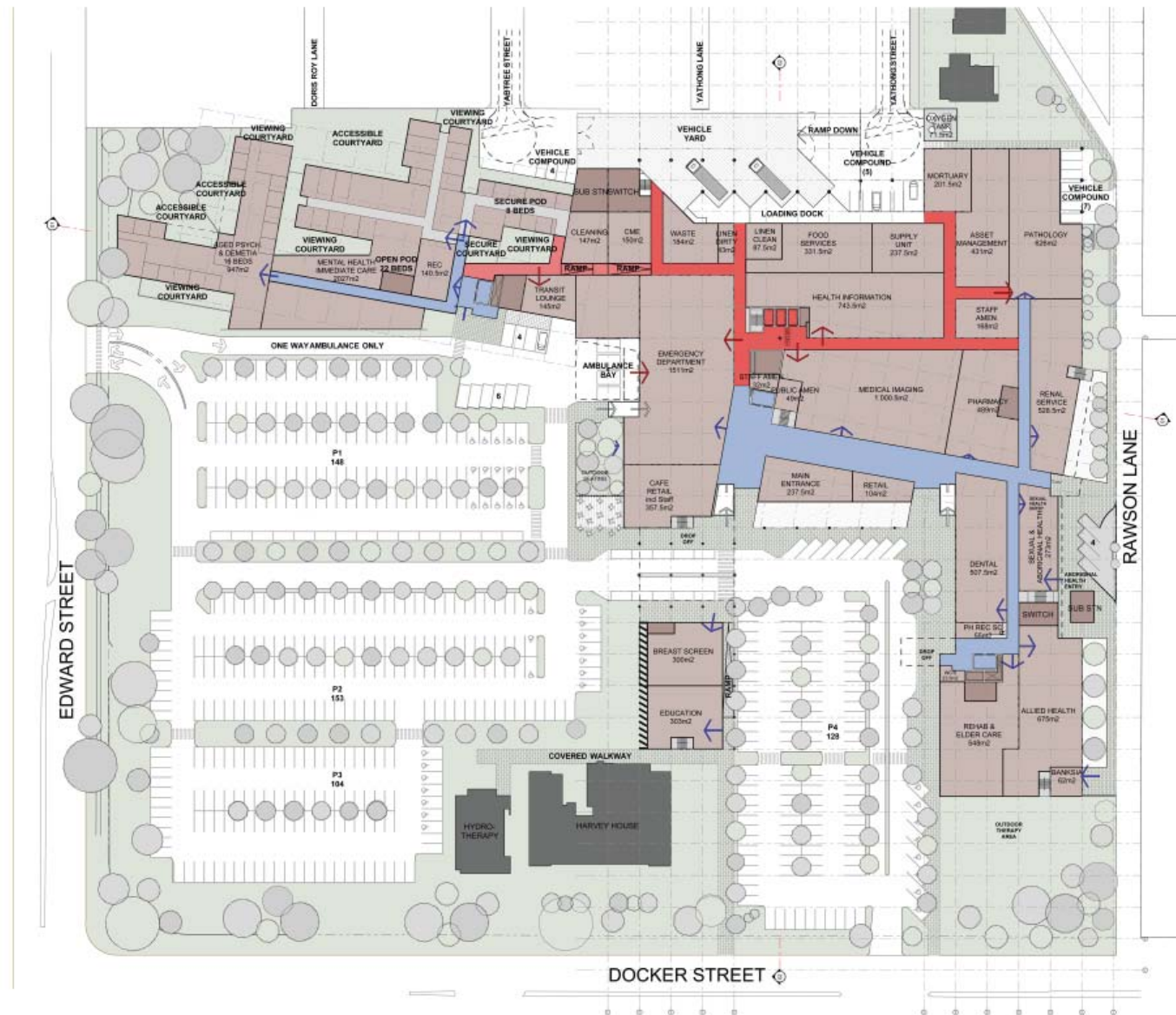


Fig. 08 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan

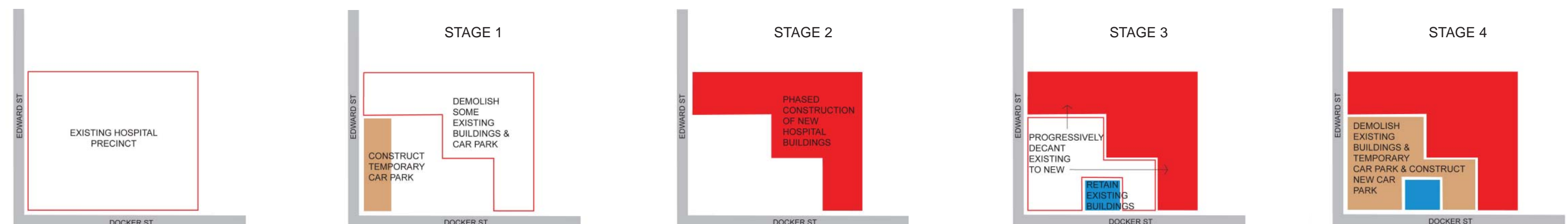


Fig. 09 - Diagrammatic Project Staging (Please note: these diagrams are indicative only, a staging strategy will be provided as part of subsequent Project Applications)

The WWIRHS development project will provide new state-of-the-art health facilities on the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site to meet changing clinical needs, expanded activities and the provision of educational facilities.

The capital investment value of the WWIRHS development project is approximately \$185 million. The project will be staged to allow ongoing service provision from the existing hospital whilst new facilities are built to the east and south of the site. Once construction is completed, the existing services will be decanted, allowing demolition of these buildings and the provision of car parking in their place.

The completed project will comprise:

- An increase in Gross Floor Area from approximately 27,000 sqm existing to approximately 40,000 sqm proposed.
- A decrease in height from 7 storeys existing to 4 storeys proposed (but reaching five in the centre of the site to accommodate a helipad).
- New development - primary/community health, mental health, acute clinical services, education, support services and rooftop helipad.
- Retained existing buildings - UNSW School of Rural Health (Harvey House) and the Hydrotherapy Pool.
- Provision of 263 beds.
- New pedestrian routes traversing the site and linking with nearby health facilities.
- New pedestrian hospital entry points including main and secondary.

- New car parking facilities.
- New internal roads.
- New access road off Docker Street.
- Integrated landscaping including softening of the street edge.

The project may also facilitate opportunities for the development of complementary office, retail and residential schemes by the private sector; as well as additional health facilities for the Defence Force's nearby Army Recruitment Training Facility and RAAF Base, all of which may support and fund the procurement of the new facilities.

Aspects for which concept plan approval will be sought include:

- Land use distribution.
- Pattern of buildings.
- Building heights.
- Road hierarchy/layout.
- Open space networks.
- Access networks.
- Car parking facilities and numbers.
