



# Hunter Expressway

## Draft Strategy

December 2020



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
.....	
<b>Hunter Expressway - Shaping the Hunter</b>	<b>4</b>
.....	
<b>Applying a collaborative and strategic-led approach to future growth</b>	<b>6</b>
.....	
<b>Interchange Growth Area Planning</b>	<b>7</b>
.....	
Branxton Interchange	9
Newcastle Interchange	10
Kurri Kurri and Loxford Interchanges	11
Allandale Interchange	13
Buchanan Interchange	14

## Find out more:

[www.dpie.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au)

Title: Hunter Valley Expressway

Subtitle: Strategy

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a departmental website.

## Disclaimer:

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (December 2020) and may not be accurate, current or complete. The State of New South Wales (including the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.

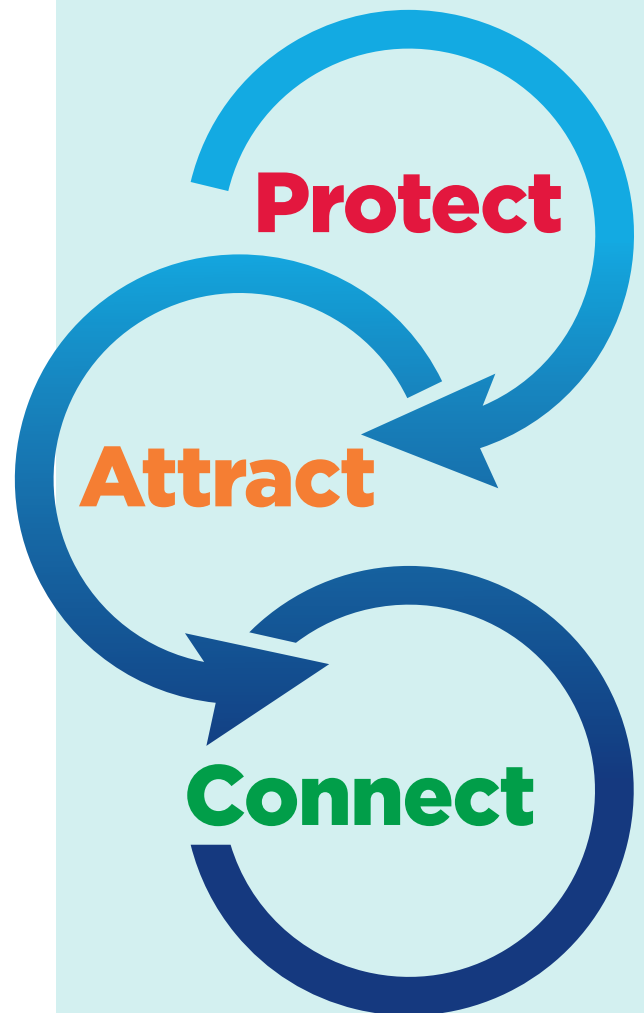
# Introduction

**The Hunter Expressway was a \$1.7 billion investment connecting communities across the Hunter and linking the region into the national network between Queensland, Yohaaba/Port of Newcastle, Greater Sydney and Western NSW.**

Making the most of this accessibility will deliver the vision in the *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* and the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036*, for the Hunter to be the leading regional economy in Australia with a vibrant metropolitan city at its heart.

The Hunter Expressway Strategy provides direction for infrastructure investment and land use planning in the vicinity of the Expressway. Responsive planning, strategic decision making and coordinated land use and transport management are needed to **protect** the operation of Hunter Expressway and its role in the state and national freight network. At the same time, enabling the Expressway to **attract** economic growth and employment at strategic locations and **connecting** the Hunter to employment, services and open spaces.

The Strategy draws upon work by local councils in their Local Strategic Planning Statements to optimise the opportunities Hunter Expressway has provided for local communities.



# Hunter Expressway - Shaping the Hunter

The Hunter Expressway provides improved links between the major resources of the Upper Hunter and the metropolitan markets of Greater Newcastle. This strengthens the integration of the Hunter, shrinking the distance between people and places. The big difference the Expressway has to many other roads is not merely the speed and capacity, but also how it controls and limits the access points in order to enable people and goods to move efficiently. These interchange points are an important part of how the Hunter Expressway is shaping the Hunter.

