

Future Planning Strategy

A response to the 2031 Your Future Central Coast Discussion Paper

Mountain Districts Association



ABSTRACT

This document forms a response from the Mountain Districts Association to the 2031 Your Future Central Coast Discussion Paper.

MOUNTAIN DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

The following document has been prepared on behalf of the Mountain Districts Association. If you would like any further information or the opportunity to discuss any of the material provided herein, please do not hesitate to contact our Chairperson, Claire Podlich (details provided below).

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INTRODUCTION

The Mountain Districts Association (MDA) welcomes this opportunity to provide feedback on and input to the *2031 Your Future Central Coast* planning process. We represent the residents who live in a large area classified as Rural and Resource land to the west of M1 Motorway. We are a sparse population, dispersed throughout this comparatively large proportion of the Central Coast and we contribute significantly to the local economy.

Our community is very diverse, encompassing many cultural, religious, socio-economic and age groups. As indicated on your map we have no significant villages, but include the localities of Mangrove Mountain, Kulnura, Somersby, Peats Ridge, Bucketty and Spencer.

Many people who live here are employed locally, with some commuting to Major Centres such as Sydney, Newcastle and Gosford and other coastal localities.

Locally, people are employed in a variety of industries including:

- Agriculture and primary production (fruit, vegetables, hydroponics, meat chicken, eggs, cut flowers, plant nurseries, beef cattle, horse spelling/training);
- Sand and hard rock mining;
- Water bottling;
- Electrical, plumbing, mechanical and carpentry trades;
- Retail and catering (including golf clubs);
- Processing industries (chicken, fruit);
- Local government;
- Education;
- Health;
- Veterinary services;
- Landscape supplies;
- Small businesses such as real estate, accounting, hairdressing and property maintenance;
- Earthmoving, machinery hire and contracting;
- Religious establishments; and
- Tourism.

Additionally, we have a large number of retirees living in our local community. We are also fortunate to have many voluntary organisations that enhance the cultural, sporting and social enrichment of our community.

SURVEY SUMMARY

To ensure that our response is as representative of our community as possible, we have conducted a survey of local residents to gauge their attitudes towards issues they see as important to them, affecting their lifestyle both now and in the future. As of 13-Nov-2014, we have received responses from 63 residents of our area. Details of the survey, including raw response data and summarised results, are included in Appendix A – Survey Details.

In the following, each of the major categories presented in the *2031 Your Future Central Coast Discussion Paper* are addressed in a way that relates to the lifestyles of Mountain residents. These responses comprise the results from our survey, feedback provided to MDA members, and the views of the MDA committee. We strongly feel that representation and inclusion of our community in the planning process is very important, as our needs often differ significantly from the responses suggested in your literature, which relate more specifically to the coastal urban areas.

HOUSING OUR GROWING POPULATION

Much of our available area is zoned Rural 1A Agriculture, with a minimum subdivision of 20 hectares (50 acres). Some smaller blocks exist from previous zoning requirements.

In our survey, the majority of respondents believed that keeping existing block size and usage should be encouraged, in order to maintain a predominantly productive rural/farming area. Similarly, 36% responded that allowing a second home on their property would facilitate farm employee accommodation and assist with inter-generational farm succession planning, without requiring the need to sub-divide viable farming units.

Many respondents commented that they want to see the rural and bushland environment maintained and protected, saying that the natural beauty is what initially attracted them to the Hinterland area. A lack of such maintenance and protection poses a threat to the economic and cultural growth of the area.

The concept of a Hinterland Village Centre with a consolidation of services and facilities including health, education and professional services, has been suggested. Such a centre would stand to serve children, families, retired farmers and farm/industry workers, and would be beneficial for the growth of our community. Re-zoning of a central area such as the triangle bordered by Wisemans Ferry Road, George Downes Drive and Peats Ridge Road would enable future development of housing, services and facilities to support this community. Currently most residents must travel 15km to 90km to access services in urban areas East of the M1. At present, the services that do operate locally are run as small home businesses and are scattered throughout the district. Similarly, local schools and cultural centres, including sporting facilities, community halls and convenience shops, are geographically dispersed. A centralised hub would provide a strong foundation for future growth and development, and strengthen the social bond of our sparsely populated community.

Pressures created by population growth and real estate appreciation have forced the need for further urban development on the Central Coast. Residential sub-division and associated developments, including rural lifestyle blocks, west of the M1 are considered a threat to the future viability of agriculture in this area. Areas of suitable land for agriculture need to be maintained. Because of the proximity to major urban populations, this area is strategically well placed for fresh food supply. As described in the following section, agriculture is an important sector of the Central Coast economy.

PROVIDING JOBS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Pressure from urban sprawl forcing inappropriate planning policy regarding agricultural areas in other parts of Greater Sydney has led to the loss of farming zones similar to ours, with the ensuing re-location of farm businesses to marginal areas further from markets driving up the cost of production. Agriculture currently employs many local people in our district and contributes \$157 million per annum to the Central Coast economy. It can also provide more jobs on the Central Coast in the future, with a growing population and associated increase in demand for local fresh produce.

Our proximity to urban areas enables Hinterland businesses to provide jobs for both local people and those from the greater Central Coast area in fresh food production, processing and value adding to primary produce. As the general population shifts its attitude towards sustainable and organic foods, our area is in a prime position to capitalise on the economic opportunities and job creation for the Central Coast area. Future challenges, such as the reliance on finite fossil fuel resources, will see food security and food miles become an increasingly important issue and will highlight the productive agricultural capabilities of our area and its accessibility to nearby urban populations. Furthermore, as the need to feed an ever-increasing world population expands, our community is well placed with proximity to major transport links and export facilities to provide fresh produce and processed food for overseas markets. Over 78% of survey respondents believe further support for agricultural activity is required to encourage investment and growth in our local industry.

Possibilities for additional areas of economic growth in our area include aged-care support, tourism, “remote office” working and renewable energy production. Increased training and employment of aged-care workers who can assist elderly people to remain as independent as possible in their own homes must be seen as a growth area as our population ages. Because of the unique situation in which many farming families’ homes are also their workplaces, as well as a substantial portion of their assets, arrangements required to access aged-care facilities are difficult,

especially when the younger generation continues to operate the farming business. In-home support is a necessary alternative for elderly people in this rural community improving quality of life for all generations of the family, whilst enabling continuity of the knowledge and operation of farming businesses.

Eco-tourism, bed-and-breakfasts and farmstays are another growth area for employment according to 68% of survey respondents. This industry relies on the large tracts of National Park and pristine bushland surrounding our area, the rural ambience, and our proximity to urban areas. Planning policy to ensure sympathetic developments and environmental protection is vital, as is sufficient infrastructure and service provision. Increased tourist accommodation will benefit existing local businesses including golf courses, stores, cafes and clubs.

