1. Sydney

This region encompasses the Sydney metropolitan area and its commuter region, with the exception of the northern Illawarra which has a distinctive landform and historical dissociation from Sydney. The region is well-bounded topographically by including the Hornsby plateau to the north, extending into Wyong Shire and Gosford which is increasingly coming into the orbit of the Sydney housing market with improved communications. On the west is the plateau of the Blue Mountains, an early barrier to expansion, which is now a commuter and vacation area for Sydney. To the south is the Woronora plateau, much occupied by the Royal National Park and catchments for water supply. The region is extended in the south-west to include the natural corridor leading to Goulburn, where commuter, retirement and recreational towns have developed.

The core of the region is the Cumberland Plain developed in Wianamatta Shale, with important alluvials along the Hawkesbury and to a lesser extent at Botany Bay.

The coast provides harbours in Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay. As elsewhere in New South Wales, the sea rose after the last glaciation and has drowned the valleys which frame these deepwater parts and the Hawkesbury Valley. Consequent accommodation of sand in embayments provides for resort development.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS
All Sydney metropolitan councils

CITIES
Blue Mountains
Gosford, Hawkesbury

SHIREs
Wingecarribee
Wollondilly, Wyong
PREAMBLE
The decision to designate Sydney as Region 1 was taken in order to maintain the logic of the geographic divisions of the state. While it can be characterised as a region for some purposes, Sydney is overwhelmingly more significant than the other regions, not only in its concentration of population and functions it contains, but in the complexity of its functions. This in part stems from the frequency of overlay of land uses, and in part from the degree to which ‘local’ activities and ‘higher order’ activities share the same geographic space.

Much that is of heritage significance within the central city area is significant not only (or not even) to the region, but to a far wider locality - in some cases to the world. The implications for the heritage inventory of Sydney’s dominating position are:

- Items of significance at the local suburban level must not be allowed to be swamped by the dominance of the centre.
- Heritage items at the centre which are of local significance must not be jettisoned in favour of items of a wider significance which occupy the same space.
- Some of the areas contained in this region would not be considered as part of Sydney at present, while some areas which are currently so considered would not have been so in the past. The evolution from rural to suburban to urban is always rapid within this region.

The political and economic dominance of Sydney over the whole colony from the start of European settlement means that in many cases the significance of activities in all the regions will only be understood when the links are made with the Sydney region.

Sydney now holds nearly two-thirds of the State’s population. As the size of its population has grown, Sydney’s built-up area has spread within the Cumberland Wianamatta shale lowland, and on to adjoining coastal sandstone plateaux, the Hornsby and Woronora Plateaux. In a way Sydney has been ultimately, though not initially, fortunate in the broad band of rugged sandstone upland that surrounds it, giving it breathing space for recreation and water supply, but such is the scarcity and price of land that Sydney’s urban community lies now well beyond these barriers, on the Central Coast, in the Blue Mountains, and to the south-west highlands. Sydney even draws some commuters from Illawarra, another region. Modified by its topography, Sydney has grown as a modern city over a long period. Its growth has been affected by rising land prices at the centre; radial growth dictated by changing modes of transport; and booms and busts in the Australian economy.

BEGINNINGS
Governor Arthur Phillip arrived on the coast with convict in January 1788; finding Botany Bay not to his liking he sought out Port Jackson, and discovering a run of water there, he made a start on the colony at Sydney Cove where the now-tunnelled Tank Stream provided fresh water. Very soon the 1,000 or so people were housed in tents, wooden huts, or wattle and daub houses, with bricks made after March 1788. By 1799 the population had grown, mainly by transportation, to 2,500. A subsidiary settlement had been set up at Parramatta, where soils were better for agriculture, and this was surrounded by smaller settlement at Prospect, Toongabbie and the timber gang at Castle Hill. Time-expired and ticket-of-leave convicts were already farming on the Hawkesbury alluvial against Aboriginal resistance.

Early Sydney showed no signs of fulfilling Erasmus Darwin’s dream of a southern metropolis:

> There shall broad streets their stately walls extend,<br> The Circus widen and the crescent bend:<br> There, ray’d from cities o’er the cultur’d land,<br> Shall bright canals and solid roads expand.<br> There the proud arch, Colossus-like, bestride<br> Yon glittering streams, and bound the chasing tide.
The only bridge was a wooden one, over the sullied Tank Stream at Bridge Street, and the best road was a bestumped and rutted track that led to Parramatta.

Little of this early Sydney survives except the street plan. It was a wooden town soon overtaken by grander buildings, as Fowles shows in his drawings of Sydney streets in the 1840s. Even by 1829, Burford could write in his *Description of a View of the Town of Sydney*:

The houses are in general substantially built of freestone, or brick plastered, seldom more than two or three stories in height, with verandas to at least one story, the roofs are covered on with shingles of iron bark, or cedar. Near the harbour, where the ground is valuable, the buildings are contiguous, but, generally speaking, the better sort of houses are detached, having a small enclosure in front, with a neat geranium hedge.

Most of this was still within Meehan’s plan of 1809, essentially laid down by Phillip, but government in the 1820s was still struggling to enforce conformity with building lines in the streets.

A major contribution to the public splendour of this colonial port was made by Governor Macquarie, who between 1810 and 1821 built some fine structures, some of which survive. The Mint building (1812) and Parliament House are two wings of his ‘rum’ hospital. The Hyde Park Barracks was built in 1817, Macquarie Lighthouse in 1818, and St James’ Church in 1819. Fort Macquarie was finished in 1819 to complement Dawes Battery for harbour defences, and the government stables, later the Conservatorium of Music, was finished in 1821. All this with the help of the architect Francis Greenway, who also designed bridges, a hospital at Liverpool, the Lancer Barracks at Parramatta, and an obelisk in Macquarie Place to denote distances in the colony for which Sydney was the centre. St Luke’s Church was built at Liverpool, St. Matthew’s at Windsor, two towns that reflected Macquarie’s aims of civilising the remoter settlements. It was Macquarie who began to make settlers conform their enclosures and buildings to Meehan’s plan, and who may be said to have lifted Sydney into the status of a town rather than a camp.

**ECONOMY**

The Crown paid for all this mainly through expenditures on the upkeep of the convicts, and by convict labour. Until 1820, the Commissariat was the chief supplier, the chief buyer and supplier of labour. With its help, fine buildings were made, and roads constructed, to Parramatta, on which tolls were charged, to Liverpool in 1814, to Botany Bay in 1813, while Cox’s road to Bathurst was made by convicts in 1815. South Head road was providing a promenade for Sydney people from as early as 1811. But while a trail was blazed to Goulburn by Throsby and Meehan, the road was not begun until the 1820s. A track to Illawarra was found at the same time. But while people were reaching out, Sydney remained their focus.

Trade had begun in the very early days, in articles of use, and increasing in imported rum which was used to buy the spare labour of convicts. Officers speculated in imported goods, and merchants joined them, one of the most significant being John Campbell whose wharf and warehouses occupied the western wide of Sydney Cove. Behind lay the ‘rocks’, already a labyrinth of ill-drained slums and sly-grog shanties. Imports were paid for by bills on the Commissariat in London; exports were limited, though cedar was exported from 1806.

The basis of a new economy was found in the 1820s. First there was whaling and sealing; ample resources lay off the eastern Australian coast and were easily exploited. Parties of whalers and sealskin robbers left Sydney, and exported their oil, spermaceti, whalebone and skins through American ships, which engaged more in open sea whaling. From the late 1820s, the East India Company’s monopoly on Australian trade was broken, and the industry could ship directly to England. When the local whales were exhausted, ships were sent to New Zealand waters. Until 1834, exports from the fisheries exceeded in value those from wool. Shipping meant industry – sailmakers, ropeworks, slipways, timber, and more trade in ships’ chandlery. The town had acquired the colony’s first staple industry and self-initiated growth. Shipments of wool
increased the trade of the port, and eventually, as Barnard has described, a wool sales auction market in Sydney itself to which overseas buyers were coming in mid-century.

A growing population meant a market for easily made consumer goods, often bulky to transport. A steam flour mill operated from 1813, and there was growing diversification into soap and candles from local tallow, breweries, distilleries, tanneries, iron foundries, woollen mills, and a sugar refinery in 1841 that still stands at Cooks River. Salt was boiled; hats, boots, clothing manufactured, paper and furniture made. Pottery, brick-making, tile-making, used the local clay. The stench from some of these industries was so poisonous that during the 1830s they were pushed away from the populated areas and towards waterside areas. Then, in 1849 legislation was enacted which ordered these industries to remove themselves from within the city boundaries within ten years. They settled at Blackwattle Swamp in particular, though others went further afield to Botany. In some of these trades, Sydney supplied the whole colony, in others, inland centres sprang up, defended from Sydney competition by the cost of transport. In 1853, Sydney had only 3 of 16 breweries, 15 of 130 flour mills, and one of 5 woollen mills. Centralisation was to come later. By 1900, with the aid of railways, Sydney had 63 per cent of the colony’s manufacturing workforce, by 1920 it was 75 per cent. This process of extinguishing country enterprise was encouraged by economies of scale, freight rate policies on the railways, and branding.

The brewing industry demonstrates the complex processes at work that turned Sydney from a mercantile city to a manufacturing city. At first country breweries were encouraged by government and protected from Sydney by high costs of transport, even by water. The beer made was highly perishable, because hops were scarce and expensive. The inland breweries even survived at first the coming of the railways, because they could deliver promptly to the local area, and had their tied public houses, and a local price advantage. The attack when it came in the 1890s was partly financial, partly technological. New scientific methods made brewing high quality beer a large-scale activity, and the city breweries that took this up needed more outlets, and so bought up and closed down country breweries already hampered by a new tax on beer that undermined their price advantage and made demands on their working capital they could not meet. The improved keeping qualities of the new beer made country markets accessible, and the city breweries practised price equalisation to keep country prices down. Tooth’s, Resch’s, Marshall’s, Marks and Cornwall’s city breweries took over the country trade, and by 1921 made 80 per cent of the state’s beer. Transport, technology, access to a large local market and financial power were all elements that simplified the country town. In the nineteenth century the country town was a manufacturing area; in the twentieth century it was a service centre distributing Sydney-made goods or goods imported through Sydney.

Meanwhile, the functions of government grew and were concentrated in Sydney. New South Wales has been dominated by government licence, restrictions, land control and planning from its beginnings, and the growth of the modern bureaucratic state in the nineteenth century was nowhere more apparent than in New South Wales where government interfered more and more with aspects of work, leisure and settlement. A vast bureaucracy grew up, which swelled Sydney’s population, and produced grand edifices that showed the power and righteousness of the democratic state in such buildings as the Lands Department, the Education Department and the Chief Secretary’s Office. This was a duplication of Macquarie’s earlier efforts to impose an official landscape on central Sydney.