- Heritage strategy.
- Construction Staging.
- Potential additional development.

Pursuant to the Concept Plan provision of Part 3A of the EP&A Act, the detailed design of buildings and works will be separately considered as part of subsequent Project Applications.

6.1 Introduction

The following section sets out the key issues as part of the Preliminary Environmental Assessment for the WWIRHS development project.

The assessment is intended as a guide to the Part 3A planning process in determining the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements.

The key issues are categorised into three core areas:

- Heads of Consideration
 - Suitability of the Site
 - Social and Economic Issues
 - Public Interest
- Statutory Planning Context
 - EP&A Act
 - SEPP Major Projects
 - SEPP Infrastructure
 - SEPP 55 – Remediation of Land
 - SEPP 64 – Advertising and Signage
 - Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan 1985
 - Draft Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan 2008
- Key Issues
 - Hospital Operations
 - Strategic Planning Context
 - Land Use
 - Flooding
 - Transport and Traffic
 - Vehicle Access and Car Parking
 - Helicopter Access
 - Built Form and Urban Design
 - Heritage
 - Public/Private Domain
 - Ecology
 - Acoustics
 - Infrastructure
 - Contamination
 - Geotechnical

6.2 Heads of Consideration

Suitability of the Site

The WWIRHS development project will deliver valuable social and economic outcomes for the region including achieving state and regional planning objectives, such as those identified in 'acceler8_Wagga Wagga - a blueprint for economic growth in 2008', and the recently released 'Community Social Plan 2009-2013'. Significant opportunity exists on the site and, in the immediate site context, to provide employment and infrastructure growth in line with these objectives. In addition, the development will facilitate and reinforce the focus on the Wagga Wagga town centre by complementing its range of shopping, health, education, business and cultural facilities.

Social and Economic Issues

Benefits

The WWIRHS development project will have a beneficial social impact including:

- Providing the local community with access to health services that better meet their care needs.
- Enhancing the recruitment and retention of health professionals to the local area.
- Creating better health experiences for patients and staff.