Renewable energy is another industry that would be readily accommodated in our area, and is worthy of government support. Solar energy production already exists, but has a huge potential to expand and is conveniently located close to urban markets. Large open spaces in our area may also be suitable for wind-generated power, and research on geo-thermal energy may produce useful results for future development.

In our survey, 68% of respondents believed that rock and sand quarrying should be phased out or be contained to current operational extents in the Mountain Districts because of environmental concerns and possible impacts on productivity of agricultural land. These industries provide a source of employment currently and have existed for some time providing essential materials to urban areas, but may expose local communities to significant health risks and affect the aquifers.

Almost all of survey respondents (98%) are completely opposed to coal seam gas (CSG) extraction being permitted to proceed in our area due to the potential risk of destruction to vital aquifers upon which we are all reliant. This is identical to the response from a door-to-door survey of 1,221 residents in the region conducted recently by an MDA sub-committee. Protection of drinking water is critical for both

the Mountain Districts and the coastal urban areas, with Mangrove Dam providing over 90% of the potable water consumed by Central Coast residents. Agriculture is also very dependent on a reliable source of clean water, as are local water bottling operations. Employment from the CSG industry would be minimal with no to very few opportunities for locals.

Similarly, over 80% of survey respondents believe that extraction of water for bottling needs to be better monitored and regulated, with a gradual reduction in operations. Current water sharing systems are under review by the Office of Water. This industry provides minimal local employment.

PROVIDING EFFICIENT TRANSPORT NETWORKS

For most residents of the Mountain Districts, better access to public transport is desired, with some parts of our area currently having no available public transport, creating problems for elderly residents and those without access to private transport. However, it is unlikely that increased public transport is a viable option with such a small population and vast distances to cover. This means that private transport is currently a necessity and it is therefore critical that roads are well maintained and safe.

82% of respondents in our survey felt that our roads are not in good repair and therefore pose an increased risk to drivers. Many felt that our main local roads are arterial access routes and part of state road systems, and should therefore fall under State jurisdiction and funding. These roads are also used as alternative routes between the Hunter Region, the Central Coast and Sydney for both leisure and in the event of an emergency, underlining the importance that they are adequately maintained.

Our local roads also have a high incidence of heavy vehicle movements, due to the nature of farming, water bottling and mining and quarrying industries, and therefore require a greater level of maintenance. Planning and increased funding for roads that are safe and meet standards required by heavy vehicles are necessary. A recent decision by the Land and Environment Court has approved a dumping operation for 1,000,000 cubic metres of fill to be placed at Central Mangrove, requiring 55 heavy vehicle movements per day. This considerable and additional impact on local road surfaces concerns many residents, as does the presence of such an increase in traffic volume through the busy intersection of two main access routes.

The intersection of George Downes Drive and Wisemans Ferry Road is central to our area and has a high incidence of cross directional traffic. Gosford City Council has initiated redevelopment of the intersection with a different design, despite community opposition. Many believe the new design, currently under construction,

will increase the frequency of fatal accidents with numerous cars and school buses having to turn into the path of oncoming heavily loaded vehicles. A feasibility study for a safer intersection is strongly desired by local residents.

PROVIDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE WE NEED

Telecommunications such as mobile phone reception and broadband connectivity are problematic issues for 60% and 46% of local residents respectively.

Improvements in these services would create new employment opportunities for “remote office” workers, and also reduce the need to commute to major centres. Online ordering of products and internet banking also reduce the need to travel long distances for crucial services.

As already mentioned above, planning and funding to improve the condition of our main local roads is considered necessary by residents.

A centrally located Hinterland Village Centre, as described earlier in the housing section, is necessary infrastructure development to support economic growth and social and cultural enrichment in the Mountain Districts. A central hub would reduce the need for duplicated services throughout the district, as well as provide mutual support for neighbouring businesses.

Domestic waste disposal service is not available to some residents of our area. However, any proposal for siting processing operations of domestic and industrial waste in our area is considered completely unacceptable by 90% of residents. It is believed that it would pose a significant risk to the quality of the underlying aquifer and the adjacent creek, surrounding pristine bushland, the viability of the golf course and club, and the health of neighbouring residents and nearby primary school students.

Although Mangrove Dam lies within our area, local residents do not have access to reticulated water. We must rely on rain and surface water or purchase a water licence to extract ground water. This applies equally for domestic, agricultural, mining or other business uses. Water is therefore considered a vitally important issue to the future of our district, as without access to good quality water all domestic activity, primary production, mining, bottling, tourism and most other enterprises would be halted and cease to exist. Co-ordination between government

departments to develop an integrated approach to sustainable water sharing and land tenure would improve business confidence for local industries and create a more stable economic future for the Mountain Districts.

BUILDING ON OUR ATTRACTIVE LIFESTYLE

Many respondents to our survey commented that they want to maintain their rural and agricultural surroundings, as well as ensure protection of our natural bushland in National Parks and State Forests. Increased population and decreased land holding sizes would put viable agricultural enterprises at risk and increase pressure on already unsustainable use of the aquifers. Water is the most vital part of our environment, and it needs protection above all else, if lifestyles are to be maintained and economic futures enhanced. Our communities need to prepare for increasing changes in severe weather patterns that will impact on agriculture and have a flow on effect to many other industries. The protection and preservation of our water aquifers is essential to ensure our future food security.

Increased eco-tourism opportunities would enable more people to enjoy our beautiful natural areas. Sensitive planning policy is needed to ensure a sustainable industry.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE AND BUILDING RESILIENCE TO NATURAL HAZARDS

The maintenance of habitat and wildlife corridors that support bio-diversity networks is to be encouraged. Existing National Parks and State Forests help protect our natural environment, including many endangered species, and provide an opportunity for people to live near and appreciate our natural surroundings.

As the incidence of severe weather patterns increases due to climate change we need to develop strategies that will enable us prepare for and withstand these occurrences. The departments responsible for our National Parks and our State Forests, including very large tracts of bushland, need to develop management plans that ensure hazard reduction occurs regularly and at appropriate times to reduce the risks of extreme fire events that have the potential to adversely impact local properties.

Furthermore, Rural Fire Service plans for survival and evacuation need to provide holistic community strategies. Suitable sites for community-wide emergency assembly points (EAPs) need to be identified, set up and maintained. Such plans and EAPs should then be communicated to residents. It is hoped that the local volunteer Rural Fire Service Brigades will be supported in coordinating and completing these tasks crucial to the safety of our community in emergency events.

Some residents have expressed concerns that public land needs to remain under public ownership and not be sold to private individuals, thus ensuring access to open areas and community resources for all residents. Sadly, some local areas of land and facilities, such as Peats Ridge Hall, Mangrove Mountain Memorial Golf Course, and the bowling club and tennis courts off George Downes Drive, once held in trust for the community have been lost to residents due to unfortunate circumstances and poor decisions. Some of these facilities were donated by individuals for community use and were subsequently significant social hubs.

