



# Central Coast Council Draft Tuggerah to Wyong Economic Corridor Strategy

**UDIA Response**

May 2020

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## CONTACT

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## ABOUT THE UDIA

Established in 1963, the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) is the leading industry group representing the property development sector. Our 500 member companies include developers, engineers, consultants, utilities, and local government including Central Coast Council. Our advocacy is focussed on developing liveable, affordable, and connected cities.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW Division welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission into the exhibition of the Central Coast Council (Council) draft Tuggerah to Wyong Economic Corridor Strategy (draft Strategy).

The Central Coast Chapter of UDIA represents the full spectrum of the development industry in the region and is focused on the delivery of housing, jobs, transportation, and sustainable development for the Central Coast. As part of the community, UDIA shares Council's aspirations for creating more local jobs and delivering housing for the residents of the Central Coast.

UDIA is encouraged that Council has undertaken the work to draft a Tuggerah to Wyong Economic Corridor Strategy. Over many years with both the former Wyong Shire council and the now Central Coast Council, our members have advocated for planning progress in the Northern Growth Corridor (Corridor), and we support the public exhibition of this draft Strategy. However, while in general we don't disagree with the Directions and Actions included in the draft Strategy, we believe it does not go far enough to articulate and support the outstanding economic potential of this Corridor which would benefit the region as a whole.

The final Strategy will become an increasingly important document as NSW continues to experience the growing pains of the major metropolis of Sydney, and as people and businesses search for a more affordable and liveable lifestyle offered on the Central Coast where land is accessible to Sydney and Newcastle but more affordable especially compared to Sydney. The timing of the Strategy is critical with the \$3 billion Northconnex Project nearing completion, the new Intercity rail fleet and potential fast rail planned through the region, and the growing comfort for remote working which is being highlighted in NSW's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Premier labelled the Central Coast "NSW's fastest growing corridor" and called for a 25,000 jobs boost in her speech at the CEDA economic forum in November 2019.

In its draft Strategy, Council identifies capacity for 23,270 new jobs and 2,558 new dwellings in this Corridor under current controls but projects the delivery of only 3,400 additional jobs and 1,975 new dwellings through 2036. That leaves a residual capacity of 19,870 jobs and 583 new dwellings in the Tuggerah to Wyong Corridor beyond forecasts. How will Council unlock the Corridor's promise?

UDIA believes that the draft Strategy, as currently written, misses opportunities to outline how the Corridor's growth can be supported and to send a strong message to the private sector, the NSW and Commonwealth Governments that the Central Coast is "open for business" and seeking to support major jobs expansion in its local economy. We urge Council to demonstrate its commitment to growing local jobs by strengthening the draft Strategy under a more expansive vision. The final Strategy should focus on unlocking the full aspirational capacity of the Corridor, instead of focusing on supporting the existing modest projections. In other words, the final Strategy should adopt a target of 23,270 new jobs and 2,558 new dwellings.

UDIA offers this submission to provide our recommendations, which are summarised on the following page. Supporting comments are provided in the remainder of the submission. We would welcome the chance to engage further with Council as it works to finalise the Strategy.

In summary, we recommend that Council take the following actions to improve the draft Tuggerah to Wyong Economic Corridor Strategy:

1. **Incorporate into the Strategy the complete geographical Northern Growth Corridor (i.e., extended to include Warnervale, Bushells Ridge, Wyong Employment Zone, Wyong Hospital Precinct, Wadalba, Doyalson and Lake Munmorah) as defined in the Central Coast Regional Plan 2036.**
- 1a. **If it is not possible to include the full Northern Growth Corridor in the Corridor Strategy at this time, then accelerate the release of associated plans such as the Greater Warnervale Structure Plan and Central Coast Airport masterplan and include a commitment on timing.**
2. **Adopt aspirational targets based on the Corridor's capacity to support 23,270 new jobs and 2,558 new dwellings over the next 20 years.**
3. **Outline how existing established employment areas will be supported for further growth.**
4. **Reflect updated local road planning efforts in the Tuggerah precinct area.**
5. **Understand and leverage the impacts of Northconnex, M1 upgrades, intercity rail improvements and acceleration of remote working.**
6. **Work with industry to address environmental barriers to development and identify incentives to encourage sustainable development.**
7. **Work with industry to encourage outcomes without dampening growth incentives.**
8. **Investigate the potential for diversified mixed uses in the precincts.**
9. **At Tuggerah, investigate precinct-wide solutions for flooding and reflect greater potential for transport-oriented development with minimum 8-storey heights at the TOD.**