The WWIRHS development project will have a beneficial economic impact including:

- Reducing the need for the community to travel outside their local area to access health services.
- Improving the capacity of the region to attract new residents, businesses and industry sectors.
- Improving the capacity of the region to attract and retain health professionals.
- Providing significant capital expenditure in the local region.
- Providing employment opportunities during construction and operation.
- Supporting the local community via NSW Health's recurrent funding for the ongoing operation and staffing of the new facility which will see an increase in jobs and supporting infrastructure.

Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

The following information provides a snapshot of the residents of the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area (LGA). This information is taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census and the City of Wagga Wagga 'Community Social Plan 2009-2013':

- Wagga Wagga LGA has 59,908 residents, with an annual growth rate of 1.8%.
- Wagga Wagga has a high proportion of young people, with over 20% of the population aged under 15 and almost 18% aged 15-24. Comparatively, 12% over 65.
- 93.2% of Wagga Wagga's population was born in Australia (while the NSW average is 69%).
- 6.8% of Wagga Wagga's population was born overseas (while the NSW average is 23.8%).
- The most common region of origin is North-West Europe (2.7%).
- 3.1% of the population speak a language other than English at home.
- There has been an increase in refugee resettlement in the LGA in the last four years, accompanied by an increasing secondary migration population.
- People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background represent 4.2% of Wagga Wagga's population (which is higher than the NSW average).
- Almost 36% of families in Wagga Wagga are couples with no children, 32.6% of families are couples with children, and a further 11.3% are single parent families.
- Half of Wagga Wagga residents aged 15 years and over have post-school qualifications.
- The unemployment rate is 6.3%.
- Almost 85% of dwellings within the LGA are detached houses.
- The average weekly income for individuals in the area is between \$700 and \$750 (ABS Census 2005).

Public Interest

The issues of public interest as part of the WWIRHS development project include:

- Consistency with the objectives of the EP&A Act and the existing and draft Wagga Wagga LEP.
- Encouraging the economic and orderly development of land.
- Minimising the impact on the natural and built environment.
- Incorporating best practice urban design and principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- Consideration of risks to the safety and security of the surrounding community and public amenity.
- Contribution toward meeting the health, employment and social needs of Wagga Wagga and the greater southern area of NSW.

6.3 Statutory Planning Context

For details of the Statutory Planning Context applicable to the WWIRHS development project, as listed below, see Part 4.7 - EP&A Act and Relevant Environmental Planning Instruments, pp. 11.

