

minmi | Link road

preferred project report

September 2009



COAL
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Minmi/Link Road and Stockrington Preferred Project Report

Prepared for Coal & Allied

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1 Introduction

This Preferred Project Report (PPR) has been prepared on behalf of Coal & Allied relating to the Coal & Allied owned Minmi/Link Road and Stockrington estates.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 75H(6) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (the Act) which states:

The Director-General may require the Owner to submit to the Director-General:

- (a) a response to the issues raised in those submissions, and*
- (b) a preferred project report that outlines any proposed changes to the project to minimise its environmental impact, and*
- (c) any revised statement of commitments.*

The PPR provides a brief history of the Part 3A Process to date for the Minmi/Link Road Project and outlines the Owner's response to the issues raised by Department of Planning (DoP) in their role as the assessment authority and the issues arising from the public exhibition of the application.

The report summarises the proposed amendments to the proposal to minimise its potential impacts and provides revised Statements of Commitments for the Concept Plan.

The PPR also outlines proposed amendments to the State Significant Site (SSS) listing.

Each of these matters is addressed in the following sections:

- Section 2 – Part 3A Application Process.
- Section 3 – Development Description and Modifications to the Part 3A Concept Plan.
- Section 4 – Assessment Against Amended Planning Controls.
- Section 5 – Identification of Key Issues.
- Section 6 – Responses to Key Issues.
- Section 7 – Revised Statements of Commitments.
- Section 8 – SSS Listing Amendments.

The PPR is supplemented by the following documents to assist Department of Planning in the final assessment of the Part 3A application:

- Updated Concept Plan and Indicative Lot Layout prepared by Conics at **Appendix A**.
- Response to Submissions Table at **Appendix B**.
- Revised Statement of Commitments included at **Appendix C**.
- Coal & Allied \$10 million Allocation and Cost & Timing Schedules included at **Appendix D**.
- State Significant Site Schedule 3 Listing in **Appendix E**.
- Traffic Report Addendum in **Appendix F**.
- Visual Impact Analysis in **Appendix G**.
- Supplementary Noise Report in **Appendix H**.
- Correspondence with Department of Education and Training in **Appendix I**.
- Flood mapping in **Appendix J**.
- Minmi Social Impact Addendum in **Appendix K**.

- Proposed Open Space Ownership Plan in **Appendix L**.
- Open Space Area Calculation Plan in **Appendix M**.
- Heritage Items Map in **Appendix N**.
- Building Height Plan in **Appendix O**.
- Addendum Bushfire Threat Assessment in **Appendix P**.
- Addendum Ecological Report in **Appendix G**.

2 Part 3A Application Process to date

The preparation of the Part 3A application, comprising a Concept Plan was subject to a lengthy process, including extensive consultation with the community and liaison between the Owner, State and local government and other key stakeholders, and detailed investigations, research and analysis by a range of specialist consultants.

Since the lodgement of the application in November 2008, the proposal has been subject to a rigorous assessment process, including the public notification of the proposal from 18/02/09 to 23/03/09, review of submissions from a range of stakeholders and a comprehensive assessment lodged in association with the SSS Listing and Concept Plan.

Key dates in the preparation, lodgement and assessment of the Part 3A application are outlined as follows:

October 2006 to November 2007	<p>Coal & Allied undertook a series of community consultation initiatives to ensure that the views of the community were considered in the process up to the lodgement of the Concept Plans for Minmi/Link Road and Black Hill including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community meetings; ▪ A series of targeted stakeholder meetings; ▪ Community workshops; ▪ Community newsletters, newspaper advertising and media releases; and ▪ Community input into the regional forum and design charette. <p>The design charette process built upon the preliminary structure plan by drawing together key government, community and project stakeholders to make recommendations which informed the final Concept Plan and Project Application for the Minmi/Link Road site. An overview of the consultation undertaken by Coal & Allied is provided in Section 3 of the Concept Plan Environmental Assessment report.</p>
7 May 2007	A Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) was lodged with the Department of Planning in accordance with Section 75F of the Act requesting that Director-General's Environmental Assessment Requirements (DGEARs) be issued for the Minmi/Link Road project.
30 November 2007	<p>The Minister for Planning formed the opinion that the development proposal for Minmi/Link Road be considered as a Major Project under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and EP&A Act. The Minister also agreed to consider Minmi/Link Road as a potential State Significant Site (SSS) under Schedule 3 of the Major Development SEPP 2005 (Major Development SEPP).</p> <p>Given the size and complexity of the proposal, the Minister for Planning also authorised submission of a Concept Plan for the site.</p>
10 April 2008	The DGEARs were issued by Council by the Department of Planning (DoP) on behalf of the Director-General outlining the matters to be addressed in the Environmental Assessment.
11 September 2008	A meeting was held at the Minmi Public Hall with the community members.
28 November 2008	An Environmental Assessment was lodged with DoP for a test of adequacy in accordance with the provisions of Section 75H of the Act. Correspondence was subsequently issued on 22 December 2008 directing that a range of issues are required to be addressed within 21 days of the date of the letter.
5 February 2009	An application seeking approval for a Concept Plan Approval for the redevelopment of the site was lodged with DoP. The Environmental Assessment lodged with the application was prepared in accordance with the provisions of Part 3A of the Act and the Environmental Assessment Requirements.
18/02/09 to 23/03/09	The Part 3A application and SSS listing was publicly exhibited.

25 March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copies of all submissions received by Department of Planning during the public notification process were provided to the Owner, including: ▪ Government authorities and major stakeholders. ▪ Local Councils. ▪ Residents and land owners.
7 August 2009	Correspondence was issued by DoP providing specific comments regarding the assessment of the Concept Plan and SSS Listing.
April – July 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further meetings have been held by Coal & Allied which entailed: ▪ Meeting with Lake Macquarie City Council on 24 June 2009 ▪ Meeting with Newcastle Council on 27 April 2009 and 21 July 2009. ▪ Meeting with DECC on 2 April 2009 and 28 July 2009.
April – August 2009	A number of discussions with DoP staff to confirm the necessary content of the PPR report.

This PPR identifies each of the key issues raised during the assessment process and provides a comprehensive response to each of these issues, as outlined in **Section 6**.