PROTECTING PRODUCTIVE RURAL AND RESOURCE LANDS

There are many potential threats to our productive rural and resource lands. Primarily, all existing agriculture and resource extraction is completely dependent upon the availability of clean water. Thus, a sustainable water sharing policy is essential for current industry to thrive into the future. Clarification from within government regarding catchment and groundwater policy is needed. All threats to aquifers and local waterways by new and existing industries must be considered thoroughly, researched extensively, and approached with the utmost integrity.

The continuation of a stable and well-defined planning regime that specifies areas for agriculture in the same way that urban, industrial, environmental zones are designated will create stability and confidence in the farming and resource sectors. Maintaining viable farming units is critical, and avoiding urbanisation of the area will enhance confidence in and the growth of agriculture. Consistent planning policy at all levels of government will continue to encourage capital investment in farm infrastructure, with flow on effects to the Central Coast economy.

Climatic stability is seen as a challenge for agriculture in the future, as more severe weather patterns emerge creating more difficult conditions for food production. Consumers are becoming more aware of food security, food integrity, freshness and food miles. Supporting local agricultural industry reduces concerns for all these factors.

CONCLUSION

In summary, our main areas of concern for consideration are:

- The need to protect water sources, including aquifers and local waterways, and ensure sustainable water-sharing policies;
- The need to improve rural infrastructure including roads, telecommunication services and the development of a Hinterland Village Centre;
- The need to maintain viable farming units and protect the agricultural integrity of our area by ensuring planning policy restricts further urban development of rural and resource lands;
- The need for planning policy to allow a second home on farming properties that would assist with inter-generational succession planning without the need to subdivide viable agricultural units;
- The need to ensure the protection of aquifers and Central Coast potable water supplies from threats posed by CSG operations;
- The need to develop planning strategies to improve community safety in emergency situations such as bushfires;
- The need to mitigate the economic impacts of severe weather patterns on agriculture; and
- The opportunity for significant renewable energy production to facilitate a transition from a society dependent on finite fossil fuels.

APPENDIX A – SURVEY DETAILS

MDA SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In response to the call for community comment to the *Your Future Central Coast 2031 Discussion Paper* the Mountain Districts Association undertook an online survey to gather as many comments from individual residents of the areas as possible. Announcements were made regarding the survey via local printed news, the MDA website, community facebook pages and via an email to all MDA and subcommittee subscribers and via other local community email lists.

The survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey, and described as follows:

The Central Coast Regional Office NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure have produced a discussion paper titled [2031 / Your Future Central Coast](#), which was recently released by the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Pru Goward MP and Minister for the Central Coast, the Hon. Rob Stokes, MP.

The Discussion Paper focuses on areas important to supporting the projected addition of 64,250 people to the Central Coast by 2031 – housing, jobs, transport, infrastructure, natural resources (such as water supplies) and services, and the question of how we maintain the natural environment.

Our assessment of the focus of the planning is that it is very biased toward growth and an expansion of the extractive industries and there is no mention of how the rural lifestyle in the Mountain Districts will be preserved and enriched. There is little mention in the plan of how all the various activities (both lifestyle and economic) that are expected to occur within the Central Coast region can be shaped so that they will help the area cope with the projected effects of climate change - changing rainfall patterns, drying bush and increased risks of bushfire and so on. The plan assumes the area will continue to be a source of fossil fuel mining for decades to come, a position at odds with [calls from climate scientists](#) for a rapid move to renewable energy sources.

*The Department's planning process allows for a period of community consultation and **we have until November 16th to provide our input.** This feedback will then inform the development of a new Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan for the Central Coast. We urge all the residents of the Mountain Districts to participate in this community consultation process.*

The Mountain Districts Association and also its subcommittee, Gasfield Free Mountain Districts, are currently preparing submissions to be forwarded to the Department of Planning for consideration.

SURVEY DESCRIPTION

The survey totaled eight questions as follows: 2 related to housing; 3 related to the environment including the aquifer/water catchment and the impacts of mining and waste disposal; 1 related to jobs; 2 related to infrastructure.

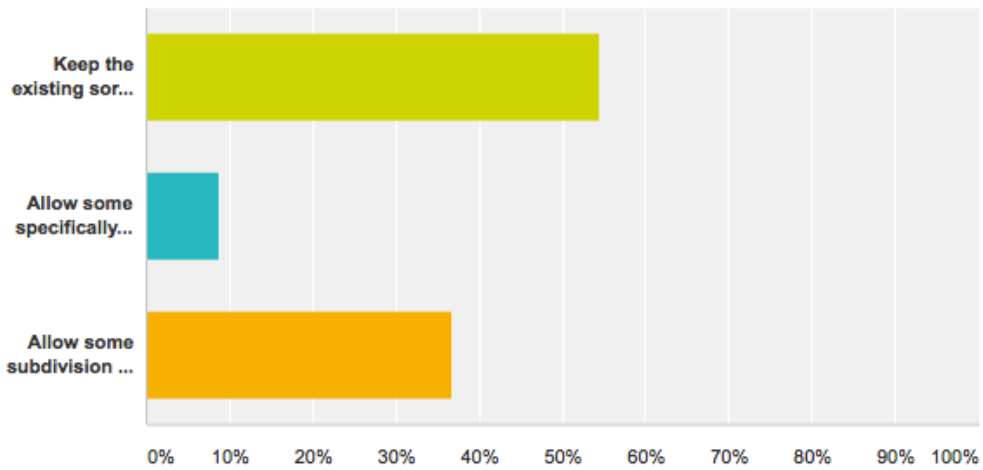
All questions were multiple choice except for Q8 (related to future infrastructure – this question allowed for full text responses only). Q1 (housing density) was a closed multiple choice (allowing one selection), with all the remainder being open multiple choice allowing the respondent to choose as many of the answers as they felt best described their views. All questions allowed for respondent comments of up to 500 characters.

A total of 63 responses were received from the community. Not all respondents answered all questions. All responses follow.

HOUSING

What sort of housing density do you think should be encouraged in the Mountain Districts area over the next 20 years?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 6



Answer choices

Response

Keep the existing sort of block size and usage	54.39% (31)
Allow some subdivision to allow lifestyle block sort of density (1000 - 2000m2 block size)	36.84% (21)
Allow some specifically chosen areas to be subdivided to allow something approaching "standard" suburban housing density (1000m2 block size or less)	8.77% (5)
Total respondents	57

COMMENTS

The addition of a very few additional lifestyle blocks would possibly be advantageous to the community due to there being more people available to service the need for more volunteers e.g. with the RFS brigades.

Despite what some say the land on the Mountain is not all prime agricultural land. A lot of it would be ideal for Rural Residential Subdivision into to say 5 or 10 acre lots. Many residents on the Mountain are elderly and do not want to leave the area. If the Mountain area was rezoned to allow Rural Residential it would assist these people. At present they are stuck with minimum block sizes of 50 acres which is not only beyond their capability to maintain but can also affect their Pension rights.