## COMMENTS

### Geographical Inclusions

UDIA is disappointed that the draft Strategy does not include the key areas which offer the greatest opportunity for employment in the Northern Growth Corridor, and instead defers their consideration to the later Greater Warnervale Structure Plan (GWSP). UDIA believes the full Northern Growth Corridor as defined in the Central Coast Regional Plan 2036 (CCRP) should be included in the final Strategy, i.e., the draft Strategy should be expanded to incorporate these key areas:

- Warnervale Town Centre
- Wyong Employment Zone (WEZ)

- Wyong Hospital Precinct
- Warnervale Urban Release Area
- Wadalba Urban Release Area
- Doyalson
- Lake Munmorah

Other projects and debates regarding the broader Corridor are occurring now, for example with regard to residential development in Precinct 7A and Warnervale Town Centre, a new Warnervale public school, the future of Warnervale train station, and Council's proposed University and Education Business Park near Warnervale Station.

The Wyong Employment Zone (WEZ) was rezoned in 2008 and still lacks essential infrastructure and certainty on biodiversity matters. These issues, at least in the short term, should be included as part of the final Strategy.

In addition, the Central Coast Airport masterplan, which has been continually deferred by Council, should be included in this Strategy.

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***Recommendation:** The Strategy should incorporate the full geographical footprint of the Northern Growth Corridor as identified in the CCRP. If it is not possible to include the full Corridor areas in this Strategy, then UDIA urges Council to accelerate the Greater Warnervale Structure Plan and the Central Coast Airport masterplan and include a commitment in the final Strategy to when they will be released.*

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## **Evaluation of Land Supply**

UDIA notes *Action 2.1: Resist rezoning significant sites and releasing new urban land in the short to medium terms*. We query the rationale behind this Action, when it has also stated, for example on page 20, that "some of the available employment land in the Corridor is not in attractive locations for development".

While it may be true that there is "sufficient land rezoned" on paper, we encourage Council to investigate the reasons why this land has not yet delivered. Many sites are constrained for various reasons and may not ever be developed. We encourage Council to maintain a flexible approach to rezoning to account for unforeseen constraints on currently zoned land.

Hence, UDIA is strongly supportive of *Action 2.2: Continue to monitor take-up and availability of industrial land in the corridor*. UDIA encourages Council to expand upon this Action through a robust Urban Development Program (UDP) that includes employment, industrial and residential land. Establishing and maintaining a clear understanding of land supply is critical to the ongoing assessment of their delivery and opportunities for economic growth.

The UDP information should be regularly updated and published for public viewing, which will enable Council, State and Commonwealth Governments, the community, and the private sector to evaluate ongoing opportunities.

UDIA has tools and experience in managing UDP projects that can assist in Council's data gathering, and we would be pleased to work with Council on this endeavour. In 2018 UDIA and its partners completed the Blacktown UDP Pilot and this year we are well advanced with a Western Sydney UDP, including collaboration with DPIE, NSW Digital Twin, Sydney Water, Endeavour Energy and four Councils.

UDIA strongly supports *Action 2.3: Attract and retain business* and would like to see Council commit to a more aggressive approach. Fundamentally, the final Strategy will be an essential device in signalling to both existing and potential private sector investors that the Central Coast is committed to supporting their investments. In order to provide such confidence, we urge Council to demonstrate its support for the Northern Growth Corridor by improving the draft Strategy through the adoption of our recommendations.

As identified by Council, the Corridor contains residual capacity of 19,870 jobs and 583 dwelling beyond current growth forecasts. This enormous economic growth capacity in the Corridor requires leadership to unlock. UDIA recommends that the draft Strategy further outline how Central Coast Council will support and promote growth in existing established employment areas.