3 Development Description & Modifications to the Part 3A Concept Plan

3.1 Concept Plan

This PPR accompanies a modified Concept Plan for the future development of the Minmi / Link Road estates comprising residential precincts and includes commercial, retail, open space, community and educational land uses. In response to the key issues raised during the public exhibition period, the key amendments to the plans involve:

- The area of open space on the steep slope in Link Road North has been converted to residential area with an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) over it.
- All APZs have been removed from open space and placed either in roads or lots or a combination of both.
- Open space ownership has been agreed to as per the Open Space Ownership Plan included at **Appendix L**.
- The lot design that accompanied the application is now an indicative layout only. A new simplified concept plan has been produced that shows land use areas and major roads only.
- The School site in Link Road South has been extended to 4 ha.
- The classification of open space and area breakdown has been clarified as per the Open Space Calculations Plan included at **Appendix M**.
- A land use budget for all land use types in the concept plan has been provided.
- The open space corridor along a creek line in Link Road North beginning at the Newcastle Link Road has been confirmed as private lots rather than public open space.
- Additional Bus Routes have been introduced along a new type of local road and the transit catchments analysis has been amended to use 400m catchments.
- Road cross-sections have been updated and a new section produced to allow a bus route along some local roads. A new street hierarchy diagram shows the extent of each road type.
- Paths within the Blue Gum Hills Regional Park have been removed from the Concept Plan with only possible pathway connection points to the internal pathway network indicated.
- The extent of on and off-street cycleway have been clarified.
- Building heights have been clarified according to mining constraints (included at **Appendix O**).
- Constraint plans have been simplified into a series of four plans and a refined slope analysis and mining constraints plan have been included with the PPR.
- The extent of hillside character housing has been refined according to the constraints and the range of lot size and types have been nominated for each character area.
- An area of mixed use has been shown in the Minmi Township as part of the Minmi Extension Precinct.
- The Urban Design Guidelines have been updated to clarify building setbacks, site cover, maximum wall heights, private open space and controls specific to mixed use lots provided. These have been compared to NSW, LMCC and NCC standards.
- Typical sections have been developed to show how hillside housing product can address slopes in excess of 20%.

- Proposed Zoning has been clarified.
- Riparian Cross-sections have been produced that show how lots and roads relate the proposed riparian corridors.
- An explanation of how the Senior living site can address topography is provided.
- An additional street connection in Link Road South has been provide across the power easements to improve access for residents in the north of the precinct to the neighbourhood park in the south of the precinct.
- The emergency services site along the eastern boundary of the Link Road North Precinct has been removed (services to be accommodated in the Minmi Village Centre as needed) and is now included in lots.
- Direct access from the internal road network of Link Road North and South to the Newcastle Link Road has been restricted to limit access for emergency vehicles only.
- A visual impact statement has been prepared dealing with the impact of the proposed development when viewed from major road corridors.
- Landscape sections through the Link Road have been prepared to show how the widened corridor fits with the ecological corridors either side, the APZs and the location of acoustic barriers.

As such, the modified Part 3A Concept Plan seeks approval for:

- Dedication of 2,264ha of conservation land (less 300 ha biodiversity offset land to be transferred to RTA and then to DECCW) comprising approximately 77.4% of the Coal & Allied lands at Minmi/Link Road and Stockrington.
- Approximate dwelling yield of 3,300 dwellings over approximately 520ha as shown in the Indicative Lot Layout.
- A range of land uses as proposed in the SSS Listing.
- Conceptual road design and access arrangements.
- Landscape, open space and heritage design concepts.
- Urban Design Guidelines.
- Indicative development staging.
- Associated infrastructure arrangements.
- Torrens title subdivision to achieve the following:
 - To dissect land on either side of the F3 Freeway and to separate the development lot from the conservation land.
 - To enable the transfer of approximately 17ha of land at Minmi to the North of the Minmi Rural Fire shed dedicated to State Government for conservation land.

As per the original submission, approval is not sought under the Concept Plan for a specific lot layout or individual housing designs. The amended Concept Plan drawings are submitted with the PPR.

3.2 Clarification of Key Issues

In addition, this PPR provides further details on other matters raised during the exhibition period. This is detailed at **Section 6**.

4 Assessment against Amendments to Planning Controls

4.1 Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan

Since the lodgement of the Concept Plan the NSW Government has adopted the Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan. The plan provides a focus for conservation efforts over the next 25 years by identifying priority biodiversity areas in the Lower Hunter. A full assessment against the draft Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan was provided at Section 5.14 of the Environmental Assessment.

In summary, the conservation land to be dedicated to the NSWG as part of this proposal will provide and enhance vitally important conservation corridors identified in the Regional Conservation Plan. The securing, protection and management of conservation corridors is a key focus of the Regional Conservation Plan. The dedication of approximately 2,264ha of conservation land (less 300 ha biodiversity offset land to be transferred to RTA and then to DECCW) as an offset for the development of the Minmi/Link Road estate is crucial in achieving the state government's objective of securing major conservation corridors, most notably to the northern lands, the green corridor that links the Watagans and Yengo National Parks with the coastal plains of the Tomago Sandbeds, Stockton Bight and Port Stephens; and the Wallarah Peninsula Corridor.

4.2 Draft Newcastle –Lake Macquarie Western Corridor Planning Strategy

Since the lodgement of the Concept Plan, a revised Consultation Draft of the Newcastle – Western Corridor Planning Strategy was issued by DoP in April 2009 and placed on public exhibition. The Minmi/Link Road Concept Plan remains consistent with the Strategy and the amended Planning Principles in the consultation draft, as demonstrated in Section 5.18 of the Environmental Assessment submitted with the Concept Plan.

A number of agency submission noted that the draft Western Corridor Planning Strategy includes a Planning Principle requires a 'green entry statement' to be maintained along Newcastle Link Road. The Strategy states that the width of the corridors should be determined by environmental studies taking into consideration the biodiversity role for the corridor. These lands are required in addition to vegetation offsets proposed. The green entry statement should be provided on both sides of the Link Road.

DoP have requested that the PPR respond to this Planning Principle and include consideration of any proposed road widening of Newcastle Link Road by RTA, the need to accommodate noise walls or mounds, the topography of the site, the proposed residential layout and visual impact, and potential biodiversity linkages.

It is noted that the proposal will result in an overall reduction in the width of the existing vegetation corridor. However, the Western Corridor Planning Strategy identifies opportunity for development in the Coal & Allied lands and states that the green entry statements should be retained as much as possible. Coal & Allied have undertaken further investigations into the amount of buffering (corridor) vegetation that will remain following development of the Coal & Allied land together with the likely Hunter Expressway – Link Road upgrade/widening works. Refer to the Link Rd cross sections submitted with the PPR. These sections illustrate that a substantial vegetation width will exist collectively on the RTA (Link Road) and Coal & Allied development lands. It is envisaged this corridor will provide for arboreal and highly mobile faunal guilds movement through the local landscape into larger patches of offsite habitat.

Cross sections submitted with the PPR show the location of where noise walls need to be located in order to maintain the APZ area and green entry statement. These sections illustrate the link road within the green corridor, the location of noise walls and mounds in relation to the road, the location of housing lots, the relationship between topography and noise walls. The proposed heights of walls/mounds will vary dependent on setbacks of housing in close proximity to the Link Road corridor.