Because of our high rainfall and excellent climate, this area is suitable for intensive farming. Close proximity to Sydney markets also is an advantage. We already have many poultry farms, intensive hydroponic vegetable growing and plant nurseries in the area. Further housing development would impact greatly on the future of farming in this area.

Unless a massive change of infrastructure which would have to include transport and road upgrade then the area must stay the same. I personally want it to remain as rural as possible. That is why I liked it enough to come and live here twenty seven years ago.

I would like the area to stay as is , except for the allowance of one additional unattached house for family members.

Or even a bit more..

Low density as its a rural area and should stay that way

Whilst it would be great to see the existing housing density be maintained, it would also assist the area to have slightly increased population growth to enable more facilities to be developed here. Schools will not be threatened with closure, the RFS

may be able to increase its membership, other organisations will be further developed.

Allowing granny flats or 2nd dwellings on properties would be a huge benefit as we grow older we would love for our kids to take over the farm, with us possibly staying here as long as possible.

Rural residential with the option for inter generational and farm employee accomodation.

The Mountain district cannot

the mountain area is predominantly a productive rural / farming area - reducing that space will impact this outcome

Agriculture needs to be maintained close to the city

No smaller than 2 hectare blocks in certain areas

This will allow older residents to realize the land value and stay in the community.

There is opportunity for more condensed housing around some of the townships, but the bush areas should remain as is.

I think that the mountain district is a place to go to escape the city and live in natures beauty. To urbanise it would be to wreck this beauty.

We moved to the Mountains district area many years ago and continue to live here because it provides a comfortable and safe lifestyle for us and our family. To change/destroy anything in the area would be detrimental to the whole community young and old. Children are raised happy and healthy here, wildlife thrives here, endangered species flora and fauna survive because we protect them all and will continue to do so!

The Mountain Districts is also known as the Central Coast Plateau and it is zoned Rural 1a Agriculture. The Sydney Metropolitan Strategy identifies development growth zones in the NW and SW, the latter currently responsible for significant production of fresh agricultural produce for Sydney. The CCP is well placed to replace this area and become the major area for supplying fresh produce to Sydney and should be preserved and encouraged for this purpose.

Imperative to maintain the rural zoning to permit and promote agriculture in the region.

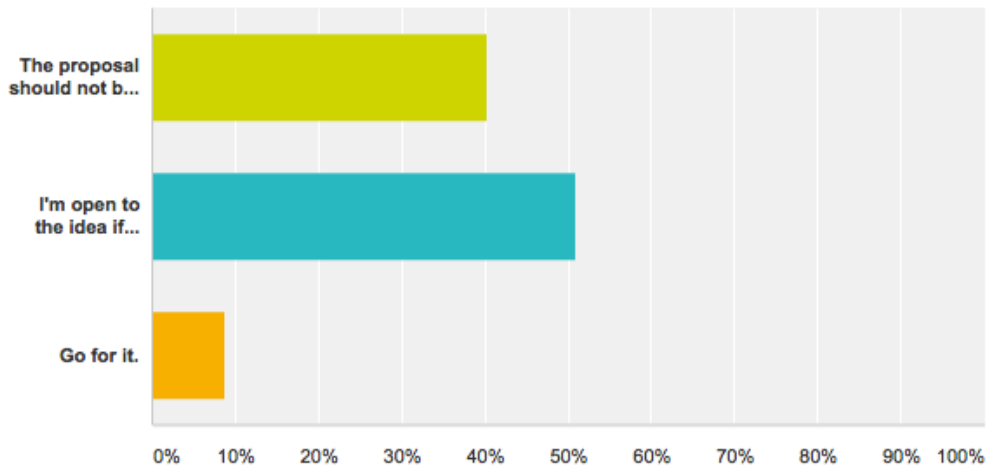
We seem to be forgetting that all people need to eat. Land that is available for farming is being pushed further and further away from population centres and onto more marginal land. We need to keep pockets of productive land to allow food to be produced close to its end destination.

Suggest a 4th Option - some planned subdivision for rural lifestyle lots (2 -4 hectares in size) around the existing community schools & centres (e.g. Somersby, Peats Ridge, Kulnura). However, a form of development contributions plan would be necessary to contribute to the upgrade of existing electricity, road, and communications infrastructure to accommodate the resulting population increase. 2-4 ha should be sufficient to cope with on-site waste water management and thereby avoid need for sewer and town water infrastructure.

DEVELOPMENT

The NSW Planning Department documents mentions allowing residential development West of the M1/F3 corridor. We believe this refers to proposed development in Jilliby and near Mardi Dam. What are your views on this idea?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 6



Answer choices

Response

The proposal should not be allowed.	40.35% (23)
I'm open to the idea if residential development is constrained to only these two specific areas.	50.88% (29)
Go for it.	8.77% (5)
Total respondents	57

COMMENTS

The development being considered for Jilliby and Mardi Dam, should also include the Mountain Districts as well. The Mountain Districts is also close to the M1/F3 and the NSW Planning Department should also consider develop within the area.

Residential development should not be further increased west of the M1 due to the need to have an agricultural zone which cannot be impinged upon over the years by governments of the future. Once the land is subdivided it cannot be taken again for agricultural use. Also, see above qualification to this comment.

I really believe that rural residential of 5 -10 acres should be allowed in all areas from Calga through all the Mountain district to Jilliby.

We need all the area we can for rural food production.

The block sizes should be large. e.g 1,000 sq m

These areas already have smaller "hobby" farms and are closer to bigger residential areas such as Wyong.

If your beliefs are correct that appears to be responsible

Intensive Subdivision along the lines of what has happens to the east of the m1 would be very bad news! Carefully planned discreet projects responding to established local needs that bring jobs and support the economy should be considered on a case by case basis, and should be subjected to the usual Environmental impact reviews

Development should only go ahead if the catchments and aquifers are unaffected. That is zero possibility of contamination. Can this assurance be attained?

some of the area is swamp area and prone to flooding. development would not make the flooding situation better.

However, the document says, "additional land around the Somersby and Mount Penang areas may have potential for more development." This is the sort of creep we must prevent. Unless there is adequate infrastructure to sustain residential development, and the corresponding local government services, development must be curtailed. The Cessnock LGA is very poorly serviced outside the immediate town area already. Unless that can be improved additional development will only aggravate an existing problem.

And I repeat! We moved to the Mountains district area many years ago and continue to live here because it provides a comfortable and safe lifestyle for us and our family. To change/destroy anything in the area would be detrimental to the whole community young and old. Children are raised happy and healthy here, wildlife thrives here, endangered species flora and fauna survive because we protect them all and will continue to do so!

This is a beautiful rural area, and once higher density is allowed in some areas, the services will follow, along with more development, and soon there's no farmland left, just more suburbia.

There is land between the Somersby Industrial Estate and Peats Ridge Rd that is targeted for small holding subdivision. This plus unusable areas of the SIE could be developed for residential subdivision.