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**Recommendation:** *Adopt aspirational targets based on the Corridor's capacity to support 23,270 new jobs and 2,558 new dwellings over the next 20 years, and outline how existing established employment areas will be supported for further growth.*

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## **Transport and Movement**

UDIA supports the goal of *Direction 3: Maximise connectivity between activity nodes and centres to support renewal opportunities*. Resolving traffic issues is critical to maximising the economic benefits of growth.

We strongly support *Action 3.7: Prepare a Transport Study* and urge Council to complete a comprehensive Transport Study as a matter of urgency.

### Tuggerah Local Road Network

We note recent discussions have been undertaken between Council, Transport for NSW and investors related to local road planning from the M1 to the Tuggerah precinct area. It is not evident that the draft Strategy has incorporated the updated efforts. As a result, the draft Strategy misses opportunities to leverage an improved local street network in the Tuggerah Precinct.

In September 2018, a Council report on the proposed Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund identified the potential Tuggerah East. The accompanying plan to that report included a recommended road linkage from Lake Rd, via Mooramba Rd to a new intersection at Wyong Rd. This concept has the support from several local stakeholders. However, the draft Strategy shows a proposed road link through Council's sewer effluent ponds, connecting to the Reliance Dr roundabout. The draft Strategy's route would seem highly unviable compared to the earlier alternative.

We are aware there are at least 5 significant stakeholders with current projects in the Tuggerah East area, including Council, Transport for NSW and private investors, all of whom would benefit from a review of local roads in the immediate/short term. Bryant Dr is already at failing capacity. It would be optimal timing to revisit Tuggerah East road planning options now.

We urge Council to update the draft Strategy to reflect local road planning efforts in the Tuggerah precinct area.

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***Recommendation: Reflect updated local road planning efforts in the Tuggerah precinct area.***

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#### Consideration of Growth Drivers

UDIA strongly supports *Action 3.5: Understand and leverage the opportunities associated with the Sydney to Newcastle fast rail project* and congratulates Council on focusing on this critical opportunity. UDIA is developing tools to evaluate the value uplift along potential rail corridors, and we would be pleased to work with Council as it embarks on this work.

Other important influences exist beyond the potential for fast rail, and we encourage Council to update the draft Strategy to also understand and leverage opportunities associated with the following:

- **Upgraded intercity rail fleet**  
Before a fast rail project is implemented, improvements to the existing rail corridor and fleet are being planned which should decrease travel times from Tuggerah to Sydney and Newcastle for both passengers and freight.
- **Northconnex and M1 upgrades**  
The opening of the Northconnex project as well as current and future planned M1 upgrades will further improve the Central Coast's connectivity between Sydney, Newcastle and the Newcastle Airport.
- **Remote access for work**  
While physical connectivity to the rest of NSW, Australia and the global economy is imperative for Central Coast businesses, so too is digital access. In addition, the utility of, and comfort

with, working from home and home-based businesses has been growing and is likely to accelerate through the experiences of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Council should consider the growing influence of digital access and ensure that the region is well-equipped with leading digital technology infrastructure and capability.

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***Recommendation:** Understand and leverage the impacts of Northconnex, M1 upgrades, intercity rail improvements and acceleration of remote working.*

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## **Environment and Sustainability**

UDIA generally supports the goals of *Direction 4: Maintain and improve the area's strong relationship with green open space and the environment*. We urge Council to maintain the proper balance between environmental, social and economic benefits as it considers its various policies in this regard.

UDIA strongly supports the strategic conservation planning ("bio-certification") project underway by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for the Central Coast. UDIA shares Council's goals for protecting the natural environment that is a unique and valuable asset for the region.

As we have noted in past discussions and submissions, biodiversity issues are complex and are often a barrier to delivering anticipated development. We wish to work with Council to address these issues, and we welcome the opportunity for further discussion beyond this submission.

Beyond the specific actions proposed, UDIA notes recent discussions between Council and industry on how to better understand barriers and opportunities to enable and encourage more sustainable development on the Central Coast. UDIA supports efforts to develop incentives to encourage sustainable development measures. We would be pleased to engage more closely with Council in this area.