**EARLY SUBURBS**

Even in the 1830s and 1840s, those who could afford it left the centre for more Arcadian surroundings, thus forming the first suburbs. Sydney was still a walking city, and the mass of the population crowded into narrow tenements within the old plan, too poor to afford horse transport. But the population grew from 11,000 in 1828, to 30,000 in 1841, and some relief was needed. In the prosperous years of the 1830s, many could afford new houses, and land speculation in subdividing near-city estates was rife. Sydney was ‘completely English’ according to one visitor, C.J.
Baker, the footpaths were paved, water was drawn from the Lachlan Swamps (now Centennial Park) through Busby’s Bore, wooden buildings were prohibited, noxious industries kept at bay, and some roads were macadamised.

Beyond the city was a rising ring of suburbs, mostly on high ground for health and sea cooling breezes. Far out on the south shore of the harbour lay Watsons Bay, a fishing village too far off for these early suburbanites: it became a suburb only in the 1860s. Closer in was Darling Point, connected by New South Head Road in 1831, divided into large gentlemen’s allotments with fine houses such as Carthona and Lindsay. The impressive St Mark’s Church was built in 1848.

Closer in was low-lying Woolloomooloo, which in this period was an upper class suburb, but by the 1880s had deteriorated to working class level. Darlinghurst was a mixed suburb of many small terrace houses, mixed with some grander ones, replacing the windmills that earlier stood on this ridge. Darlinghurst Gaol, designed by Mortimer Lewis and built in 1841, lowered the tone. Lewis also designed the court house facing Taylor Square. Redfern, originally surgeon William Redfern’s estate, developed first as a high class suburb, losing its status when the railway and Eveleigh yards arrived and made it a working class area. Paddington at first had some good houses, such as Juniper Hall, but the siting of Victoria Barracks in 1848 made it a home for soldiers and their families. Its terrace houses are therefore of very mixed size and status.

Newtown was an attractive residential suburb in the 1830s and 1840s, but subsequent subdivision produced in the latter century a largely working-class, tightly packed suburb interspersed with some grand terraces such as Georgina Street. The original St Stephen’s church, designed by Edmund Blackett in 1844, was replaced by the same architect thirty years later on a site within the existing Camperdown cemetery.

Most people in the Sydney area were buried in a public graveyard, first at Brickfield Hill where the Town Hall now stands, then at Devonshire Street on the site of Central Railway Station, and finally at Bunnerong, Rookwood and North Ryde. Northern Sydney had its own fine burial ground at Gore Hill dedicated in 1868. All demonstrate changing attitudes to death in society: the churchyards denote a community death, the nineteenth-century graveyards as at Waverley, celebrate the death of the individual with their grand monuments, while the simpler style of the twentieth-century monument illustrates the hidden anonymous death from which our contemporaries recoil.

Grose Farm, Crown land, separated Newtown from the Glebe, a suburb built mainly on land granted early as an endowment for the Church of England. At its Parramatta Road end this was a working class suburb, serving the industries of Blackwattle Bay and the stockyards to which cattle were brought in from the west. On the peninsula, however, were large subdivisions with some fine houses. The upper class suburbs of the time can be recognised partly from surviving buildings, but chiefly by the dominance of professional men and merchants but also domestic servants among the occupations recorded at the 1841 census. This showed Balmain to have been a fashionable residential area early on, connected to the city by ferry. The construction of Mort’s Dock in 1854 brought in a working class element.

Most of these upper class suburbs were overtaken by the spread of the working class in the inner city ring, their inhabitants moving further out to more genteel places. The eastern suburbs however maintained the momentum given to them as ‘better’ areas in the 1830s and 1840s, helped by their recreational harbourside location. These actual building developments should not obscure the amount of land subdivision that went on in the boom days of the 1830s: many estates beyond reach of actual settlement were subdivided and their ill-aligned road patterns can still be seen in inner areas such as Drummoyne. The early officers’ estates still determine much of the street pattern.

THE CUMBERLAND PLAIN
The farming of the Cumberland Plain began around Parramatta, for a while the Governor’s chief place of residence. Parramatta emerged
around a mile-long street running from the wharf to Government House, near which an observatory was built by Governor Brisbane. It stagnated into a very English-like country town until its absorption into Sydney. Around were patches of agriculture, on the volcanics at Prospect and at Toongabbie.

The need to create a local food supply was partly met on the Hawkesbury, and in Airds and Appin to the south west where topography left quaternary soils suitable for cultivation.

By the 1790s the alluvials on the Hawkesbury were taken up by small farmers growing wheat and maize and shipping it to Sydney in small boats, often built on the river itself, where cedar was found. Thus arose that connection between cedar-getting and shipbuilding that was to characterise the north coast.

Governor Macquarie founded an urban base for this small-farming endeavour. At the Hawkesbury he laid out Wilberforce, Pitt Town, Windsor, already a flood-free settlement known as the Green Hills, Richmond and Castlecrag. All except the last acquired some settlement, even though farmers were reluctant to leave their holdings to live in a flood-free town. Macquarie also designed Liverpool to be the capital of the southwest, but added sites for Campbelltown and Appin within Airds and Appin.

Urban growth was slow. Only Windsor, strongly supported by government with St Matthew’s church and a court house built in 1820-21, achieved much early status, as the chief shipping point, though Richmond eventually emerged as a farmers’ town and Wilberforce and Pitt Town as small villages. The site for Campbelltown which had St Peter’s church in 1823, was expanded and replanned by T.L. Mitchell in the early 1830s, as was Appin. By this time however the agriculture of the Hunter Valley was taking over the Hawkesbury’s function as the chief agricultural area, and rust in wheat in the 1860s, combined with heavy flooding, reduced its significance greatly. The south-west went over to grazing on larger holdings.

Most of the Cumberland Plain was held in large grazing estates, many of which became headquarters for chains of runs stretching out into the pastoral areas. George Cox’s Winbourne was one such estate, supporting a large house in parklike surrounds, fed by a series of runs stretching to the Namoi. Sir John Jamison’s Regentville was another such estate, which has been explored archaeologically. John Macarthur’s Camden Park occupied the best of the Cowpastures, and he founded Camden as a private town in the 1830s to compete successfully with the government foundation of Narellan. Penrith grew as an informal street-town on the highway to the west; it was officially a town in 1818, when there were already a court-house and lockup on the site. Its importance grew with road traffic, though wheat and vines were grown in the area.

After the 1860s Cumberland stagnated, its wheat industry gone and its pastoral significance reduced to a holding paddock for stock from up the country. Some districts found new opportunities: Camden in particular found it could grow hay for sale in Sydney, and eagerly took up the new manufacturing butter industry from the 1880s. Penrith farmers too went over to hay production. But the Hawkesbury vegetable farmers were conservative, and continued with the maize staple, despite North Coast competition, and despite receiving a rail line to Sydney in 1864. Camden had to be content with a tramway to Campbelltown, but flourished nevertheless. The Hawkesbury continued a sleepy place, an idyllic landscape for Arthur Streeton to paint, though when it finally took up dairying, Eliot Gruner was there to record it. More life awaited a stimulus from Sydney.

To the south of Sydney lies Botany Bay, which stood aside from residential growth until the twentieth century, bypassed by the southern railway that ascended the heights of Canterbury to its west. In the nineteenth century, Botany Bay lay on the margins of Sydney, a place of recreation for both the settling Europeans and Aboriginal people. It was a source of vegetables and oysters, and a disposal site for sewage and refuse. The northern headland was fortified, just in case, but development was limited to marginal functions. An Aboriginal settlement developed at La Perouse very early, and has persisted. The Botany swamps provided for special developments, as a mass of
water-soaked sands and ponds. There Simeon Lord built a textile mill. Later a pumping house sent water up to Paddington reservoir when the Centennial Park resources could no longer cope with supplies. From the 1860s to the 1950s this was an area of Chinese market gardens. Cook's River, at first idealised in the Martens' painting of Spark's Tempe House, became a sewage outlet for southern Sydney during the 1880s. Further south, Brighton-Le-Sands became a seaside resort and funfair, served by a tramway from Rockdale railway station. The southern shores of Botany Bay remained undeveloped, mostly in the hands of Thomas Holt, who hoped to find coal, and made Captain Cook's landing place a memorial site in 1877.

**SUBURBAN EXPANSION**

Sydney's suburban development had begun even in the era of the 'walking' city, and took shape and spread as mass transit facilities were adopted from overseas and spread out - first ferries and horse busses, then trams and trains. S. Jevons, an English observer, noticed this pattern of growth in 1855. The result was a city thinly spread over a large area and consuming great amounts of capital in service provisions. The suburb plays a distinct role in capitalist society, sheltering workpeople; acting as a nurturing ground for labour force replacement; a centre of consumption of the mass-produced goods upon which capitalism relies; and a measure of status on the ladder of success which motivates the workers at all levels. The suburb is par excellence the realm of women and children, and is the chief expression of gender differentiation in the landscape. Suburbs should not be confused with 'neighbourhood': such a term was probably meaningful in the nineteenth century, but has mostly disappeared as a reality in the age of the motorcar, which has turned Australians into 'cosmopolites', seeking associations throughout the city and knowing little of those immediately around them. Neighbourhood can however be resurrected by some threat to the local landscape and amenity, and is always present for families in the form of the school, the chief social binding force in the suburb. The tendency to send children to diverse private schools, particularly at high school level, removes even this source of neighbourhood in the better-off suburbs.

Suburban growth began anew with the expansion of steam ferry services from the 1840s and 1850s. Ferries played a significant role in opening up harbourside suburbs and, particularly, in serving the north shore until the Harbour Bridge opened in 1932 and Manly-Warringah until after the second world war.

**TRAM SERVICES**

Trams began in Sydney with a line from Circular Quay, to the railway station in 1861, but this had failed by 1866. Stream trams were introduced to serve the Great Exhibition Building in 1879, but expansion was slow - only 39 miles by 1890, when electrification began - but expansion was thereafter rapid with 62 miles of electric line in 1930 and 110 miles in 1960, the end of the tramway era. Cable trams were used to initially serve Crows Nest and Edgecliff (1894), being considered necessary in these hilly areas.

Tramway patronage grew rapidly and trams became the major passenger carrier in Sydney until after the second world war. Their influence on the development of the inner ring of suburbs was profound.

Trams were important in opening up some inner western suburbs to development, such as Drummoyne with the Iron Cove Bridge of 1884, and Gladesville with a new bridge. Five Dock was given trams in the 1920s and became a suburb of Californian bungalows. Dulwich Hill, Leichhardt and Marrickville were suburbanised by trams.