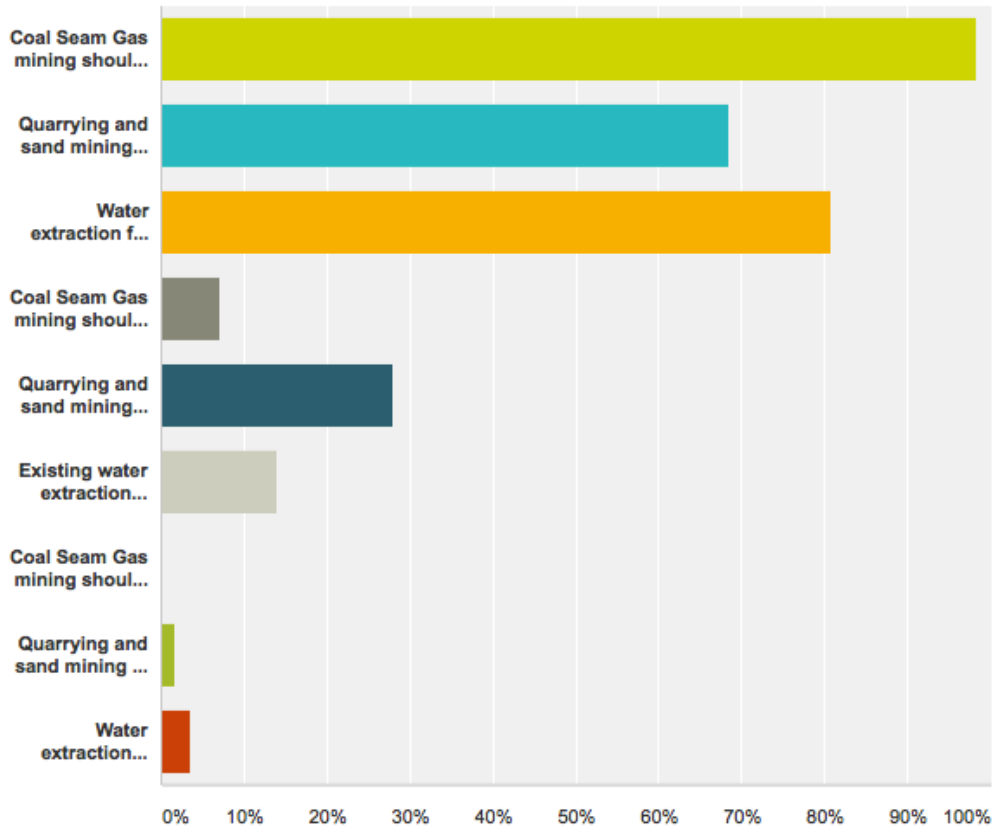
Housing development should be limited in this area to the places where soil is poor and food production is difficult.

Again, I would seek a 4th option. I accept the push for urban development west of the to M1 on the Central Coast, but only where appropriate and adequately planned and funded. Need not be confined to Jilliby & Mardi Dam.

IMPACT OF EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Please select all the following options that best describe your views on extractive industries.

Answered: 57 Skipped: 6



Answer choices	Response
Coal Seam Gas mining should NOT be allowed to proceed anywhere in the Mountain Districts.	98.25% (56)
Quarrying and sand mining should be phased out in the Mountain Districts	68.42% (39)
Water extraction for the purposes of use outside the area should be phased out (for example bottling of drinking water)	80.70% (46)

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Coal Seam Gas mining should be permitted outside of the water catchment and gazetted forests (i.e. it should be allowed on private land)	7.02% (4)
Quarrying and sand mining should be continued in the locations it currently operates	28.07% (16)
Existing water extraction industries of any type should be allowed to continue	14.04% (8)
Coal Seam Gas mining should proceed without any specific protection being placed over the Mountain Districts	0.00% (0)
Quarrying and sand mining is needed and should be allowed to expand as the industry requires	1.75% (1)
Water extraction should be permitted to increase as needed by industry and development	3.51% (2)
Total respondents	57

COMMENTS

Once lost, the water and land cannot be reclaimed and the district will forever suffer. All extractive industries should be stopped immediately. The coastal areas also cannot afford to have their water 'fiddled' with due to the growth of the population in the coastal belt.

No further quarrying or Sand mining should be allowed as also there should be no further water extraction other than for local use. There should be no Coal Seam Gas

Mining nor any other forms of mining allowed anywhere in the Mountains district. No further water extraction should be allowed other than for local usage..

This area is too valuable as bushland preservation and rural farming for feeding the city population with out too many 'food miles' involved.

Extractive industries should exist only if the aquifer can support them. Protection of our drinking water is critical to any continued and future growth.

Water extraction needs to be very carefully monitored. If current licenses are honored and well managed then both farming and environment are protected and the market economy will work to value the resource. If the current free for all continues the environment will be the loser.

This is Australia, bottled water is unnecessary in this country as we are fortunate to still have a pure water supply from our taps. The only reason we do have a bottled water industry is due to the advertising propaganda by these industries.

The extraction of water for bottled water by companies such as Coca Cola must be phased out. What does this do to the water table and what do these extracting industries pay for this. Who benefits. this is a community asset not a limitless well for multinational corporations

Water extraction e.g. bottling drinking water, would help to keep CSG out of the area because it pollutes water.

The local farms need the water to remain clean and plentiful if they are to continue operating. If the water becomes tainted, or depleted in quantity the farmers will not be able to grow food for our local population. Food will have to be transported in and the costs and freshness will be adversely affected.

The aquifer water reserves under the Central Coast Plateau serve both the local community and the Gosford town water supply. NOTHING should be permitted that could in any way have an adverse impact on it.

I have no objection to quarry and sand mining activity that currently exists, but do not support expansion.