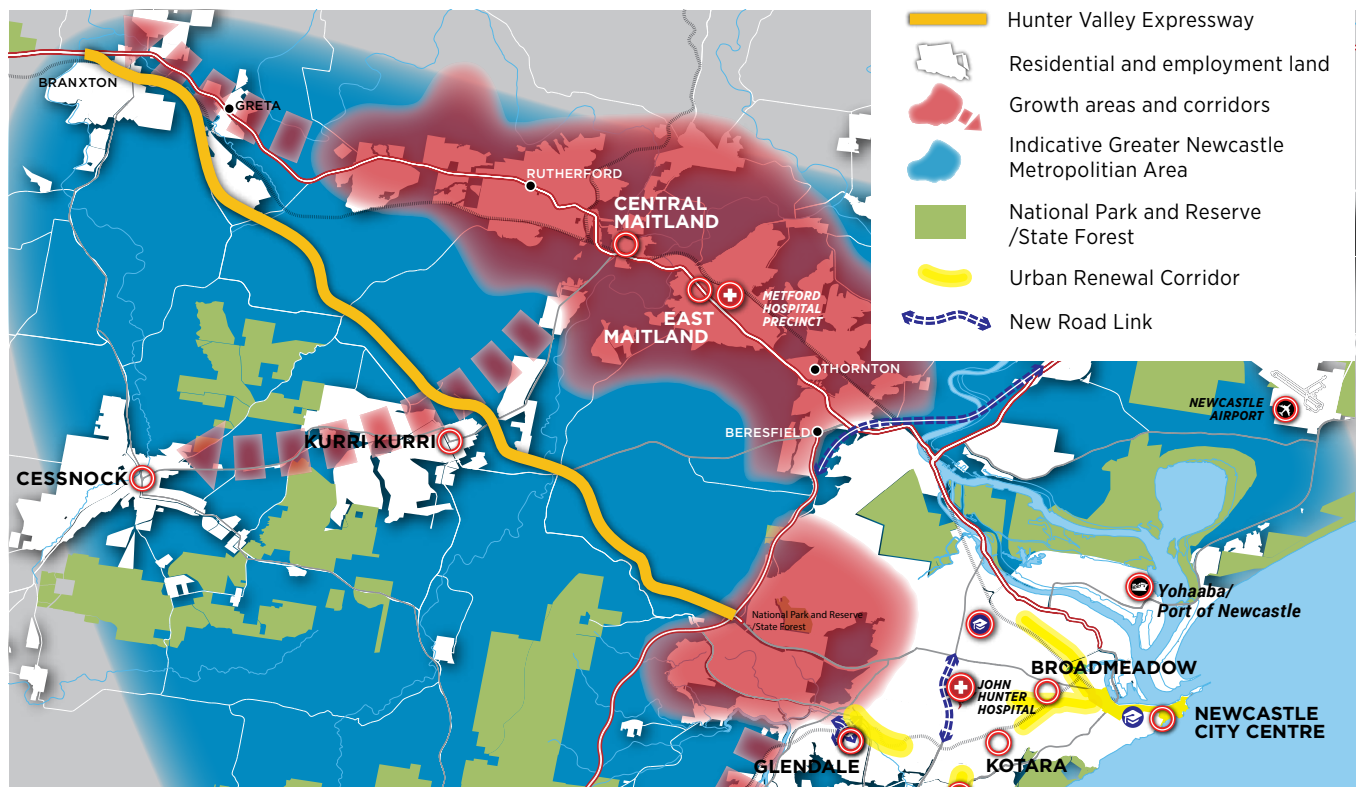
Growth areas in the Greater Newcastle metro frame are focused along the New England Highway and at West Lake Macquarie, with future extensions along a corridor between Maitland and Cessnock. New development in these growth areas is expected to cater for the majority of future housing needs. This will help ensure the Hunter Expressway can continue to serve a freight and logistics function and a focus for employment close to the new homes.