A major eastern development resulting from the trams were the beach resorts and suburbs. At Bondi government maintained a beachside reserve, but it was a popular picnic place even before trams made it a suburb and place of mass resort in 1881. There had already been some development there, with a school in 1879. Bronte, hitherto the preserve of the residents of Bronte House, became a fashionable resort, as did Coogee, gazetted as a village in 1848, but which had remained an agricultural area though frequented by day trippers until the arrival of the tram brought mass visitors from Paddington and the inner city. A pier was built in 1928, one of the few in Australia, now demolished, and a shark net was one of the first on Australian beaches in
1929. At the same time it became a residential suburb with cool breezes and sea views. Maroubra was a late tramway development of the 1920s. On the way to the beaches, the trams passed through Kensington, an estate subdivision of the 1880s, in which the Bedford Park new model suburb with industry forbidden was a planning innovation. Anzac Parade was part of this plan. Kensington racecourse, established in 1893, eventually became the site of the University of New South Wales. Away on the far southern coast, Malabar was cursed by sewage pollution, the gaol, and Prince Henry Hospital; these were city fringe activities overtaken by twentieth-century suburban growth around them.

Trams also served the southern suburbs, first carrying trippers to Botany Bay, but later workers to the growing industries of Alexandria and Mascot, drawing upon the water supplies and flat lands of the Botany Swamps, often moving from inner city congested sites. Effluent disposal onto the surrounding land was easy. Workers’ suburbs grew in this direction, from Erskineville to Botany. On the eastern fringe this was thought a suitable spot for ex-soldiers’ housing at Matraville after World War I, and for the Daceyville Garden Suburb designed by John Sulman and built from 1912 to 1924.

Much of eastern and southern Sydney, varied in its land use and quality of housing, was made possible by tramway development. Only very recently has Bondi Junction been connected by rail to the city. The southern suburbs railways are goods lines much used by traffic from the Kingsford Smith airport, and the Botany Bay container wharves located on the north shore of the Bay. Here too was located the Bunnerong power station, once one of several that generated Sydney’s power on waterside sites: all are now closed, including White Bay, Pyrmont and Balmain stations on Sydney Harbour.

THE MOSMAN AND WARRINGAH PENINSULAS

These areas were opened up by ferry services and expanded through development of the tramway system. The Mosman area had been the resort of artists and a pleasure resort, as at Clifton Gardens and Cremorne. Neutral Bay was an early whaling centre, as was Mosman Bay, where ships could lie at anchor or be careened. The ferries and trams opened up Mosman as a middle class suburb, Taronga Park Zoo moving there from Moore Park in 1916. A bridge at the Spit made Balgowlah more accessible after 1924, and this early village, planned as a resort for ‘marine villas’ in the 1830s became a suburb, leading to a continuous line of housing and shops from Neutral Bay to Manly.

Manly itself had a regular ferry service to Sydney from 1855, and was planned to grow as the ‘Brighton of Australia’. A pier was planned but never built, but its Corso and promenade planted with Norfolk pines, and its sandy beaches on both ocean and harbour sides made it an attractive resort, particularly for country people, so that many boarding houses developed on the subdivision of 1855. Here William Gocher broke the ban on daylight bathing in 1902 and set off the Australian love affair with the surf. St Patrick’s College, the most imposing building, was completed in 1884.

North of Manly, the development of resorts was a twentieth century phenomenon fostered partly by the tram from Manly to Brookvale in 1910, though Newport already had a history as a picnic spot with regular sailings from Sydney. Dee Why was Salvation Army land subdivided into the 1920s, as was Narrabeen. Further north, most development has been post-World War II, the coast, from being a retreat for artists and a holiday place, has become a suburb relying on motor car and bus. Palm Beach has become the most fashionable resort, with many large houses, and looks over the Barrenjoey Lighthouse designed by James Barnet in 1891.

A feature of this northern development has been its relation to topography. First the narrow coastal plain was built on, then the plateau, producing such postwar suburbs as Harbord, French’s Forest and Davidson, and development of the steep slopes between has followed last. This process of infill between the key lines of advance along ridges and coast has taken place inland. Other examples were the building of the railway line which opened Hurstville Park, Wiley Park and Bankstown to much interwar and postwar suburban growth, and the East Hills line of 1931 which opened up Beverley Hills, Panania.
and Revesby. The radial pattern of Sydney, oriented to the main inland lines, gave way to a more circular shape even before the coming of the motor car as trams and new railway lines filled in the gaps and made for twentieth century subdivisions. Sydney’s inevitable route was to grow westward onto the Cumberland Plain.

**EARLY RAILWAY SUBURBS**

**The Western Line**

The first railway line in 1855 was to Parramatta, still a country town for the Cumberland Plain, and, like all the early railways, was intended to go inland to serve the farming and grazing areas across the ranges. Some early stations were built, and augmented by others as subdivision proceeded. Thus Stanmore was given a station in 1878, and the large estates were subdivided speculatively for small houses. Petersham had one of the original stations, in 1860, when it was given a post office and became a middle class suburb. Croydon was for a while an outlying area with large houses, including Shubra Hall owned by Anthony Horden, a city retailing magnate, before getting a railway platform in 1875, and being developed first with terrace housing, later with Federation houses of a better kind. Haberfield was a small outlying village, with subdivision beginning in the 1880s, but it achieved a special landscape when Richard Stanton set about creating a garden suburb in the early 1900s, when the Federation house was popular. The Federation character of this suburb has been mainly preserved. Burwood was another original station, developing first with the large houses of businessmen, enough to support a school in 1858 when there was a small farming and timbergetting community. Terrace houses were then built. The Appian Way and Federation houses were a later attempt at a model village. Strathfield similarly began with the subdivision of Redmire estate into large blocks for impressive houses; some of which remain. During the nineteenth century only the wealthy could afford to use the trains to live so far from the central workplace. Patronage was small, compared to the trams and ferries.

Homebush for example remained a sparsely populated district, with a racecourse established in 1842, until the coming of the main Sydney saleyards in 1882. A working class population collected, reinforced by the movement of the state abattoir from Glebe Island in 1906.

Flemington also was a late speculative suburb, close to Rookwood cemetery and well-stocked with monumental masons. Lidcombe further along the line had an early station, was given its present name in 1876, and saw its chief residential development in the 1880s, during the great boom. Beyond, Auburn developed as an industrial suburb after much subdivision in the 1870s, and the sign of a growing population was a post office in 1880. With industrial employment, it emerged as a working class suburb, next to Clyde and Granville, both also industrial areas. Clyde had the Hudson Brothers factory for rolling stock, while Granville had tanneries, woollen mills and agricultural machinery manufacture. While the inner western suburbs mostly served the well-to-do commuters, the far west from the beginning was a working class area. Except for Strathfield, the inner suburbs lost their high status as the wealthy moved to the north shore and the eastern suburbs.

**The Illawarra Line**

The line south to Wollongong was a product of the 1880s, in search of coal traffic from the Illawarra region. Incidentally it opened up a new area of suburban development. In 1884, the line reached Cook’s River at Tempe, and after much debate, ignored the Botany Bay shore and Tom Ugly’s in favour of a crossing of the Georges River at Lugarno.

This opened up the interior country, notably Canterbury. Here was a rural area directed to timbergetting, some vegetable growing, and much illicit activity in the form of gambling and sly grog establishments on the city fringe.

Arnestaffe was reached by the railway in 1884 and speculators subdivided land. Campsie was also given a station and subdivided, but significant growth waited until the 1920s. Rockdale, or Frog Hollow, was given over to timber, farming and quarrying, all enhanced by the railway, but subdividers soon attracted a large suburban population. Kogarah began slowly, and was still growing into the 1950s. Such early developments must be seen as villages, clustered around the
railway stations. Penshurst and Oatley were reached in 1886, and Bexley was a major beneficiary of this line aided by a steam tram to Arncliffe. Hurstville was an early village transformed by the railway, becoming a municipality in 1887. Beyond Brayford, too far from the city to be immediately developed, so that this is a suburb of the 1920s, and Como, which became a weekend resort. Sutherland’s timber industry benefited, while Cronulla became a weekend beach resort with a tram from Sutherland replaced by a railway in 1939, subsequently becoming a suburb in the post-war era. Late nineteenth-century development is now mainly seen around the railway station and in the churches of the period. This was a whole new area for suburban development opened up by railway.

The Main Northern Line
The idea of a line to Newcastle aroused such debate: should it take off from Windsor or Riverstone, or nearer the city? Chosen was a line from Strathfield, rising with the Hornsby Plateau, and crossing the Hawkesbury by a major bridge in its estuary. The possibilities of land speculation seem to have had a part in this choice.

Strathfield was already a wealthy suburb, and the line connected Strathfield to Concord which had been a riverside village and an early government farm. Subdivision began immediately in 1886, and continued for forty years. Crossing the Parramatta River, Ryde was a village in the Field of Mars, with a church [1827] and police station: activity now shifted downhill to West Ryde where the railway station was located. Eastwood was an agricultural settlement, with some grazing, and large estates including the Eastwood House estate from which the station took its name. There was some new development, and a school was built, but extensive subdivision lagged until the early 1890s when many Federation houses were built. Cheltenham received a station in 1898, when Charley’s estate was subdivided with the stipulation that no commercial development occur round the station, and it is unusual in this regard, a leafy, uncommercialised suburban tract. The railway attracted some large houses at Beecroft in the 1890s, but development is mostly interwar. No strong suburban development accompanied this railway at its construction.

The North Shore Line
The line from Sydney to Hornsby was built in the reverse direction, starting at Hornsby and terminating at a major ferry interchange at Milson’s Point. Only in 1932 was the Harbour bridged, providing a direct rail and road link to central Sydney. Hornsby, reached by ferry, was laid out as St Leonards in 1836 and became a retreat for the well-off. Don Bank, a house of the 1820s, still survives, and suburban development was slow, with a church in 1843, a school of arts in 1859, and a courthouse and town hall in the 1880s, when a new Blackett Church was also built. The reach of the suburb was then extended by a cable tram to Crows Nest.

Railway development began with the line from Hornsby to St Leonards (now the name moved north) in 1890. It developed as a mixed suburban and orcharding district: Gore Hill cemetery became the north shore graveyard. To the north a string of suburbs slowly developed, their railway stations surrounded by commercial buildings from 1890 to 1914. Artarmon was not given a platform until 1910, but Chatswood was a pre-railway village, with subdivision in 1876 and a post office in 1879, so the railway merely boosted an existing development. Roseville, Lindfield, Killara, Gordon and Pymble were farming and orchard areas that began their suburban growth with the railway, as did Turramurra and Wahroonga, though Normanhurst was a pre-railway farm village. Here on the upper north shore, though there are some Federation houses, most development is interwar. Hornsby, as the railway station and yards, benefited most, but to the north Asquith and other suburbs are post-1954 in their growth. The railway made Cowan a popular picnic spot.