As detailed in the Acoustic Addendum Report prepared by Renzo Tonin & Associates and included at **Appendix H** noise wall will be positioned on the boundary of the proposed properties. Therefore, the location of the noise walls is in accordance with the requirements of the green entry statement. Further details on noise are discussed at **Section 6** of this report.

5 Identification of Key Issues and Responses

5.1 Overview

The Environmental Assessment prepared in association with the Part 3A application for Minmi/Link Road was publicly exhibited from 18/02/09 to 23/03/09.

A total of 21 agency and 12 public submissions were received in relation to the Minmi/Link Road and Stockrington Concept Plan and SSS listing. All public submissions raised objection to the proposal.

This section of the PPR outlines the key issues arising from both the preliminary assessment of the Concept Plan by Department of Planning (DoP) and a review of each of the submissions arising from the public notification process.

The key matters raised by DoP during the preliminary assessment of the Part 3A application were articulated through general discussion and correspondence dated 7 August 2009. A comprehensive response to outstanding matters raised by public authorities and agencies, non-government agencies, local interest groups and the existing and surrounding residents and land owners during the public exhibition of the Part 3A application is provided in **Section 6** of this PPR.

It is noted that Coal & Allied has found the feedback for Minmi/Link Road to be constructive and has made amendments to the Concept Plan, SSS listing and Statement of Commitments.

5.2 Department of Planning

Following the preliminary assessment of the application by the DoP, the key issues identified by DoP as outlined in correspondence prepared by DoP dated 26 August 2009 are as follows:

- State Emergency Services Submission.
- Section 94 Contributions.
- State Infrastructure Contributions.
- Western Corridor Strategy (Noise).
- Stage 1 Minmi East Precinct.
- Proposed Village Centres.
- School Site.
- \$10 million Allocation.
- Emergency Services and Access.
- Cycleway.
- Local Road Design.
- Biodiversity Corridors.
- Flooding.
- Open Space.
- APZs.
- Mine Subsidence – Geotechnical Assessment.
- Biodiversity.

Other outstanding issues raised during the public exhibition include:

- Traffic.
- Clarification of Environmental Assessment and Concept Plan Information.
- Dwelling density.
- Topography.
- Urban Design Guidelines.
- Bus catchments.
- Population projections.
- Consistency with Planning Strategy.
- Visual Impact.

Each of these matters is addressed in the following sections of the report.

5.3 Key Stakeholder and Public Submissions

Written submissions were received from a range of state and local public authorities and agencies, including:

- NSW Department of Planning.
- NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change and Water.
- NSW Department of Primary Industries.
- NSW Department of Water & Energy.
- NSW Department of Education and Training.
- NSW Police Force.
- NSW Fire Brigade.
- Lake Macquarie City Council.
- Newcastle City Council.
- Ambulance Service of New South Wales.
- Hunter Regional Development Committee.
- Hunter Water Corporation.
- Mine Subsidence Board.
- NSW Rural Fire Service.
- Hunter New England NSW Health.
- Ministry of Transport.
- Roads and Traffic Authority.
- Hunter Catchment Management Authority.
- Summerhill Waste Management Centre.
- Ambulance Service of NSW.

- TransGrid.
- AGL.
- State Emergency Services.

Submissions were also received from a number of non-government organisations and local interest groups, including the Green Corridor Coalition Inc.

Further, a small number of submissions were received from local residents and land owners.

Copies of all submissions received arising from the public exhibition of the application were provided to the proponent for review following the completion of the exhibition period.

Each of the issues raised by the public authorities and agencies, non-government agencies, local interest groups and the existing and surrounding residents and land owners during the exhibition of the Part 3A application have been addressed in detail at **Section 6** of this report or in the Submissions Response Table, which is attached as **Appendix B**. This table provides a summary of the issues raised in the public submissions and documents the response by the relevant specialist consultant on behalf of the proponent.

6 Response to Key Issues Raised

The comments made by Department of Planning (DoP), public authorities and agencies, non-government agencies, local interest groups and the existing and surrounding residents and land owners during the exhibition of the Part 3A application with regard to the assessment of the Minmi/Link Road and Stockrington Concept Plan and SSS listing have been given full and detailed consideration.

6.1 State Emergency Services

Responses to the State Emergency Service submission have been included in the Response to Submissions Table included at **Appendix B**.

6.2 Section 94, State Infrastructure and Coal & Allied \$10 million Allocation

Please refer to **Section 7** of this report and **Appendix C** and **D** for detailed information regarding this.

6.3 Noise

A supplementary noise report has been prepared by Renzo Tonin in response to issues raised by a number of agencies (see **Appendix H**).

Noise modelling of traffic noise impacting the proposed Minmi/Link Road development was based on predicted 2031 traffic volumes for the F3 Freeway, Newcastle Link Road, Woodford Street, Minmi Road South and the proposed Minmi Boulevard. However, it is anticipated that by the year 2013, a new major road development, the Hunter Expressway (previously known as the F3 Freeway to Branxton (F32B) Link), will be constructed and in operation. Based on the Hunter Expressway, it is expected that traffic volumes along the F3 Freeway and the Newcastle Link Road will be affected. Therefore, remodelling of traffic noise from these roads has been undertaken to account for the changes in traffic volumes and to determine likely impacts to the proposed Minmi/Link Road development (see **Appendix F**).

Various heights for proposed noise walls / mounds were recommended in the previous noise assessment report, ranging from 2m to 6m in height. Using the revised traffic volumes included at **Appendix H**, noise contours for the range of noise wall / mound heights previously recommended have been revised. Noise contours for no noise walls / mounds have also been revised. It is noted that noise contours for increasing wall / mound heights were prepared for the day period only as this was the most critical period that would experience the highest exceedances. However, for the noise contours showing no noise walls / mounds, both the day and night periods were produced. The proposed heights of walls/mounds will vary dependent on setbacks of housing in close proximity to the Link Road corridor. Architectural treatment to some future dwellings will also need to be considered and should be determined at the detailed design stages in accordance with the requirements of the NW infrastructure SEPP (2008) and the DoPs *'Development near Rail Corridors and Busy Roads – Interim Guidelines'*. The extent of the treatment will depend on the noise wall/mound height implemented and the residual exceedance experienced at each dwelling. Further details are included in the Noise Addendum at **Appendix H**.

6.4 Stage 1 Minmi East Precinct

Coal & Allied and Mirvac have negotiated two access points for the Minmi East development precinct. The eastern access road from the Coal & Allied estate is proposed to link into the Hidden Waters estate at the corner of Waterside Drive and Kingfisher Drive. Newcastle City Council (NCC) recently approved a Section 96 Application lodged by Mirvac to facilitate this proposed access when stage 9 of the Mirvac development is approved. The western access will be via the western end of Kingfisher Drive.