## The Hunter Expressway provides:

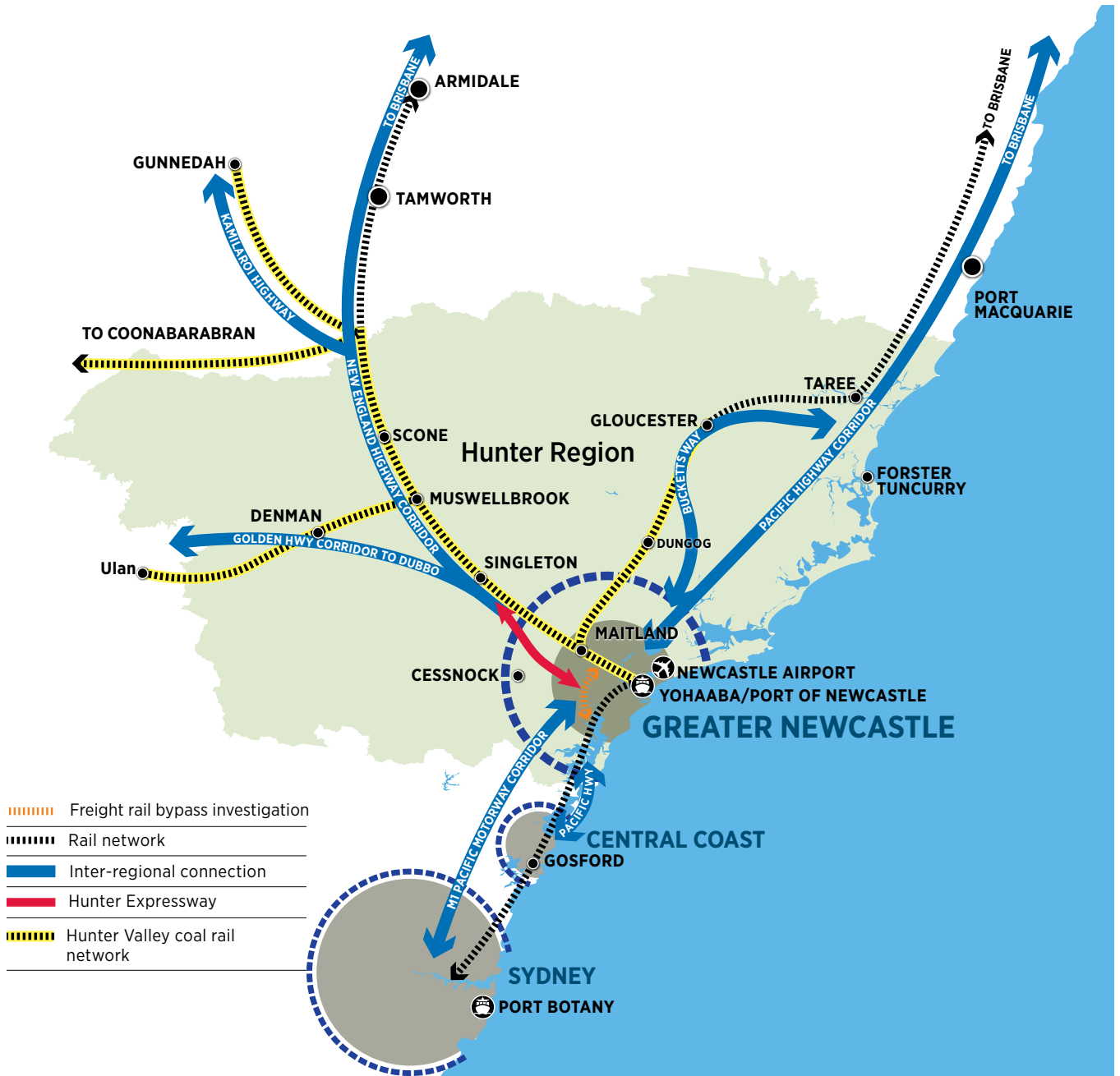
- An efficient north-south National Highway link through the Lower Hunter Valley;
- A centrally located east-west link connecting Newcastle with the Lower Hunter;
- An efficient link to Yohaaba/Port of Newcastle via John Renshaw Drive, upgraded as a designated heavy vehicle route;
- An access controlled high-service arterial road network for the Hunter Region;
- Opportunity for Kurri Kurri to provide employment generating industries in a central location;
- Relief to the increasingly congested New England Highway

The Expressway is also moving heavy freight movement away from centres of population growth and development at Branxton, East Maitland, Maitland and Cessnock CBD.