EP&A Act

SEPP Major Projects

SEPP Infrastructure

SEPP 55 – Remediation of Land

SEPP 64 – Advertising and Signage

Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan 1985

Draft Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan 2008

Other Relevant Legislation

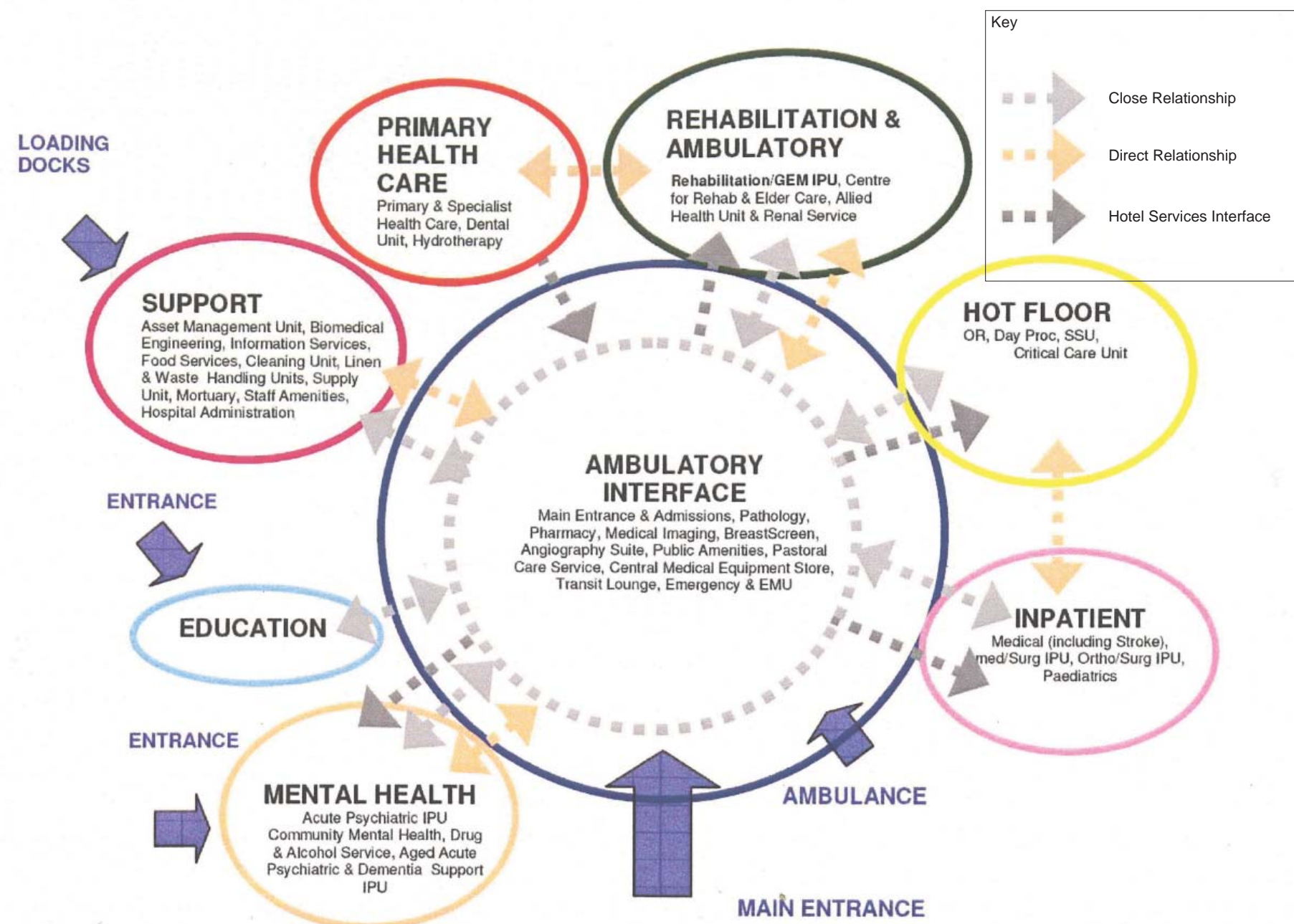


Fig. 10 - Functional Clusters

6.4 Key Issues

Hospital Operations

Contemporary service delivery modes are changing the way in which health services are delivered and arranged. Wagga Wagga's population will require a mix of services that are patient-centred and clustered in such a way as to enhance ease of use and accessibility. Whilst inpatient beds will be an important part of the redeveloped facilities, most people will not receive treatment in a traditional in-patient unit, but will be cared for on a day-stay, ambulatory or community outreach basis.

The WWIRHS development project provides opportunities to enhance health services on site by:

- Providing a facility which delivers health services in a manner consistent with modern healthcare practices and current and future health services needs.
- Providing flexible building design to allow for future modification and expansion to meet changes in clinical practice.
- Locating acute clinical services in a central cluster, with close links to rehabilitation services thus improving accessibility and enhancing continuity of care.
- Providing consolidated research facilities and multidisciplinary educational facilities on site.
- Improving links between community and health services on and off site.