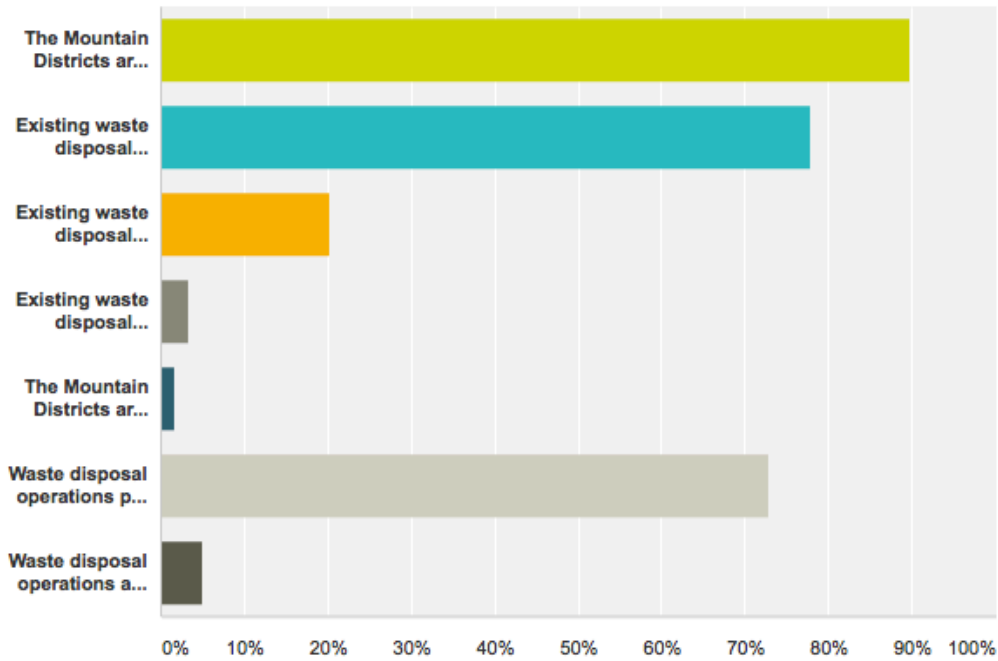
Our water aquifers need to be protected. Removing huge amounts of water is unsustainable. Fracking is not proven to be safe and there is actually a lot of information indicating that it has a detrimental effect on the land where it is conducted.

Definitely no CSG. Current Quarrying, Sand Mining & Water Extraction uses should be permitted to continue if they are environmentally sustainable and their adverse impacts can be managed so as not to adversely impact neighbors to anything more than a minor degree. Fair compensation should be considered where impacts on neighbours are more than minor.

WASTE PROCESSING AND STORAGE

Please select all the following options that best describe your views on dumping and processing of residential and industrial waste products.

Answered: 59 Skipped: 4



Answer choices

Response

The Mountain Districts are NOT a suitable location for the dumping or processing of residential and industrial waste	89.83% (53)
Existing waste disposal operations such as the one operating at Mangrove Mountain should be shut down	77.97% (46)
Existing waste disposal operations should be allowed to continue to operate according to their existing licenses	20.34% (12)
Existing waste disposal operations should be allowed to expand as needed	3.39% (2)

Answer choices	Response
The Mountain Districts are a suitable place for waste disposal operations that handle waste from nearby areas such as Sydney and the Central Coast	1.69% (1)
Waste disposal operations pose a risk to the water catchment and to the aquifer	72.88% (43)
Waste disposal operations are entirely safe when operated within the NSW Government's regulations	5.08% (3)
Total respondents	59

COMMENTS

This area is NOT to be a dumping round for waste materials. They pollute and destroy the environment, particularly the water ways.

The dumping of waste is open to abuse - as is obvious already. The Council does not monitor it effectively to stop abusive dumping. Therefore dumping of waste must stop.

Our water is too precious to risk!!

Protection of the aquifer is critical. Placing a dump on top of the aquifer is akin to madness.

Unless there is increased transparency and better testing there is no assurance that that the current operation is suitably managed for operation in a water catchment area

Obvious but again money rules

Our water supply needs protecting.

We cannot preserve biodiversity and bush corridors if we systematically poison the environment.

The Mountain Districts AND surrounds are key Agricultural areas. These areas also have significant Flora and Fauna that need to be protected - dumping waste of any kind does not mix with Agriculture or Flora/Fauna. This is the closest agriculture belt outside of Sydney and part of the food bowl for Sydney.

The current waste disposal depot has not been monitored adequately so there is already a possible risk to our water supply. Arable land areas should not be used for dumping any sort of waste.

Despite all of the reassurances from governments, business with vested interest and landowners, the Mountain Community says NO to this disgusting operation. The proposed increased road transport will tear up the roads. The leachate from this area will drain down onto coastal areas and find its way into waterways as well. No one can provide any kind of credible assure that this will not happen.

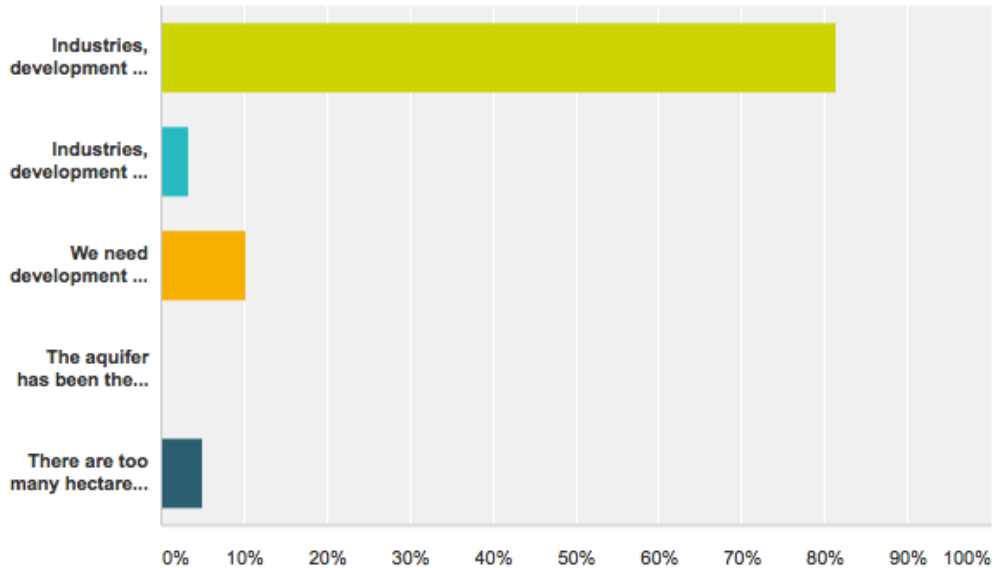
The waste disposal at Mangrove Mountain was started by deception to the community as a landfill to expand the golf course.

Urban waste should be managed within the Local Government Area that it originates. "Rich" and over-developed Sydney LGA's should not be permitted to export their waste problems because it is a cheaper option and they can afford to do so.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Please select all the following options that best describe your views on the aquifer and the surrounding bushland

Answered: 59 Skipped: 4



Answer choices

Response

Industries, development and activities that place the aquifer, water catchment and bushland at risk should be prevented	81.36% (48)
Industries, development and activities that place the aquifer, water catchment and bushland at risk should be allowed if the developer vouches for the safety of their operations	3.39% (2)
We need development to continue and the Mountain Districts need to accommodate its fair share	10.17% (6)
The aquifer has been there for a long time and will be OK regardless of what we do	0.00% (0)

Answer choices	Response
There are too many hectares of bushland protected already. Substantial clearing of land should be allowed to cater for new development	5.08% (3)
Total respondents	59

COMMENTS

Whilst we need development it could be done on existing cleared acreages which should be allowed to be subdivided. Leave existing bushland alone.

Water is a precious resource and will become more so in the future. I don't think that any industry or activity that will impact adversely on our water supply should be allowed to go ahead.