The north shore grew as a group of upper class suburbs, with little commercial or industrial development. Large houses in large gardens, with ample plantings of exotic trees, and the preservation of much bushland, make this a distinctive residential landscape now under threat from the very different tastes of ‘new money’ and government policies of medium density housing. Ku-Ring-Gai Council and local interest groups are waging a losing battle against market forces in attempting to preserve a privileged landscape, a task never undertaken by Willoughby Council.
URBAN FRINGES
In any city there are certain activities which take place on the urban fringe, where land is cheap, resources plentiful, noxious effects are acceptable, and waste disposal easy. Such fringe activities tend to be overtaken by suburban growth, and their relics to become entombed within the mass. Overseas it has been recognised that cities grow in a boom and bust cycle, and the past ‘fringes’ can be recognised with the urban fabric as fossilised relics of past ‘stillstands’.

Such fringe activities in Sydney’s growth are of numerous kinds. Timbergetting has left its mark on Fidden’s Wharf on the Lane Cove River, and at Duffy’s Forest. Small farms for horticulture, dairying and pigs left small villages at Baulkham Hills, Bay View, Castle Hill and Dural to become suburban centres. Large country estates of wealthy townsmen created Tempe House, Ashfield Park House, and Enmore House, now demolished. Georges Hall (1837) has become a convalescent home. The Showground, and showgrounds at Castle Hill and Fairfield, and the racecourses, were fringe activities built on cheap land, beginning with Canterbury in 1871. The water resource, now Centennial Park, Bankstown aerodrome, the garbage tip which held back the growth of Ermington, are all fringe activities now absorbed into suburbia. Quarries at the Dundas Valley and Prospect, the munitions factory at St Marys, the powder works at Elanora Heights, were all originally located in remote non-urban areas.

The search for the remnants of fringe activities and their relation to Sydney’s pattern of growth is a subject for further research.

THE INTER-WAR PERIOD
The built expression of the 1920s and 1930s was the Californian bungalow and Art Deco, the latter best seen in the many pubs and some banks built during the period. In the 1920s there was a boom, leading to the Great Depression of 1929.
Recovery was underway in 1934. Suburban growth filled in the wedges left between the old transport routes and the East Hills line was constructed, though most development here is postwar. In 1919, local councils received clear zoning powers, which have been used to accentuate differences between various parts of the city. There was little new public housing, but Daceyville continued and Matraville was built, and there was slum clearance in Pyrmont and Alexandria. The Housing Commission was not formed until 1941, and had its great impact after 1945 in postwar reconstruction.

There was a decline in the inner ring of suburbs and decentralisation. As new suburbs grew, they surrounded earlier ‘villages’ sometimes based on a railway station, and infilled the urban fabric with Californian bungalows. In fact in the boom there was more subdivision than could be taken up for many years. Such new suburban growth typically had no sewage disposal connected, and the balance of amenities, such as hospitals, began to be seriously disturbed, as it remains today. The eastern suburbs saw a wave of apartment construction, up to three storeys high, in Bondi, Coogee, Waverley, Randwick and Woollahra. Growth also took place on the North Shore, stimulated by the Harbour Bridge. In the poorer areas, fibro made an appearance.

THE POST-WAR DECADES
Here the great fact has been an increase in population, coupled with the baby boom and massive immigration. Sydney has expanded beyond the possibilities of infill, to create vast new suburbs in the west, extending in a narrow belt to Penrith and the lower Blue Mountains, to the southwest, where a new city has engulfed Liverpool and Campbelltown, and in the north, where the Hills district, Ryde and the railway areas north of Hornsby have taken off. Provision of amenities lagged far behind. Particularly pernicious were the Housing Commission Estates, such as Green Valley and Mount Druitt, where masses of houses were built with no social provisions beyond schools; urban deprivation is clearly established in Sydney’s western suburbs where the poorest are located.

The immigrants tended to cluster, at first in inner city areas, but also in growing Fairfield. Hostels of barracks type were built at Bradfield, Villawood, Hammondville and Leightonfield, and also at Cabramatta. Immigrant ‘ghettos’ grew up: the Italians preferred Leichhardt, the Greeks Marrickville, with Yugoslavs interspersed. British immigrants were more widely scattered and
spread across class. The tendency was for clustering by chain migration, but as newcomers accumulated funds, they bought houses on the western fringe, in Fairfield and Cabramatta. The latter has recently become a centre of Vietnamese immigration. In the west the immigrants encountered a general problem of Sydney's expansion, flooding, which has not sufficiently been taken into account by planning authorities.

All this growth was to be influenced by the motor car and shaped by the County of Cumberland Plan of 1947, which set aside areas for residential and industrial growth and proposed a 'green belt' in Sydney's west to halt expansion and provide breathing space. The decentralisation of industry was correctly forecast. In the 1940s, manufacturing was strongly concentrated in a few suburbs between the city and Botany Bay. J. McDonald Holmes mapped its various distributions accurately. Since then, there has been much decentralisation to larger sites in the outer suburbs. Meanwhile, there has been a great decline in the manufacturing workforce since 1974. Decentralisation has also reduced the importance of the CBD in shopping functions, and now more than ever it is an office district with the rise of the finance industry. Government has continued to grow, but has decentralised some employment. The concomitant has been the rise of suburban shopping malls such as Roselands, the first, and the rise of older suburban centres, notably Parramatta and Chatswood as retailing and office centres. The motor car has been the catalyst for cross-city movement, and the freeing of suburbs from the mass transit lines. Trams disappeared in the 1960s, and buses have taken up only a small part of the demand for mobility created by the structure of the city. Railways and buses are now the major public transport modes.

The preferred building material for this postwar boom has been brick, either double or brick veneer, often required by council ordinances. Speculative building to standard designs, but never side by side, has provided much housing, and apartments have multiplied, now known as 'home units' and subject to strata title. These have grown up in the eastern suburbs, on the northern beaches, around railway stations as at Artarmon and Rockdale, and in many scattered spots where councils have been amenable, as at North Ryde and Granville. A process of suburban 'defence' against these often-tenanted and therefore low status developments has drawn suburbanites together. A relatively new feature, prominent on the northern beaches and the North Shore, is the retirement village, as the population ages.

While the poor leave for the outer suburbs, 'gentrification' of the inner suburbs is occurring, first appearing in Paddington in the 1960s and now widespread. Both gracious old houses and workers' housing are renovated for a white collar class seeking to be close to CBD or university workplaces and valuing the aesthetics and solid building techniques of old houses. This may spread beyond such fashionable places as Glebe and Balmain as the ageing disappear from a central ring appearing in the Census maps. Alternatively, medium-density housing may replace much central ring stock. R.J. Horvath's *Social Atlas of Sydney*, 1986, reveals much about the population dynamics and planning possibilities of the next decades.

**THE OUTER RING**

Sydney in the last 20 years has taken a firm grip on some outlying areas previously independent or specialised in recreation. Commuting now embraces a wide area from Wyong in the north to Leura and Blackheath in the west to Heathcote and even Wollongong in the south, though that lies within our Illawarra Region. The central coast area of New South Wales is becoming one vast city or 'Megalopolis'.

To the south lies the Woronora Plateau, a sandstone upland that was of little use for either agriculture or grazing. Much of it was therefore available to be placed in the [Royal] National Park in 1872. While this was the world's second national park, its aim of providing active recreation together with the introduction of exotic trees and animals, puts it outside the true national park tradition. Much of this fringe area however is given over to true national parks, in which Sydney is fortunate as a city. Settlement has been confined to the main Sydney to Wollongong highway, with late suburban development at Engadine and Heathcote.
However, with increasing demand for water, and with the Lachlan Swamps and Botany swamps successively inadequate, the drainage of the Upper Nepean has been tapped to serve a distributive reservoir at Prospect. At first small weirs were built on the Nepean and Cataract rivers, with a tunnel to Prospect. Then in 1907, a series of large dams was commenced: Cataract (1907); Cordeaux (1926); Avon (1927); Nepean (1935); Woronora (1941); and Warragamba (1958). Now the city is looking to the upper Shoalhaven for a supplementation of these dams, and Kangaroo Valley [Illawarra Region] is threatened.

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

A corridor of lower, shaly land connects Camden with the Goulburn Plans, explored first in 1798 by John Wilson and Henry Hacking, who reached Marulan. Throsby and Hume completed its exploration before 1820. Oxley was running cattle at Bargo in 1815 before moving them on to Wingecarribee. The grazing resources of this corridor are limited, and its chief function has been as a route to the interior.

The road first reaches Picton, after crossing the Razorback mountain and entering the hostile and infertile Bargo Brush. Antill had an estate there, and the area was known for dairying and mixed farming. Picton first developed a private town on Antill's land, but a government town was laid out in 1845. The railway arrived in 1863, and there was some growth, but it was bypassed on an easier grade in 1919, and the main road now also bypasses the town and the Razorback. Some coal-mining employment helps support the present moribund settlement.

Beyond the Bargo Brush a village grew around Sutton Forest, a settlement of small farmers even in the 1830s. Mitchell's Great South Road, convict built, sweeps on past to reach Berrima, which he planned to be the capital city of the south-west in 1830. There was a good water supply, and a large gaol was built in 1839 and a court house in 1841. The town made little progress: there was little good land about it, and the settlers on the plains preferred Goulburn as a district centre. Government gave way in 1855, and while Goulburn flourished, Berrima became a road town with many inns. It was revitalised in the twentieth century by a coal mine and cement works, and the renewal of road traffic with the motor car, and, now bypassed by the main highway, serves as a heritage pilgrimage town, its old landscape preserved because it was also bypassed by the railway.

An alternative route to the southwest ran under the Gip mountain from Mittagong, by way of Bowral and Moss Vale, to Goulburn. This was the route taken by the railway, which reached Mittagong in 1867 and Moss Vale in the same year.

Mittagong grew as a road village, with two inns in the late 1830s. It acquired increased importance with the opening of 'New Sheffield' in 1848, with the discovery of local coal and iron ore, and using limestone from Marulan. A blast furnace and brickworks were set up, and hopes were high for a colonial source of iron. This venture faltered, and was wound up in 1857. There were several subsequent revivals, in 1863-1866, in 1869 when bar and plate-making were thriving, and from 1876-7 when cylinders were made for the bridge at Gundagai. In 1888 William Sandford took up the lease, but failed to make it work and moved on briskly to Lithgow. Perhaps it might have succeeded with an import tariff, but it never took on the scale of the Lithgow works, and the site remains rescant. Mittagong survived chiefly as a road town, and as a suburb for the more working class element in the district serving aristocratic Bowral.