An easement has been recorded on the land titles to provide access until such time as the road is constructed and dedicated to council. Plans will be submitted to DoP when final details are approved by NCC. Discussions between Coal & Allied, Mirvac and NCC are continuing. The two proposed egress points from the residential area will satisfy bushfire requirements.

6.5 Proposed Centres

A number of agency submission have raised concerns about the viability of including two separate centres and the location of the two centres, rather than one centralised centre.

NSW Government recently released the *Draft Centres Policy: Planning for Retail and Commercial Development* (Draft Centres Policy). The Draft Centres Policy provides a planning framework for the development of new and existing retail and commercial centres in NSW. The policy is based on six principles:

- Retail and commercial activity should be located in centres to ensure the most efficient use of transport and other infrastructure, proximity to labour markets, and to improve the amenity and liveability of those centres.
- The planning system should be flexible enough to enable centres to grow, and new centres to form.
- The market is best placed to determine the need for retail and commercial development. The role of the planning system is to regulate the location and scale of development to accommodate market demand.
- The planning system should ensure that the supply of available floor space always accommodates the market demand, to help facilitate new entrants into the market and promote competition.
- The planning system should support a wide range of retail and commercial premises in all centres and should contribute to ensuring a competitive retail and commercial market.
- Retail and commercial development should be well designed to ensure they contribute to the amenity, accessibility, urban context and sustainability of centres.

The Minmi/Link Road Concept Plan is in consistent with the six principles of the Draft Centres Policy as follows:

1. The Concept Plan will allow for retail and commercial activity in two centres to ensure the most efficient use of transport and other infrastructure and to improve the amenity, vitality and diversity of the existing centre. In this instance, it is proposed to provide two retail centres (convenience retail only) as opposed to one centre, to assist with meeting the everyday needs of the local community and visitors to Minmi at a convenience level – coffee/café, convenience supermarket, retail and commercial services. The centres are located on more heavily trafficked roads to assist with economic viability, but are also located to enable walkability of all residents in the future community. If the two centres were combined into one, then future residents in Minmi East Precinct will need to drive to the existing Minmi Village or to Fletcher for convenience shopping needs.
- The provision of two separate centres has been primarily driven by the topographical and geotechnical constraints of the development estate. There is limited level land on the site that is also centrally located to accommodate one Village Centre area. The proposed Village Centre is situated on the most level land available in the centre of the site to enable appropriate and equitable access to all future residents. However, the topographic and geotechnical constraints as a result of previous mining activities provide limitations to the size of the centre (i.e. future building forms will be limited to single storey in the Village Centre Precinct). Constraints mapping is included with the PPR illustrating mining, topography and drainage constraints on the site. As a consequence, it is proposed to provide two different centres that have different functions. This will ensure that the retail potential of Minmi is adequately met to serve the needs of the future growing population of Minmi.

- The proposed High Street area within the Minmi East Precinct is proposed to function as a convenience retail area, having a different function from the Village Centre Precinct. The emphasis of retail or commercial will be less pronounced in the Minmi East Precinct, which will be integrated with residential uses such as townhouse and low rise apartment developments and connect to the sporting fields. The absence of geotechnical constraints in parts of this precinct will enable development up to 2-3 storeys. However, the predominant building height will be 2 storeys, with a maximum 3 storeys proposed along High Street. Minmi East will form a 'gateway' to the existing townships of Fletcher and Wallsend, linking them with the existing Minmi township and the proposed new settlement. To ensure a village character, it is proposed that Minmi Road become a village high street.
 - In contrast, the Village Centre Precinct will be the key focus for retail and commercial activity, being centrally located within the development estate and adjacent to a future retirement village as well as within close proximity to a regional park to cater for a range of cultural needs and lifestyles at a district level. The Village Centre is proposed to be a dynamic and vibrant urban hub, providing a range of services for adjacent precincts and the wider locality. The co-location of the retirement village and Village Centre will ensure that future residents of the retirement village have good access to necessary services. A bus route is also proposed along the Minmi Boulevard, which will assist in achieving a vibrant and active centre.
2. The existing Minmi township will be complemented by the supporting mixed use, retail, commercial and community uses proposed in the Concept Plan.
 3. The Concept Plan appropriately responds to anticipated market/community demand from the growing population of Minmi for additional retail services by facilitating two centres. Urban Design Guidelines provides adequate guidelines for Minmi East Precinct which will control the location and scale of future development. Urban Design Guidelines will be prepared to accompany any future Application for the Village Centre Precinct.
 4. The size of the proposed centres are in keeping with the anticipated retail and consumer demand for additional retail and commercial services at Minmi.
 5. The Concept Plan supports a wide range of retail and commercial premises in two distinct precincts and will contribute to ensuring a competitive retail and commercial market.
 6. The Urban Design Guidelines for Minmi East precinct are adequate to ensure that future retail and commercial development will be well designed to ensure it will contribute to the amenity, accessibility and urban context of Minmi.

It is noted that the *Draft Centres Policy* emphasises the need for flexibility. In summary, the two centres are proposed as small scale villages and will not impact on the hierarchy or viability of any surrounding regional centres as identified in the LHRS.

6.6 School Site

The Department of Education and Training (DET) advised Coal & Allied by letter dated 13 December 2009 that the DETs anticipated requirements for the site based on a forecast dwelling yield of 3,300 dwellings as a being a 1.35ha site extension to the existing Minmi Public School to enable it to be upgraded and a 4ha primary school site suitably located within the proposed new residential area. The most recent advice the DET sent to the DoP in March 2009 confirmed the need for a 1.35ha site extension to the existing Minmi public school (to bring it up to 3ha) and for a 4ha site (for a combined primary school and special needs school in the Link Road South precinct). Copies of these letters are included at **Appendix I**.

The DET requirements for a 1.35ha site extension to the existing Minmi Public School and a 4ha school site in the Link Road South precinct will be accommodated. The location of the 4ha site was based on a catchment that extended further south than the proposed concept plan. The land in this area is also the least slope affected. Further constraints mapping demonstrating how this site can accommodate a school is included with the PPR.

6.7 Emergency Services and Access

The Concept Plan has been revised to remove the proposed fire station/commercial land at the east of the Link Road North precinct due to the RTA's restrictions on additional access points to Link Road. It is now proposed to:

- Include a 3000m² ambulance site in the central village centre.
- The current proposed site would be converted to large residential lots to avoid open space ownership issues with Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC).

Although, the Emergency Services Facility is being relocated, emergency fire access / egress is still required onto Link Road. This has been agreed by the RTA. It is proposed that the access point will be gated with keys held by Fire and SES.

