Singleton Housing and Accommodation:

Strategy & Action Plan

Prepared for Singleton Council
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REPORT FOR COUNCIL - FINAL

Prepared by;

Scott Carver Pty Ltd
Level 8
71 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Australia

205

Andrew Turnbull
+61 424 083 967
andrewt@scottcarver.com.au

Approved:

Name	Andrew Turnbull andrewt@scottcarver.com.au
	09.04.2015 - REPORT POST EXHIBITION
Date	
Signed	

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Executive Summary

At the heart of the Housing and Accommodation strategy is the alignment with the Singleton 2030 Vision and diversification of housing product, residential land release and CBD living to support regional population growth.

Transformational change and urban interventions require a framework that engages stakeholders and community in understanding the forces that define the current context and to explore new ideas that will be influents in future housing and accommodation delivery. A shared understanding is paramount.

The alignment of the enablers; those individuals, groups, agencies and government that can effect change and the community aspirations provides a framework for collective and shared responsibility.

Singleton is experiencing transformational growth pressures that challenge existing planning and strategy. It finds itself at the forefront of the "coal chain event" in the Upper Hunter which is projected to further expand as the global demand for premium grade coal continues over the next 25 years. The employment cycle is subject to global market forces requiring flexibility and micro planning with the mining sector.

This presents specific challenges in forward strategic planning. A shift from permanent to highly mobile "activity based" workforce, the influents of communications technologies, changing demographic profile, decentralised employment opportunities and infrastructure demands require a strategy that is flexible and can respond to changing forces.

Process

The Singleton Housing and Accommodation Summit program (2012-13) provided valuable insight into the macro and local issues that would inform a future strategy – a process of discovery in which new scenario could be explored. A Summit and Discovery Report (2013) was provided for Council consideration. It presented background data on the current demands and challenges in housing and accommodation and posed a series of strategic scenario, that have been endorsed, that directly shift the focus on future housing product and delivery including:

- **Urban Release**
  Support for an urban land release model that improves residential land yield efficiency by 30% with increased population density, diversification of housing product and affordability
- **CBD Urban Infill and Consolidation**
  Support for CBD urban housing and accommodation intensification with a target 20% of projected future population growth housing in the CBD with a predominance of medium and high density living
- **Flexible Housing Model**
  Support for a new accommodation model focussed on the delivery of flexible activity worker and crisis housing component that is adaptable and can be staged to meet regional growth demands
- **Social and Crisis Housing**
  Council will actively work with NSW Land and Housing to implement a strategy to align new and additional social housing product to meet the changing needs of the community and to support the broader Housing and Accommodation Strategy

- **Demonstration Projects; Urban Release and CBD**
  Council is prepared to initiate, facilitate, and deliver through association, demonstration housing and accommodation projects to accelerate community education and market supply.

The new Strategy and Action Plan require mechanisms for annual review, monitoring, live data collection and fine tuning to respond to rapidly changing real estate market, employment and lifestyle forces in order to optimise the regional competitiveness of Singleton.

There has been a major readjustment in housing demand post the 2010-2012 mining sector event with a return to a historical 1% annual population growth trajectory. The first quarter of 2014 indicated a modest investment into detached housing product and return to the average 2% rental vacancy rate.

Forging strong partnerships and working associations regionally and specifically within mining, infrastructure, defence and community service providers, will enable forward planning that is responsive to dynamic market forces.

The Housing and Accommodation Strategy is part of a whole of Singleton Strategy. It needs to be supported by place branding to elevate the townships profile, retain and build community and to attract investment to support growth ambitions while remaining regionally competitive.

Enablers Summit - Singleton 2012

STRATEGY PROCESS

DISCOVERY		FRAMEWORK		DELIVERY	
UPPER HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN	SINGLETON 2030 VISION	HOUSING & ACCOMODATION STRATEGY	ACTION PLAN	IMPLEMENTATION	ANNUAL AUDIT
NSW GOVERNMENT	SINGLETON COUNCIL	SINGLETON COUNCIL	SINGLETON COUNCIL	SINGLETON COUNCIL	SINGLETON COUNCIL
REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN	TOWN VISION	STRATEGY	5 YEAR ACTION PLAN	PROGRAM	ACTION PLAYS
• Employment • Population growth % • Resources sector • Infrastructure investment	• Regional position • Singleton Offer • Community Dimensions • Lifestyle Choice	• Place capital • Competitive offer • Supply & demand • Population growth • Singleton Offer and Partnerships • Real estate • Planning • Infrastructure • Council Leadership	• Brand alignment 'messaging' • Urban land release • CBD activation project (Ford Site)	• Demonstration project urban release & CBD • CBD public domain • Social/crisis housing • Defense Housing (DHA) • Infra structure	• Live data analysis • Partnerships • Supply & demand
SUMMIT & DISCOVERY REPORT 2013		STRATEGY & 5 YEAR ACTION PLAN			

Strategic Framework

Housing and accommodation is subject to a complex array of forces that necessitate a flexible strategy. A **Place Capital and Wealth** model for sustainable communities highlights that there are a series of key components that are inter related in the creation of dynamic and prosperous towns and cities.

Singleton has an opportunity to redefine its housing offer which is closely aligned to **Singleton Place Brand**. What is the regional offer that defines Singleton, attracts and retains talent, promotes cultural diversity and quality lifestyle opportunity?

The Housing and Accommodation Strategic Framework is prepared in three parts:

1. Context
2. Strategic Framework
    i. Place Brand and Market Responsive
    ii. Real Estate & Product
    iii. Planning & Infrastructure
3. Action Plan

The Strategic Framework indentifies key strategic directions and alignment to support regional and local productivity and growth. The strategy will require annual review and Action Plans implemented to deliver immediate and longer term outcomes. Creating positive momentum and market position of new land release and housing choice will require partnerships with a diversity of 'enabling' parties.

PRIORITY

- Advance Council facilitated “demonstration” projects for; Pinnacle 7 – urban release and CBD Living – former Ford Dealership site, in partnership to promote new housing delivery models and add to the housing supply.

- Foster strong regional and local working partnerships to advocate for investment, knowledge share and infrastructure to support employment, housing delivery and community building

- Deliver greater diversity in land release and housing options with emphasis on developing affordable new product appropriate to independent single, couples and seniors.

- Adopt an urban “consolidation” approach that optimises land use, services and infrastructure resources to support urban sustainability and protect valuable productive lands for the future.

- Prepare a Housing and Accommodation promotional campaign that redefines Singleton’s real estate offer; urban land release and CBD living, supported by a Singleton Place Brand strategy.

- Engage the community as an active participant in defining their requirements for future housing, active living and a culturally rewarding community – **the Singleton offer.**

Forward Directions

Guiding Principles

A series of guiding principles are integral with the Strategy. These are aspiration goals that inform strategic directions and provide a context for decision making. These include:

Community Empowerment

Broad community empowerment and participation across all sectors of the community in the planning and ongoing management of housing. The provision of future housing and accommodation impacts all of the community and alignment with associated infrastructure.

Singleton Council has a role in facilitating actions that will deliver positive urban environmental change and provide the opportunity for cultural exchange, innovation and social interaction that define the Singleton town offer in the regional context.

Event

The economic and employment growth that has eventuated through coal mining might be best evaluated as an event with an end date – 'The Upper Hunter Coal Chain Event.' Although the end date of this event is indeterminate, looking at the strategic issues through such a lens will make it easier to discern between permanent and interim impacts and opportunities.

Legacy

An overarching ambition for Singleton should be to extract useful long-term legacy from the mining event and continued population growth. Not all infrastructures will have legacy value and many development opportunities might be designed for both immediate economic gain as well as long-term legacy value.

Resilience

Resilience is the capacity of a system to continually change and adapt yet remain within critical thresholds. The resilience approach focuses on the dynamic interplay between periods of gradual and sudden change and how to adapt to and shape change.

Commonly applied to 'socio-ecological' systems that measure the impacts of man on natural systems, this thinking can also be applied to social and physical change in Singleton. Change being accepted, its impacts can be evaluated such that values are knowingly preserved and enhanced through change.

Resilience is a concept that can be used to test all investment in mining-induced development. Many projects can be designed to be adapted later to future markets after the mining has subsided. For example, Seniors Living might be designed for the future yet used as worker accommodation in the interim to generate more revenue on a rental basis. This would be wiser than building a hotel that proved difficult to convert to later uses.

Resilience, an eye to the future, would become a strong platform for sustainable solutions.

Overlay

Some accommodation infrastructure can be designed to be relocatable after the mining activity subsides or as temporary enhancements to long-term infrastructure. The twin principles of 'Legacy and Overlay' were used very effectively in the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games to help discern between useful long-term benefits and more affordable interim solutions.

Connectivity

Singleton is well served by road and rail connections, both of which can be expected to improve through the life of the coalmines. The legacy of this will be a town that is more urbanised, aloof from but connected to the urban centres of Newcastle and Sydney. This will afford Singleton a unique position in terms of employment and lifestyle markets in the future.

Affordability

Housing affordability is the capacity of a person or family to pay for their housing. It can apply to those who are paying off a mortgage or to those that rent. Affordability is influenced by various factors including income, household expenses and the housing market in which a person lives. A basic benchmark of affordability is that the cost of accommodation ought to cost no more than 30% of a household's gross income. A core objective being to provide housing and accommodation at a range of price points that caters for all members of the community and income levels.

Diversity

A mix of housing product; form, floor plan and construction that provide a range of socially inclusive architectural styles that contribute to a stimulating urban context. Investment into the public domain to support active living and healthy lifestyle are to be complemented by a variety of landscape characters.

Urban Consolidation

Optimising existing urban infrastructure by encourageing development within existing urbanised areas; CBD and urban release, with the intent of limiting urban sprawl. It is the building of higher density housing in existing areas of a town in order to increase population density. Urban Consolidation involves increasing the number of houses or units within existing areas so they can have more efficient use of services and reduce the overall impact on the environment with a net benefit in reducing the amount of land needed to house the population.

Place Capital & Wealth

The Housing and Accommodation Strategy is not a standalone document. It fuses a number of attributes necessary to enable the efficient planning and delivery of market attuned solutions. The strategy acknowledges each of these attributes in formulating specific strategy and actions relating to each of the land use and housing typologies: urban release, CBD Infill, flexible Housing, social and crisis accommodation and short stay accommodation, seniors assisted, and independent living

There is a need for continued engagement with the “enablers” to develop market responsive implementation plans and align investment, the branding and positioning of Singleton. Strong partnerships with the resources sector, defence, real estate industry and community organisations will provide valuable insight into the real demands, trends and priority issues that influence the housing market. This will enable the streamlining of service infrastructure to efficiently deliver and accelerate housing product to market that meets short term demand and supports sustainable production for regional population growth.

The strategy provides for community building capacity and the opportunity to invest into high quality living and urban environments. Education, town promotion, inspired governance and an engaged community will define the future housing product and strengthen Singletons regional influence.

Part 1 - Context

1 Context

The “Coal Chain Event” of 2010 - 2012 was an abnormal event that placed unprecedented pressure of housing demand and triggered local investment into detached and duplex housing product. House prices increased at 10%+ pa. and rents by 15% pa. and short stay accommodation options were at 90%+ occupancy. Combined, these seriously impacted housing affordability and choice.

The temporary nature of the large “activity” based workforce, (drive in - drive out), is reflective of the mine roster cycle and a need for low cost temporary accommodation options. It is estimated that 70% of the workforce was “activity’ based, employed for specific tasks for varying lengths of duration with their permanent residence located outside of Singleton. Severe road congestion was a consequence of the drive in – drive out phenomenon.

The rapid mining decommissioning and retraction in late 2012, resulted in a significant reduction in direct and allied mining employment and immediate increase in availability of permanent housing stock and rental vacancy. This effectively allowed for an adjustment in market forces and rebalancing of the housing supply and demand.

The impacts on housing and accommodation are:

- The local investment into the detached and duplex housing product in Singleton Heights fulfilled a shortfall in detached product over the previous ten years;
- A high portion of the duplex houses were investor driven for the rental market, leading to a rental oversupply post the mining boom resulting in distressed investments being offered for sale at 10-15% less than peak market value;
- Lower and middle income earners could enter the housing market, further taking pressure off the rental housing sector and community housing; and
- Renters were afforded the opportunity to upgrade their accommodation quality or seek rental options at a lower price point.

The real estate agents suggest in the first quarter of 2014 that the market has largely stabilised with indications of a positive market uptake of housing stock and decrease in rental vacancy. A return to the historical market pattern.

A concerted effort is required by Council to engage with the mining sector, NSW Minerals Council and Defence to jointly plan for future sector growth to ensure an appropriate quantum and product typology is delivered through permanent or flexible housing and accommodation delivery. This is ‘additional’ to the historic township growth trajectory. Strong partnerships and intelligence share will allow for attuned market and sector responsive housing delivery.



1.1. Affordability

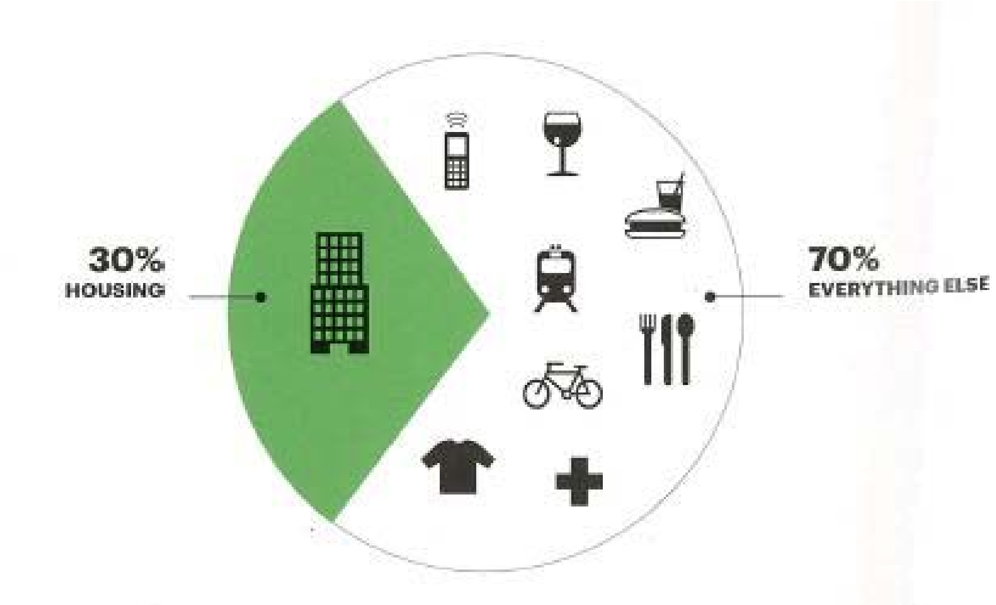
The market readjustment post the 2011-12 resources boom has resulted in a reduction in the average detached and duplex house purchase prices in the order of 10% and a significant increase in rental availability at both a lower price and quality. This has certainly eased affordability pressures, however the forward planning must forge stronger partner relationships with the key employment drivers; resources, infrastructure and defence sector to appropriately manage and deliver market attuned housing and accommodation product.

The lack of housing diversity remains a challenge and does not adequately cater for all sectors of the community. The options for independent singles, couples and seniors living are limited. This can be addressed through a strategy for smaller urban release lots diversification of housing product and integration of one / two bed CBD living options that deliver affordable choices.