Oxley had an 5,000 acre run at Bowral, which was subdivided when the railway arrived, including a town. The town, like Moss Vale, benefited from farming developments to the east, but also became a resort town for Sydneysiders seeking a more temperate climate. Large country houses were built on large areas of land planted with English trees, and such prominent Sydney businessmen as S. Hordern, W. Angas and J.L. Campbell had their country residences here. The town became a municipality of 1,200 people in 1886. A gasworks was built in 1889, and a reticulated water supply was provided in 1908.

Country retreats also included Moss Vale, though it was more of a farmer's town than Bowral, and the resort of Bundanoon. Moss Vale became a
municipality in 1888, and acquired a water supply in 1894. Its cattle market was of some importance, and the activities of the Fresh Food and Ice Company drew this area into the late nineteenth-century milk supply zone for Sydney. As a recreation area, the Southern Highlands properly fall into the functional pattern of Sydney's social development. Many private schools, notably Frensham for girls, can be found in this upper class 'rural' area.

East of Bowral and Moss Vale lay the Yarrawa Brush surrounding the Wingecarribee Swamp and grazing on rich basaltic krannozem soils. This dense rainforest was ignored by early pastoralists, and thus lay open to small farmers after the Free Selection Acts of 1861. Robertson, its chief settlement, is named after the father of the Acts, Sir John Robertson. Clearing and burning the brush, settlers ran cattle and grew potatoes on small farms, and 30,000 acres had been selected by 1865. Private villages sprang up to serve them: Robertson in 1862, Kangaroo in 1864, and Burrawang in 1865. When the technology of dairying was revolutionised in the 1880s, this became a butter-producing region with many small factories, though eventually production withdrew to a central factory at Bowral in 1924, with most milk going to the liquid milk market. This is still a dairying area, with some beef cattle, but the many small farms have undergone amalgamation and the population has declined. The gap is increasingly filled by artists and hobby farmers and country retreats for city people. The whole area is now one vast recreational area for wealthy city people.

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

The image of the sandstone Blue Mountains has varied over time. At first they were seen as a barrier to expansion, until crossed by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth in 1813, and a road made by Cox in 1815. The road has been realigned at both ends, but T.L. Mitchell's descent, the engineered Victoria Pass, is still in use. The mountains were then seen as a desert to be crossed on the way to Bathurst, with little water and a hazardous road running through useless and scrubby vegetation. Some travellers noted the magnificent scenery. Then, with the coming of the railway the picturesque and sublime images came to the fore; the mountains became a holiday resort. Finally, the mountains in the postwar period have become a suburb, with cheap land and long travelling hours. They remain however a 'lung' for Sydneysiders who can enjoy picnics and walking in the grand scenery of the Blue Mountains National Park stemming from a movement begun in the 1920s by Miles Dunphy and Mary Byles in particular. The first park area was declared only in 1959.

The railway crossed the mountains in the 1860s, using two zigzags still visible though replaced by tunnelling. Katoomba did not at first benefit - it was a mere stopping place on the road, but it was given a railway station in 1876 and what had been 'crushers town', supplying stone for the railway, quickly became a resort, and a municipality in 1889. The railway advertised its attractions far and wide, and these were enhanced during the Great Depression of the 1920s and 1930s by much construction of paths and lookouts by unemployed men. Blackheath was another road village enhanced by the railway into a resort, though fruit growing was an activity on the adjoining Shipley Plateau. Mount Wilson was a high class resort of private residences, to which a few wealthy people retreated to escape the summer heat of Sydney or Newcastle. Jenolan Caves were another mountain attraction, known in 1848, with major discoveries in the 1890s and early 1900s. Excursions from the railway at Mount Victoria were popular, and accommodation was available at Caves House from the early 1880s, though the first stone building dates from 1897, added to in 1909. From desert to recreational area, the railway changed the image. Health too made the mountains attractive, far from the sultry and noisome air of Sydney, Bodington Hospital at Wentworth Falls and the Hydro Majestic hydrotherapy resort at Medlow Bath reflect this attraction.

The lower mountain towns shared this enchanted image, but developed less as resorts than as residential and recreational homes for the retired and wealthy. Sir Henry Parkes' House at Faulconbridge illustrates this trend. Springwood, Blaxland, Lawson, Wentworth Falls, are now within reach of many less wealthy people who work in Penrith, the western suburbs, or even...
Sydney, while the Blue Mountains has become a popular place for retirement and for second homes.

THE CENTRAL COAST
The lower Hawkesbury is incised deeply in the Hornsby Plateau beyond Ebenezer with its early chapel. It is a stretch of water and coastline very little developed until very recently except for a fishing village at Brooklyn. A northern inlet, Brisbane Water, gives access to some useful land, and to very good timber. The first settlers were there in 1820 and spread widely about the district - in 1834 there were 150 scattered just along Mangrove Creek. Timbergetting led to shipbuilding, an important industry until late in the nineteenth century, though few traces have been seen they must be there for an archaeologist to find. The chief wharf site on Brisbane Water, at its head, was mostly set aside for small farmers, but there were some large estates such as Hely's 2,000 acre Wyoming. Reserves for public purposes were made during survey at Gosford, Terrigal and Kincumber. Shell was fired for lime, and timber, cattle and vegetables sent to Sydney.

When Gosford was laid out as a government town in 1839, it already had a watch house, scourger and local magistrate. More successful initially was East Gosford, a private town laid out by Peeke. In time, government influences such as the post office brought the government town to the fore: by 1875 it was much the larger, and the railway station in 1889 decided the site of the town centre. Until then access to Sydney was by water, or by road using first Wiseman's Ferry. From the 1850s travellers used Peat's Ferry.

Further north lay Tuggerah Lakes, collecting drainage from Ourimbah and Wyong Creeks. Here was some early cedar, but large eucalyptus trees made the area a logging district: as clearing went on, cattle and dairy farms took over. There were many sawmills, mobile items with a few huts attached, but Yarramalong grew as the central village for the area. It was the last home of Edward Hammond Hargreaves, discoverer of gold. There was a great influx of small farmers as selectors from the 1860s. The railway created a new settlement, Wyong, which became the town for the district, replacing for many purposes the journey to Gosford. Wyong was a timber town, and most of its buildings were burned in great fires in 1903 and 1904. The main street was rebuilt in brick in styles of the period, and saw three picture theatres added in the 1920s.

The railway brought much change to this district, making it easily accessible to Sydney through the 1889 Hawkesbury River Bridge. There were many new subdivisions, at Erina, Green Point, and the 2,000 acre Gosford Model Farms in the 1880s and 1890s. The citrus industry, already established, expanded throughout the district. Wyong became a stopping place for amateur fishermen and holiday makers going to Ourimbah, Tuggerah Lakes and the Entrance which was developed as a resort from 1920 and given a traffic bridge in 1934. Woy Woy became popular for fishing, boating and shooting with subdivision of Cox’s estate in 1912. The Terrigal estate had been subdivided in 1900, and like Avoca in 1918, became another resort. The old shipbuilding villages, such as Davistown and Blackwall, declined. Electrification of the railway line in 1960 increased accessibility, and now this central coast region is developing into a commuter suburb for Sydney with lower land prices and a beautiful coastal environment. The early settlement pattern and the citrus and vegetable farms are disappearing under a sea of houses. Wyong is too distant for this to have gone far, and it has been bypassed by the new expressway to Newcastle: new retirement suburbs such as Bateau Bay are springing up on the coast in this district.

SHIPWRECKS
While Sydney Harbour, Botany Bay and the Hawkesbury offer shelter to ships in storms, this is a dangerous coast with storms and onshore winds for much of the year. Not all ships have made it to safety. The Kiama off the Entrance and the Hall Caine and the Valiant off Toukley testify to the lack of safe easily accessible harbours to the north. Many ships, of which the immigrant ship Dunbar is best-known, lie wrecked in failed attempts to enter Sydney Harbour, the Wontora and Hilda lie off Botany Bay. These vessels, representing a wide range of naval architecture, commercial activity and on-board living conditions, provide a rich research field for marine archaeologists.
CONCLUSION
The growth of a city of nearly four millions is a complex process not easily summarised. Pattern overlays pattern, yet some logic can be seen in the influence of transport in the sorting out of workplace and residence, and in class differentiation. Buried within the present urban fabric are layers of earlier growth, not yet overtaken by renewal, which must proceed if Sydney is not to spread as a continuous built up area as it now shows signs of doing, with only national parks as barriers - they now substitute, along with the Nepean water catchment, for the ‘green belt’ of the County of Cumberland Plan. The state government hopes to halt this sprawl with medium density housing, which on a large scale will call for sensitive heritage policies conserving not only single buildings but whole residential districts.

Meanwhile the metropolitan area’s growth continues to be governed by the outline plan of the 1960s [Report 1968]. The aim has been to divert growth into urban corridors, to the southwest to


Campbelltown, Appin and Camden, and to the west, including Blacktown, Mount Druitt and Penrith. These corridors are now filled, albeit at a lower density than originally planned, and in the 1990s a new northwest corridor will be opened with the Rouse Hill–Maraylya development of some 400,000 people, but without the railway line envisaged in the original report. Gosford-Wyong has taken much overspill, as planned, and the Blue Mountains have become a commuter zone.

Planning for growth, both residential and service-industrial, in the difficult terrain around Sydney has been directed by the corridor concept that allows refuges of open space for functions such as transmission lines, sporting venues, and a new international airport at Badgery's Creek.

30 Written comments, Town Planning Section, Blue Mountains City Council.
31 Ibid.

FIGURE 1.2. THE GROWTH OF SYDNEY’S RAILWAY SYSTEM.

To the south is a rugged plateau, cut in sandstone mainly, with streams (like Wollombi Brook) flowing northward to the Hunter. There is little land for grazing and agriculture. This gives way to the hilly Lake Macquarie Shire, with level land developed for agriculture, and low swampy ground around Dora Creek, Cockle Creek and Wyee Creek and in the Redhead-Swansea area. Here are large areas of poorly drained tidal flats carrying mangroves.

To the north lies the lower Hunter Plain, dominated by the extensive alluvial flats of the lower Hunter, Williams and Paterson Rivers, attractive to early settlement. Land between the rivers on the solid geology is mostly developed farmland for dairying but increasingly for beef cattle. The mouth of the Hunter requires constant dredging, but the port can accommodate very large bulk carriers.

An extensive dune barrier marks the sea coast from Newcastle to Port Stephens which is an undeveloped natural harbour. There is much swampy land around it.