The aquifer is too precious to risk. Especially in this country the aquifer must be the priority in any future decisions. Other things must be done without in order to protect the water.

We shouldn't stop all development, but very stringent guidelines that protect our environment need to be properly administered.

Some bushland could be cleared to allow for agriculture/horticulture use not cleared for residential or industrial development

If a developer feels that their activities are completely safe why not ask them to sign an agreement whereby they are completely liable for any damage caused and face huge fines and/or gaol terms if their activity has a damaging effect on the environment or the health of the population in the area. It would be very suspicious if they did not want to sign such an undertaking.

development is inevitable but the aquifers need protection

Developers regularly vouch for the safety of their operations but sadly it appears that if no regulatory body is making regular checks on the behaviour of the developers they pretty much do as they please. Any development that is risky should not be allowed anyway because the water and land is of great importance to the whole region and surrounds.

Water is critical to the wider region

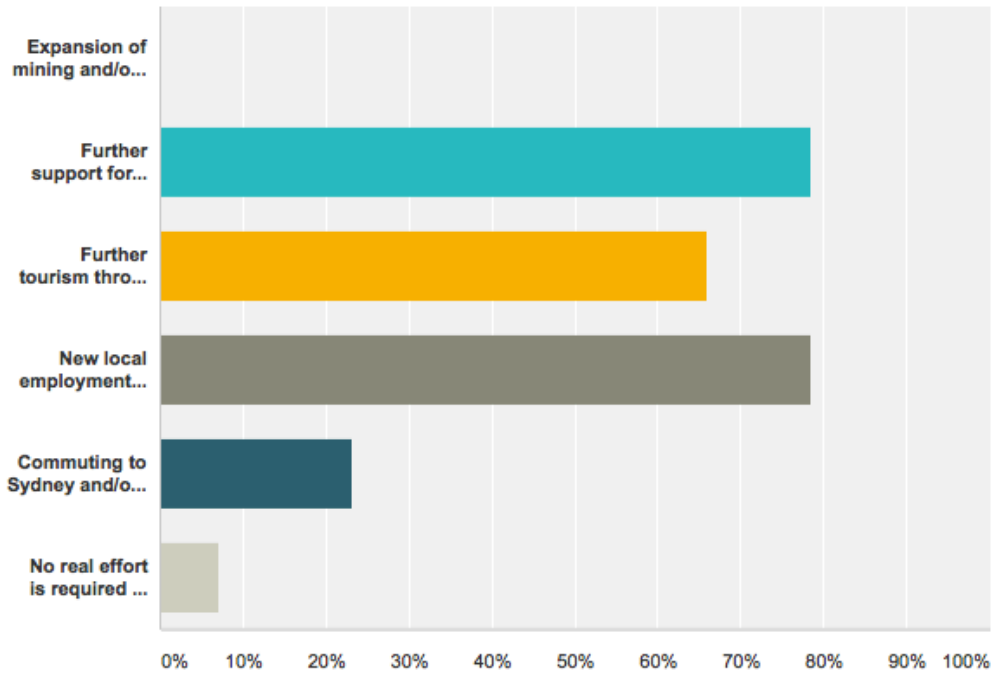
I fully support adherence to the precautionary principle where we are not 110% sure that risks can be totally managed. Our natural resources are just too valuable to risk their destruction just so someone can make a quick dollar.

This is a semi rural area and we all depend on our own water supply, thus developments should be in line with the community's reliance on aquifer and clean rain water

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Please select all the following options that best describe how you think employment opportunities can be grown

Answered: 56 Skipped: 7



Answer choices

Response

Expansion of mining and/or waste disposal industries will provide many needed new jobs	0.00% (0)
Further support for agricultural activity will provide many needed new jobs	78.57% (44)
Further tourism through and in the area will provide many new jobs	66.07% (37)
New local employment opportunities that involve "remote office working" using computers and phones should be encouraged	78.57% (44)

Answer choices	Response
Commuting to Sydney and/or the Central Coast provides the best future set of opportunities	23.21% (13)
No real effort is required to encourage new employment opportunities, things will naturally take their course	7.14% (4)
Total respondents	56

COMMENTS

If subdivision of existing acreages into say 5-10 acre blocks is allowed such will require services such as shops and other services and this will open avenues for employment.

Providing the tourism does no harm to the bushland or the water then it could be encouraged. (Four wheel drives, hunters & shooters are not harmless tourist activities.)

No public transport to Gosford after Spencer, this could be improved

Care and support of the older residents on the mountain plateau can also supply employment opportunities and should be considered as part of the future growth plans for this area.

Need to improve both communications and transport infrastructure.

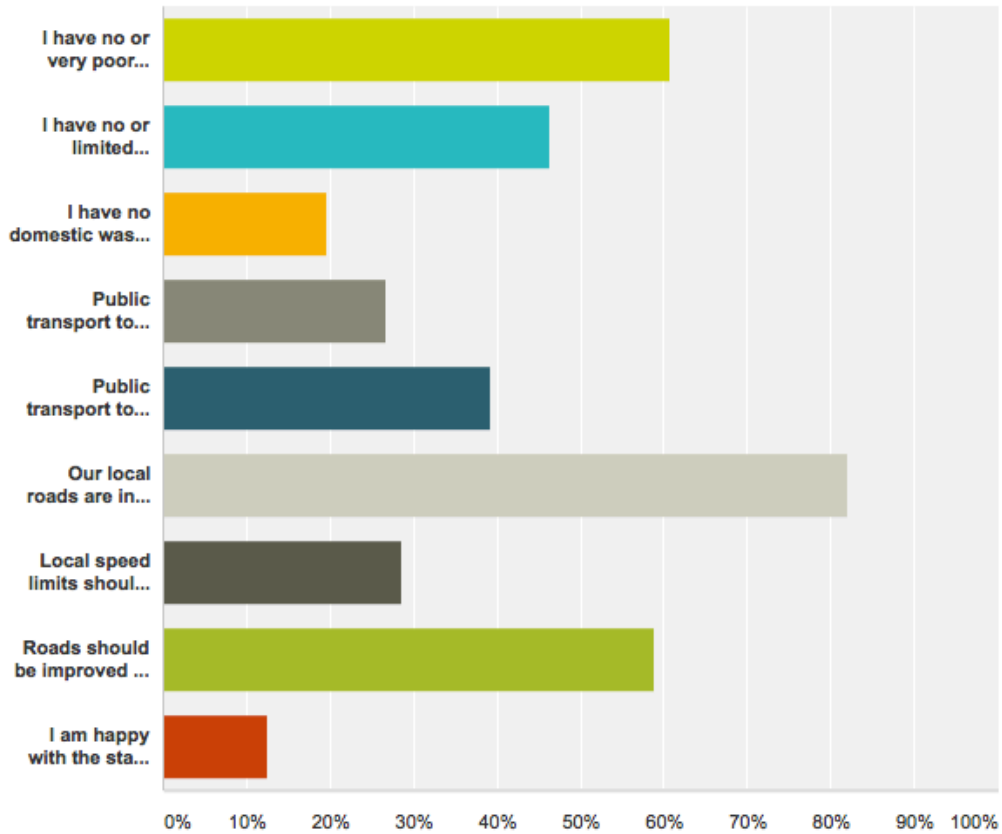
Tourism opportunities such as farm stays, B&B, permaculture workshops should be fostered

Connection via reliable and fast internet will improve working possibilities in this area

INFRASTRUCTURE

Please select all of the following choices that best describe your view on existing infrastructure.