A sustainable economic model for housing is based upon 30% of household income being allocated to housing. If the level of expenditure exceeds this value the resultant effect is evidenced in mortgage and rental stress and loss of disposable income for lifestyle services, entertainment, travel and quality of lifestyle. During 2013/14 there has been a significant market adjustment with signs that there is a return to a balance between supply and demand.

Innovations through modular housing systems should be further explored that deliver construction efficiency, high quality housing product and lower cost to market as one means of addressing consumer affordability.

Singleton is regionally competitive for detached or duplex housing product with a focus on the family home. What is evident, is that Singleton is not delivering land to market efficiently and not realising the optimum economic return or land yield efficiency through a standard 750m2+ lot model. The lack of lot diversity inhibits inclusive property ownership across the community at an affordable level.



Affordable Household Expenditure model - Chakrabarti, V. 2013 'A Country of Cities'

Median House Prices 2013/14

Bolwarra Heights

BUY $485,000			RENT $420 PW		
2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
-	$410,000	$502,000	-	-	$410 PW

East Maitland

BUY $360,000			RENT $350 PW		
2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
$312,000	$349,000	$446,000	$300 PW	$350 PW	$420 PW

Muswellbrook

BUY $332,000			RENT $330 PW		
2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
-	$297,000	$385,000	$230 PW	$290 PW	$360 PW

Singleton

BUY $380,000			RENT $350 PW		
2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
-	$379,000	$518,000	$280 PW	$340 PW	$400 PW

Source: www.realestate.com.au

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Opportunities

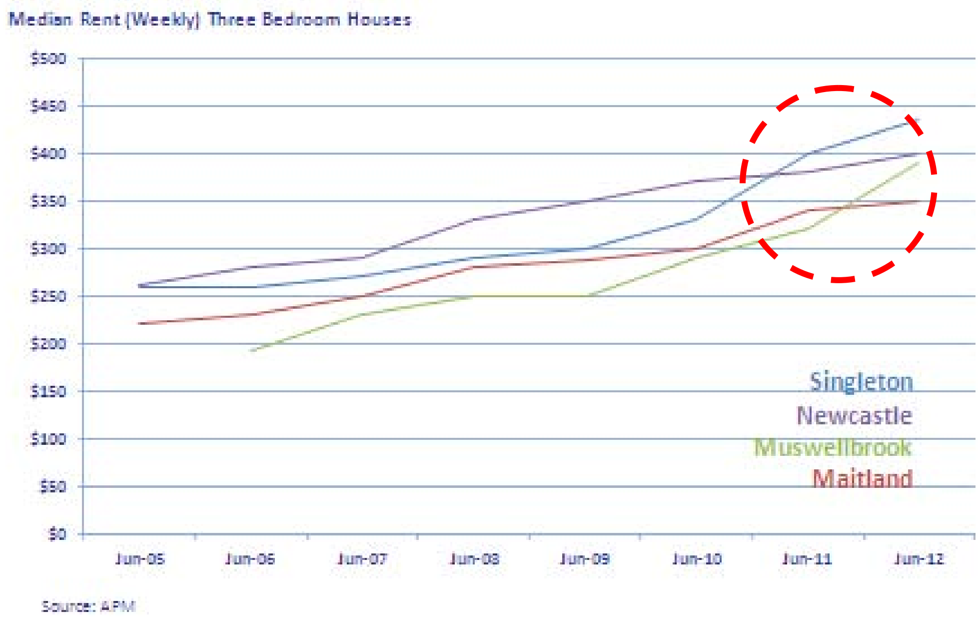
- Singleton is regionally competitive for detached family house and land product.
- A diversity of smaller lot size and architectural diversity catering for independent singles and couples is a significant opportunity for Singleton to explore and create a point of market differentiation. The detached home offer currently represents 90% of the market product in Singleton.
- Land use efficiency through a diversity of urban release lot sizes and price points.
- Encourage new construction technology and systems that deliver reduced housing cost to market.
- Facilitate "new model" urban release and CBD housing.
- Proactively work with resources sector, community housing, Defence Housing Authority providers to explore new model for shared and investment incentive through subsidised or deferred return on investment programs.
- Investigate Government | developer sector partnerships that could support low Investment loans and new financing models, especially with the mining sector.

Rental Affordability

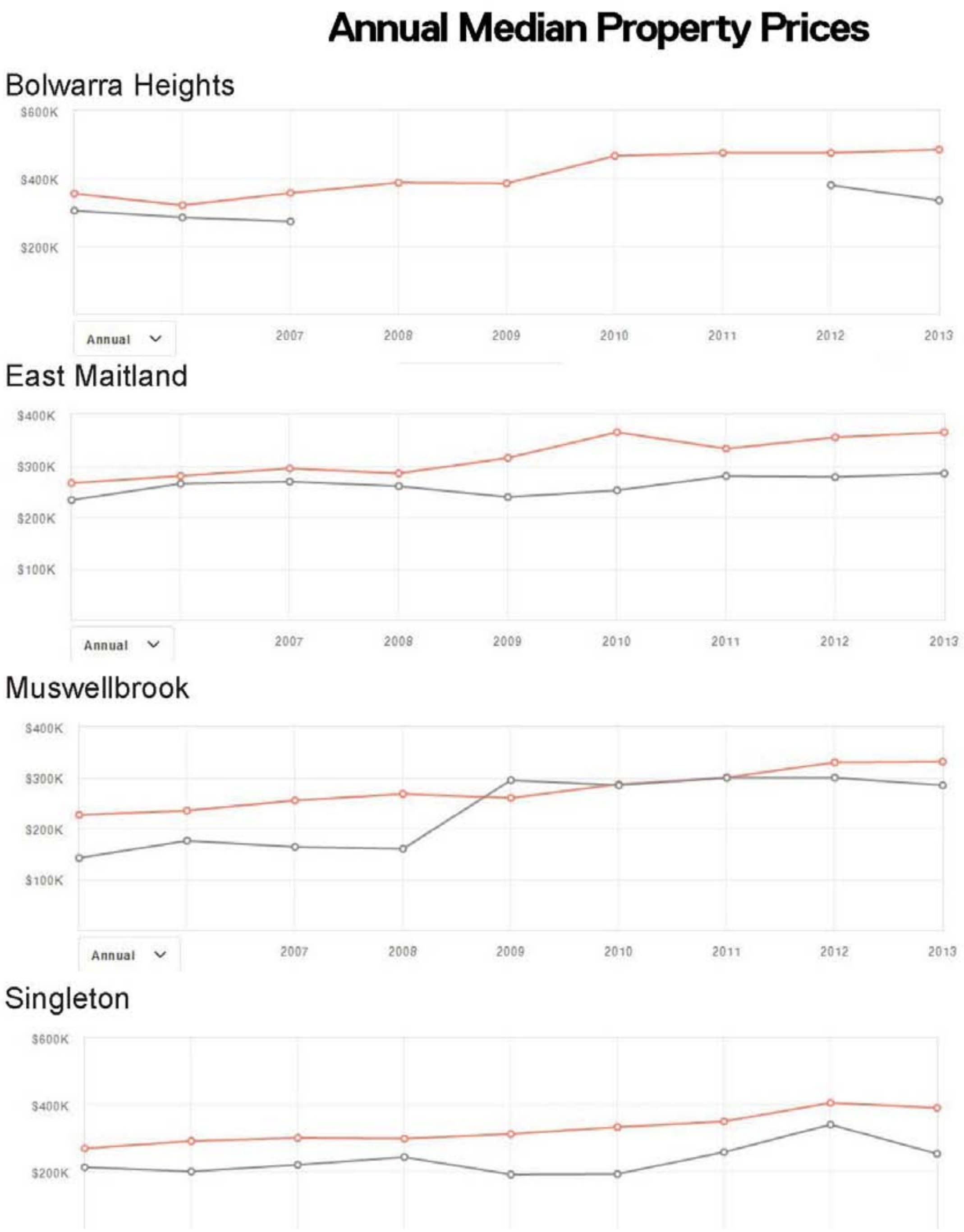
Post the 2010-12 Mining Event, rental availability has increased and the heat taken out of the market with rental reduction in the order of 15% in 2013. The lack of independent singles and couples rental accommodation remains a challenge. Future rental demand from defence personnel requires further investigations especially if their future is a forward commitment to growing the Singleton Army Base. The 2011 Census data shows that there is a shift towards rental accommodation in the order of 15% from 2006.

Privately Occupied Dwellings 2011 vs 2006	Singleton	Muswellbrook	Maitland
% Change Owner Occupied	5.2%	1.7%	9.3%
% Change Rented	14.5%	16.9%	16.1%

Shift to rental accommodation (source: Landcom, ABS 2012)



Median rental rates in the Hunter (source: Landcom 2013)



The above reinforces that the local markets are responsive to investment stimuli and targeted strategy. The newly completed Hunter Expressway has the potential to influence inter regional connectivity and travel times that potentially influence lifestyle choice and housing reach.

Opportunities:

- Increase the range of lot size and housing choice in forward urban release areas that will incentivise housing and rental investment and provide lower 'entry' price point options.
- Increase independent singles and couples rental options in CBD living
- Implement a strategy to progressively increase the number of beds provided as social - crisis housing through adaptive reuse of existing land holdings.

1.2. Social and Crisis Housing

There was limited Government investment in the conversion of social housing properties during the Federal Jobs Stimulus Program in 2009-10, however a continued conversion program is required to meet the demands of a growing and ageing community.

NSW Land and Housing Commission (LAHC) does not identify Singleton as an Upper Hunter Region priority for new housing investment as the 2-3 year waiting list for social housing in Singleton is well below the state average. The current housing stock is old, often exceeding a 30 years lifecycle, and does not adequately cater for the current demographic demand for housing.

Whilst there has been a reduced pressure on low cost and supported accommodation during 2013/14 there is still demand for independent singles, couples and emergency housing. The homeless level is identified at 20 persons/night in Singleton. The homeless persons issue is not adequately catered for and requires a regional program to address this particular issue.

Council is encouraged to work closely with LAHC to advance a renewal agenda.

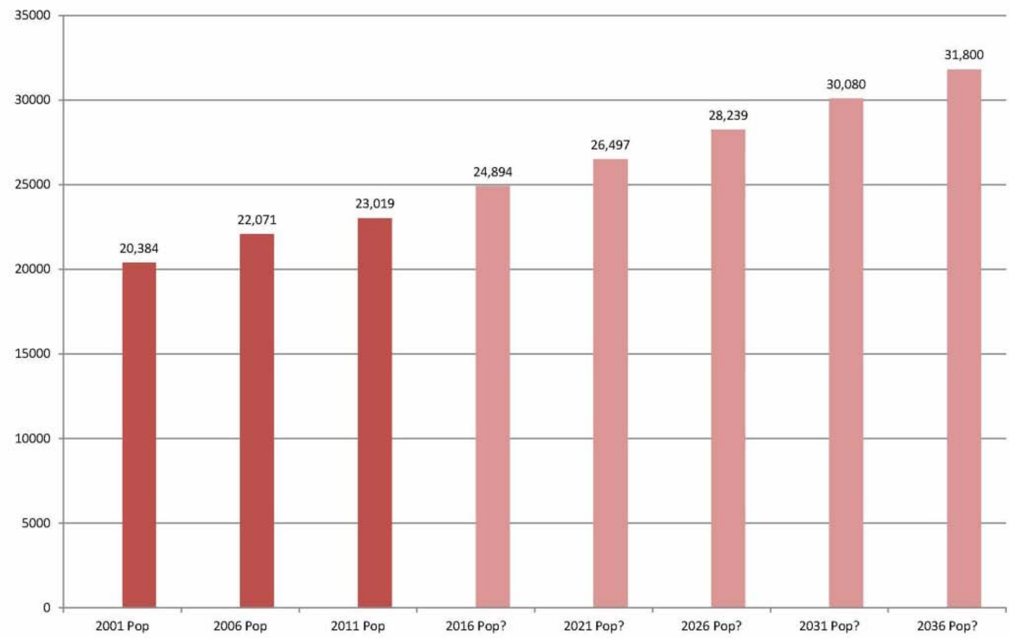
A cautionary note. Whilst the housing and accommodation market has largely returned to its historic trajectory in 2014, a sudden employment spike; permanent or activity worker, will place strain on low cost housing and accommodation options that may increase demand for social and emergency housing.

Concept model for an inclusive medium density living community

1.3. Demographic Trends

Fundamental to attracting and retaining residents is the town and regional offer; employment, lifestyle, cultural, social inclusion and aesthetics. Different age demographics have differing expectations of accommodation, transport, services and education.

The cost of living is a key influent. Affordability affects all members of the community; youth, families and seniors. Each has differing expectations and priorities of living choices. Accordingly, it is important to acknowledge these differences in forward planning and town promotions strategy.



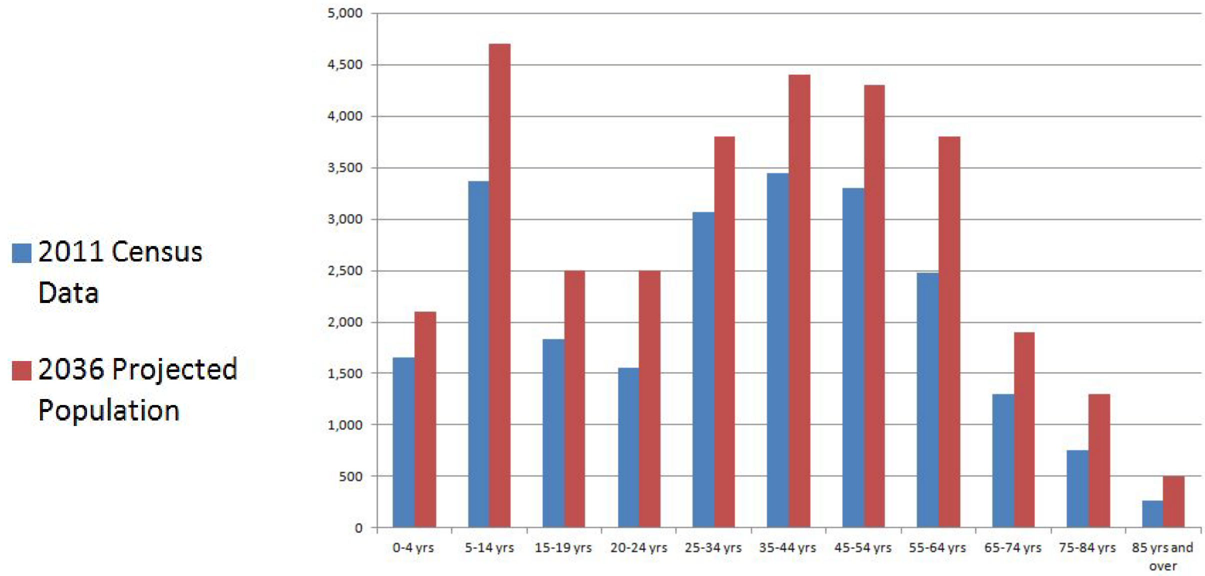
Projected population growth for Singleton at 1.3% per annum to achieve NSW Government regional growth target.

Key Indicators

- Singleton has a rich and diverse cultural mix with residents drawn from many nationalities calling Singleton home.
- Higher than NSW State average for <39 age profile indicating a high percentage of families with children, reinforced by the 2011 ABS Census with 30% of the population under the age of 19, currently places a high demand for school positions and need for expanded education infrastructure.
- An ageing population, slower than the national average at +6%, for 60+ age demographic, however there is strong purchaser profile data to suggest a high demand for independent living housing product in the Upper Hunter.
- There is a lack of housing choice to support independent single, couple and seniors living. The impact being regional migration.
- Market research is needed to verify a supply shift towards smaller dwellings and smaller lot sizes to cater for the young single & couple and ageing higher density independent living models.