The centre of the region is developed on Upper (mined early) and Lower (mined from 1900) Coal measures which provide the mining and industrial character of the region.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

CITIES
Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland,
Newcastle

SHIREs
Port Stephens
This region is characterised by the important role of river navigation in establishing its settlement pattern, and by the dominance of coal in its economic life. As a colliery and concomitant industrial region it is unique in Australia, but characteristic of many rich regions in Europe and the United States.

An escaping convict William Bryant, was the first European to reach the area. Then in 1797 Lieutenant Shortland noticed coal deposits along the Hunter River, and James Grant explored its lower reaches in the Lady Nelson in 1801. At that time a penal settlement was required for re-offending convicts, and a settlement was attempted at the mouth of the Hunter, but failed through lack of administrative efficiency. It was reoccupied in 1804 after the Castle Hill rebellion and by 1820, its peak, 1,200 convicts were undergoing sentence there. Convicts were employed in coal-mining, cedar-getting, limeburning from local Aboriginal middens, and salt-boiling using cheap coal. There were convict barracks, convicts' and officers' houses, a church, mines and various workshops: the remains of a workshop were found in 1987 and have been the subject of an archaeological investigation. Cedar-getting involved exploring the rainforest-clad banks of the lower river, and outstations were established at Wallis Creek and on the site of Raymond Terrace.

The risk of convicts escaping became greater once communications by land to Sydney by way of the Upper Hunter were established, while the growth of settlement placed pressure on the government to open the Hunter Valley to settlement, a decision taken in 1820. Most of the convicts not assigned to the Australian Agricultural Company's mines were removed to Port Macquarie by 1823. By 1823 there were already 13 private houses, 71 convicts' houses, and a barracks when Henry Dangar drew up a plan for the town of Newcastle. The settlement continued as a mining village dominated by the company until its monopoly on coal was broken in 1849. Then began a period of expansion and prosperity as cheaper coal led to more exports, as California became a significant export market, and as local industry expanded. In 1859, Newcastle became a municipality.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Meanwhile, settlers had exploited the rich alluvial soils of the lower Hunter and Williams and Paterson rivers. Thirteen ex-convicts had been allowed small farms at Wallis Plains during the convict era, and had supplied Newcastle with fresh foodstuffs, and the timber-getters had reported good land elsewhere. On the south bank of the Hunter a strongly Irish Catholic small freeholder farming community grew up. On the north side large estates employed convict labour in agriculture but also let to tenants, a practice which expanded greatly with the ending of private convict assignment in 1840. Only the poorer land back from the rivers was used for grazing cattle and timber-getting.

The Aboriginal people were weakened by disease and poverty. The Newcastle magistrate in 1845 reported them much decreased, having given up the traditional life for begging with some hunting. Some worked as stockmen and ship's crewmen, but the Aboriginal mission under the Rev Lancelot Threlkeld at Lake Macquarie had failed to persuade them to take up agriculture.

The early farmers grew wheat, maize and vegetables, and tobacco which enjoyed a boom in the 1830s and 1840s; in 1844 333,000 lbs of tobacco were shipped to Sydney, but the quality could not compete with increasing imported supplies. There were vineyards particularly associated with the pioneer James Busby and James King of Irrawong, and in 1846 the Hunter River Vineyards Association was formed. Most members were on the north side of the river where capital and an improving spirit contrasted with the conservative mass on the south side.
Floods in 1857 and the early years of the 1860s had two effects. First, many tenant farmers left the Hunter for the Manning River where they could obtain freehold land for about six pounds an acre compared with twenty to thirty pounds on the Hunter. This began that long trek northward which eventually encompassed all the northern river alluviums. Secondly, as on the Hawkesbury, humid seasons brought heavy rust in wheat, which was given up and many flour mills abandoned. Maize became the stable crop as on the Hawkesbury, but it paid little, and dairying eventually became the mainstay especially after the technological revolution of the 1880s and the establishment of Ireland’s butter factory in Newcastle. The city also supplied an outlet for liquid milk sales. Vegetables, especially potatoes, pumpkins and cauliflowers continued to be grown for the Sydney market, and much lucerne hay. Vineyards from the 1880s shifted south to the Pokolbin where sandy and loamy soils were more suitable, and to the lower Wollombi. An influx of German settlers was important in this re-establishment of the industry. By 1922 there were 2643 acres of vineyard, but in the face of South Australian competition the industry declined to 823 acres in 1960, since when there has been a marked revival with growth in demand for quality wines. The river flats continue in intensive cultivation, but dairying has given way to beef cattle and hobby farms on much of the solid geology.

THE ROLE OF THE RIVER
In the early period the river was the chief form of transport in this region. Shipping provided easy access to the Sydney market, to overseas markets for coal, and boats on the river made contacts with towns and butter factories easier. Now, rail and road have replaced shipping, and the rivers have much silted up due to clearing of the land and increased soil erosion.

To reduce the cost of expensive land transport to a minimum, the point of head of navigation is the crucial one in a river system. Newcastle, isolated from the rural districts by a long barren stretch of road, early persisted only as a mining village and point of export for coal. The significant ports developed upstream. At the head of navigation of the Williams was Clarendown, planned in 1832, which built ships with ample local timber, including the steamship William IV, but had little good available land to encourage its development. Hinton also had a wharf, and was established as a private village in 1840 with a church and school. By 1866 it had a population of 200, with three churches and a school of arts. Raymond Terrace, at the junction of the Williams and the Hunter was a key location for an extensive area of farms; it was planned beside the wharf in 1835, and soon had a court house, flour mill and school. Many small farms around it grew wheat, maize, vegetables and vines, and there was extensive grazing of cattle. Its flour mill was later replaced by a butter factory, and it remained a rural service centre after the decline of shipping, to be revitalised by a masonite factory in 1938, Courtauld’s textile mill in 1954 (both have ceased operation), and increasing suburbanisation in recent years. The commercial centre of the town has shifted from the old wharf site to the main road north. Paterson is built at the former head of navigation on the Paterson river, as a private town, but little remains to indicate its former port function.

A town began to grow early on the site of West Maitland where freehold land had been granted to the ex-convict farmers at a point where deep water adjoins the levee bank. The river was formerly navigable to this point, and the road from Newcastle to the upper Hunter provided the main street. By the mid-1820s West Maitland had fifty houses and 400 inhabitants, but its flood-prone site led some residents to petition for an alternative site. Consequently Sir Thomas Mitchell laid out his most imaginative town plan, that for East Maitland, on a ridge near the existing town, and to encourage its growth, government services such
as the courthouse and post office were located there. In 1841 the gaol was completed. The site failed however, to attract townspeople, largely because of high land prices and lack of water. Meanwhile, a northern local site was developing; by 1829 the store ship St Michael was moored at the site of Morpeth where deep water provided anchorage above flood-free ground. This was the estate of E.C. Close, which he laid out as a town in 1832. Shipping goods there meant avoiding the then tortuous meanders which took the river up to West Maitland. So, a three-cornered metropolis evolved. West Maitland already had 2,768 people, and in 1861 7,747, while in 1861 Newcastle had only 3,722. This flourishing triangle dominated the urban structure of the Hunter Valley, East Maitland being incorporated in 1862, West Maitland following in 1863, and Morpeth in 1865.

As a rural centre West Maitland enjoyed the boom years of the 1880s and has many fine buildings from that period. By that time however its great days were already over: the railway reached the town from Newcastle in 1858, and as the railroad moved inland, traffic increasingly passed through to the deepwater port of Newcastle. Morpeth declined much more drastically than Maitland, especially when the Hawkesbury River Bridge was opened in 1889, allowing rail traffic to compete on the through route to Sydney. Shipping continued to Morpeth until the 1950s, but its day as the second port in NSW were long over.

East Maitland was provided with a reticulated water supply in this century as a suburb of Maitland. West Maitland survived, particularly boosted by the development of the Cessnock and Maitland coalfields for which it became the commercial centre. Much beset by floods, it had expanded westward on flood-free ground at Telarah and Rutherford. New industries such as Bradmill were located there. In 1901 it was supplanted by Newcastle as the chief town of the Hunter Valley, with a population of only 11,052, compared with Newcastle’s 50,000. Much reshaping of the town and its surrounding lands has been undertaken for the purpose of flood mitigation. It remains the centre of the Catholic diocese, with the Anglican diocese centred on Newcastle, though the Anglican bishop’s residence was for long at Closeborne, the regency mansion which is now a conference centre, built at Morpeth by E.C. Close.

COAL

The Hunter Valley dominated Australia’s bituminous coal production until the 1970s. The first field found was around Newcastle, and only late in the nineteenth century were the Cessnock and South Maitland fields opened up. The coal measures dip southward into the Sydney Basin, and run under the sea, where they have been mined as at Catherine Hill Bay, an abandoned colliery deserving investigation. In the Newcastle Field the upper coal measures of Permian Age comprise the Borehole and Victoria Tunnel seams, and provide good coking coal. Around the Lochinvar Dome to the west the Greta seam provides good gas-making coal. This is a difficult field for underground mining, with faults, dykes, thick seams and steeply dipping strata.

Early mining began around Newcastle, which is built over a honeycomb of tunnels. With the exhaustion of this coal easily accessible by adit and shaft, mines spread out, west, north and southwards, creating many mining villages and a network of private railways centred on the port. As Newcastle has grown, it has absorbed these villages as suburbs — Adamstown, Hamilton, Merewether, Lambton, New Lambton, Wallsend, Wickham, Redhead, Belmont, Swansea and Charlestown. Most survive as shopping centres within the suburban mass, and present chiefly timber houses. The southward movement of mining led to the end of power generation in Newcastle. Large coal-powered stations were
built on Lake Macquarie beginning with Wangi Wangi in 1956 and included the Vales Point, Munmorah and Eraring stations. Lake Macquarie and its adjacent sea shore have become a commuter and retirement extension of Newcastle.

On the Cessnock and South Maitland fields, settlement assumes a linear form that extends along the line of outcrop. It leads from East Greta to Bellbird and comprises East Greta, Hebburn, Greta, Kurri Kurri, Stanford Merthyr, Pelaw Main, Weston, Abermain and Neath. The names suggest the origins of miners in South Wales. But the mines have been controlled by a small group of companies in an industry marked by poor employer-worker relations in which the great strikes of the 1890s are just one episode. Here the collieries are larger than on the Newcastle field; in their heyday they produced between 500 and 1,000 tons of coal per day.

There are many small villages, such as Bellbird, Kitchener, Paxton and Kearley, providing workers for one mine, but also some larger centres. One of these small villages was Minmi, where mining began in the 1840s, but closed down in 1924 after a strike.