6.8 Cycleways

The Cycle and Access Plan has been amended to:

- Show cycleways on and off road within the estate.
- Shows access points for Blue Gum Hills Regional Park (BGHRP).
- Internal trails as per Blue Gum Hills Figure 8.1.5 – 8.1.7 Regional Park Plan of Management have been deleted from the Cycle and Access Plan as these may change and are not part of the Concept Plan.

The amended Cycle and Access Plan is included with the PPR.

The timing and funding arrangements for the contributions towards regional cycleways as part of the Coal & Allied \$10 million Allocation Fund is outlined at **Appendix D**.

DECCW is also considering the Richmond Vale Line land owned by Coal & Allied to the north of Minmi which runs across the Hexham Swamp. DECCW are to advise Coal & Allied of its interests when further considered.

6.9 Local Road Design

Subject to LGA boundary change (which is anticipated to be post Concept Plan approval) Coal & Allied will commit to complying with road cross sections when preparing a Project Application or Development Application in the Statement of Commitments. Road cross sections generally comply with NCC requirements being the major portion of the Coal & Allied estate. Amended road cross sections are submitted with the PPR. Minor adjustments are required for LMCC compliance at the Project Application stage. There has been a design need to integrate the requirements of both LMCC and NCC as the road network straddles both LGA's. However, assuming the LGA boundary is more logically realigned to Link Rd, the integration of road design variances falls away.

6.10 Biodiversity Corridors

Coal & Allied met with DECCW on 28 July 2009 at which time Coal & Allied confirmed the issues raised in the DECC submission will be included in the PPR.

The riparian land on the western boundary of the BGHRP owned by Coal & Allied located south of the Minmi Road culvert has been included in the open space ownership plan as being transferred to DECCW following discussions at that meeting referred to above. The conservation land to the north of the culvert is proposed for dedication to NCC (refer to the Ownership Plan included at **Appendix L**).

The biodiversity corridors that traverse the Minmi/Link Road estate are proposed to be maintained as public open space rather than private open space which will allow the wider community to enjoy the amenity proposed by the biodiversity corridors in the Concept Plan.

6.11 Flooding

The 2m contour information used in the preparation of the Concept Plan was commissioned by Coal & Allied and is based on high resolution aerial photography. For this concept stage of the project, flooding based on 2m contour information is sufficient, in recognition of:

- The deeply incised creek corridors for most of the site.
- The rapidly rising land adjacent to floodplains.
- All other planning associated with the concept plans are based on the same information.

In some of the lower lying areas, minor filling maybe required on the edge of the flood plain. Flood mapping is provided in **Appendix J**. The flood maps should be read in conjunction with the following extraction from the GHD report submitted with the original Concept Plan:

"At the site the majority of lots are located above the 100-year existing climate and 2100-climate change flood levels. For flood management, floor levels of dwellings should be above the flood planning level (500 mm above the 100-year ARI event flood levels). A minor affectation of internal roads and lots in isolated areas is expected. In a few isolated areas in the northern precincts the 100-year ARI event extends into the development footprint. In these locations, minor filling of the flood fringe would be required to ensure roadways and lots remain flood free. In addition, in a number of locations, minor tributaries, would be incorporated in the development footprint as part of the stormwater system. In these cases, the capacity of both the overland flow paths and underground stormwater system will be designed to provide a level of service that minimises the flood hazard. A flood evacuation strategy would be provided for all areas inundated by the Probable Maximum Flood".

6.12 Open Space

6.12.1 Quantum and Location of Open Space

A number of the agency submissions, including the submission from NCC have suggested that the land in the Minmi East precinct proposed for playing fields may be more suitable as a biodiversity link between the Blue Gum Hills Regional Park (BGHRP) and Hexham Swamp. NCC advised at meeting on 21 July 2009 that if this location proceeds, then the realignment of Minmi Road be considered to provide better access to the recreation facilities and that flooding and drainage issues be addressed. Flooding is addressed at **Section 6.11**. Coal & Allied advised that the Minmi Road alignment will remain unchanged as it is required to service the proposed village centre.

Based on urban design analysis and with input from a landscape architect together with social research undertaken by reputable consultants the land in the Minmi East precinct was found to be the most suitable land for playing fields given the constraints of the overall Minmi/Link Road site.

The Minmi Social Impact Addendum at **Appendix K** provides a more detailed analysis of the open space provision within the development. This focuses on the quantum of open space, size and location of parks and the provision of other community facilities.

In summary, it is important when considering open space planning for Minmi/Link Road to be aware of what is required at this strategic planning stage. At concept planning stage the focus for open space planning is to confirm the quantum of open space being planned in and the location of key large scale recreation space. The focus at this stage is not on the details of paths, picnic facilities etc. These will be further detailed at project approval stage via subdivision plans and development approvals.

It is also important to note that the new development is located in close proximity to the regional park and is also set within the context of an existing large supply of bushland and natural areas in close proximity that have been dedicated as public through the process of development. In planning for open space at Minmi/Link Road, the current NSW Planning benchmark of 2.83 ha per 1000 population has been used as a base. A Schedule of "open space" areas throughout the development area has been prepared which indicates that parks and sportsfields exceed the recognised benchmark of 2.83Ha per 1000 persons. It is noted that the NCC is currently reviewing its Open Space Guidelines. However, this review is not expected to be complete and publicly available until the end of 2009. This Schedule and a plan showing all open space areas are included at **Appendix M**.

The size of parks varies according to function and purpose. The neighbourhood parks vary in size from a minimum of approximately 4,600m² in Link Road South to 1.2ha in Link Road North, including Water Sensitive Urban Design. The sizes of the parks are scaled in appropriate proportions to the proposed urban form and provide effective distribution and access to open space.

Parks are located based on a variety of circumstances as identified below:

- Topography – drainage, slope.
- Heritage – aboriginal and European.
- Sports and Recreation.
- Pedestrian and cycle networks.
- Neighbourhood Planning – within a 5 minute walk of a public transport route.
- Urban and landscape feature parks – village square, lake.
- Land constraints - existing easements (powerlines), high risk pothole areas.

In conclusion:

- The Concept Plan significantly exceeds the quantum of open space identified in the open space standards applied.
- The size and location of the parks has been considered for maximum community accessibility within the topographic constraints of the site.
- The types of facilities proposed is consistent with that identified in the social infrastructure report.

6.12.2 Ownership of Open Space, Riparian Corridors and APZs

An Ownership Plan of the proposed open space, riparian corridors and APZs has been prepared and included in **Appendix L**. This will require "in principle" agreement from NCC, LMCC and DoP. As discussed above the quantum and location of proposed open space is considered to be acceptable and where identified in the Ownership Plan they should be dedicated to the relevant Council or DECCW at no cost. All APZs are located on privately owned land and public roads within the development estate.