1.4. Decision Drivers: Location Choice

	Lifestyle	Employment	Cost of Living	Family	Education
Youth: Culture, excitement and personal exploration					
Mobile / Flexible Time Challenged	Inclusive Incubator Active CBD	Dream company Dream city	Pay levees - Education debt	Low priority	Training Skill programs Tech-savvy - flexible Tertiary access
Family: Security, education, amenity, recreation, culture					
Permanency/Stability Time poor	Inclusive Active Suburban Entertainment	Local context Secure Dual income	Mortgage Dual income Education Sports/culture Accumulating	Far active amenity Social engagement High participation Recreation	Schools choice - private / public Primary / secondary
Seniors: Reduce expenses, proximity to activities and services, mobility choice, health					
Security Social inclusion Support services Time rich	Active Assisted living Inclusive Independent	Community engagement Low priority	Reduce expenses Affordability Community value Travel mobility	Families Connection Support network Community support	Time = healthy engagement Vocational courses

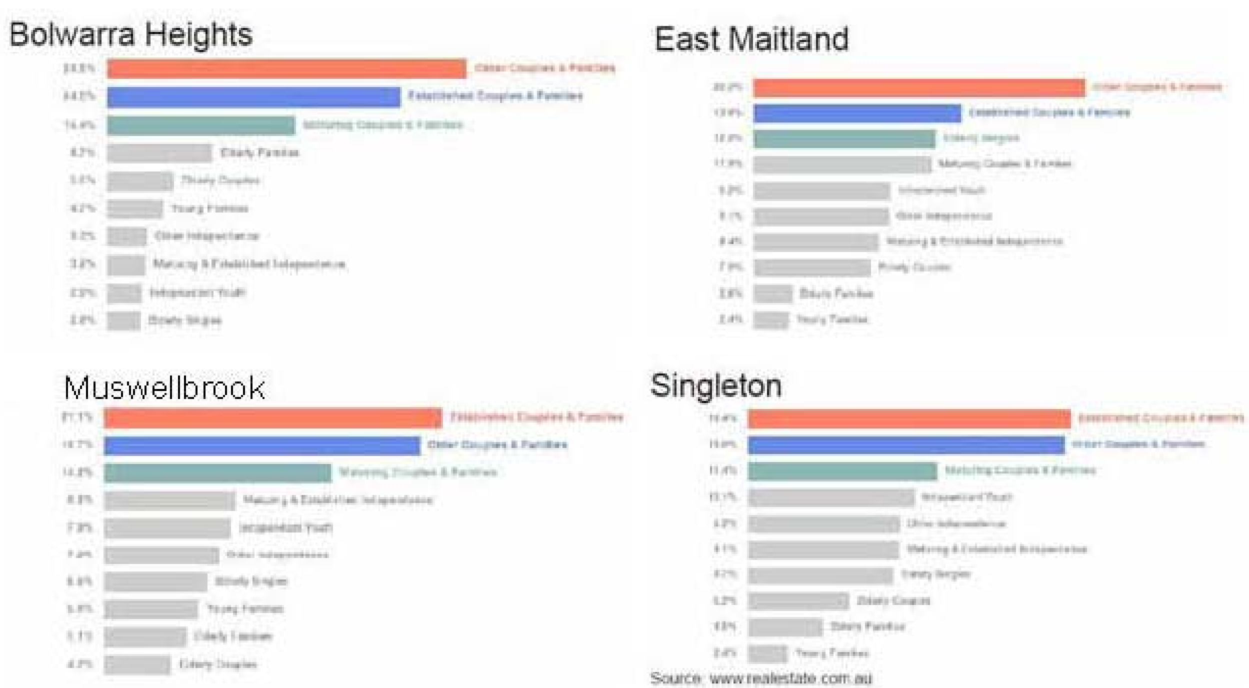


The forward strategy anticipates that Singleton will remain regionally competitive for families and that this will require additional support through investment in education, culture, sports and recreation and active lifestyle choice. The projected shift is in the +55 age bracket with increasing numbers reflecting a natural transition from families to seniors living. This will require a strategy that acknowledges independent and assisted living options, including increasing requirement for one and two bed accommodation choice.

1.5. Consumer Profile

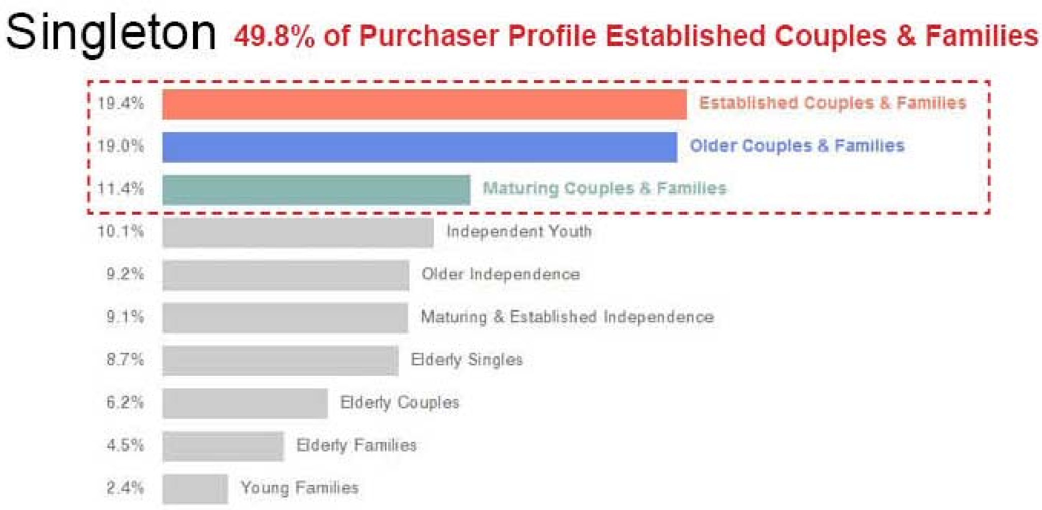
The community and real estate industry has identified a lack of one and two bed accommodation options. The purchaser data suggests that there is a significant market sector (37%) of independent youth, older independents and elderly singles seeking to invest into the housing market. The diversity of housing choice and location is a factor in regional consumer purchasing.

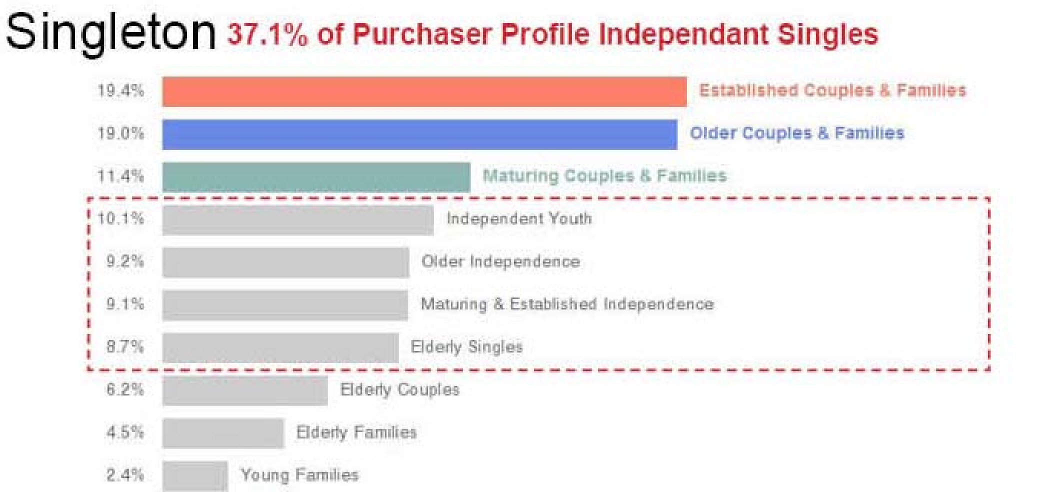
A comparison of regional housing purchases and consumer profile provides an insight into market trends and demographic profile. Of note for Singleton, is the split between families and singles | couple independent living. The home ownership profile from the 2011 ABS Census indicates that there is a lack of suitable housing product and lot size for singles and couples.



Source: www.realestate.com.au

In Singleton, 50% of the purchaser profile is established older, mature couples and families. This is reflected in the desire for detached housing product in urban release area. The impact of an ageing demographic over the next 20 years will most likely alter the purchaser demand for smaller housing product with increased access to services and community amenity supporting a strategy for mixed lot and house size and CBD living options.





Source: www.realestate.com.au 2014

Opportunities

- Singleton has an opportunity to further position urban release and CBD living options for this growing independent youth and senior's market sector.
- Investment into cultural activities, health and ultra local transport to support CBD living and proximity to services.
- Further market research is required into seniors housing preferences in Singleton and the Upper Hunter. Alignment of social housing and services is also an important forward consideration.
- Market research is needed to verify a supply shift towards smaller dwellings and smaller lot sizes to cater for the young single & couple and seniors in higher density independent living models

1.6. Housing Drivers - Employment Growth

Activity Workers / Flexible Employment: Mining, infrastructure and Defence

A significant trend affecting housing and accommodation demand is the transient or activity based worker. The non-permanent accommodation model requires a new strategy to provide both an affordable and flexible accommodation product. The majority of workers require single room accommodation. The resources boom highlighted several trends that need to be acknowledged in forward planning.

i. That a 'group' home; detached or duplex, offers an affordable option for activity workers and can successfully drive investment into this product.
ii. There is reduced availability and choice in low cost accommodation and short options during peak employment cycles. Escape economy to regional centres is a reflection of supply and demand.
iii. Flexible and adaptable housing models are not recognised by NSW Planning instruments. Low cost worker accommodation directly impacts affordability choice for permanent resident low income earners, increase rents and creates rental stress with the result being increased demand for community and emergency housing.
iv. Dialogue with the Minerals Council and Mining Sector is imperative to forward plan for housing and accommodation.

Defence Housing

The Defence Housing Authority (DHA) has signalled an annual demand for new housing of 90 dwellings per annum for the next 5 years to be delivered within a 30KM radius of the Singleton Army Base.

The current defence housing policy is to provide 'off base' rental housing for singles, couples and family accommodation in rental subsidised accommodation. Further discussions with DHA are required to determine the preferred housing and accommodation mix, price point and potential for accommodation through a flexible accommodation provider.

The DHA advises that defence personnel receive rental housing subsidised to facilitate off base accommodation. Singleton Army Base has had one of the highest accommodation subsidies in NSW reflective of low housing supply and high rental cost during the mining event. Accordingly, dual incomes are needed to support the cost of living and accommodation.



1.7. Housing Choice

Understanding the demographic profile and projecting forward trends is important to meeting future housing demand, product mix and location. The different life stages have differing requirements and expectations of housing and town amenity. These directly influence affordability, owner occupier, investor and rental demand.

Singleton has sustained positive population growth at a positive annual growth of +1.0%pa and is an important regional township supporting mining, tourism, engineering, equine and agribusiness.

The introduction of urban release lots <500m2 would support singles, couples and young families in urban release area and address shortage of equal accommodation choice the CBD area.

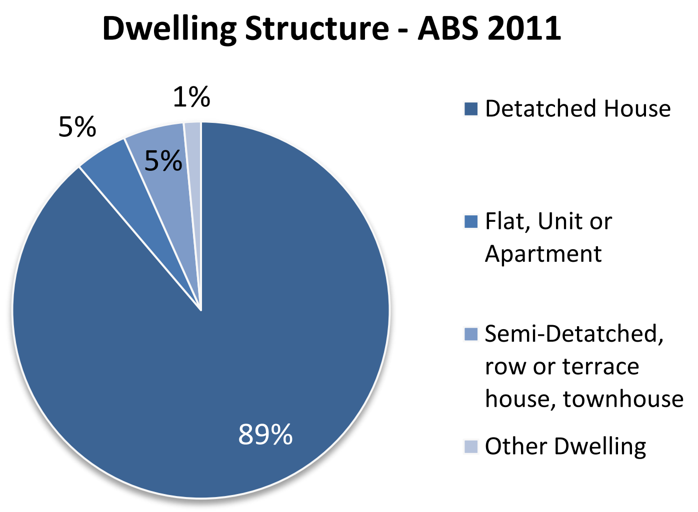
Opportunities

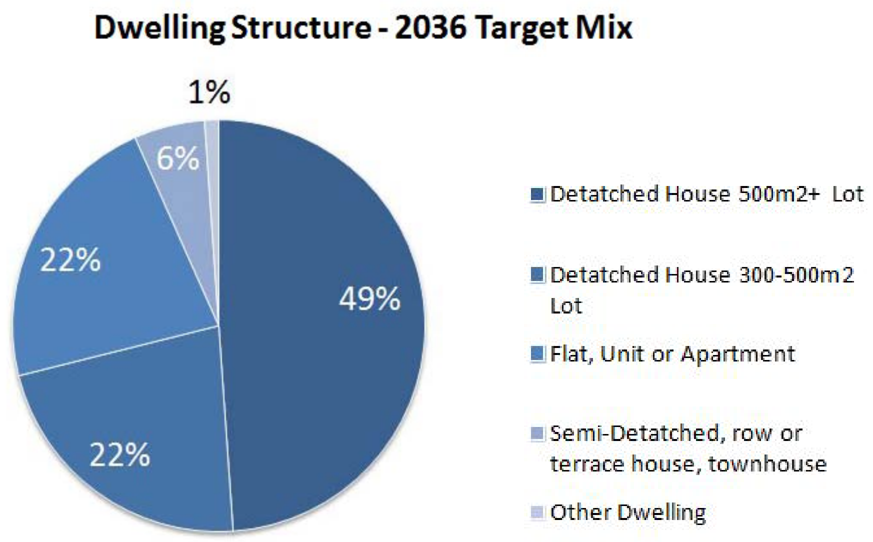
To diversify the housing offer and differentiate Singleton's Housing and Accommodation regional offer. This must be supported by:

- **Singleton Branding Strategy**
- **Real Estate Marketing Plan**
- **Planning Efficiency: strategy, process and approvals**
- **Infrastructure alignment: transport, services, community; schools, health, recreation.**

An assessment of dwelling structure data from the ABS 2011 and a proposed forward mix highlight a substantial shift in housing delivery and choice that reinforces increased choice for independent singles and couples. Further market research and investment alignment is required to verify the demand and rate of delivery to market.



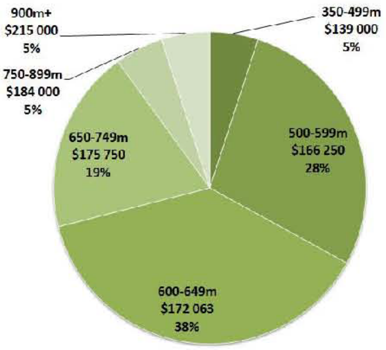




The 2036 projected mix is based on adoption of the housing and accommodation strategy to deliver both a diversity of lot size and housing product that envisages a shift to a higher percentage of 1 - 2 bed housing products suitable for independent singles and couples.

