



New Planning System for NSW

28-Jun-2013 submission on White Paper (April 2013)

... more holistic REGIONAL PLANNING

CHAPTER 5 STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK - NSW REGIONS & Subregions

Recommendation:

THAT the new NSW Planning System take this historic opportunity to enable parallel Regional NRM Planning, with holistic local community participation, by aligning with Regional (and/or Subregional) boundaries adopted by DPI's Local Land Services (LLS).

We enthusiastically support the **hierarchy of four levels** of planning designed to come together simply and spatially within each underlying **Local Plan**. Community participation in all levels of planning is best conducted holistically within each Local Government Area (LGA). ABS data on the economy, jobs and the environment is reported within each LGA. Local groups like Landcare add to the social fabric.

The top overlay of **NSW Planning Policies** facilitate a **whole-of-government service**, including funding from our Australian Government (AG). We welcome the Planning Minister's Foreword recognition of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) reports, including Natural Resource Management (NRM); and his assurance that this new planning system "*enables positive development outcomes for the state in a way that is also mindful of the need to protect and enhance the environment*".*

We understand why **Regional and Subregional Plans** in this White Paper focus primarily on housing and infrastructure in *urban growth areas*. We recognise this urgent priority especially around Sydney.

Regional communities throughout NSW are already working with Regional NRM Plans/CAPs which will expand from 2014 onwards under Regional Local Land Services (LLS). Upon examination we see little reason why most LLS Regions and their subregional plans should not share boundaries with Planning Region/Subregions. LGA boundaries are now common boundaries (unlike the old CMA Catchments).

My experience with Agency 'silo' problems began as the sole community representative on the board of Premier Carr's CANRI Program (Community Access to Natural Resource Information). More recently Environment Minister Parker appointed me to the board of Aboriginal Owners' Gulaga National Park and I meet Government and Coalition members in Canberra on the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI). Landcare and 'Climate Ready' Regional NRM Plans under LLS will gain expanded CFI-funding in 2014.

NSW North Coast Koala Protection Plans prepared by Local Government were over-ridden by Forestry. Today the OEH and one Regional CMA manage \$5m in 2 AG-funded Koala Habitat Protection projects. Listing of Koala as 'vulnerable species' under the EPBC in 2012 could ensure more AG-funding in 2014.

*Figure 11 on page 71 of the White paper shows how existing SEPP No.44 – **Koala Habitat Protection** 'may be translated into the new planning framework. The proposed **Environment and Conservation NSW Planning Policy** would specify the objectives of conserving areas of natural habitat for koalas and reversing the trend of koala population decline.' This would be reflected spatially in Regional and Subregional Plans. 'The relevant parts of Local Plans would specify specific land use or development controls applying in identified areas'. This Framework is 'informed by Strategic Planning Principles' eg.

Level ① NSW Planning Policy	- encourages conservation of habitat for koalas over their present range
Level ② Regional Plan	- determine if the policy applies to the region and identify koala habitat
Level ③ Subregional Plan	- prepare a plan of management if there is core koala habitat
Level ④ Local Plan	- include koala habitat in Environmental Zone or apply special provisions

Shared GIS/Spatial tools and maps for native vegetation and other layers are key framework enablers. Page 67 of the White Paper claims the new hierarchy of plans will also address *Catchment Action Plans*. Thank you for this opportunity for community participation. Nature.Net provides carbon farming services to *connect, protect and restore* regional forests in the South East, Hunter and North Coast.

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