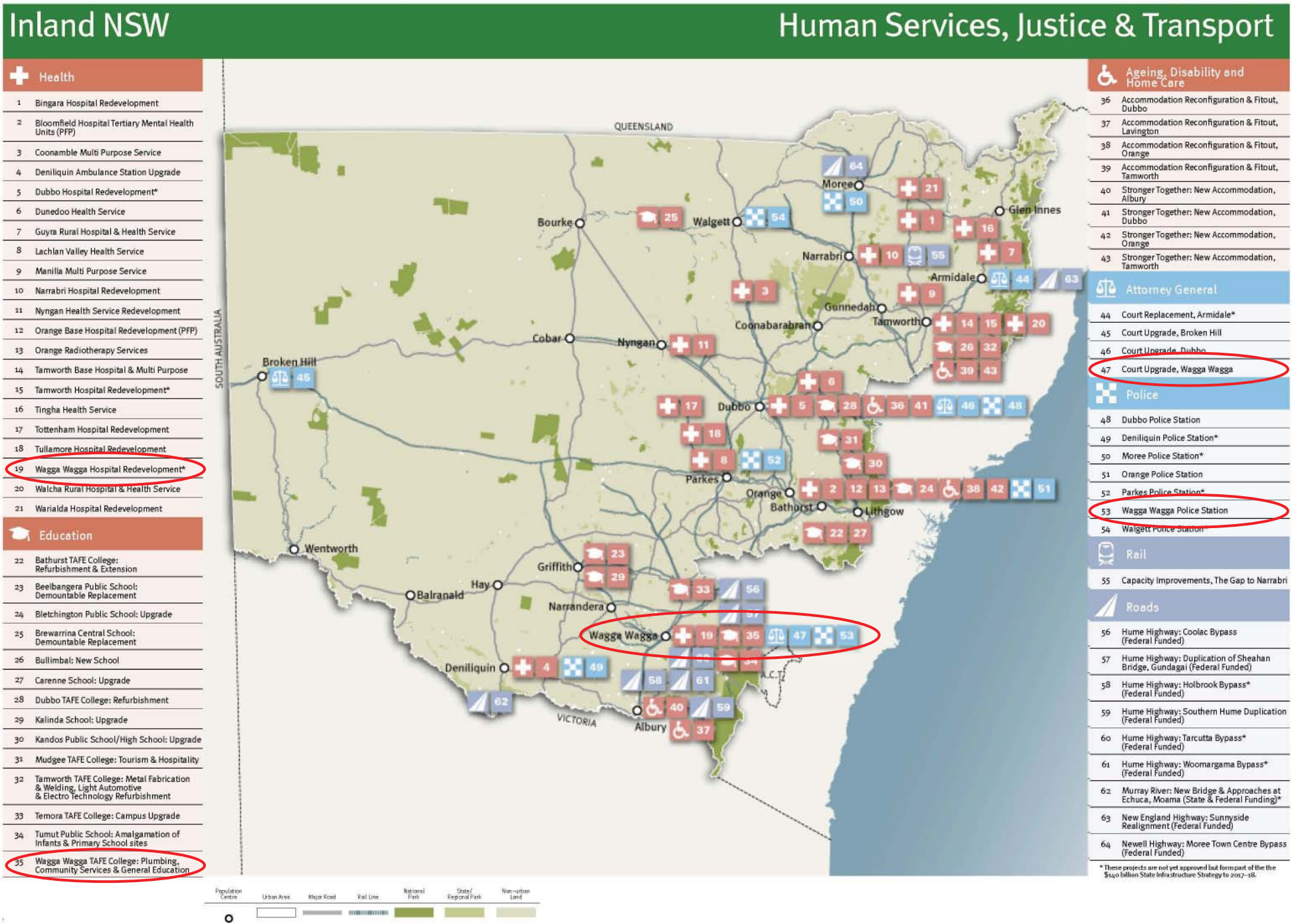


Fig. 11 - State Infrastructure Strategy

Strategic Planning Context

The Council has identified the WWIRHS development project as an important driver in its strategic and spatial plans: 'Community Strategic Plan, Our City...Our Tomorrow, 2008/2018' and 'Wagga Wagga Spatial Plan 2008'.

Both documents are currently on exhibition as part of the process for implementing the Wagga Wagga LEP 2008. The documents represent Council's latest strategic policy for the future development of the Wagga Wagga LGA. The strategic plan acknowledges significant population growth in the region and addresses the subsequent need for infrastructure maintenance and renewal, whilst the spatial plan outlines the pragmatic challenges in providing maintained and renewed infrastructure.

The WWIRHS development project presents an opportunity to build on the site's health and well being, and education and employment assets in line with the NSW Government's State Infrastructure Strategy. The adoption of an 'all new build' solution provides increased employment potential in services that are both directly and indirectly health related.

Land Use

A Service Procurement Plan and Value Management Workshop were previously undertaken and it was concluded that the hospital would be best redeveloped on the existing site. The land use issues for consideration included:

- Retaining existing relationships with the adjoining health precinct such as Calvary Hospital, consulting suites, and specialist and diagnostic services.
- Retaining and reusing existing infrastructure such as the UNSW School of Rural Health and Hydrotherapy Pool.
- Retaining superior service accessibility due to the proximity to the CBD and access to public transport and major traffic routes.
- Meeting the size, flexibility and options for expansion required for the provision of redefined services.
- Providing a solution which meets the service objectives of the Clinical Services Plan, is the least costly, and can provide the building footprint necessary for the functional relationship of departments in the delivery of health services.

The WWIRHS development project acknowledges the Council's document, *'acceler8_Wagga Wagga - a blueprint for economic growth in 2008'* which identifies methods for economic growth in Wagga Wagga, by offering increases in the health services provided, the number of staff required to deliver these services, and the number of users.