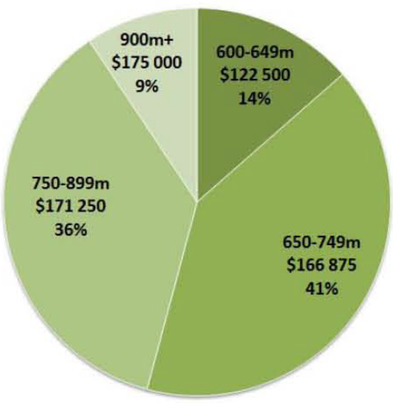
A comparison of housing purchases provides an insight into who is purchasing and their demographic profile. Of note, is the mixed profile between singles, young, seniors and families. This further supports an opportunity to diversify the housing product that acknowledge single & couple; both urban release and CBD living choices.

Local Land Realease Comparison



Huntlee - Satellite Community

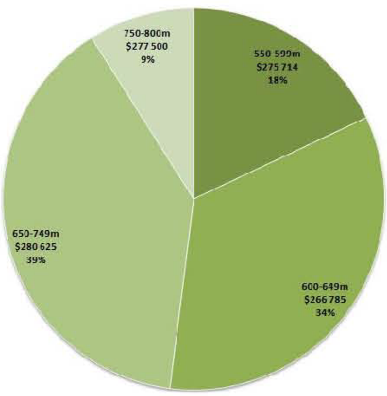
LOT SIZE	PRICE	% LOT	COST PM²
350-499m	$139 000	5%	$371 pm²
500-599m	$166 250	28%	$290
600-649m	$172 063	38%	$282
650-749m	$175 750	19%	$265
750-899m	$184 000	5%	$222
900m+	$215 000	5%	$134



Pinnacle 6 - Singleton Heights

LOT SIZE	PRICE	% LOT	COST PM²
350-499m	N/A	N/A	N/A
500-599m	N/A	N/A	N/A
600-649m	$122 500	13%	$195
650-749m	$166 875	39%	$239
750-899m	$171 250	35%	$208
900m+	$175 000	9%	$176

*Not all Lot Data available at time of assesment



Braeburn - Singleton Heights (New Release)

LOT SIZE	PRICE	% LOT*	COST PM²
300-499m	N/A	N/A	N/A
500-599m	$275 714	18%	$485
600-649m	$266 785	34%	$406
650-749m	$280 625	39%	$409
750-800m	$277 500	9%	$359
800+	N/A	N/A	N/A

Forward Direction

Through the consultative processes there is strong support for mixed housing offer that caters for all sectors of the communities housing and accommodation needs. The issues of continued urban release, CBD housing and flexible housing models were explored.

There was overwhelming acknowledgement that preserving the rural context, built heritage, strengthening the sense of community and building resilience for Singleton were overarching principles to be embraced in the *Housing and Accommodation Strategy*.

There is in principle, community and key stakeholder agreement to:

> Urban Release Area - Diversification of lot sizes, as freehold or community title, and architectural diversity delivered through models that would foster and build community are strongly supported. The “new communities” recently delivered by Landcom (Urban Growth NSW) and sighted by Scott Carver in the envisioning session were considered benchmarks worthy of further exploration that could be applied to Singleton to drive affordability and housing diversity.
>
> Singleton CBD – The community acknowledge that urban intensification within the CBD through infill mixed development and housing product is a desirable forward direction. A 20% target of the future population growth is to be integrated into the CBD.

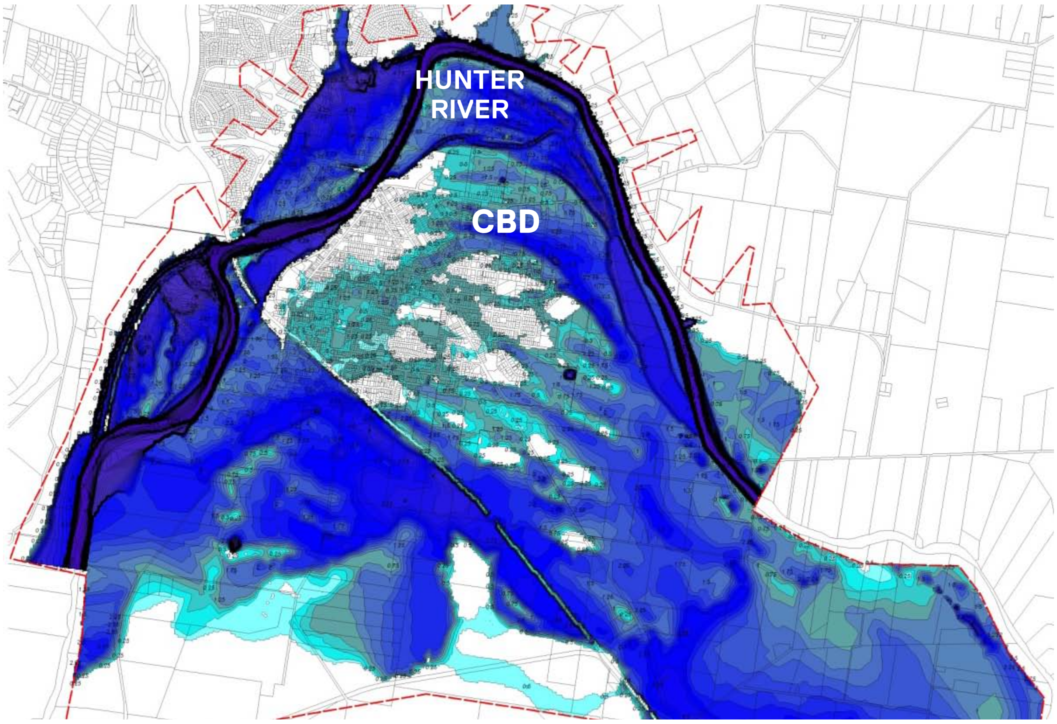
1.8. Ecological & Flood Limitations

As with many regional towns, a physical and historical relationship to the river for water and transport has left them vulnerable to flood inundation. Singleton is no exception. A levy, in part, protects the CBD; however in 1:100 year (1955 flood) and extreme events the CBD is susceptible to flooding at variable heights.

The flood mapping and undeveloped land has clearly dictated that the future urban release be to the north of Singleton. The future detached lot residential land supply is planned for this area which is decentralised from the CBD. Emergency flood evacuation planning correlates directly to population density, location and capacity of the transport infrastructure.

Whist the CBD is flood prone to varying risk profiles, there are lands along John Street that have low impact that are worthy of further investigation as to their capacity for infill mixed use and housing product. Flood risk will impact financing and insurance profiles that may deter investment.

Through considered planning and design solutions that respond to a "low risk" flood profile, urban infill opportunities can be realised that contribute significantly to the vitality of the Singleton CBD.



Predicted 1% AEP flood levels (Source: Council)

1.9. Land Use

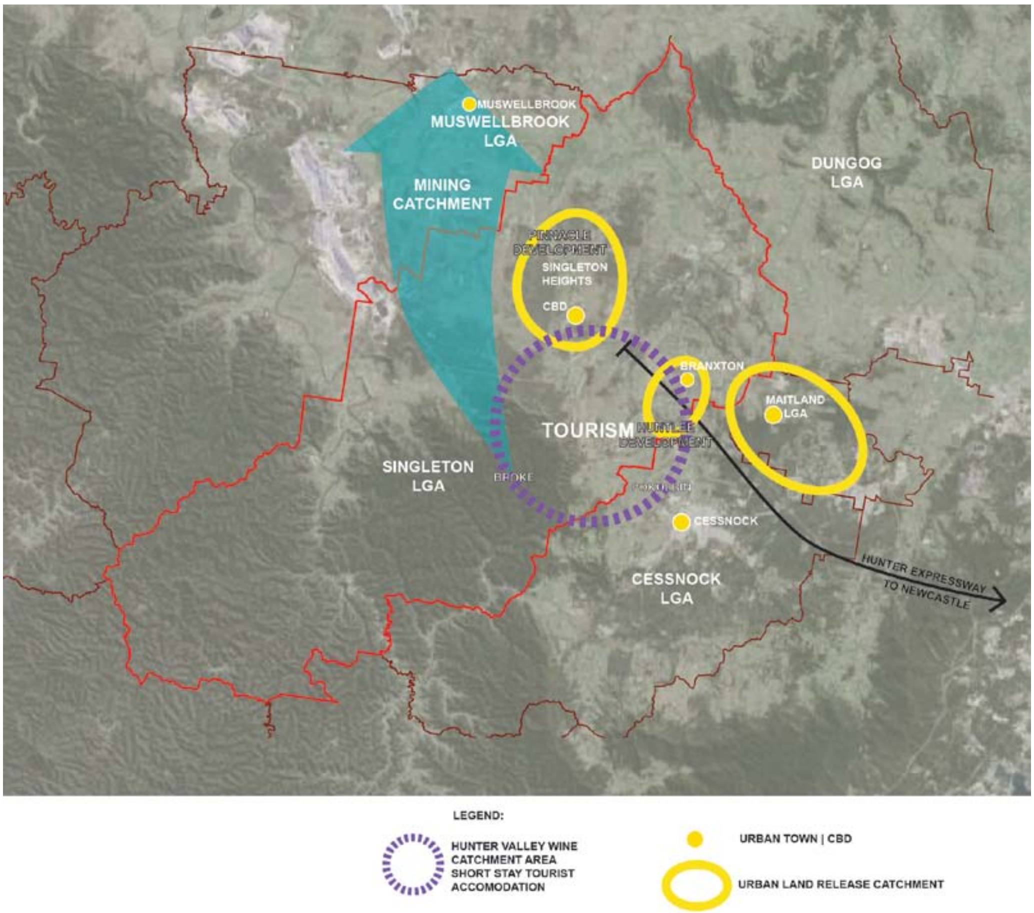
The Singleton township accounts for @80% of housing in the LGA. This strategy promotes 'urban consolidation' as the primary focus to effectively utilise infrastructure resources and land, however the forward planning needs to recognise a demand for rural large lot options as a lifestyle choice as part of the land release program.

Land Release

The NSW Department of Planning regional population growth target is 1.3% per annum for the Upper Hunter region. With Singleton's permanent population in the order of 22,500 (2012), this equates to a population growth in the order of 300 people per annum. In simplistic numerical terms an average household rate of 2.6 people could be applied requiring 115 dwellings per annum. This assumes a family housing provision only and doesn't account for independent singles and couples housing that will increase the volume of built product.

The capacity to service new land release is a constant challenge. To date, this has been a constraint to supply in a timely manner to meet demand. Accordingly, the land hold cost is identified as one factor in driving up land supply costs. Future services alignment is critical to efficient land supply. It is understood that Council is reviewing forward services provisions and that sewer reticulation is a challenge. A higher lot yield and consolidation strategy would optimise service infrastructure.

Regional Influents

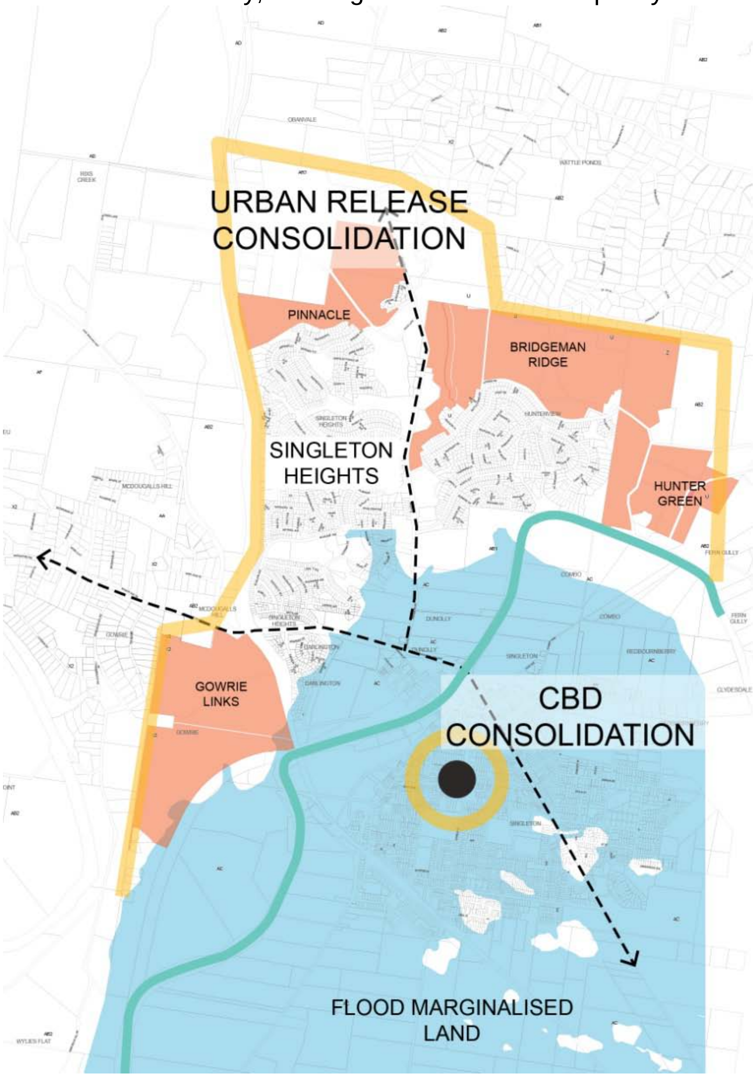


Singleton is at the heart of the Upper Hunter 'coal chain event'. The mine expansion is progressively moving northward into the Upper Hunter and is a major influent on local employment and housing availability.

The Huntlee urban release area straddles the boundary of Cessnock and Muswellbrook within the Singleton LGA. It is a competitor for investment and resources to Singleton. The staged release of lots (140 Lots in Stage 1) has the potential to directly impact urban release within the Singleton Heights growth corridor.

The newly constructed Hunter Expressway has the potential to further open up access to the Hunter Valley wine area with a flow on effect of economic injection that will support short stay tourism accommodation.

The capacity of Maitland and other regional centres to deliver land release and new housing volume is a determining factor in the competitive price point and affordability. To be competitive and produce an affordable housing offer, Singleton will need to review its current urban release delivery, housing mix and volume capacity.



The Singleton Land Use Strategy defines future urban growth tracts to the western fringe and north of Singleton. The level of social, retail, education and transport infrastructure will need further consideration to support the Housing & Accommodation Strategy. A strategy that generates a higher lot yield from future urban release lands has the potential to extend future land supply for residential housing beyond 10 years.

1.10. Employment Cycle and Construction Delivery

A challenge in forward planning is in understanding the influent employment forces: permanent and temporary requiring direct engagement with mining, defence and infrastructure, education & health sectors.

Peak employment events drive local investment as a response to supply and demand. This was experienced in 2010-2012 by investment into housing sector, in particular duplex models, within the urban release areas in Singleton Heights.

Constructions lead times and in particular service infrastructure alignment are key factors in the housing supply chain. The capacity to mobilise and align with funding, capital and construction lead times is in the order of 18 months, and are often out of sync with the employment cycle.

The period between 2010-2012 was a period of low supply and high demand directly relating to the mining and transport infrastructure investment. This led to a local housing construction boom and a shortage of skilled construction workers. House prices increased at 10%pa, and rental at 15%pa. The affordability gap widened resulting in increased mortgage rental stress.

The undersupply of housing identified by HVRF in 2012 as part of the Enablers Summit, has largely been addressed by unprecedented investment into duplex and urban release housing in 2011/2012 in response to the mining sector boom.