The proving of the Greta Seam by T.W. Edgeworth David in 1886 brought new prosperity to Cessnock. The area was an early grant exploiting timber and supporting a vineyard, and by the 1850s there was a small village with a police station and lockup and an inn. A steam timber mill was installed in 1884, but the timber was not of the best quality. The first shaft was sunk in 1891, and a private railway built to West Maitland. In the early decades of the twentieth century the large Aberdare Extended mine was established in the centre of the town and local mining expanded. Population skyrocketed. From 165 in 1901 it had grown to 7,243 in 1921. The town became a municipality in 1926.

Kurri Kurri was laid out as a government town in 1902, as a residential centre for the Hebburn, Pelaw Main and Stanford Merthyr and Richmond Main collieries. It also acquired a timber mill and brickworks. Abermain was a town that mushroomed with colliery development after 1903.

Most mines are now closed, and Hunter Valley coal now comes from the Singleton-Muswellbrook area, from cheaper open-cut mines. However, as Newcastle's Manager of Strategic Planning has been eager to point out, 'development of several first-class tourist resorts and vineyards, as well as the aluminium smelter at Kurri Kurri has provided an increasing alternative employment focus for the residents of Cessnock and surrounding areas. Many miners transferred to other underground collieries in the Lake Macquarie area as well as the upper Hunter open-cuts while maintaining their Cessnock residences and are comparatively prosperous'.

NEWCASTLE

Rising coal output and the railway made Newcastle a major city. However developing communications affected its ability to compete with Sydney. Its capacity to serve the inland was reduced by two events; the through railway to its rival city and the failure to build a line through the Cassilis Gate to Ulan until 1982. This process of development in communications also confirmed Sydney's dominance of the whole of the state.

By the time it became a municipality in 1859 Newcastle had some further industry. This was notably in shipbuilding and associated activities such as ropemaking, and consumer goods. The railway's increased importance was recognised when a new station was built in 1878. In 1895 it was upgraded to its present grandeur. By 1890 Newcastle was exporting over two million tons of coal a year. The larger ships were also used, since they could not get up to Morpeth.
Plentiful and cheap coal, together with mineral discoveries elsewhere in Australia gave it a new impetus in the smelting industry. Copper was smelted at Burwood from 1853 to 1886. Copper and tin were smelted at Port Waratah from 1868 to 1893, and copper again at Broadmeadow from 1872 to 1894. Cockle Creek smelted silver, lead and zinc from 1895 to 1922. Copper, gold and silver were smelted at Tigha's Hill from 1907 to 1911, and antimony at Mayfield in 1911. These new industries provided a major boost to a town developing the manufacturing industries inherent to a growing population. Manufacturers produced aerated waters, agricultural implements, bakeries, biscuits, bricks and tiles, chemicals, coachworks, engineering, soap and candles, fell-mongering, flour mills, furniture, printing and woolwashing.

Buildings kept pace with this growth, and many notable examples survive. The stone harbour was made in the 1860s and Barnet's Customs House dates from 1877. The old Anglican cathedral, now a hall, was built in 1885, while Fort Scratchley is a product also of the 1880s. So are some solid office buildings and hotels. Although the new Anglican cathedral was completed in 1970, it had been opened in 1902.

Newcastle's history as a smelting centre was clinched by the decision of BHP to open an iron and steel works. It was completed in 1915 and immediately boosted by the demands of defence. Local coal, at 8 tons per ton of ore brought by ship from South Australia, with some limestone from Tasmania, made this a national and rational site. Availability of steel attracted fabricating plants, such as engineering, galvanising, rail-making, fencing and wire, and the making of firebricks and slag cement. Paradoxically, given this new large scale industry, Newcastle was reasonably prosperous in the interwar years which saw most of Australia plunged into depression. The clothing industry grew at this time, providing some employment for women, always scarce in the lower Hunter. The State Dockyard, which opened in 1914, was sporadically active.

Newcastle's growth led to a demand for fresh water. This came from the Hunter River at Walka from 1880s until the Chichester Dam was commissioned in the 1920s. The Tomago sand beds were brought on line just prior to World War II. The Grahamstown scheme has been the major source of water since the 1960s. Building the Stockton Bridge in the 1970s made this area more accessible to Newcastle, mainly for recreation. Nelson's Bay and Anna Bay on Port Stephens are popular resorts rejuvenated by the bridge.

Newcastle has not been a flourishing centre in recent decades, and this is particularly true of its central business district, which has a low profile untypical of large cities. While this has remained an industrial centre the new high technology industries have not been attracted, and its own industry is not in need of large downtown office blocks. Central Newcastle therefore remains a good example of a city centre of the 1920s, without the tower block development that has destroyed most of Sydney's CBD landscape of the pre-1940 era. Indeed, the more vital development at the more central Charlestown, in the Lake Macquarie City Council area, challenges the commercial use of the CBD.

The Lower Hunter region has its rural fringe in which dairying and timber getting are in decline. Only the remnants of a few rural villages indicate a once-dense small-farm population.
CONCLUSION
The Lower Hunter region is one of the few areas of Australia that resemble the declining coalfield-industrial regions of the developed world. Like most of those regions it suffers from declining coal reserves and cheaper open-cut coal, and the declining importance of heavy industry. Yet Newcastle is an old town, and although many fine heritage buildings were damaged in the 1989 earthquake, many nineteenth century buildings remain. However the economic energy of Newcastle is not such as to support rebuilding unaided.

24 Comments, John Rees, op.cit.
25 Ibid.
27 Comments, John Rees, op.cit.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
3. Upper Hunter

This region comprises the area draining to the Hunter, via the Hunter itself, the Goulburn River and Dart Brook. It is bounded on all sides by steep rugged country, except in the far west where the Cassilis Gate gives access to the interior and is met by the Ulan Railway to bring coal to Newcastle. Southward is dissected plateau country, to the north and west are the Liverpool Range and Barrington Uplands. Formerly entirely rural by contrast with the Lower Hunter, open cut coal mining has recently developed here on a large scale, affecting the towns of Singleton and Muswellbrook.

The Hunter Valley plain lies at the centre of the region, from Singleton to Scone and Murrurundi, a broad belt of lowlands 15 kilometres wide containing much alluvial land. This mainly consists of open undulating grassland and level alluvial plain, which also occurs along the Williams River.

To the west is the Merriwa plateau, composed chiefly of rolling fertile basalt country, served by Cassilis and Merriwa. Streams mostly flow south from the Liverpool Plains to the Goulburn River incised in the sandstone to the south.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

SHIERES
Dungog, Merriwa, Murrurundi, Muswellbrook, Scone, Singleton
The Hunter Valley was one of the first large stretches of suitable pastoral land found early in the colony's history, and after its opening to free settlement in 1820 was quickly taken up. Wood supplied for mills and catchment areas is from the thickly timbered area above the line of 8° general slope. This takes up about half that space. The remainder is used fairly intensively, especially the narrow strip of alluvium that widens out at Patricks Plains and again at the head of the valley. Other good soils are the basalts of the Merriwa Plateau. This valley served as a hearth area: the lower river agriculturalists bred the farmers who moved to the North Coast: the interior bred the sheep and cattle that occupied inland northern New South Wales.

The major evidence of European occupation lies in the widespread environment. Dense timber has been felled in accessible areas; large regions of open forest have been ringbarked and thinned, and the alluvia cultivated and irrigated. Native grasses have been widely replaced and altered by selective grazing. Much of the country suffers from soil erosion, so that rivers and creeks have silted up, and floods may be more severe than in the past. Since some 70 per cent of New South Wales suffers from soil erosion, this is not a theme that can be systematically duplicated region by region. The steady destruction of Australia's environment by its users which in the twentieth century cannot be explained by ignorance, is the chief heritage of the past in New South Wales.

The discovery of the river Hunter was partly from the downstream government enclave - Colonel Paterson in particular is said to have reached Patricks Plains - but also overlaid from other settled districts. William Lawson found the Goulburn River from Mudgee in 1822, and after a number of attempts, John Howe, Benjamin Singleton and others found a route from Windsor in 1823, approximately the line of the Bulga Road. Stock could now be overlanded from the crowded Cumberland Plain.

There were already Aborigines in possession, but they were driven off and absorbed as hangers-on about the stations. One of the pioneers of pastoralism on the Hunter, Robert Scott of Glendon, wrote 'They must be taught a sharp lesson at the first collision. Only force can keep such people in check. They cannot be civilised or tamed, and those with some acquaintance with British ways are most to be feared.'

The opening of the Upper Hunter began at Patricks Plains where Singleton grazed stock and grew wheat and maize. Others soon followed in a great rush fed by the free and wealthy immigration of the 1820s, though land had to be bought after 1825. By then however, under the old land for capital scheme, over 360,000 acres of Hunter Valley land had been granted. By 1828 there were 50,000 sheep and 11,000 cattle, grazing at the then estimated rates most of the alienated land.

This was a gentry settlement, including such rich settlers as Bowman, Chief Justice Forbes at Edinglassie, Dickson, Carter, Mills, Ogilvie at Merton, the British parliamentarian T Potter Macqueen with his 25,000 acres at Segenhoef, a mixture of Sydney merchants and graziers, and retired military officers seeking to establish a squierarchy. Only the waterfrontages were alienated, as Mitchell's map of 1834 demonstrates. The back country was leased or even grazed illegally by those who held the water.

The basic unit of settlement had been developed in Cumberland, and here showed its adaptability for settling the pastoral lands. There was a central headquarters on the run, furnished with a good house when time permitted, but certainly a woolshed. In a ring around this, strategically occupying all the land, were outstations with shepherds and hut keepers, moving the sheep over the natural pastures. One shepherd could guard 600 sheep, but more men were required to cart provisions and carry wool down the country, and cart materials and provisions on the station itself. At first the system relied on assigned convicts, but when these were withdrawn in 1840, free men were employed, supplemented by Aborigines and half castes. There were some Chinese brought in as shepherds. Drays pulled by bullocks carried 250 lb bales of wool down to Morpeth for shipment to Sydney. By 1830 the stocks were spilling westward and the Merriwa country was occupied. By then the first Hunter pastoralists had crossed Liverpool Range by Henry Dangar's route at the head of Pages River and were into the
Liverpool Plains. At this point the Limits of Location were fixed in recognisable form, making such an incursion illegal.

Lying within the Limits, the inner Hunter was provided with towns. When T.L. Mitchell built his Great North Road, he intended one branch of it to point to the upper Hunter at Leamington, a grand town never built at Jerreys Plains, a small village later recognised by a less ambitious plan. The other branch, completed, went to Maitland. The road still stands along many stretches in the sandstone country between Sydney and the Hunter, by ways of Wiseman’s Ferry. Shipping was cheaper than land transport, and was replaced by the railway. The remaining roadworks stand as fine examples of convict stonemasonry.