6.13 APZs

All APZ's identified are consistent with the NSW RFS requirements under the provisions of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006. NCC and LMCC Council advised that all APZ's would need to be located on privately owned land and public roads within the development estate. As a result APZ's have been repositioned outside of public open space and riparian corridors to address these concerns. All APZ's are inside development area and do not form part of the land subject to the SIMI. The SIMI deals with adjacent conservation lands (off site) for a 100M buffer zone. An Addendum Bushfire Threat Assessment has been prepared by RPS Harper Somers O'Sullivan Pty Ltd and is included at **Appendix P**.

6.14 Mine Subsidence

The Mine Subsidence Board (MSB) in its submission have outlined geotechnical investigations that are to occur on site prior to development. Significant geotechnical investigations have already been undertaken. Based on recent discussion with the MSB district manager additional investigation and analyses will be required on an ongoing basis for each stage of the development. Due to the large size of the proposed development the MSB is unable to provide confirmation of appropriate development types (i.e. type and size of structures) across the whole site at this stage. Appropriate additional investigations and consultations with the MSB will be undertaken on a staged basis to confirm the MSBs specific requirements for each stage and/or lot.

6.15 Biodiversity

DECCW commented that there is insufficient assessment of impact on individual threatened species, and little consideration of wildlife corridors through the development area. DECCW also sought further advice on the viability and justification of the proposed corridors. These issues have also been raised in a number of other submissions, particularly in relation to the adequacy of biodiversity / riparian corridors and their dual use for WSUD, APZs and other infrastructure.

The approach and reporting for Minmi/Link Road and Stockrington is consistent with that as accepted for the Southern Estates which was considered adequate. The Minmi/Link Road site is going to be substantially developed with a higher than usual level of 'open space' retention. Significant riparian corridors within the actual development estate will provide access and connectivity through the estate as detailed in the 'open space calculations plan' included at **Appendix M**. A substantial corridor is included along the Link Road. The cross-sections submitted with the PPR clearly demonstrate the extent and width of the corridor.

In addition DECCW's concerns also reinforce the need for the riparian corridors to remain as public open space and hence dedicated to Councils. Control over the retention of vegetation should the riparian corridors be converted to private open space could not be guaranteed and public access would be denied. This would also be totally contrary to the NCC and LMCC very strong stance at the charette to ensure the corridors were retained for connectivity through the estate by the public.

An Addendum Ecological Report is included at **Appendix Q**.

6.16 Traffic

Hyder Consulting has previously assessed the network impact from the Minmi/Link Road sites in support of the concept plan application that was lodged with the Department of Planning, in February 2009. This traffic analysis was undertaken without the Hunter Expressway (previously known as F3 to Branxton Link). During May 2009, the Federal Government approved the funding for the Hunter Expressway. The RTA has now asked Hyder to remodel the network impact from the Minmi/Link Road sites in conjunction with the Hunter Expressway.

In reviewing the concept plan application, the RTA commented on Hyder's traffic report *Traffic and Transport, Northern Estate, Minmi/Link Road* and advised Hyder to revise the traffic modelling assumptions by deleting unfunded future projects in the assessment. Following confirmation from the RTA, Hyder has summarised the modelling assumptions which form the basis of this traffic modelling investigation:

- Inclusion of Hunter Expressway in all modelling scenarios.
- Deletion of RTA unfunded future roads documented in Section 4, page 31 of Hyder's traffic report, November 2008. Two unfunded roads including Fredrick Street extension and Glendale Drive extension will influence traffic on the Newcastle Link Road, Main Road (MR527) and Minmi Road, Edgeworth.
- Inclusion of the proposed F3 to Raymond Terrace Link bearing in mind that construction of the F3 to Raymond Terrace Link is not expected until after 2026.

- Reporting intersection performance at two additional sites including Minmi Road / Main Road signals, Newcastle Link Road / Lake Road (MR217)/Thomas Street roundabout.

Following the Hunter Expressway approval, the RTA is now proposing to construct the new freeway from the Newcastle Link Road interchange on the F3 Freeway, to the New England Highway at Branxton. The project involves 40 km of new high standard dual carriageway road. The project will be delivered under two separate packages of works, and will be opened as one project on completion of both packages of works. It is anticipated that this new freeway will open to traffic by 2013. The construction of the Hunter Expressway will redistribute traffic on the John Renshaw Drive, F3 Freeway and Newcastle Link Road corridors.

The Traffic Addendum prepared by Hyder and included at **Appendix F** provides an overview of our modelling investigation on the future traffic impact on the Newcastle Link Road and associated key intersections with the Hunter Expressway in place. The Hunter Expressway is expected to increase traffic on the Newcastle Link Road. Previously determined upgrading works at key intersections including Newcastle Link Road/Minmi Road/Minmi Boulevard, Newcastle Link Road/Woodford Street, and Minmi Road/Northlakes Drive were re examined and tested using both the SIDRA and Paramics models.

Findings

The Traffic Addendum details the traffic impact on the Newcastle Link Road, and associated key intersections considering additional traffic from the Hunter Expressway. In 2031, the traffic model forecasts an approximate 27 percent traffic increase on the Newcastle Link Road corridor. The most likely traffic increase will be on Newcastle Link Road and Minmi Road (Edgeworth). The impact from Hunter Expressway on other roads in the corridor will be minimal, including Minmi Road through Minmi / Fletcher. The increasing traffic on the Newcastle Link Road from Hunter Expressway triggers the need to revise the previously determined traffic operation / lane configuration at the Newcastle Link Road/Minmi Road/Minmi Boulevard intersection. The 2031 modelling results suggest that with the Hunter Expressway, this intersection will require a major upgrade with full traffic control signals. The analysis determined that three through lanes in each direction will be required at Newcastle Link Road/Minmi Road/Minmi Boulevard intersection to achieve a satisfactory level of service. The additional through lane on the Newcastle Link Road may be required as a result of increased traffic from the Hunter Expressway. The Link Road widening issue and its timing are outside of the scope of this traffic modelling work. The traffic model suggested low impact at other intersections on the Newcastle Link Road as a result of the Minmi/Link Road development.

6.17 Clarification of Environmental Assessment and Concept Plan Information

In response to a number of submissions received during the exhibition period and specific requests by DoP the following are provided with the PPR to clarify various issues:

- Constraints Map – Drainage.
- Constraints Map – Mining.
- Constraints Map – Slope.
- Constraints Map – Slope constrained.
- Steep Site Building and Road Analysis.
- Senior Living – Site Analysis.
- Access and Movement Plan.
- Link Road Cross Sections.
- Street Hierarchy.

- Street Sections.
- Precinct Character Plans.
- Riparian Sections.
- Private Domain Guidelines.
- Open Space and APZ areas and Schedule of Areas.
- Heritage.
- Land Ownership.
- Visual Impact.