Opportunities

- The Housing and Accommodation strategy adopts regional population growth targets at 1.3%pa in the long term strategy.
- Provide for flexible ‘event’ needs with close liaison with employment sector influents - micro planning. What is the real worker demand and housing mix; permanent / flexible volume attuned to the demographic profile.
- Consider modular housing systems as both an affordable housing product and flexible in delivery of horizontal and vertical format living
- Increase market supply of 1 or 2 bed product options in urban release and CBD living supported by a targeted marketing strategy.
- Employment drivers: mining, defence and the like are volatile. They are subject to macro political influences and global commodity forces require flexible planning and housing delivery models.

1.11. Urban Aesthetic

The quality of the urban environment; natural and built, is a reflection of community attitude and market competition.

The aesthetic; quality of streets, tree planting, open space, diversity of architecture, urban furnishings define the character and market proposition - the offer.

There is a direct link between property value, community wellbeing and urban aesthetic. Investment into the public domain is a 'legacy' investment that will mature and increase the community value with time. The quality of the urban environment directly influences the town profile, its capacity to attract investment; capital and infrastructure and a sustainable growth model.

Urban Release

Council has the capacity to directly influence the qualitative and quantative urban outcomes through planning instruments, master planning and demonstration.

To be regionally competitive for new residents and investment, Singleton must significantly increase its investment into the public domain. Competitive developments of Huntlee planned community directly compete for resources and residential investment and strongly promote the 'Active Lifestyle' living as a core image in the marketing and support this by investment into the public domain. **As a minimum the urban release and community offer must be equal or exceed their promise to compete in the 'lifestyle' offer.**

Singleton North - Existing quality of the residential environment

CBD

Singleton Council has commissioned a CBD Public Domain Masterplan that defines a new streetscape strategy, consolidated open space, connections and activation of sites.

Council's purchase of the former Ford Dealership is a significant investment that offers a key renewal and construction project opportunity.

The cultural and heritage CBD elements are integral with the town brand the urban character. Street tree planting and mixed use product will support is activating the streets and providing micro-climate to promote urban lifestyle living. A 'Cultural' events program is further recommended to support CBD activation and small business.

A liveable community legacy

1.12. Connectivity

The completion of the Hunter Expressway is a significant investment reducing travel times between Newcastle and the Upper Hunter. It is anticipated to relieve congestion and provide efficient direct route for heavy transport movements between the Western NSW and Newcastle.

The Expressway finishes approximately 11km east of Singleton. It will provide potential for efficient servicing of the Hunter Valley and local tourism, particularly from the North.

It will not address ultra local congestion in Singleton, heavy vehicle movement and the ‘hole in the wall’ constraint. The later being particularly relevant to urban release expansion to the north and the west of Singleton.

Singleton is a car dependent community. The rail primarily services goods movement between the Upper Hunter and Newcastle Port. The lack of efficient commuter service is an ongoing issue.

Hunter Expressway Source: RMS, Hunter Expressway: Milestones (2013)

Public Transport
The suburban model is car dependant. The density of population at 30 persons/Ha does not support bus or rail networks. Alternative community mini bus or equal systems offer potential in connection urban release and the CBD.

Public transport and active nodes; cycle and walking are key influents on the lifestyle offer and town amenity that provide an alternative to car travel.

Ultra local cycle and pedestrian connectivity is important in encourageing social interaction, exercise, wellbeing and community connection. The quality of which environment is critical in providing safe, engageing and supportive micro-climate.

A consolidated urban footprint with integral public transport and active mode; pedestrian and cycle networks are important in supporting lifestyle living and an influent in attracting young and senior age profiles. Centralised retail, education and health services are important planning considerations in terms of activation of urban release and the CBD.

Ultra local Mobility: Walking and Cycling
This is an important influent in attracting and retaining the younger demographic. Likewise, public transport connectivity, active mobility and CBD living choice are important considerations that influence senior’s independent living choice and investment.

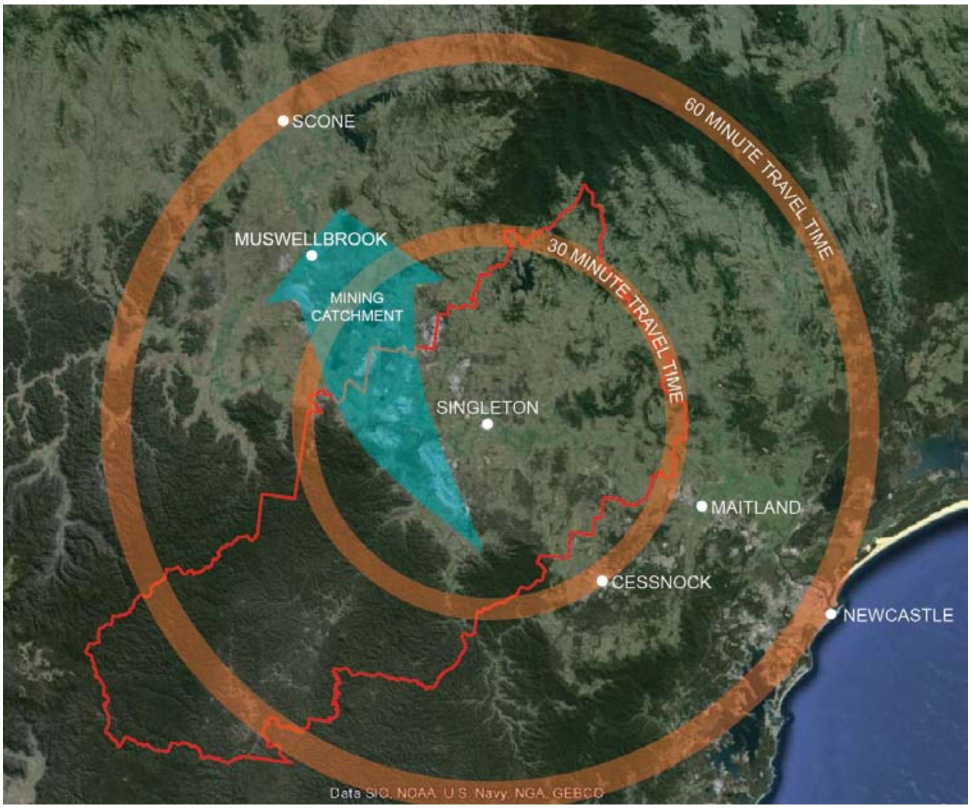
The quality of the urban environment aesthetic and activation promotes active community engagement and ultra local walkability with reduced dependence on the car.

1.13. Health and Community Wellbeing

Travel time has a direct relationship to personal health, happiness and stress. Access to active non car based transit options is a key consideration in housing choice along with proximity to support and community infrastructure.

This has particular relevance to activity workforces. Many of the workers have permanent residences in regional areas requiring daily or periodic travel patterns. Research indicates that the maximum travel distance is 45 minutes after which there are negative health consequence, low level of exercise, travel boredom, increase in dysfunctional relationships, increased obesity and loss of productivity.

The Singleton Army Base, has a requirement for 'off base' housing and accommodation within 30km of the base.



Travel Time radii

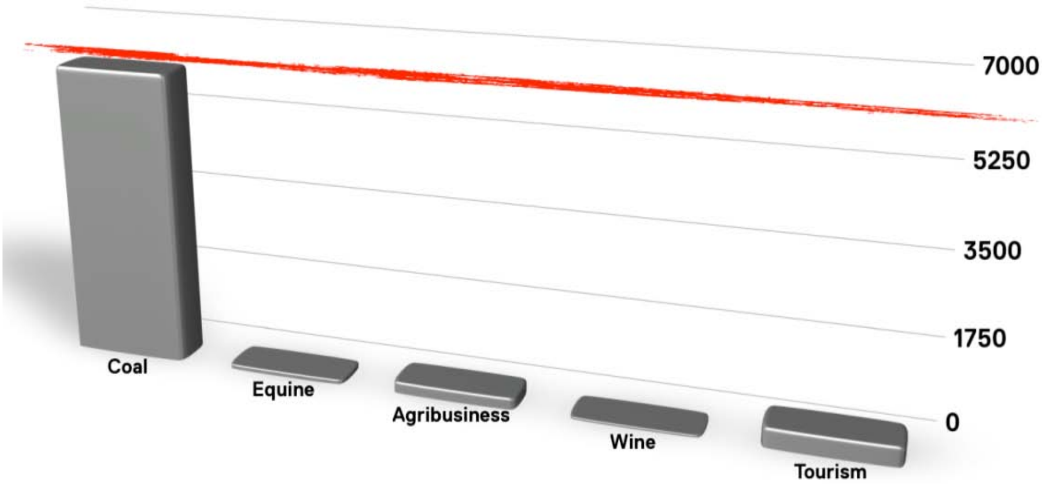
Opportunities

- Centralised the workplace and living contribute to positive health and wellbeing and low dependence on health infrastructure.
- Provide active physical exercise recreation amenity; pedestrian, cycle, open space and space for sports and casual recreation to promote active living.
- Promote active mobility modes and integrated public transport to minimise car usage.
- Promote Singleton as the **'active living'** town of choice

1.14. Coal Chain Event – A Flexible Workforce

The mining industry in the Upper Hunter does not provide housing and accommodation as part of the employment offer. There is a portion of the workforce that has a permanent status; however the majority are activity based workforce providing specialist skills for varying length of assignment. Accordingly, their accommodation requirements require a flexible low cost arrangement.

Coal is the single largest revenue earner for NSW. The Upper Hunter Region is an important source of export coal and high grade coal for power generation. The open cut coal extraction is invasive in the rural context however are a prime employment generator and state economic driver. Meeting the accommodation and housing needs of this sector is one of the regional drivers.



Value of export industries ($ millions) – Upper Hunter (Source: UHREIR 2011)

During the 2010-2012 mining event approximately 30% of the mining sector work force resided in Singleton. Seventy percent of the workforce was “drive in – drive out” placing enormous pressure of the regional road networks.

The lack of specific data on mining sector housing and accommodation demand, linked to projected mine growth over the next five years, requires open dialogue between the mines and Council to ensure forward planning delivers suitable housing to meet both permanent and activity based work force.

In considering future housing and accommodation relating to mining sector expansion, peak events; it is worth noting factors that impact housing choice and delivery.

Activity worker needs for local accommodation increases occupancy rates and tariff in the tourist and short stays accommodation sector, in particular hotel and motel accommodation. A Sunday-check-in / Friday-check-out pattern typifies the mining and infrastructure sector accommodation demand. Many of the activity based workforce have individual accommodation needs as compared to permanent staff that have need for mixed single, couples and family accommodation. A 16 day work cycle further reinforces the flexible accommodation model.

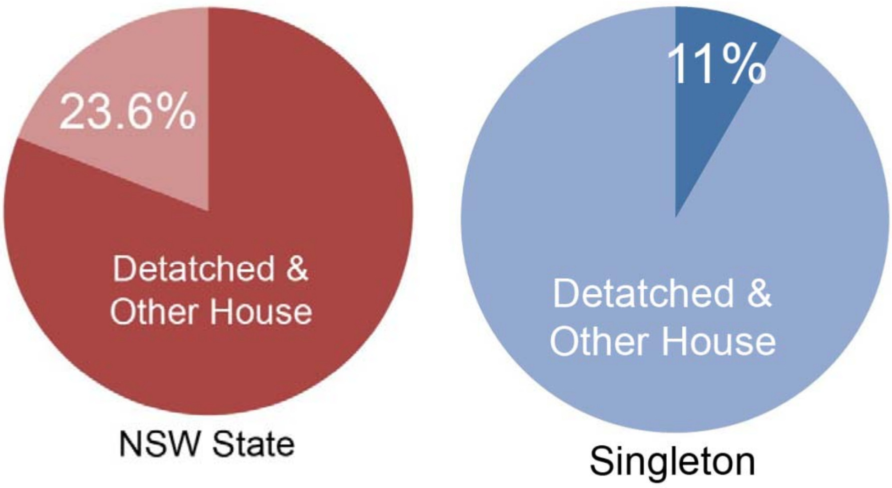
1.15. Singleton - Urban Town

The projected regional housing growth for the Hunter and Illawarra is 40-50% greater (UDIA 2012) than Sydney in both houses and other dwellings (medium and high density dwellings). This trend is significant for Singleton in that it supports a forward shift in urban land release and home & land large family lots to a more compact living model; both suburban and CBD.

Singleton has sustained a positive long term growth trajectory and is anticipated to continue this pattern. The town has evolved from a rural town to an urban town with growth of accommodation primarily in an urban land release model to the north of Singleton CBD.

In NSW there is a clear upward trend of 23.6% of people residing in rental apartments in a higher density style living model (UDIA October 2012). By comparison Singleton has approximately 11.0%. Further research is required to determine the potential impact of this State trend on forward housing delivery in Singleton.

By comparison, the number of units sold in Singleton during 2011 was approximately 11% of total dwelling sales, half of the NSW State trend. A forward strategy that provides increased opportunity and incentive for higher density living through CBD infill and smaller lot 1,2,3 bed product is to be encouraged.



Opportunities

- Detailed market appraisal is required to test the viability and proportional mix of medium and higher density product.
- Make provision for a shift in purchaser demand for higher density consolidated living and both urban release and CBD infill.
- CBD housing infill to support activation of the CBD and support small business.

Part 2 - Strategy

2 Strategic Framework

The Housing and Accommodation Strategy is a living document that requires partnerships with the employment, real estate and community service providers to define trends and data collection to fine tune the housing and accommodation mix.

The NSW Government has stated an Upper Hunter Regional population growth target at 1.3% per annum. Singleton's population is projected to grow from 22,500 in 2012 to 31,000 by 2036.

Housing and accommodation is subject to a complex array of forces that necessitate a flexible strategy. The 'Place Capital and Wealth' model for sustainable communities highlights that there are a series of key components that are inter related in the creation of dynamic and prosperous towns and cities.

Singleton has an opportunity to redefine its housing offer which is closely aligned to a **Singleton Place Brand**. What is the regional offer that defines Singleton attracts and retains talent, promotes cultural diversity and quality lifestyle opportunity.

The mining event of 2010-12 has highlighted the need for responsive and flexible planning that responds to major employment drivers, activity workforce and global commodity forces. There is a need to forward plan for flexible activity based workforces that are non permanent which greatly impact the real estate market capacity for housing supply and demand, rental vacancy and property values. The mining sector is a major regional influent. Fostering strong working relationships with the mining sector and Minerals Council to actively planning for mining cycles and support infrastructure is essential if Singleton is to respond and capitalise on the economic benefits that build the community.

The Housing and Accommodation Strategic Framework structure defines three pillars that will inform the strategic directions and Action Plan:

- Place Brand and Partnerships
- Real Estate & Product
- Planning

Singleton Heights - Pinnacle Urban Release

PRIORITY

- Advance Council facilitated “demonstration” projects for; Pinnacle 7 – urban release and CBD Living – former Ford Dealership site, in partnership to promote new housing delivery models and add to the housing supply.
- Foster strong regional and local working partnerships to advocate for investment, knowledge share and infrastructure to support employment, housing delivery and community building
- Deliver greater diversity in land release and housing options with emphasis on developing affordable new product suited to independent single, couples and seniors.
- Adopt an urban “consolidation” approach that optimises land, services and infrastructure resources to support urban sustainability and protect valuable productive lands for the future.
- Prepare a Housing and Accommodation promotional campaign that redefines Singleton’s real estate offer; urban land release and CBD living, supported by a Singleton Place Brand strategy.
- Engage the community as an active participant in defining their requirements for future housing, active living and a culturally rewarding community – the Singleton offer.
- Protect property values through sustained population growth, a competitive market offer and Singleton as the regional town of **’lifestyle choice’**.
- Aligned social, service and transport infrastructure to housing delivery program to support Upper Hunter Regional growth targets.