For a discussion regards permitted existing and proposed land uses see Part 4.5 - Zoning, pp. 9.

Flooding

A Flood Impact Assessment was previously undertaken and found that flooding of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site is likely only in the event that the Murrumbidgee River overtops the Main City Levee, which was built to stop flooding up to the 1:100 year flood planning level (FPL). However recommendations will be followed, such as locating critical services at a high point of the site, to mitigate any effects that flooding may have.

In addition, the Floodplain Development Manual Appendix K states, 'Consideration should also be given to using the PMF (probable maximum flood) as the FPL when siting and developing emergency response facilities such as... hospitals'.

In the case of the WWIRHS development project the adoption of the PMF level as the FPL has been deemed not feasible on the site, specifically because Wagga Wagga sits below this level and implementing the PMF would mean raising the building by more than three metres above existing ground level.

Instead the project ensures that all services are sited above the 1:200 year FPL and that the critical services area is above the 1:500 year FPL. In support of this, the NSW Floodplain Development Manual Policy Provisions state, 'The policy provides for: a merit based approach to selection of appropriate flood planning levels (FPLs)...noting that...it is neither feasible nor socially or economically justifiable to adopt the PMF as the basis for FPLs'.

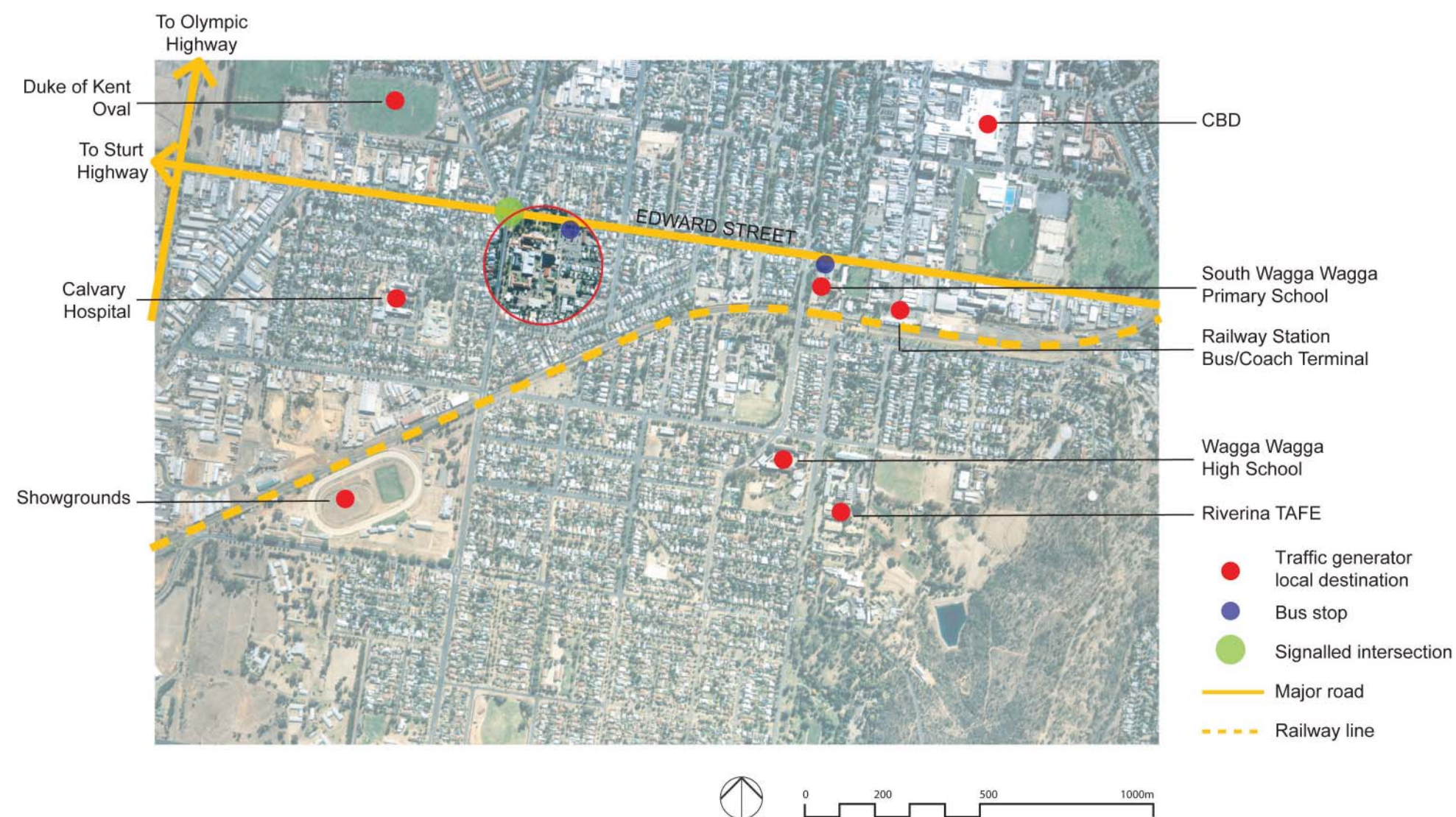


Fig. 12 - Transport and Traffic

Transport and Traffic

The Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site benefits from easily accessible bus services which run frequently to the CBD and surrounding areas. The convenience of the available public transport service will enable the WWIRHS development project to occur with an encouraged 'mode share' and a contained reliance on private car transport. The transport and traffic issues for consideration include:

- Maintaining and upgrading the access and convenience of existing public transport facilities.
- Facilitating and encouraging walking and/or cycling to and from the hospital site, particularly for staff.
- Providing enhanced pedestrian connections to, from and through the site.
- Providing access for emergency and service vehicles that is well defined, controlled and easily monitored.



Fig. 13 - Current Vehicle Access and Car Parking

Vehicle Access and Car Parking

The Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site has good access to the arterial road system and has significant elements of on and off site car parking. The vehicle access and car parking issues for consideration include:

- Providing on site car parking for use by patients and visitors.
- Implementing measures to increase the efficient utilisation of staff car parking such as car pooling.
- Providing car parking bays on site which are located and defined to enhance pedestrian thoroughfare thus minimising the conflict between vehicle access and pedestrian movements.
- Providing improved access to and within the site.