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***Recommendation:** Work with industry to address environmental barriers to development and identify incentives to encourage sustainable development.*

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## **Precinct Strategies**

### North Wyong & Watanobbi Precinct

UDIA generally supports the goals of the Directions and Actions for this precinct, while urging Council to focus on minimising costs for development to boost delivery of individual sites. We would be

pleased to engage with Council as it considers how to encourage outcomes without dampening the growth it seeks.

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*Recommendation: Work with industry to encourage outcomes without dampening growth incentives.*

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#### Wyong & East Wyong Precinct

UDIA supports the goals of this Direction and its Actions as far as they go. However, we would ask whether more could be done to encourage growth in this precinct. For example, UDIA recommends that the draft Strategy be updated to reflect the potential for diversified mixed uses.

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*Recommendation: Investigate the potential for diversified mixed uses in the precincts.*

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#### Tuggerah Precinct

UDIA is disappointed that the Directions & Actions for the Tuggerah Precinct have not gone far enough to support the growth of the Central Coast's major gateway between Sydney and Newcastle. We encourage Council to build on the principles of the draft Strategy to more robustly promote the potential of the Tuggerah Precinct.

Under Direction 12: Utilisation of flood prone land, while we support the action to investigate recreational uses in flood prone areas, we also encourage Council to pursue a precinct wide solution and funding to mitigate broader flood constraints in this important precinct.

Under Direction 13: Sustainable renewal in Tuggerah Town Centre, we urge Council to update the draft Strategy to reflect greater potential for transport-oriented development (TOD) at Tuggerah.

On pages 68-69 of the draft Strategy, Council provides brief comment and an image of what a TOD might look like, emphasizing "low scale mixed-use development":

### Action 13.1 Investigate transit-oriented development at Tuggerah Station

The immediate vision for Tuggerah is to continue to provide for employment growth and to support regional sporting, retail and entertainment facilities. Council to seek funding to investigate the development of mixed-use residential and short-term accommodation around the station. This may include investigations for flood mitigation in the area. In the longer term, renewal around the station may deliver additional local shops to service commuters as well as short-term accommodation to support the existing business park and regional sporting facilities. Intensifying development around the station will increase activity, creating a more vibrant and safer place. It is important that a plan is in place to future-proof land for renewal.



Potential low scale mixed use development and landscaping along Anzac Road.



#### Transit-oriented development

Opportunity for future low-scale mixed-use development around Tuggerah Station.

However, project feasibility experience suggests that a minimum of 8 stories is needed to promote take-up of a mixed-use TOD. These objectives are consistent with contemporary urban planning for TOD development to be based on taller buildings near the rail station and support 30-minute city planning objectives, which improve affordability and liveability for communities. There is already a 6-storey building on the outer edge of the TOD site (the Mariner's office building 600m away); the Tuggerah TOD itself should provide greater height of at least 8 stories. Tuggerah TOD also benefits from the Government's investment in the Tuggerah regional playing fields providing substantial open space within 200 metres of the railway station and further opportunities for walking and community recreation with greater connection to the nearby Pioneer Dairy.

We strongly recommend that Council incorporate more aspirational wording and images regarding TOD development to encourage investment.

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**Recommendation:** At Tuggerah, investigate precinct-wide solutions for flooding and reflect greater potential for transport-oriented development with minimum 8-storey heights at the TOD.

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## CONCLUSION

UDIA is grateful for the opportunity to offer comment on the draft Tuggerah to Wyong Economic Corridor Strategy. Whilst the exhibited draft Strategy provides a sound base in many elements as this

Region continues to grow, UDIA and its members see greater potential for growth in the Northern Growth Corridor beyond what is suggested in the draft Strategy. We would be pleased to meet with Council staff to discuss in greater detail where these opportunities exist. Should you have any questions or wish to schedule a meeting for further discussion, please contact Elizabeth York, Regional Manager, at [eyork@udiansw.com.au](mailto:eyork@udiansw.com.au) or 0434 914 901.

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