It is important to distinguish between population growth (beds) and housing mix. Simplistically, Singleton will need to deliver 115 dwelling per annum (at an average occupancy rate of 2.6 persons per dwelling) to meet the projected growth trajectory of 1.3% pa. The demographic profile and housing & accommodation trends suggest that a richer offer of housing and price point is required for permanent housing and a new flexible housing product.

Place Capital and Wealth

The success of the **Singleton Brand** will be reflected in its capacity to attract new resident population, employment, investment and infrastructure to support growth. The regional tourism offer, cultural events program, quality of the environments; natural and built, and sense of community are strengths that define Singleton. The brand "promise" must be deliverable. In the context of the Housing and Accommodation Strategy, the promise is for a quality living environment supported by a diversity of housing product, architectural style, streetscape, open space and active living amenity. Senses of belonging and inclusive community values are imperative.

Ecological

Singleton has a diversity of natural, rural and urban ecologies. Protecting and enhancing the systems that allow for people to engage and learn is a valuable attribute. Protecting sensitive vegetation communities and fauna habitats support the broader ecological systems along with water quality and flood management. Consolidate the residential release footprint through smaller lot sizes and integrated open space networks.

There are opportunities to reduce the urban "heat Island" effect with an investment into tree lined streetscapes and landscapes that provide shade and environmental off set which significantly improves the public domain presentation and quality of the residential communities.

Preserving productive rural lands is an integral part of the Singleton Land Use Strategy. It has strong community support and defines the rural context of the township.

Infrastructure

Services, transport, community and communication require forward planning and investment. To support the Housing and Accommodation Strategy these will need to be aligned to the release and infill programs. The new Hunter Expressway and rail connectivity are positive investments that support Singleton's regional functions.

Social

There must be places for social engagement, cultural exchange and arts expression. A creative community is a vibrant community. It is important to recognise that Singleton has a higher than State average under 34 years population which places pressures on schools, active open space, recreation and community facilities. Equally, over the next 25 years there will be a shift to an ageing profile that have different demands for social engagement and support social and health infrastructure.

Finance

Singleton has demonstrated a capacity for sustained growth from a rural town to urban town. A flexible forward planning model, engaged partnerships and realising the economic benefits of the "coal chain event" are attainable. Attracting investment from private and government sectors is aligned to brand positioning, regional presence and continued population growth.

Increasing the volume and choice of housing and accommodation will allow for a higher percentage of the activity workforce to be accommodated in town with a reduction on 'escape' expenditure adding to the wealth and prosperity of Singleton.

New models of affordable housing financing are required through partnerships between government, major employers, defence and social housing providers.

Health

The health of a community can be measured in many ways: wellbeing and happiness, environment, facilities, infrastructure, wealth and community spirit. This directly informs the town brand and place capital – the essence of the place.

Human Capital

Singleton has a strong lineage as a rural community as a regional township that has achieved sustained population growth. The capacity to attract and retain, skilled employment and provide an engaged community is a strength. The drive in - drive out activity worker is reflective of a new flexible employment model that is not based on permanency. The workforce uses the towns amenity, however does not necessarily contribute to its community building. This places unparalleled demand on infrastructure, housing and accommodation.

Real Estate

Providing a diversity of real estate options and price points is important to retaining and attracting new residents. Singleton is experiencing a new paradigm that includes permanent and a flexible housing demand.

To be regionally competitive for housing, Singleton must adopt new urban land release models that promote improved land use efficiency, housing yield and quality living environment. A commitment to increasing CBD living options will support business and activate the CBD aligned to investment into the public domain.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION

PLACE CAPITAL & WEALTH MODEL - COMPETITIVE ATTRIBUTES HOUSING

PLACE BRAND

- Attracts visitors and short stay tourism
- Attracts investment
- Attracts new residents
- Regional events program hub
- Information services
- Rural lifestyle 'town of choice'.

LIFESTYLE CHOICE

ECOLOGICAL

- Resiliance to climate impacts
- Educate & engage
- Sustainability
- Protect & enhance natural systems
- Minimise urban footprint
- Environmental diversity; natural & urban
- Protect productive lands

EFFICIENT URBAN FOOTPRINT

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Regional connectivity: rail, road, air.
- Education facilities: primary, secondary, tertiary
- Community facilities & health
- Sports infrastructure - active lifestyle
- Equitable public transport aligned with pedestrian & cycle networks
- Public domain quality
- Broadband

ALIGNMENT

SOCIAL

- Inclusive community
- Cultural expression
- Low crime
- High participation in community programs
- Quality education and family inclusive.
- Seniors independent and assisted living
- Community housing offer

INCLUSIVE

FINANCE

- Vibrant small business culture
- Capacity to attract infrastructure and employment investment
- Shared wealth
- Growth = investment
- Cost of Living - affordable urban town living offer.

INVESTMENT

HEALTH

- High personal wellbeing and personal happiness
- Active community
- High environmental quality
- Health infrastructure
- Active lifestyle opportunity and non-car bound movement networks
- High urban quality

URBAN QUALITY

REAL ESTATE

- Affordability
- Diversity of product and price point
- Industry partnerships
- Product innovation & experimentation
- Diversity of urban release offer: singles, couples & families
- CBD residential living
- Attracts investment and infrastructure to support growth models
- Assisted and independent housing choice
- Growth in demand for tourist/short stay accommodation
- Property value growth
- Flexibility to meet housing product, employment and demographic changes

DIVERSITY & AFFORDABILITY

HUMAN CAPITAL

- Attracts talent & skills
- Employment growth - permanent & flexible
- Salary growth - wealth creation
- Lifestyle choice
- Quality training & education offer

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

5 YEAR ACTION PLAN

3 Strategic Directions

3.1 Singleton Offer and Partnerships

Engagement

The capacity to engage the community is pivotal to "community building" and protecting the qualities and values that define the community and 'Place Offer' of Singleton.

Transformational change requires leadership, engageing the collective intelligence of the community, and a desire to provide a legacy for future generations.

There are complex and often competing interests in formulating forward strategic plans. Transparent communication supported by an achievable action plan will engender confidence and a positive attitude.

Council has a key role in facilitating cultural activities and social interaction. Being open to urban experimentation through the seeding of cultural experience and promoting an events program will offer opportunity to engage the community and innovative spirit that will redefine Singletons cultural offer.

An investment in digital communication platforms will further engage the youth and allow for equity of access to information and civic conversations for all members of the community.

Live data Collection

The Housing and Accommodation Strategy requires flexibility to respond to dynamic regional employment forces.

This is particularly relevant to the mining and defence sectors. Generally, there is a lack of coordinated data collection and assimilation to inform micro planning surrounding housing supply and demand. The ABS Census data provides a 5 year snapshot with data subject to interpretation. It is not "live" data that allows for responsive decision making to support regional alignment and growth.

Partnerships

Strong relationships with the employment generators, real estate, community services and tourism sector are required to collate and share information.

Information sharing is imperative to support regional growth and address collective Upper Hunter Council issues. Housing and accommodation is a key element in supporting regional growth and prosperity.

Forging strong relationships with the mining sector through the Minerals Council and like organisations will allow for pro active annual planning that is responsive to market forces. It is important to acknowledge that employment cycles are not necessarily aligned with infrastructure investment and housing construction capacity. The later should be aligned to achieve housing and accommodation to support the NSW Government stated Upper Hunter regional growth target of 1.3%, however it is the peak employment event(s) that need to be better understood and planned for; the mining investment cycle, production, activity worker profile, employment basis and duration. These directly influence permanent housing and temporary accommodation demand.

Equally, strong working relationships with the NSW Housing (LAHC), community service providers, community organisation, defence and tourism will allow for a comprehensive Action Plan to be delivered. Annual review mechanisms are necessary to attune Action Plans, with investment and housing demand.

Investment & Incentive

In practical terms, the capacity to maintain supply and demand for housing is related to sustained employment growth, housing affordability and dynamic Singleton “place” offer.

Attracting investment relies on sustained positive population growth and the capacity for Singleton to be regionally competitive for employment investment. Attracting and retaining talent is inherently linked to the place offer.

With population growth there are economic thresholds that trigger particular investment into community infrastructure, retail and services. A strategy for **urban consolidation** supports efficient use of resources and services.

The planning instruments and policy that promote opportunity for “value uplift” through merit based development incentive, flexibility in development controls and efficient approval assessment are important to building investor confidence. A positive “can do” attitude speaks volumes.

The strategy seeks to broaden the investment opportunity through delivery of new housing typology that can be delivered cost effectively to market in the CBD and a diversity of urban release lot size that provide a range of investment price point to allow Singleton to be regionally competitive.

There is a real opportunity to redefine the housing product offer through a program for CBD and suburban lifestyle living that is supported by a **Singleton Place Branding** and commitment in promoting Singleton as a ”cultural incubator”, similar to initiative adopted by the City of Adelaide - SPLASH Adelaide Program.

Decentralised urban release within the LGA is counterproductive to an urban consolidation strategy. Satellite communities directly compete for resources, infrastructure and investment.

Council has an important role in lobbying and engageing with State Government for regional investment and infrastructure, often as part of a collective voice of the Upper Hunter Regional Councils.

In order to advocate for regional investment and support there must be clear and defensible strategy for growth. The Housing and Accommodation Strategy directly links to economic drivers: resources sector, defence support, tourism and agribusiness.

Council needs to work proactively with the NSW Housing (LAHC) and allied community housing providers: Compass Housing, St George Housing and the like, to deliver a model that is financially sustainable to increase the supply of community and crisis housing.

The strategy envisages intensification of existing detached housing sites with a 4:1 accommodation increase ratio.

Council is encouraged to work closely with the Defence Housing Authority(DHA) to identify the housing mix and delivery to market strategy that is underpinned by a third party investor program.

Governance and Leadership

Singleton Council has the opportunity to facilitate the delivery of a new model for intensified urban release and a CBD higher density living through two ‘demonstration’ projects that establish a benchmark and commercially sustainable product.

The Council initiated new urban release and CBD living models will be influential in defining a new standard of housing and in community education. These will need to be delivered through partnership with the private sector.

The Housing and Accommodation Summits in 2012, demonstrated that the stakeholders and community recognise that housing product diversity, urban aesthetic and social inclusion are important attributes in the transition of Singleton from rural town to urban town. This requires leadership by Council in envisioning and engageing with the community in exploring new housing options that build place capital and wealth.

There is a continued need to advocate for community investment: education, health and housing that support the township amenity and regional competitiveness.

PRIORITY

- Proactively engage the community and key stakeholders in forward housing and accommodation directions that fosters education, ideas share and shared ownership in defining the forward housing and accommodation Action Plans.
- Engage with the NSW Minerals Council and NSW Government to explore how the mining sector could underwrite or provide financial guarantee, pre-commitment or the like in a financial model that de-risks housing investment to support peak employment events and support increased productivity in the sector.
- Develop strong relationships with employment generator, real estate, community services and tourism sectors to collate and share information to inform Action Plans.
- Implement a program with key stakeholder partnerships to collect statistical data on an annual basis to inform forward strategy and action plans.
- Align the Singleton Housing and Accommodation with a Place Branding strategy and marketing program to communicate Singleton’s market offer.
- Deliver through partnership urban release and CBD Living ”demonstration “ projects.

3.2 Real Estate & Product

To be regionally competitive for housing, Singleton must adopt new urban land release models that promote improved land use efficiency, housing diversity and quality of the living environment. A commitment to increasing CBD living options will support business and activate the town centre. Alignment of investment into a quality public domain will define the urban aesthetic and experience.

Providing a diversity of real estate options and price points is important to retaining and attracting new residents. Singleton is experiencing a new paradigm which includes permanent and a flexible housing demand. The later being driven by the coal resources sector and defence base accommodation requirements.

Urban Release

There is a disconnect between the delivery of a diversity of housing and accommodation product that reflects the demographic profile of Singleton and the broader Upper Hunter Region. There has been significant focus of the supply of family home product on detached lots in Singleton Heights over recent years.

The housing delivery model to date, largely neglects housing product suitable for independent singles and couples. The current purchaser profile suggesting that approximately 40% of purchasers are in this group, both young and seniors.

Singleton Heights – identified future land release areas

North Singleton Housing Product

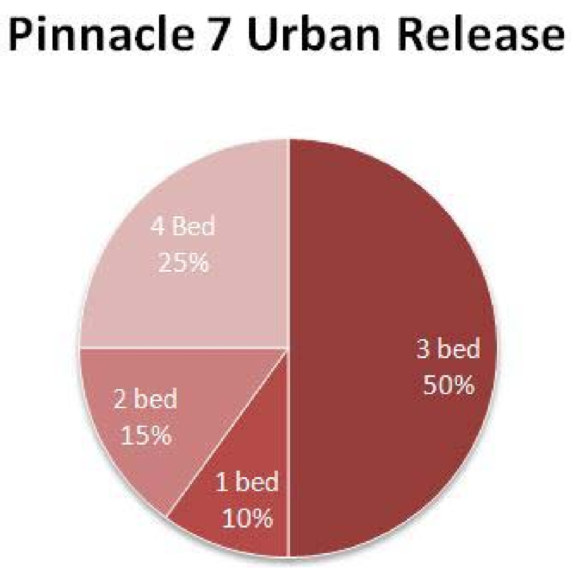
The current Land Use Strategy provides for future delivery of 2200 lots based upon the current lot size configuration tending towards 40% of lots greater than 750m2. To be regionally competitive and improve land use efficiency, this strategy proposes a model whereby 50% of the future land release be 600m2 with provision for @25% of smaller lots (300-500m2) to deliver diversity of choice and improve affordability.

The proposed new urban release “demonstration” project has the potential to redefine the house and land package model currently employed in Singleton Heights. This will be market driven and the project needs to be supported by the real estate industry and by a marketing strategy.

The current house and land product offered in Singleton Heights does not cater for the demographic profiles of Singleton and is weighted toward higher income purchaser. The current product is typically 3-4 bedroom detached/dual occupancy house on large lots ranging from 750-1000m2.

There is minimal diversity in architectural style and lot size. The low environmental quality detracts from a sustainable high quality ‘liveable community’ agenda embodied in Council's 2030 Vision.

Housing product diversity, a mix in lot size and land tenure are key considerations to improving the urban quality and land use efficiency. This strategy encourages higher housing densities in select areas, diversification of price point and affordability are to be encouraged. This will potentially influence forward land release and service infrastructure stageing.



Proposed housing mix for Pinnacle 7 Master Plan Demonstration Project.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- Advance Council facilitated “demonstration” project for Pinnacle 7 to achieve a new master plan to achieve 25% 750m2 lots : 50% 500 - 600m2 lots : 25% 300-500m2 lot ratio supported by a high quality active living environment.

- Adopt a forward Residential Urban Release - Land Use Strategy that delivers a 25% residential land use release efficiency target through higher lot yield and higher percentage of smaller lot configuration to increase future land supply.

