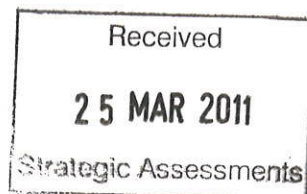




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Dear Ms Johnston,

**Re: Exhibition of Minmi/Newcastle Link Road Part 3A Concept Plan (MP10\_0090), State Significant Site Study and draft Voluntary Planning Agreement**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Exhibition of Minmi/Newcastle Link Road Part 3A Concept Plan (MP10\_0090), State Significant Site Study 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 Minmi, Link Road North and South Residential Development as part of the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements for a Concept Plan (23 January 2008). A further response to *Minmi / Link Road and Stockrington Proposed State Significant Site Listing and Schedule 3 SEPP (Major Project) and Minmi, Link Road North and South Residential Development – Newcastle. Concept Plan (MP 08\_0125) – Exhibition*, was submitted in 18 March 2009.

The following recommendations are provided in regard to the Minmi/Newcastle Link Road Part 3A Concept Plan (MP10\_0090) and the Proposed State Significant Site Study 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.

The response from HNE Health examines the proposed development in respect to these various influences on health and well being.

**Access to Health Services**

We would like to reiterate our previous comments, mainly, that if approved, this development will result in significant population growth in the area and in the long term will increase demand for health services. Consideration also needs to be given in relation to the availability and access to other health services, including aged care beds (particularly low care residential beds and aged care packages), health related transport, and private healthcare providers such as general practitioners, dentists and allied health.

We note and appreciate that the Social Impact Statement (Appendix 4) has included all the past feedback provided by HNE in regards to access to health services for this area.

### ***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:

- Provision of a reticulated water supply and sewerage system to alleviate environmental and public health concerns is recommended. The reticulated water supply must be of sufficient quantity and quality for the population size. An increase in population reinforces the need for the water supply to meet water quality standards that are presented in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.
- A mosquito risk assessment should be included in the planning of the urban development to ensure any potential mosquito breeding sites are identified in the terrain e.g. potential impacts of the detention basins discussed in Appendix P – Minmi Hydrology. Furthermore, a mosquito management plan should also be created to reduce both nuisance biting and disease transmission 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 included:

#### **Connectivity**

HNE Health encourages design features which promote connectivity by linking the proposed development to surrounding suburbs and ensuring strong association between precincts within the proposed development. This is of particular importance as the North and South Link Road Precincts straddle the Newcastle Link Road. HNE Health notes a significant expected increase in traffic on the Newcastle Link Road, and is concerned that the Link Road South Precinct, which includes the proposed Primary School site, will be inaccessible for pedestrians and cyclists. HNE Health recommends provisions are made for traffic calming measures and an appropriate pedestrian crossing on the Newcastle Link Road.

HNE Health notes a significant opportunity to promote social cohesion between the Existing Minmi Township and the Minmi Extension Precinct through best practice planning and design.

#### **Public Transport**

For some primary service access, residents of the proposed development will rely on services located outside of the proposed development. To ensure equitable access to these essential services, HNE Health recommends the provision of appropriate public transport options.

HNE Health notes that the nearest train station is located 8km from the proposed development site and commends the plan to provide additional bus services to the proposed development site.

To facilitate connectivity with surrounding suburbs and services, HNE Health recommends the provision of safe and convenient footpaths and cycle ways, as well as direct public transport access to:

- Appropriate childcare and preschool facilities
- The West Wallsend High School
- The John Hunter Hospital
- Wallsend and Glendale bus interchanges and retail facilities.

### **Active transport**

HNE Health commends the developer's intention to create a neighbourhood structure within walking distance to where dwellings are located. HNE Health commends strategies to reduce the extent of private vehicle usage through a public transport, pedestrian and cycling strategy.

HNE Health recommends the placement of employment, education and leisure destinations within 400 – 800m easy walk of dwellings to encourage active transport.

In terms of promoting active transport and reducing car dependence, HNE Health is particularly concerned about the following:

- Cyclist and pedestrian access to the proposed Primary School site for residents in precincts north of the Newcastle Link Road.
- Cyclist and pedestrian access to recreation facilities located at the Northern End of the Minmi East Precinct, at least 3.5km from the proposed Primary School site and surrounding dwellings. The intention to provide a "social and cultural focus for the community" may be undermined by this limited accessibility.
- Access to healthy food outlets and community facilities for residents of the Link Road South Precinct. The Village Centre Precinct is located at least 2kms from the proposed Primary School site and surrounding dwellings, and separated from the Link Road South Precinct by the Newcastle Link Road.

### **Development staging**

The proposed staging of the development will leave the Link Road South Precinct (Stage 2), including the proposed Primary School, isolated from the services and dwellings at the Northern end of the development until the completion of the Link Road North Precinct (Stage 5). HNE Health recommends that the plan be amended to ensure that residents have access to retail, recreation, community and education facilities during the 20 year development period.

In addition, HNE Health commends:

- The location of the proposed development in close proximity to Blue Gum Hills Regional Park to facilitate safe and convenient access to green space and the use of natural surveillance and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principals in residential areas adjacent to passive open space.
- The placement of higher density dwellings in the Minmi East and Village Centre Precincts to facilitate equitable access to retail and community facilities for residents who are elderly or less mobile.
- The provision of a mixture of dwelling types to promote housing choice and affordability.
- The retention of key areas assessed as high Aboriginal Archaeological potential and the incorporation of Aboriginal walking routes in partnership with local Aboriginal communities. It is recommended that extensive consultation and ongoing relationship building occur with Aboriginal communities and representative organisations/services throughout the area, including relevant local Aboriginal lands councils.

It is noted that the anticipated population for the future site has been decreased; however, **the above recommendations are still valid for the development at the proposed Minmi/Newcastle Link Road site.**

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



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Health Reform Transitional Organisation Northern

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<sup>i</sup> 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](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2010/hud_checklist.html)