An amended map showing proposed building heights is included at **Appendix O**. The proposed height limit across the site is governed by the construction constraints associated with the mine subsidence issues. A map showing heritage items is included at **Appendix N**. In addition, an amended Concept Plan and Indicative Lot Layout are included with the PPR.

6.18 Dwelling Density

The DoP have requested Coal & Allied provide justification for the proposed density on the site. Coal & Allied have been asked to identify where this has been influenced by constraints such as: slope, heritage, mine subsidence etc, particularly for those areas where very low densities are proposed.

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy recognises the need for new release areas to achieve densities of at least 12 dwellings per hectare given the scarcity of available and suitable land for urban growth. This density is unlikely to be achieved in the draft Western Corridor Planning Strategy (WCPS) due to site constraints such as mine subsidence, slope, riparian corridors, power transmission easements and vegetation. The Draft WCPS therefore projects that it will be possible to achieve a density between 5-9 dwellings per hectare for the estimated yield of around 8,000 dwellings. These estimates take into consideration potential infill development, the Renewal Corridor along Main Road Edgeworth and housing mix. With a projected yield of 6.4 dwellings per hectare, Coal & Allied's Minmi/Link Road estates will meet the Draft WCPS target comfortably.

The amended constraints plans submitted with the PPR demonstrate mining, slope and drainage corridors that affect the dwelling density.

6.19 Topography

A number of the agency submissions, including the submissions from Newcastle City Council and Lake Macquarie Council have requested further details on how the proposal, including the road layout, has responded to the topographical constraints.

A significant part of the site has slopes that are greater than 20% and these areas are outside Council's current standards for residential development. Newcastle City Council current standards include a maximum grade of 16% for a public road, a maximum grade of 20% for a private road and a maximum grade of 25% for a driveway that services a single dwelling. All areas with steep topography have been reviewed and additional details submitted with the PPR on the following:

- Suitability of Senior living site and existing grades.
- How dwellings respond to steep topography.
- Cross sections demonstrating how the concept plan and housing responds to topography.

It will be very difficult to provide sufficient details on the extent of earthworks, site regrading works and the level of cut and fill that DoP/Newcastle City Council (NCC)/Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) are requesting at this stage without undertaking a detailed survey and preliminary road/earthworks design for the estate. It has previously been agreed with DoP that these details would be provided with future development applications for each precinct. It is important to note that a series of plans, cross sections and longitudinal sections were provided in Appendix G of the Environmental Assessment that illustrate proposed finished contour levels through the roads and adjacent properties. These drawings provide an indication of areas that will be impacted by cut or fill during civil / construction works. Longitudinal cross sections of the roads in Minmi East, which is proposed Stage 1, were also provided but further details will be prepared as part of the future Development/Project Application for Minmi East.

6.20 Urban Design Guidelines

In response to observations made in respect of the urban design guidelines for Stage 1 the following details have been addressed in the amended Concept Plan Design Guidelines submitted with the PPR.

- Site cover expressed as a percentage.
- Controls for mixed use lots – front setbacks, mix of uses and shops address.
- Street details by street type/category.
- Maximum wall height and boundary setbacks in Table B.2.
- Private open space controls.
- Figure B.2.3 amended to distinguish between large courtyard and traditional housing.
- Housing typology for steep slopes.

6.21 Bus Catchments

The catchment of a proposed bus route was identified in terms of walkable catchment. A walkable catchment is defined in terms of proportion of residents within a 400 m or 800 m radius of an activity (or other focus of activity, such as bus stop or school) who are within 400/800 m (5/10 minutes) actual walking distance. A common guideline is to use 400m walking catchment for potential bus stop where majority of dwellings can be served.

A review of 400m Benchmark Bus Catchments has been undertaken by Conics and is included with the PPR. This plan shows that the vast majority of the site is within a 400m transit catchment (approximately 80% of lots).

6.22 Population Projections

NCC and LMCC have raised a number of queries regarding the calculation of the projected population growth. The question of accurate population forecasts also has implications for the provision of social infrastructure. The queries are summarised in the three related points below:

- Insufficient justification of the use of the ratio of 2.60 persons per household.
- Use of unsuitable catchments from which to derive comparable dwelling occupancy estimates.
- Implications for the total population increase and increase in young persons.

The Minmi Social Impact Addendum at **Appendix K** provides further rigour and explanation around the demographic target for household size and demographic projections. This focuses on providing clarity around the target market, built typologies, urban forms, Newcastle DOP trends, broader household size trends and ageing population.

The Social Impact Addendum concludes that there are a range of factors and considerations which are likely to influence the resulting demographic make up on the site. Many of these factors point to a decreasing household size and occupancy. In summary, the projected household size of 2.6 is appropriate for the new development at Minmi/Link Road.

Assumptions behind projections are detailed in the Social Impact Study prepared by Urbis Social and submitted with the Environmental Assessment and are based on the following:

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

Final projections for the site are best considered in the context of the detailed subdivision plan where a clear profile of the potential dwelling types and the likely household types is able to be clearly established.

6.23 Consistency with Planning Strategy

It is important to note that the Concept Plan is entirely consistent with Regional Planning Strategies for the Lower Hunter Region, notably the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, the Western Corridor Planning Strategy, and the Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan. Specifically, the Concept Plan delivers:

- Housing to help achieve the Lower Hunter Strategy dwelling targets to cater for the predicted population growth for the Region over the next 25 years.
- Increased and improved social infrastructure to meet the demands of the new and existing residents.
- Consistency with all relevant strategic planning guidelines for the region, the Newcastle – Lake Macquarie Western Corridor Planning Strategy (Western Corridor Planning Strategy), and deliver significant economic development benefits for the Lower Hunter Region.
- Dedication of 2,264ha of conservation land (less 300 ha biodiversity offset land to be transferred to RTA and then to DECCW) to NSWG for conservation, which will help secure the conservation corridor between the Watagan Ranges and Stockton Bight.

The project is of clear significance to the region and State in terms of its significant delivery of environmental gain from the environmental land offset package and the implementation of the objectives of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy and Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan. It is important to note that these Strategies have been developed in consultation with local and state government agencies along with the wider community. As such the Concept Plan takes into account the environmental, economic and social parameters operating in the Lower Hunter.

It is therefore considered that the proposed Concept Plan is an appropriate response to meeting Regional Planning Outcomes in regard to residential land and conservation

6.24 Visual Impact

Agency and public concerns regarding the impact upon visual amenity of the proposed development when viewed from existing major roads are addressed in a Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Conics included at **Appendix G**. These roads are: the F3 Sydney to Newcastle Freeway, the Newcastle Link Road, Minmi Road south of Link Road and Woodford Street in Minmi Township. The Visual Impact Statement reviews the likely impacts of the proposal when seen from each of these vantage points and the measures Coal & Allied have taken to minimise this impact.