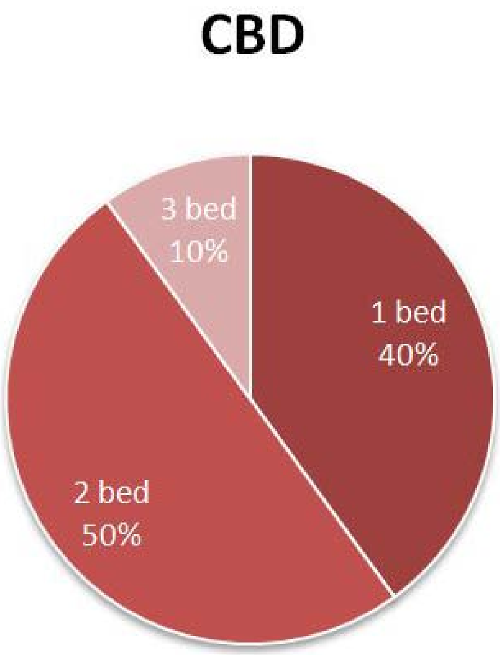
- Prepare Landscape Framework and Master Plans to increase the urban quality and active amenity of future urban land release. The principles should also include; building climate resilience, micro environmental benefit, amenity to support active community living and spaces for social engagement.

- Establish an industry working group to advance new land release models and investment strategy that are market sensitive and establish a competitive point of difference for Singleton.

Urban Community - Streetscape amenity

CBD & Infill Housing

There is strong support for intensification of housing in the CBD focussed on the John Street Precinct. There is general agreement to a **target of 20%** of the future housing and accommodation demand to be supplied in the CBD with proximity of social, health, retail and entertainment amenity. Mixed Use development with a focus on residential is supported. This would optimise existing service infrastructure, transport and the like and would support CBD enterprise though critical mass of an increased inner CBD population.



The projected housing demand is in the order of **50-75 medium and higher density living product per annum** catering for a diversity of age demographic through 1, 2 and 3 bed mix. To achieve an economical model for higher density apartment product a 5 storey height provision is recommended. Verification through detailed market research is required to inform the mix, market demand and development investor.

During the Summit (2012) process Council representatives and Scott Carver met with the NSW Government Architects Office to understand the forward directions with the Singleton CBD Master Plan. A 20% future housing target in the CBD is supported and will further activate the town centre.

In line with the CBD Master Plan (2013), Council has initiated a strategic investment in the purchase of the Ford Dealership Site on Johns Street as a prime residential mixed use consolidated site. This is a key mid - street site activation opportunity.

Johns Street - Former Ford dealership - redevelopment opportunity

There is the opportunity for Council to further explore on grade car park as potential higher density infill sites that would be an integral part of the forward strategy.

Potential car park redevelopment opportunity

One of the key challenges of realising redevelopment of the CBD for housing is the fragmentation of land ownership. An infill housing strategy would involve large block consolidation, subdivision of single detached housing lots, adaptive reuse of existing buildings and small lot subdivision. This is in line with the recommendations of the *CBD Master Plan*.

The existing planning instruments supports increased density within existing residential areas through small-scale investment by existing land-owners through the addition of studio apartment style infill, house additions and townhouse development.

CBD - infill development examples

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- Advance Council facilitated "demonstration" project on key Council owned assets focused on activating the CBD, increasing supply of 1-2 bed accommodation and supporting the CBD Master Plan.
- Conduct market research to define the future market for CBD higher density living and prepare a marketing plan to support the initiative.
- Target 20% of the future population growth in the CBD with capacity to deliver 50-75 beds per annum.
- Planning instrument alignment to support 5 storey height model to deliver economic incentive and construction efficiency.
- Implement the CBD Public Domain Master Plan (2013) to deliver a high quality urban aesthetic and amenity.
- Explore co-shared community infrastructure provision as an integral component of the future housing delivery.
- Promote a CBD LIVING campaign with the real estate industry.
- Align a cultural events activation program with the CBD

Flexible Accommodation and Housing Product

The capacity to deliver flexible, affordable and immediate housing to support regional growth is a forward challenge.

The basis of this accommodation is its flexible and adaptable nature that can be customised to meet the changing needs of the employment market and demographic. Modular housing systems offer a viable solution as a responsive market delivery product that can be delivered expediently compared to traditional construction methodology and to a higher quality and flexible format.

Affordable housing and modular product can deliver @20% production costs efficiency that offers a flexible price point solution to urban intensification. Factory production delivers superior quality and modular systems are set to revolutionise housing delivery as their popularity is increases. It has been successfully supplied as an adaptable housing product to service education, defence, mining and health sectors.

The inherent accommodation model can deliver 1 and 2 bed product in volume, expediently and has adaptability to meet current and future workforce demand.

The location, land tenure, traffic management, social integration, product type and services infrastructure are a number of issues requiring clear direction and alignment to planning process and instruments.

A **flexible** accommodation model is an integral component of the forward *Housing and Accommodation Strategy*.

Flexible Housing Product

PRIORITY

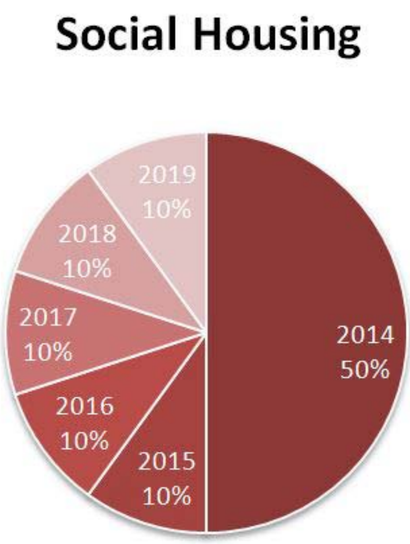
- Encourage new housing delivery systems that deliver housing diversity, competitive price point and high standard of construction.
- Through “demonstration” projects showcase architecturally diverse product that positively contributes to the urban living experience through materiality, form and setback.
- Investigate adaptive modular housing systems that can respond to activity worker needs of the mining, infrastructure and defence sectors.
- Target 5 star environmental performance: building, public domain and transport

Social & Crisis Accommodation

Concept model for an inclusive medium density living community

Regionally, NSW Housing (LAHC) considers Singleton as a low housing priority with a 2-3 year waiting period. Housing NSW has approximately 40 properties which are predominantly 30 years + in age as 3 bed houses. These do not meet the current needs and forward needs of the community in the bed volume and accommodation mix.

The housing stock is in need of renewal. As was the case with the National Housing Stimulus Program, a 4:1 yield per block strategy was adopted providing a diversity of equitable housing product with a mix of one, two and three bed product would seem the appropriate forward strategy for Singleton. This will require further discussion and prioritisation with Housing NSW.



Representatives of the community and social services agencies attended the Summits highlighting an immediate demand for crisis housing in Singleton. Their advice was that there was one community refuge house and an urgent need for crisis singles, couples and families accommodation. Approximately 20 persons per night are identified as homeless or in need of crisis accommodation.

Delivery target – 200 additional bed capacity by 2020.

Provision of new social housing - product development (Scott Carver)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- Convert 25 detached house properties at a 4:1 redevelopment ratio providing for integrated family, single and couple accommodation, Target increased 200 bed capacity by 2020.
- Proactively work with NSW Housing to focus investment into conversion of existing ageing stock into new product in Singleton.
- Investigate models that offer affordable housing as an integral component of new CBD housing delivery.
- Realise 30 bed capacities for crisis and emergency accommodation in Singleton by 2017.

Independent and Assisted Seniors Living

The national trend is for increased demand for senior living product in line with an ageing demographic profile. The 2011 Census data indicated a positive +6.0% increase in the 55+ years of age demographic for Singleton. It is important to acknowledge that there is a diverse range of independent, assisted housing and accommodation needs in this sector. Proximity to social infrastructure, health services, transport, retail and the like are key considerations in the forward planning.

There is limited data on actual housing and accommodation supply and demand in this age demographic. Integrated apartment living in the CBD within a socially inclusive context and small lot urban release housing require further investigation to meet the future demand. The forward strategy will require alignment with NSW Housing and social housing providers to ensure that there is suitable product and affordable price point.

Discussions with housing and accommodation providers, financiers and social infrastructure providers is a priority to understand the issues and plan for future growth demand for this demographic.

Existing seniors living accommodation, Singleton Heights

There is one larger facility - Singleton Heights with select independent living product within the CBD precinct. The integration of contemporary living models is a prime consideration with proximity to existing services such as entertainment and transport are key principles. Assisted living generally requires a consolidated accommodation model supported with health and community services and often aligned with existing health infrastructure.

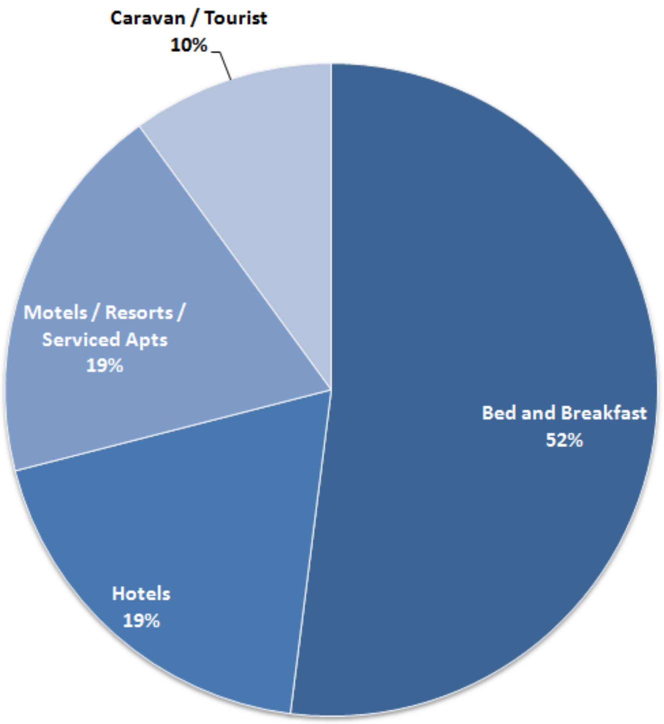
Further research and site identification is required. Lands bequeathed at the Hospital would be an appropriate site for assisted accommodation

PRIORITY

- Review the level of health services and proximity to future housing; to CBD and Urban release as an integrated planning approach.
- Plan for increased assisted living and hospice to support projected ageing population profile.
- Review the forward demand for independent and assisted seniors living as part of the social housing strategy with NSW Housing.
- Increase the volume of one and two bed housing choice for seniors looking to down size with a focus on proximity to existing health and service infrastructure and public transport.
- Market research into needs of seniors living: priorities, housing choice and purchaser trends.

Tourist & Short-Stay Accommodation

A total of 154 short term accommodation establishments were identified in the Upper Hunter region, dominated in number by bed and breakfast and guest houses 52%, followed by hotels 19%, Motel/resort/serviced apartments 19% and caravan/tourist parks 10%. These were distributed across three sites: Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter, with 40% of establishment located in the Singleton LGA.



Singleton LGA Tourist and Short Stay Accommodation Mix

Quest Apartments, Singleton

The Short Term Accommodation Baseline Survey Report (January 2014) prepared for the NSW Mineral Council, provides an insight into how short term accommodation has been affected (across the years 2011-2013) during recent coal mining expansion and retraction.

It is evident that demand for short term accommodation, other than bed and breakfasts establishments, is largely driven by mining activity and to a lesser extent contract work associated with infrastructure projects and railway maintenance. There is capacity within existing accommodation to meet the demands for the immediate future. The variable factor being expansion of the mining sector which would stimulate new investment into accommodation products. The Action Plan suggested limited bed increase that in the short term will be driven by tourism demand.

Defence Housing – 5 Year Demand

Defence personnel housing is an integrated component of the rental housing supply and demand. The accommodation is rental, however provided through DHA procurement investment model. There are two questions regarding this:

1. What is the defence requirement with respect to singles, couples and family accommodation?
2. Demand: growth, status quo or retraction?


STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- Actively engage with the Singleton Army Base and Defence Housing Authority (DHA) to confirm annual and forward housing and accommodation projection to inform this housing and accommodation strategy.

4 Planning

Council has made suitable provision in template LEP and DCP instruments to accommodate higher yield urban release provisions and medium and high density CBD living to five storey.

To realise the ambition of the Housing and Accommodation Strategy, LEP planning instruments have been aligned. Further review and amendment to the Singleton Development Control Plan (DCP) may be needed to delivery qualitative outcomes that support high quality urban living environments.

The two identified demonstration projects are significant in redefining contemporary land use, housing product and in community education. Exploration of new construction methodologies and flexible housing delivery options will further inform forward planning controls.

As stated, the Land Use Strategy provides for continued supply of urban release lands to meet the demand for the next decade. The proposed land efficiency targets of 25% have the potential to extend land supplies. The urban consolidation principle will support efficient use of existing service infrastructure and potentially delivery reduced subdivision costs.

A Council electronic lodgement and administration process will streamline the processing and accelerate the Development Consent process that will incentivise investor confidence. Further alignment of S94 plans is required to support initiative detailed in this strategy.

The alignment of State Government - Upper Hunter planning and infrastructure investment to meet the projected regional growth is identified as a key alignment action to the efficient delivery of a coordinated housing and accommodation Strategy for Singleton. Opportunities for government agency partnering; Urban Growth, Compass Housing and the like, offer strategic, technical and investment support to accelerate the forward housing and accommodation delivery. Government needs to be an active participant in realising new investment and co-shared risk models that provided for investor incentive and confidence to realise regional productivity.

The capacity to realise a Crown lands for a higher value proposition is very limited in Singleton. As noted, there is a need for alignment and renewal of social housing product in Singleton along with a clear regional strategy for emergency accommodation.

Proactive community engagement and consultation forums are strongly recommended to provide a transparent process. Transformative change is challenging. The opportunity for collaborative community participation is a key role for Council to facilitate.

Further quantitative research is required to support aspects of the forward Strategy and Action Plan. Council has the capacity to coordinate data collection and assessment, including community feedback via web based consultative process.

4.1 Infrastructure Alignment

Government has a pivotal role in providing leadership, governance, investment and infrastructure to support regional growth. This directly impacts investor confidence, forward planning and community building. The inability to align critical micro and macro infrastructure; transport, service and social in an expedient coordinated approach is a blockage to the efficient delivery of regional housing and accommodation.

The NSW Government, through the Hunter Development Corporation (HDC Newcastle) has prepared extensive infrastructure and financial modelling to support regional growth strategy investment for the Lower Hunter. This has tremendous application to be expanded to the Upper Hunter. The modelling would inform future infrastructure alignment with Singleton's Housing and Accommodation Strategy and forward urban release program.

Social Infrastructure

The population increase will necessitate social, health and educational investments in Singleton. The high school is sighted as at capacity and urban release growth in Singleton North will require support infrastructure including public transport network.

Future tertiary education and regional health infrastructure are flagged as impacting future housing and accommodation provisions. Childcare, youth amenity, private and public school investment are identified as key issues impacting the liveability and offer of Singleton. Health Care provisions with regard to a young population and ageing demographic require forward planning including hospice, assisted living and mental health care.

Service Infrastructure

The greatest challenge is for alignment of service infrastructure with the urban land release program. In particular, power via third party providers and Council sewerage present challenges in both funding and supply. Services alignment should be critically reviewed in light of this strategy.

Broadband internet is identified as key infrastructure to support the community, education and health sector growth and to meet the needs of an activity based workforce.

Environmental Infrastructure

The management of endangered ecological habitat, flood management and preservation of prime agricultural lands directly influence the future housing land release areas. This strategy envisions an urban consolidation approach that is supported by the community and is a responsible forward land management approach.