Answered: 56 Skipped: 7



Answer choices

Response

I have no or very poor mobile phone coverage where I live which is a problem to me	60.71% (34)
I have no or limited broadband internet coverage where I live which is a problem to me	46.43% (26)
I have no domestic waste pickup service where I live	19.64% (11)

Mountain Districts Association

Public transport to key places within the local area would be very useful to me and regularly used eg. to schools, shops and medical clinics	26.79% (15)
Public transport to areas outside the area would be very useful to me and regularly used eg. to Gosford train station	39.29% (22)
Our local roads are in poor state and represent an increased risk to drivers	82.14% (46)
Local speed limits should be decreased so that potential accident risks are reduced	28.57% (16)
Roads should be improved and current speed limits left as they are	58.93% (33)
I am happy with the state and range of local infrastructure services	12.50% (7)
Total Respondents	56

COMMENTS

Roads are a priority. Main roads are poorly maintained especially where they are utilised by quarry trucks and cannot accommodate 100kph speed limits. Side roads are in most cases deplorable.

Although I drive and can transport myself I will eventually not be able to do so. Public transport is a big problem here. Its a big problem for people seeking employment on farms here who do not drive. We have not been able to employ good workers on the farm in the past because they cannot drive.

Our local roads were not designed for the amount of heavy traffic they carry. They really need improvement. Presently I do not use public transport, but as I age, I would greatly value it within and outside the local area.

My mobile phone works for me, but many visitors have problems when they visit.

Budget restraints are a problem. Unfortunately we do have to prioritise our spending on infrastructure.

Please note that I do not currently live on the Mountain but did and all of the above are relevant to the present day, as far as I understand

Unless the consumer is with telstra mobile coverage is exceedingly limited. Even with telstra there are many black spots. Recently emergency services could not be contacted due to lack of coverage until an individual with telstra boosted by there car assisted a severe accident. Further Internet and phone availability is limited to a few carriers where here is a monopoly and therefore no competitive pricing available.

The Mountains Districts is poorly served for the rates they are charged. Waste pick up is the only real benefit. There is an urgent need to improve the condition of the roads. Wisemans Ferry Road and George Downes Drive used to be State responsibility. The cost to implement the necessary road works is beyond Council budgets and these roads should be returned to the NSW Government. In many cases road replacement is needed, not temporary patch jobs, which do not last long, as is customary.

I drive, but don't think I could live in the area if reliant on public transport. when my children were at school, I changed my working times so I could drive them to school as the buses did not cater properly.

Roads should be repaired and speed limits raised back up to where they once were,

dropping all roads to 60 kph is a disgrace.

I don't feel that I get value for money from paying my rates. The only real service I get is garbage collection. The state of the roads is so poor that I need to change my cars more often than if the roads were maintained to a higher standard. We have a very high rate of heavy vehicle traffic which supports the local and Sydney economies but little is put back in to the area.

The fatalities on our roads speak for themselves.with the number of trucks and racing motor bikes on our poor road conditions it is no wonder.

FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

Please tell us what new infrastructure you think the area will need over the next 15 years (text only answers).

Roads improved, Public transport to trains etc, tourism accomodation, mobile coverage,

improved roads, improved mobile coverage, better public transport for people wanting who have no cars

- Transportation - Local Retail outlets - Housing

Extended village zoning areas through the LEP. More allowable usage rights on large parcels of land to encourage commercial usage. Subdivision of land into smaller parcels.

Street lighting at all intersections. Better line marking on main roads. Tar sealing of all rural roads.

I think the area is fine as it is.

Some reliable public transport. Doesn't have to be a huge amount.

A regular public transport system within and outside the area will be of great value to an ageing population. It would also help to develop tourism as all people would be able to come here. As much as I don't like them, telecommunication towers to allow for people to work from home.

Better Roads..

Improvement of roads and public transport also a local Doctor near the Gunderman area

If we have an increased population, more roads will need to be built. We all have to supply our own sewerage removal systems, this may be an issue which will need further investigation depending on the level of population growth. Schools, medical clinics, housing for senior citizens are all potential issues which will need to be researched.

The road needs to be made safe. It is currently in a very poor condition (George Downs Drive/Great North Road). The area needs school buses that do not exclude areas along the main road. Broadband and mobile services need vast improvement.

Better roads and local public transport. More business growth in centralised locations such as Gosford, Wyong, Woy Woy, Somersby to enhance job growth. Fix the mobile phone coverage issues and complete the NBN to all areas of the Central Coast

Bus services are OK from Mangrove but services from Kulnura and beyond are almost non-existent in school holidays and weekends

A central community meeting hub that encompasses all mountain organisations to be able to put their objectives forward

more walkways and bicycle pathways to encourage tourism ..healthy outdoor activity..whilst appreciating the natural beauty of the area heavy fines for littering and dumping

Better roads to allow easier access for local vehicle travel safely and without delay Better public transport systems. Additional basic services to allow expansion for residential development more like Galston, Dural, Arcadia etc areas, where farming and residential co exist. There are a mix of residents from the business person to the farmer trades person. A great mix for a sustainable and growing community.

Better facilities in public open spaces/parks and reserves.

A bridge to the Sydney side near Wisemans ferry

a bridge to Mount White would certainly improve travel time and open up this area

Roads bridges updated and repaired regularly Traffic black spots fixed Local community access to swimming centres Electrical grid updated Updated telephone exchange A local public high school as the hinterland has the option of Gosford or Cessnock and a significant travel time to schools impact on our young people's results at a critical stage of life

Better roads, communications and hubs of business or very small office hubs.

Nil

Better Broadband

Road renewal - Wisemans Ferry Road Somersby - Mangrove Mountain deviation. Road wash outs along the Hawkesbury River that have temporary measures reducing to single lane traffic to be restored to two way traffic. Installation of mobile phone towers to ensure coverage throughout the Mountain Districts.

Better Communications and domestic waste service have to be on top of the list.

Better public transport and an aged care facility. Lots of people have lived all their lives in the region and do not want to leave for care facilities.

Piped gas to farms for their business use.

Upgrade landline internet access

A garbage service for local area processed locally. Mobile phone coverage, backup power for phone coverage when power out, especially when bush fire.

None if the mountain area remains in current state.

Broadband (NBN) connection