7 Revised Statement of Commitments

7.1 Business as Usual

The Draft Statement of Commitments included at **Appendix C** outlines the Statement of Commitments proposed for the Minmi/Link Road Concept Plan. These are 'business as usual' commitments that are expected to be delivered as part of the development of the site and basically standards that will have to be met to achieve approval.

The draft Statement of Commitments identifies the following:

- General terms that the project will adhere to.
- Contributions made by the proponent.
- Measures to mitigate any environmental impacts.
- Measures to monitor the environmental performance of the project.
- Achieving minimal impact in the environment and a positive environmentally sustainable outcome.

7.2 Coal & Allied \$10 million Allocation

In addition, Coal & Allied has allocated an amount of \$10 million for initiatives associated with the delivery of social infrastructure to support the existing and future communities at Minmi/Link Road and Black Hill. The \$10 million allocation is directed at initiatives that would not ordinarily be provided as part of the development of a new residential estate and accordingly, the initiatives identified are those that are considered 'over and above' what is reasonably necessary to satisfy State and Local Government approval requirements.

In summary for Minmi/Link Road, the final list of initiatives will incorporate \$8m of the \$10m allocation (the remainder being allocated for Black Hill).

The full description, cost estimates and timing for allocation of costs of each particular initiative is included at **Appendix D**.

8 Amendment to SSS listing

Pursuant to clause 7 and 8 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005* clauses are to be inserted into Schedule 3 of the SEPP (Major Development) and be the provisions that relate to the carrying out of development on the site. The proposed listing in SEPP (Major Development) has been modified as follows:

- Clarification of the proposed zoning and permissible uses on the site.
- The zoning map has been amended to reflect the proposed zoning for the site.

Refer to **Appendix E** for the proposed Schedule 3 listing in SEPP (Major Development).

The proposed zoning approach involves:

- Residential areas zoned R2 Low Density Residential Zone.
- Village centres in Minmi East Precinct and Village Centre Precinct zoned B2 Local Centre.
- Stockrington and the northern tip of Minmi to be zoned E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves.

This zoning is proposed at this stage for the following reasons:

- Given the overall low density character of the development estate, it is agreed with NCC that an R2 Low Density Residential Zone can be adopted for the residential areas.
- It is proposed to zone roads, open space and the riparian corridors within the site as Residential R2 Low Density Residential but allow for roads, recreation areas and facilities to be permissible uses. Future detailed subdivision planning will entail finalisation of the lot layout, road layout and the positioning of park boundaries and therefore flexibility within the zoning of the site is required at this stage.
- There is potential for an E2 zone to cover riparian corridor and RE1 Public Recreation to cover open space in the future once final subdivision alignments are known.
- It is not agreed with NCC that the village centres of Minmi East Precinct and Village Centre Precinct should be zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre. The most appropriate zone is B2 Local Centre. The draft Centres Policy states that
 - *“Local centres should be zoned either B2 (Local Centre) or B4 (Mixed Use). The choice will depend on the demand and supply of retail and commercial floor space and the interaction with the demand and supply for residential development. A local centre will be expected to have low traffic impacts and could serve a largely walkable catchment and have retail that serves daily and weekly convenience shopping needs”.*
- Given, that the Minmi/Link Road site will contain regional sporting facilities and is adjacent to the BGHRP the two centres will have to cater for the needs of incoming visitors from surrounding areas and not just the needs of people who live or work in the surrounding neighbourhood. This is more in keeping with the objectives of the B2 Local Centre than the objectives of the B1 Neighbourhood Centre.
- The size of the proposed centres and mix of uses to meet the anticipated retail and consumer demand for additional retail and commercial services at Minmi is more in keeping with a Local Centre rather than a Neighbourhood Centre.
- The proposed centres at Minmi/Link Road will offer employment opportunities in accessible locations. This is keeping with the objectives of the Local Centre Zone.
- The centres are located on more heavily trafficked roads to assist with economic viability, but are also located to enable walkability of residents, central to the community. This is also in keeping with the objectives of the Local Centre Zone.

8.1 Justification for Additional Uses

DoP have requested further justification for attached dwellings and multi unit housing within the proposed R2 Low Density Residential Zone. The inclusion of these uses as permissible uses at Minmi/Link Road is justified for the following reasons:

- There is an increasing demand for smaller lots. This is supported by the demographic studies submitted with the original Concept Plan.
- These uses provide for increased housing choice across a large site, which caters for changing housing needs and affordability through the provision of a diversity of housing stock.
- The attached dwellings and multi unit housing will be a maximum 1 to 2 storeys in height and will not constitute medium density development.
- Assist in meeting the projected housing densities included in the Western Corridor Planning Strategy.

9 Conclusion

The Minmi/Link Road and Stockrington estates will achieve substantial conservation outcomes through the dedication of 2,264ha (less 300 ha biodiversity offset land to be transferred to RTA and then to DECCW) of Coal & Allied land for conservation corridors upon receipt of development rights at Minmi/Link Road.

The minor amendments to the Minmi/Link Road Concept Plan and draft Statement of Commitments presented as part of this PPR appropriately address the key issues emerging from relevant submissions and responses received during the assessment process.

In summary, the modified Minmi/Link Road project will:

- Conserve in perpetuity key strategic parcels of land that complete long sought-after regional biodiversity conservation corridors and buffer areas.
- Establish ecological corridors across the site, encompassing riparian corridors, linking Blue Gum Hills Regional Park and Hexham Swamp.
- Incorporate water sensitive urban design features into the development to ensure that there is no increased export of stormwater, pollutants and sediments.
- Protect sensitive riparian corridors by providing appropriate setbacks and buffers to accommodate stormwater and ecological habitat and linkages.
- Preserve the historic integrity of Minmi by the sensitive siting of developable areas and retention of vegetation along ridgelines to retain the landscape curtilage.
- Establish a road network that will accommodate the anticipated development and cumulative regional growth whilst improving the existing public transport services facilitates opportunities for more accessible bus services.
- Respect the existing township through the establishment of urban design guidelines for new housing, addressing proportion, size and landscape elements.
- Provide housing to help achieve the Lower Hunter Strategy dwelling targets to cater for the predicted population growth for the Region over the next 25 years.
- Increase and improve social infrastructure to meet the demands of the new and existing residents.
- Achieve consistency with all relevant strategic planning guidelines for the region, and deliver significant economic development benefits for the Lower Hunter Region.
- Dedication of 2,264ha of conservation land (less 300 ha biodiversity offset land to be transferred to RTA and then to DECCW).

The project is of clear significance to the region and state in terms of its significant delivery of environmental gain from the environmental land offset package and the implementation of the objectives of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy and the Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan. In view of the clear merit of the proposal, we therefore seek approval of the Concept Plan and SSS listing for Minmi/Link Road and Stockrington.