- Locating loading docks and service entries that are easily accessed.
- Aligning intersections in support of adjacent road networks including highways but particularly Hardy Avenue.
- Maintaining access for residents of adjacent roads particularly Doris Roy Lane, Yabtree Street, Yathong Lane and Yathong Street.

Helicopter Access

Currently the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital uses Duke of Kent Oval to the north west of the site for its helicopter landings. The existing flight path is from south east to north west and requires travel over the hospital, and landing at ground level which is within the sight lines of adjacent residents.

The WWIRHS development project relocates the helipad atop the hospital, on the roof of Level 4. This reduces the length of the flight path and the proximity to residential areas, and is expected to lessen the visual and noise impacts. Overshadowing is minimised by locating the helipad towards the centre of the site.

A specialist study will be undertaken to assess noise impacts.

Built Form and Urban Design

The key issues that have been considered during design development include:

- Heights
 - The site has a fall of three metres from south to north and is surrounded by predominately single storey residences.
- Street Edge
 - The address to Edward and Docker Streets - the 'front' of the hospital - and to Rawson Lane which offers rear lane access to the residences that face Brookong Avenue.
- Shadows
 - The potential for overshadowing of public domain space and the private backyards of the residences that face Brookong Avenue.
- Views
 - The potential view lines, sky lines and legibility of the Wagga Wagga CBD; and the impact of any multistorey built form on the sight lines to and from the residences that face Brookong Avenue.
- Sense of Place
 - The site forms part of an existing health precinct which should be enhanced by providing a modern facility that acknowledges the inherent qualities of the site's heritage, topography and landscape.
- Connectivity
 - The project should enhance existing transport connections to major shopping complexes, offices, educational facilities, open space and residential areas; and provide efficient pedestrian routes within the site to access these connections.
- Address
 - The project should provide a clear sense of entry to, and identity of, the various functional clusters on site.
- Planning Controls
 - The project must respond to relevant planning controls including SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007, SEPP 55 and SEPP 64.

Landscape

The landscape of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site has developed over time. What was once formal landscaping complementing the Old Hospital Building and acting as a buffer to noise from adjacent major roads, is now a grassed area with scattered trees.

Heritage investigations acknowledge that the existing landscape has been significantly altered and no longer represents original heritage values. It is noted that landscaping will be altered to accommodate the development project. An arborist will be consulted to identify the status of existing vegetation that might be improved, replaced or removed.