Future development must protect the natural environment

The urban environmental quality was identified by the community as a key issue in the provision of quality urban landscape, open space and lifestyle amenity that fosters social engagement and inclusion. Acknowledging the role of landscape as an integral element in the amelioration of extreme climatic events is a mandate that should inform the urban quality criteria.

The quality and liveability of the new residential areas is of key community concern. Uncontrolled vehicular parking, poor streetscape amenity, predominance of colour-bond fencing and limited opportunity for active lifestyle amenity are seen as detracting from a quality living experience.

Transport Infrastructure

The frequency and viability of the commuter rail service is identified as a key community concern and its role in supporting the regional public transit. Connection to Newcastle and eastern network are considered important amenity for the future. What are the future plans for the rail network; commuter and rail freight?

The role and capacity of the airport to support regional growth and expansion of the activity worker commuter needs consideration in the forward planning.

By far the greatest challenge is the capacity of the primary road network to meet the current and future growth demand. The highway severs the town and has high frequency heavy transport movements. Singleton experiences peak congestion along the highway and there is strong support from the community to lobby government for a CBD bypass and or bridge duplication.

The "hole in the wall" on the New England Highway is identified as a major restriction to vehicular movement, safety and capacity to expand the road into the CBD from the west. With the proposed future housing land release to the north and west of the CBD, the ability to expand the road capacity is a significant forward planning issue.

Heavy vehicle movement through Singleton CBD

The northern urban growth area is poorly serviced by public transport which has the potential to further isolate sectors of the community that are immobile and do have access to vehicular transport. A "loop bus" model may be worthy of consideration to link the singleton growth areas with the CBD.

Singleton is a car dependant community. This is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. A core objective of this strategy is to consolidate the urban footprint to encourage ultra-local active transit; walking and cycling. This needs to be supported by investment into appropriate amenity that links Singleton Heights and the CBD

The "Hole in the Wall" - New England Highway

Expansion of the cycle network is identified by the community linking the residential areas to the CBD as an important infrastructure investment which also reinforces Singleton as a liveable lifestyle community.

PRIORITIES

- Critically review service infrastructure alignment to support land release to insure consistency of supply to market and to minimise development costs.
- Through strategic partnerships active lobbying for regional infrastructure; health, education, service and transport to support Singleton as a growth town.
- Utilise 'live data' to informal strategic direction and action plans that are responsive to employment sectors and establish a clear market positioning strategy for Singleton as a lifestyle community of choice.
- Realise the CBD Public Domain Market Plan to improve the urban amenity and support and active CBD living strategy.
- Develop public domain and landscape frameworks to improve the urban quality of urban release areas; including streetscapes, open space systems, passive and active recreation amenity and active movement networks.
- Seek community ideas and participation and implement a 'cultural' activation program for the CBD.

Part 3 - Action Plan

SINGLETON OFFER AND PARTNERSHIPS

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	PROGRAM
Engagement To proactively engage with the community and key stakeholders in evolving forward Action Plans and programs.	- Exhibit Draft Singleton Housing and Accommodation Strategy and finalise document acknowledging feedback.	Exhibit	2014-2015
	- Seek community participation and feed back through interactive web medium to inform, survey and collate data to inform Action Plan.	Engagement Program	2015 – ongoing
	- Initiate CBD Cultural Activation program to engage the community seek ideas to inform an annual program.	CBD Cultural Program	2015 Engage Annual program
Partnerships Develop strong relationships with employment generators, real estate, community services and tourism sector to collate and share information to inform Action Plans	- Actively participate with Upper Hunter Shires in liaison with the NSW Minerals Council and mining sector to proactively plan for expansion and contraction in this sector.	Council participation	Annual program
	- Establish a working group with key stakeholders and real estate industry to share and define new housing product, market positioning and investment alignment.	Working Group	Biannual
	- Promote Singleton as the key regional township for Government investment into education, health services and social and crisis housing.	Council leadership	Ongoing

Live Data Collection **Establish a coordinated database of live data to inform responsive decision making to support regional growth, through strategic partnerships with government, key employment drives, real estate and tourism sectors.**	**- Mineral Council - research and data sets.** **- Defence Sector and DLA: housing mix and delivery program.** **- NSW housing - LAHC and Housing providers demand and delivery program.** **- Real-Estate - purchaser trends, housing cycle, product demand and rental.**	**Council – Working Group** **Sector Data Sets**	**6 month review**
Investment and Incentive **Align the Housing and Accommodation Strategy with a Singleton Place Brand offer to deliver clear market messages and engender investment confidence to advance the township.**	**- Lobby government for investment into schools and health infrastructure to support a growing community.** **- Review the planning scheme to ensure controls provide incentives to innovate in the design and procurement of housing product that is commercially viable and flexible to respond to market forces.** **- Explore with the NSW Mineral Council, DHA and NSW Housing models for co-shared financing of future sector housing.**	**Representation** **LEP & DCP review** **Partnerships**	**Ongoing**

	- Deliver efficient Development Assessment and administration processes to support and encourage development investment. **- Develop a focussed role within Council as a Housing and Accommodation Liaison Officer to proactively facilitate approval process, support community education and representation.** **- Seek potential housing partners to deliver with Council the "demonstration" housing programs** **- Align Government infrastructure with forward housing program to realise regional productivity.**	**Efficient housing approvals** **Liaison Officer – Housing** **Demonstration projects: CBD & urban release** **Infrastructure alignment**	
Singleton Place Brand **In line with the Singleton 2030 Vision and township promotional collateral, redefine the housing offer: product, active lifestyle and culture to be regionally competitive and to support growth in population and regional tourism.**	**- Develop a Singleton Place Brand Strategy that supports the direction of the Housing and Accommodation Strategy, and regional tourism.** **- Develop marketing collateral and media campaign to regionally position Singleton's housing offer.**	**Place Brand Strategy & promotion** **Promotional campaign**	**2014 - ongoing**

Leadership **Council has an Important role in lobbying and engagement with NSW Government for regional investments and infrastructure as part of a collective voice of the Upper Hunter Region Councils.** **Singleton Council has the opportunity to facilitate the delivery of new housing models for intensified urban released and CBD higher density living.**	**- Actively lobby Government for investment into new schools, health infrastructure and growth affordable social housing product.** **- Through partnerships, master plan and deliver Pinnacle 7 as a new model "demonstration" urban release community.** **- Through partnership, define the development opportunity for the Council owned CBD - Ford dealership site as a demonstration CBD infill mixed product to support activation of Johns Street and promote CBD living.**	**Representation** **Urban Release product.** **CBD Living product**	**Ongoing** **Commence 2015** **Commence 2015**

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	PROGRAM
Real Estate & Product **To be regionally competitive for housing, Singleton must adopt new urban release models that promote land-use efficiency, increased housing diversity and a quality of living environment that supports active living and social inclusion.**	- Diversify housing product - land and housing choice, to offer affordable and increased choice for independent singles and couples housing and to promote this as a key market differentiation initiative.	Housing diversity	2015 - ongoing
	- Realise a strategy for 80% of future population growth to the accommodation in urban release in north Singleton and 20% in the Singleton CBD.	Urban consolidation and activation.	2015 – ongoing
	- Align 'Singleton Place' promotion strategy to support new housing and accommodation program to be regionally competitive.	Promotion	2015
	- Elevate the quality of the urban environment through master planning, active living amenity and investment in the CBD Public Domain.	High quality urban amenity and aesthetic	
	- Promote architectural diversity: form and materials, to provide high urban aesthetic including exploration of new building systems that offer fast construction methodology to respond to flexible market forces in the Upper Hunter.	Architectural diversity	2015 – annual review
	- Adopt a 25% residential urban release land use efficiency for future land release through smaller and diversity of lot size.	Land release diversity & affordability	
	- Adopt an urban consolidation approach to forward land release to optimise productive lands for future generations and resource efficiency.	Urban consolidation	
Urban Land Release **Target a 25% residential land use efficiency strategy for all future land release: via higher lot yield through small lot configuration, to increase choice, affordability and optimise land use.**	- Advance Council facilitated "demonstration" project for Pinnacle 7 to achieve a new master plan to achieve: 25% 750m2 lots: 50% 600m2 lots: 25% 300-500m2 lot ratio, supported by a high quality active living environment.	Pinnacle 7 – new urban release product	2014 -16
	- Implement a plan to reduce future urban release average lot size to 600m2 with a tendency toward 25% smaller lot 300-500m2 components.	Land use efficiency	

Urban Land Release	- **Prepare Landscape Framework and master plans to increase the urban quality and active amenity of future urban land release. The principles should also include building climate resilience and micro environmental benefit.** - **Establish an industry working group to advance new land release models and investment strategy that are market sensitive and establish a competitive point of difference for Singleton.**	**Public domain and streetscape investment** **Working Group**	**2014 -16** **2014 -16**
CBD Living **Target 20% of the future population growth in the CBD with capacity to deliver 50-75 beds per annum.**	- **Advance Council facilitated "demonstration" project on key Council owned assets focused on activating the CBD, increasing supply of 1-2 bed accommodation and supporting the CBD Master Plan.** - **Conduct market research to define the future market for CBD higher density living and prepare a marketing plan to support the initiative.** - **Provide for a 5 storey height model to deliver economic incentive and construction efficiency.** - **Implement the CBD Public Domain Master Plan (2013) to deliver a high quality urban aesthetic and amenity** - **Explore co-shared community infrastructure provision as an integral component of the future housing delivery.** - **Promote a CBD LIVING campaign with the real estate industry.** - **Align a cultural events program with the CBD**	**CBD Living program** **Market Research** **Planning provisions** **Public Domain investment** **Co-shared infrastructure** **Promotion** **Cultural events program**	**2014-16** **2014 – ongoing** **2014** **2014 – staged** **2014 – ongoing** **2014-16** **2014 - annual**

Flexible Housing **Explore new models of adaptable housing in response to rapid delivery of housing to meet the flexible demands of the mining sector and employment generations.**	- **Encourage new housing product: horizontal and vertical, modular building systems that are adaptable and contribute positively to the urban environment.** - **Identify future sites for flexible housing product.** - **Liaise with mining and defence sectors to understand forward housing requirements and accommodation standards to support permanent and activity workforces.** - **Review planning instrument provisions for "flexible and adaptable" housing models.**	**Market research** **Planning** **Relationships** **Planning provision**	**2015-16** **2014 - ongoing** **2014 – ongoing** **2014**
Social Housing **Proactively work with NSW Housing to focus investment into conversion of existing ageing stock to new product in Singleton with a mix of one, two and three bed product.**	- **Convert 25 detached house properties at a 4:1 redevelopment ratio to increase bed capacity by 200 beds by 2020.** - **Investigate models that offer affordable and social housing as an integral component of new CBD housing delivery.** - **Realise 30 bed capacity for crisis and emergency accommodation.**	**LHAC commitment and delivery** **Research** **30 bed capacity**	**2015-20** **2014 – ongoing** **2015-17**
Short Stay Accommodation **Short term accommodation, other than bed and breakfasts establishments, is largely driven by mining activity and to a lesser extent contract worker.**	- **Promote Singleton as a regional tourist and events destination through its association with the Hunter Valley Wine region and cultural events program to foster tourism growth and support short stay accommodation providers.** - **Actively plan for future "activity worker" employment peaks with employers' and short stay accommodation providers.**	**Target 50 bed growth per annum** **Upper Hunter Working Group**	**2015-19** **Annual**

Defence Housing **Defence personnel housing is an integrated component of the rental housing supply and demand. The accommodation is rental, however provided through DHA procurement investment model.**	**- Proactively work with DHA to plan for expansion and or contraction of defence personnel accommodation and housing investment via DHA in Singleton.**	**Partnership**	**Annual Review**
Independent and Assisted Seniors Living **Provide a range of housing options for independent and assisted living in forward urban release and CBD living.**	**- Explore future development of "assisted" living in association with hospital lands.** **- Provide housing choice for growing demand for single and couples senior independent and assisted living in Singleton.** **- Identify future seniors housing providers, product and financial models to promote seniors living in Singleton.** **- Review the level of health services, proximity to future housing, CBD, Urban release.** **- Evolve targeted marketing campaign attract seniors to Singleton with future land release and CBD Living program.**	**Review** **Housing diversity** **Research** **Planning** **Promotion**	**2015-2016**

PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	PROGRAM
Planning Align the Housing Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan with other Council strategic plans, funding and programs. Promote urban consolidation to optimise existing infrastructure and lobby for new investment to support population growth and regional productivity.	- Review planning instruments with regard to development controls and land use to include strategic directions for residential urban land release and CBD living. - Adopt data collation and share actions to inform responsive forward planning. - Council participation in working group and research to inform Action Plans. - Critical review of services alignment: regional, third party and Council to future residential land release program.	Review Date share Working group participation Services alignment	2015 - ongoing
	- Review Section 94 plan to support initiatives of the Housing and Accommodation Strategy, in particular services and urban amenity investment. - Facilitate master planning of “demonstration” projects. - Implement Landscape Framework strategy – Master Plans for all urban release lands to improve the urban aesthetic, amenity and environmental resilience. - Plan and invest into active transport infrastructure: walking and cycle, and flexible public transport modes to reduce the dependency of car travel and promote healthy living. - Advocate for new Government investment into schools and health service to support a growing community. - Continue to review options to elevate CBD and road traffic congestion to support a high quality CBD living environment. - Align Singleton’s forward housing and accommodation offer with a “Town Branding” strategy.	Section 94 Plan review Facilitation Urban Quality investment Active transport modes New infrastructure Traffic management Promotion	

6 Implementation

6.1 Demand Drivers

The delivery to market of primarily a family home permanent detached or duplex product does not meet the housing and accommodation requirements of the broader community. Best practice land management would strongly support urban consolidation that offers a diversity of lot size, housing product and price point. The Summits yielded strong support for redefining the land release offer to broaden the housing mix and affordability.

New urban release lands above the flood catchment in the Singleton North precinct is supported with additional services amenity, public open space provisions, child care, schooling and public transport.

A review of the urban land release strategy is recommended including reconsideration of the current subdivisional planning for the forward 2100 lots. Appropriate targets need to be defined for the; yield mix, increased population density and land use efficiency metrics.

6.2 25 Year Demand Projection - Beds

Refer Page 74.

SINGLETON HOUSING & ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

25 YEAR DEMAND PROJECTION - BEDS 2015-2036

CATEGORY	Target	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020-2025	2026-2030	2031-2036
PERMANENT POPULATION	Growth	22,500	23,800	24,100	24,400	24,700	26,800	28,900	31,000
Regional growth target 1.3%pa (Beds = 115 houses at 2.6 persons)	Target beds	300	300	300	300	300	2100	2100	2100
Community & Crisis Housing	Growth	20	40	80	120	160	210	260	310
Convert stock at 5 houses pa. to increase pop.density to 8 persons per site.	Target beds	20	20	40	40	40	50	50	50
Crisis and emergency accommodation	Target beds	10	10	10	*	*	*	*	*
Defence Housing	Capacity	Subject to discussion with DHA - Assume current demand is provided in urban release							
Singles, couples & families	Target beds	*	*	*	*	*	0	0	0
NON PERMANENT	Capacity	Subject to mining sector employment cycle							
Flexible - Activity Worker	Target beds	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		Subject to regional tourism growth and linked to mining sector employment cycle							
Short Stay Accommodation	Target beds	50	50	50	50	50	100	100	100

*** Subject to further research and annual cyclical market review**