The real capital of the inner Hunter grew up not at Leamington but at Singleton. Here on Patricks Plains 2,000 acres of wheat were grown on alluvial soil in the 1830s, and vines and tobacco were major crops. Tobacco continued to be grown here into the 1890s, and Singleton had two ‘factories’ which may merely have cured the leaf for shipment. Here was the crossing of the Hunter on the road that led from Maitland up the country through Lochinvar. Benjamin Singleton took up his first land at Neotsfield, a pastoral holding, but soon moved to the ford, and established an inn and punt to serve the increasing traffic. From 1836 he sold town lots from a plan quite dissimilar to the grid pattern of the government towns. By 1841 the site held 431 people, a flour mill, and two of the eleven boiling downs which the pastoralists resorted to in the depression of the 1840s were located here. Brewing was established in 1845, by which time there were Presbyterian and Catholic churches: an Anglican church was built in 1851. In a secular age it is easy to underestimate the establishment of churches for a population that despite its reputation for profanity was also deeply religious. Churches were a sign that the ‘respectable’ classes had made their appearance in a town or place.

Further upstream Muswellbrook became an urban centre, given a plan in 1838. By 1841 there were 215 people, and a post office had been established. The name was officially changed from Mussel Brook to Muswellbrook in 1839. This was chiefly a road town and an official centre for magistrates, mounted police and government functions and grew only slowly. But it did have a steam flour mill in the 1840s, and a Temperance Hall, signs of merchant activity. Surrounded by large estates, it did not have the growth potential of Singleton.

The service centre for the upper valley, much under the thumb of the Dumaresqs, was Scone, earlier named Invermein. The Scottish influence is clear. The official town was renamed Scone, and already had a hospital in 1834. Dumaresq put on tenants who grew wheat and supported the town.

Aberdeen was laid out at a ford at the Hunter River largely at the insistence of Potter McQueen to aggrandise his Sengenboue estate, in 1838. It relied on road traffic and estate workers, and in 1840 had an inn and a steam flour mill which precariously survives. Murrrunundi was another road village at the edge of the Settled Districts - Liverpool Range prevented it from serving the country beyond, as Yass did in the south - but it was laid out in 1837 and by 1846 had 52 people, inns, stores and three churches. The other minor service centres were founded later, Wingen in 1855 and Broke in 1860.

Only against the stubborn resistance of the landowners were Cassilis laid out in 1835 and Merriwa in 1840. The pastoralists wanted no inns to distract their workers from hard labour. T.L. Mitchell insisted however that a courthouse and police station must always be located within a town plan, so that these two ‘towns’ were set up with those buildings from the start. In a country with few people they acquired few services, an inn and a store being their mainstay until 1850, but which time both had schools also.

The gold rushes did not impinge directly on the Hunter Valley, though they increased the price of meat, drew off labour and created a demand for wheat and small farms, so that the better soils on some estates were subdivided into tenant holdings. The small farmer thus got a foothold. It was not until the 1890s that gold was actually found within the Valley, at Stewarts Brook and Woolooma, which gave a temporary bustle to the town of Scone. The democratic constitution of 1858, overthrew the gentry’s power in New South
Wales, and the Upper Hunter pastoralists withdrew to their estates for the most part, an exception being Sir John Robertson who unusually was on the side of democracy. He introduced two bills for ‘unlocking the lands’, the Crown Lands Alienation Bill and the Crown Lands Occupation Bill of 1861. They cut the political base from under the gentry’s allies, the squatters. And indeed the Hunter gentry also suffered, for most of them had squatting runs beyond the boundaries of which the freehold Hunter station was a secure base. The Ogelvies, for example, had land on the Clarence and Richmond rivers, where they had been pioneers reaching out from Merton.

The Hunter pastoralists were thus often preoccupied by the need to secure their outlying runs from free selectors after 1861, but most did so successfully, and the profits continued to flow in to support the gentry lifestyle. The invasion of selectors found the best land on the Hunter in large freeholds, and only the hilly fringes were so taken up, about 20,000 acres. But small farms continued to make headway on the estates as the profitability of renting increased - one estate was subdivided into 227 tenant farms. Wheat could still be grown profitably in the drier areas upstream, even after the climatic disasters of the 1860s, but maize became the more usual crop, and as on the lower river, many tenants left in search of freeholds on the coastal fringe. There was a return to sheep and cattle as the mainstays, and horses became a major output in the Weddin Valley and Kingdon Ponds areas. Racing became a favourite pastime.

Singleton lost its flour mills, but became an important stockmarket from which the animals were driven to Sydney. The railway in 1863 made it a more important collecting and sales centre, while dairying and vines - 513 acres in 1860 - took over the alluvial flats. Singleton became a municipality in 1866. Its activities represent those of a thriving country town in the late nineteenth century. Manufacturing included soap and candles, tinware, four furniture manufacturers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, carriage builders, a foundry, and a tinned meat works. A gas works provided street lighting in 1883. A volunteer firebrigade was founded in 1886, and a reticulated water supply began in 1882. It was well provided with churches, masonic hall, temperance hall, school of arts [though no public library until 1961], Oddfellows hall, and all those imposing institutions with which the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie endowed their fellows. Singleton least of all, was dominated by surrounding owners of large estates.

Similar improvements were made elsewhere. Scone municipality was established in 1888 - the railway had arrived there in 1871 - and many small tenant farmers made this a progressive centre. Races were still held on the estates, but the town went in for improvement, arranging for garbage disposal in 1889, planting an ornamental park, introducing kerbing and guttering in 1891, lighting the streets in 1896, and generally exhibiting all the signs of an ‘age of improvement’. Muswellbrook similarly built a hospital in 1857, a school in 1862, and a town gas supply in 1894. Urban amenities came to the country towns in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the pioneering phase was well over in the Hunter Valley. It is true that the lesser towns stagnated, stranded in an inhospitable and trafficless countryside where the estate owners wanted no tenants, and clung to their merinos. These did not benefit much from the great boom of the 1870s and 1880s, in which Australia was awash with British money, which rebuilt whole main streets that now dominate the scene with their neoclassical banks and shops, urned and scrolled and balustered in the most elaborate fashion.

Much of the improvement in the Upper Hunter came from the lead of the estate owners, and not merely from the urban bourgeoisie, which makes this an unusual area. Eldred Grigg has drawn attention to the ‘estate paternalism’ that persisted in the area until about 1914. The estate owners lived in big houses and aped the English squiresarchy in their paternal approach to their tenants and workers, for whom they gave ‘harvest festivals’ and built churches in the English manorial style. They were often able to do this, because their incomes included a large non-pastoral component. This was so for Whites of Belltrees. The notion of a responsible landed gentry persisted here longer than elsewhere in the colony.

In the 1890s this was still then the domain of the large freehold estate. Fourteen men held 227,000 acres between them, of which only 331 were cultivated. Ringharking and fencing had increased profits and reduced the labour force on the finest country where cultivation by tenants was not an
option. There was however a reassessment of the alluvia, partly caused by the railway, partly caused by the new dairy technology developed at Kiama in the Illawarra region. This land was now let or even sold for dairying, and this became the twentieth century mainstay. Nearly a fifth of the valley’s surface is suitable, and this served butter factories, many and widespread in the earlier phase, but soon settling on the main towns - Singleton, Muswellbrook, Aberdeen and Scone - with the coming of the hand separator and the central refrigerated factory serving the export market. The Goulburn Valley and the Merriwa Plateau, without rail access, stuck to merinos, and looked westward to Mudgee rather than eastward.

Dairying began the subdivision of the large estates, though there was some contraction as small farmers withdrew from the remote and infertile uplands. The subdivision was continued by a shift from wool to beef, which paid higher rents on pastures increasingly improved by the introduction of phalaris, superphosphate and aerial topdressing. Rising land prices made it tempting to sell up the large estates. They were beset by the rising price of labour, resumption for subdivision by government, and soldier settlement that took much of the land on the sound side of the river from Singleton to Denman after World War I. The effects of soldier settlement were felt around Scone and on the Merriwa Plateau after World War II when the country was cut up into wheat-sheep farms. Fat lambs have replaced wool production as the chief revenue where sheep remain. Meanwhile, the Upper Hunter Region now supports mainly dairy farms up to 500 acres, and beef cattle properties up to 2000 acres, or wheat-sheep farms of slightly larger size. The twentieth century has swept away the paternal estate mode of production and society that existed up to 1914.

Scone may be used to illustrate the urban change of this century. Saleyards were established in 1905 (rebuilt 1973), after the town had shown its civic spirit by accepting Mr Cook’s donation of a Federation Memorial Fountain. A fire brigade was established in 1925, and a reticulated water supply in 1930. Sewerage was supplied in 1930, and an aerodrome at Nandoura in 1938. An ambulance station was established in 1936. Electricity was run through the town in 1920. Again, this may be taken to represent what was going on in most country towns in the interwar period despite depression: a second phase of supplying modern services that parallels that from 1860-1890. The progressive country town is acquiring the services hitherto confined to city dwellers.

Aberdeen was sunk in the depression in this period, its meatworks, set up in 1892, mostly closed for want of overseas markets, so that unemployed returned soldiers were given a tent camp to live in with their families. Muswellbrook undertook similar improvements to Scone. This was largely because employment was maintained in the coal mines opened in the 1920s. Also, with the absorption of the Upper Hunter into the liquid milk supply system, its factory became the chief collector of milk from the middle and upper Hunter. Singleton also benefited from the shift of coal mining from the Lower Hunter Region, and enjoyed a similar growth of services as Scone, with mines at Ravensworth, Fry Brook and Liddell.

So came into being a diverse region, with intensive farming for dairying and irrigated lucerne on the river flats (aided by the construction of the Glenbawn Dam in 1958), beef cattle grazing on improved pastures, wheat-sheep farming on the Merriwa Plateau, and horse studs in the far north. This modern farming system supports a series of towns - Singleton, Muswellbrook, Scone - with modern facilities, augmented in their employment structure by coal mining which in the 1960s and 1970s made them boom towns, with much new housing construction. Across this rural landscape stride the great power lines from the twin generating stations at Liddell. The towns have not grown so much that they have been rebuilt at their centres.

CONCLUSION
The region was one of the first occupied by the grazing and farming industries, and retains many urban and rural buildings from a variety of phases of occupation. At one time the home of the gentry, the gentry tradition survived into the early twentieth century, and may be said to have been taken up again in the rich horse-studs and cattle properties of the Upper Hunter. At the same time it has been invaded by modern open-cut coal mining and power production that has influenced towns, notably Singleton and Muswellbrook. The river has been the key to much agricultural development, and provides the core of the region and its route ways.