

25 March 2011

Anna Johnston
A/Team Leader
Strategic Assessments
Department of Planning
23-33 Bridge Street (GPO BOX 39 NSW 2001)
Sydney NSW 2000

anna.johnston@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Johnston,

Re: Exhibition of Black Hill Employment Lands State significant site study, Part 3A concept plan (MP10_0093), and draft voluntary planning agreement

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Black Hill Employment Lands State significant site study, Part 3A concept plan (MP10_0093), and draft voluntary planning agreement. This strategy has been reviewed by the Hunter New England (HNE) Population Health, Planning and Performance Division.

HNE Health has previously submitted a response regarding the Black Hill Employment Lands Development as part of the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements for a Concept Plan (29 January 2008).

The following recommendations are provided in regard to the Black Hill Employment Lands State significant site study, Part 3A concept plan (MP10_0093), and draft voluntary planning agreement.

Developments such as these can affect the health and wellbeing of a community through impact on: the social determinants of health (including housing, education and employment), health risk behaviours (including participation in physical activity and consumption of healthy food), access to health services, and exposure to environmental health risks.

This response from HNE Health examines the proposed development in respect to these various influences on health and wellbeing.

Access to Health Services

We understand, from the Environmental Assessment of the site, that the land for 'Employment Development' will be used for light industry, mainly associated with transport services. We also understand that additional permitted uses have been sought for:

- business premises
- child care centre
- community facility
- health consulting rooms
- hotel accommodation
- medical centre
- recreation area
- recreation facility (indoor)
- restaurant
- retail premises

It is pleasing to see health and community infrastructure proposed for the development's future residents, as it will also improve health and community services for the existing residents who currently travel to access these services.

The development is aimed mainly for industrial use, and would not require the health infrastructure of a housing development, but would still require access to emergency medical care, as industrial accidents are a risk. The Social Infrastructure Study of Black Hill (Appendix I) has outlined health services close to this site (4.3.4 Health). Given the industrial nature of the development, we suggest that it would be more appropriate to list health facilities with an emergency department. For the Black Hill area, these health facilities would be Maitland Hospital, Calvary Mater Newcastle and John Hunter Hospital.

Environmental Health

In relation to environmental health concerns, consideration should be given to protecting the health of the community from potential environmental health hazards, which may be created through the future development. As illustrated in the *Healthy Urban Development Checklist*, health is influenced by the quality of our environments (natural, built, social and cultural) and how they are managed and maintained is paramount in protecting human health and the health of the environment. To alleviate the key environmental and public health concerns the following recommendations need to be considered. These include:

- A mosquito risk assessment should be included in the stormwater management plans to ensure any potential mosquito breeding sites are identified in the terrain e.g. drainage channels, detention basins and natural or constructed wetlands.
- A mosquito management plan should also be developed if constructed wetlands are proposed with consideration of best practice design. This is to prevent both nuisance biting mosquitoes and disease transmitting mosquitoes to the local population.

Health promotion – health risk behaviours and social determinants of health

In relation to health risk behaviours and social determinants of health, a number of recommendations were previously provided and are still valid for the development at the proposed Black Hill site. These included:

- Transport links between rail networks would need to be developed to support freight movement and to reduce heavy freight congestion on surrounding road networks.
- The idea of a small, central, local centre for the proposed employment community including child care centre, retail/convenience store, restaurant/fast food outlet, etc needs to be supported by:
 - street design that enables safe, walkable access between these facilities - this will be important given the traffic volume that an employment zone like those surrounding this will generate and therefore will need to include pedestrian safety and traffic slowing measures;
 - availability of affordable healthy food choices in the retail/fast food outlets – this is important given the isolation of this employment land from other retail centres.
- In order to encourage decreased car usage and enable equitable access to employment opportunities generated by the new site, there needs to be an assessment and commitment to the provision of safe and convenient public transport access (transportation and stop sites) to the site from Newcastle, Maitland, Lake Macquarie and Cessnock local government areas. The convenience of such public transport may need to be measured against the proposed hours of operation of the new employment facilities.

HNE Population Health has recently been involved in research examining what constitutes a liveable community. The research involved consultation with developers, planners, health and social welfare agencies, and the community in the Lower Hunter region and resulted in the identification of key elements for building liveable communities, which have been collated in a resource guide. This guide supports many of the recommendations provided above. I am pleased to include an electronic copy of this guide with this submission, which may be passed onto the proponent.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like any further information.

Yours sincerely



Kim Browne
Director, Population Health
Health Reform Transitional Organisation Northern

ⁱ NSW Department of Health. (2009). *Healthy Urban Development Checklist*. NSW Department of Health. For access: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2010/hud_checklist.html