Landscaping to the north of site before tree removal



Old Hospital Building showing altered building fabric



Main Building

Heritage

A Conservation Management Report was previously undertaken and found the Old Hospital Building to be of historical, aesthetic, social and scientific value at a local level. Constructed on an open, cleared area in 1908, the Old Hospital Building formed the beginning of continuous hospital development in Wagga Wagga. To this end the Old Hospital Building is deemed a Heritage Item in the listings compiled by the NSW DoP Heritage Branch.

However, the Old Hospital Building, landscape, surrounds and site have been significantly altered throughout the mid-twentieth century and much of the original fabric of the building no longer remains. As such, the integrity of the Old Hospital Building has been lost and it is no longer able to expresses original aesthetic, technical, historic and cultural significance.

The report supports the demolition of the existing building to make way for new hospital accommodation, provided a heritage recording is undertaken in accordance with NSW DoP Heritage Branch Guidelines.

In addition, the multistorey, 1960s Main Building to the east of the site has been deemed a Heritage Item in the Wagga Wagga Council Draft LEP 2008. However it is not feasible to retain this building which no longer facilitates the GSAHS's best practice service provision model and has considerable cost and clinical quality penalties.

The Draft LEP 2008 also makes reference to a Heritage Conservation Area which includes the properties on Brookong Avenue to the south of the site. The project will respond to the conservation area by stepping back the building mass to address the street edge and the single storey properties opposite.

It is anticipated that a Heritage Impact Study will be undertaken to identify how the project can best respond to the heritage of the local area.



Car parking abuts private dwellings



Public access to the Hydrotherapy Pool



Public open space to the north of site

Public/Private Domain

The existing Wagga Wagga Base Hospital is defined by major roads to the north and west, parcels of car parking to the south and east, and a number of ad-hoc buildings on site, resulting in a general level of public access but without an overall strategy.

Public access to the main hospital facilities will be maintained and pedestrian amenity enhanced by the WWIRHS development project. In addition, the rationalisation of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site will create opportunities to provide new public spaces.

Ecology

Initial research indicates that the WWIRHS development project will result in no change to the biodiversity of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site.

Acoustics

The Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site is subject to noise and vibration from typical sources including traffic, both external to and within the site, helicopter movements and plant equipment. Traffic noise is noticeable along Edward and Docker Streets which form the north and west borders of the site, as well as in loading dock areas.

An acoustic and vibration assessment will be undertaken to measure the effects of noise and vibration and if necessary, to provide solutions as to how these effects can be mitigated such that the operation of the hospital is not impaired.

Infrastructure

Initial discussions have been held with Council and the utility authorities and no major issues have been identified. However the impact of the WWIRHS development project on services infrastructure including water supply, sewer, stormwater, electricity and gas will be assessed and the utility authorities will be advised so the planning and implementation of any augmentation that is necessary can be undertaken.

Contamination

It is likely that there may be asbestos containing material in the hospital's older buildings. Where these are subject to demolition for the purposes of development, the removal and treatment of such material will be dealt with under standard Workcover and OHS&R practices.

Groundwater contamination may exist due to salinity in the area however Council provides annual status reports and has introduced its '*Urban Salinity Management Plan 2008-2013*' to which the WWIRHS development project will adhere.

Geotechnical

A geotechnical investigation previously undertaken on the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital site revealed that the likely supporting material for new construction will be alluvium clay.

Background information, specifically the 1:250,000 scale Metallogenic Series Sheet (SI 55-15) for Wagga Wagga, indicates that the proposed site area is underlain by Quaternary sediments, comprising gravel, sand, silt and clay, which appear to be underlain by Wagga Marginal Basin Formation comprising shale, subgreywacke, sandstone and siltstone of Early to Late Ordovician Age.

7.1 Agencies Consulted

To date a range of Agencies have been consulted and both group and individual consultations have taken place with relevant Agency officers. Consultations have ranged from broad strategic issues of precinct urban planning, to specific service infrastructure issues of redeveloping the hospital site.

The Agencies consulted include:

- Greater Southern Area Health Service
- NSW Department of Health
- NSW Department of Planning
- NSW Treasury
- Riverina Water
- Roads and Traffic Authority
- Wagga Wagga City Council
- Country Energy
- Telstra

7.2 Agencies to be Consulted

It is expected that consultations will continue with the above agencies during the planning process and that the following Agencies will also be consulted:

- Civil Aviation and Safety Authority
- Fearnese Buses
- NSW Department of Natural Resources
- NSW Heritage Office