**Figure 1: Hunter Expressway in the regional context**

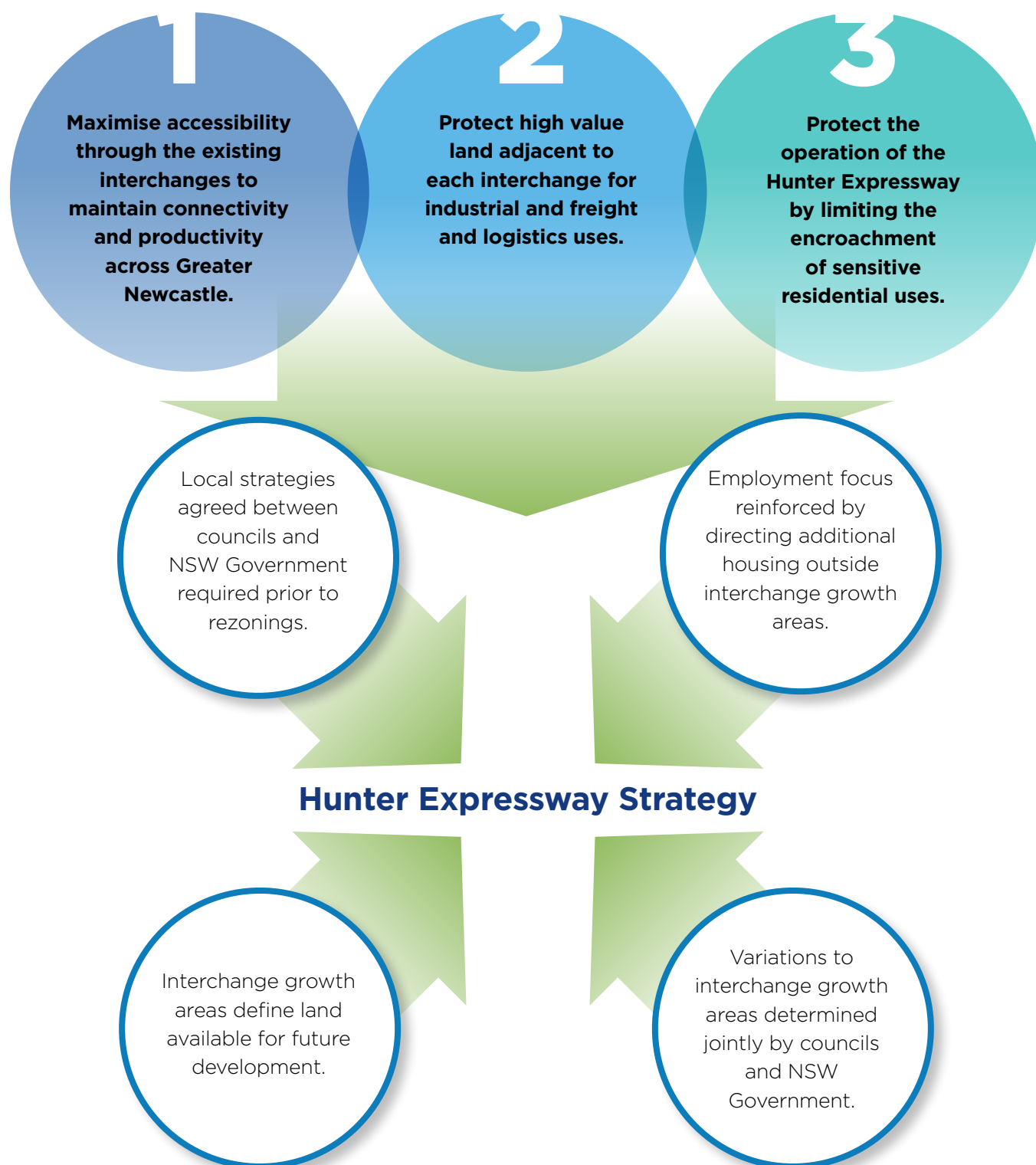


**Figure 2: Hunter Expressway in the NSW context**



# Applying a collaborative and strategic-led approach to future growth

Figure 3: Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Principles





# Interchange Growth Area Planning

## Interchange Growth Areas

The Interchange Growth Areas have been identified in consultation with local government. They identify land around the interchanges of the Expressway where careful management of land use change is required. In many cases significant land use change is already planned for and underway. Proposals for additional large scale changes to development potential will need to be first considered through a local strategy. Land currently zoned for development or subject to a Gateway Determination will not need to address any additional matters.

The prime location of the interchanges on the Hunter Expressway are expected to concentrate new development wishing to leverage their location on the freight network and proximity to identified growth corridors. The focus for the future is for land use and infrastructure to be carefully planned to deliver maximum benefits for the Hunter, while protecting the operation of the Expressway and capacity of its interchanges.

Future development at interchanges along the Hunter Expressway will be considered through a strategic process that enables traffic, heavy vehicle access, environmental and other issues to be considered by the government and community and resolved early.

There are six interchange growth areas that have been identified along the Hunter Expressway. The Kurri Kurri and Loxford Interchanges have the potential to operate as one integrated growth area. These interchanges have unique characteristics and different potential for growth and change in the short, medium and long term.

## Strategic-led planning

Councils will use the interchange growth areas to define the land available to investigate for release as they prepare their local strategies (Local Strategic Planning Statements, Urban Growth Management Strategies). Local strategies will enable communities to assess the broader implications and consequences of identifying locations for proposed urban and employment land around the interchanges.

These local strategies will need to be agreed between councils and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and Transport for NSW before any rezoning can take place. This sets up a streamlined process for rezoning by considering matters of state environmental planning policies and section 9.1 Ministerial directions.

This will also ensure early development at the interchange growth areas is part of a comprehensive regional approach that can increase the choice of available transport and support the efficient and viable operation of public transport services, along with 'park and ride' facilities.

There may be a need to vary the interchange growth areas as new information becomes available or to correct anomalies. In determining the extent of any variation, consideration will be given to the efficient use of infrastructure/services, avoidance of significant environmental constraints and natural resources, and reinforcement of the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 strategies and actions. Any variation will be determined through joint consideration undertaken between the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the relevant council.

## Planning for employment

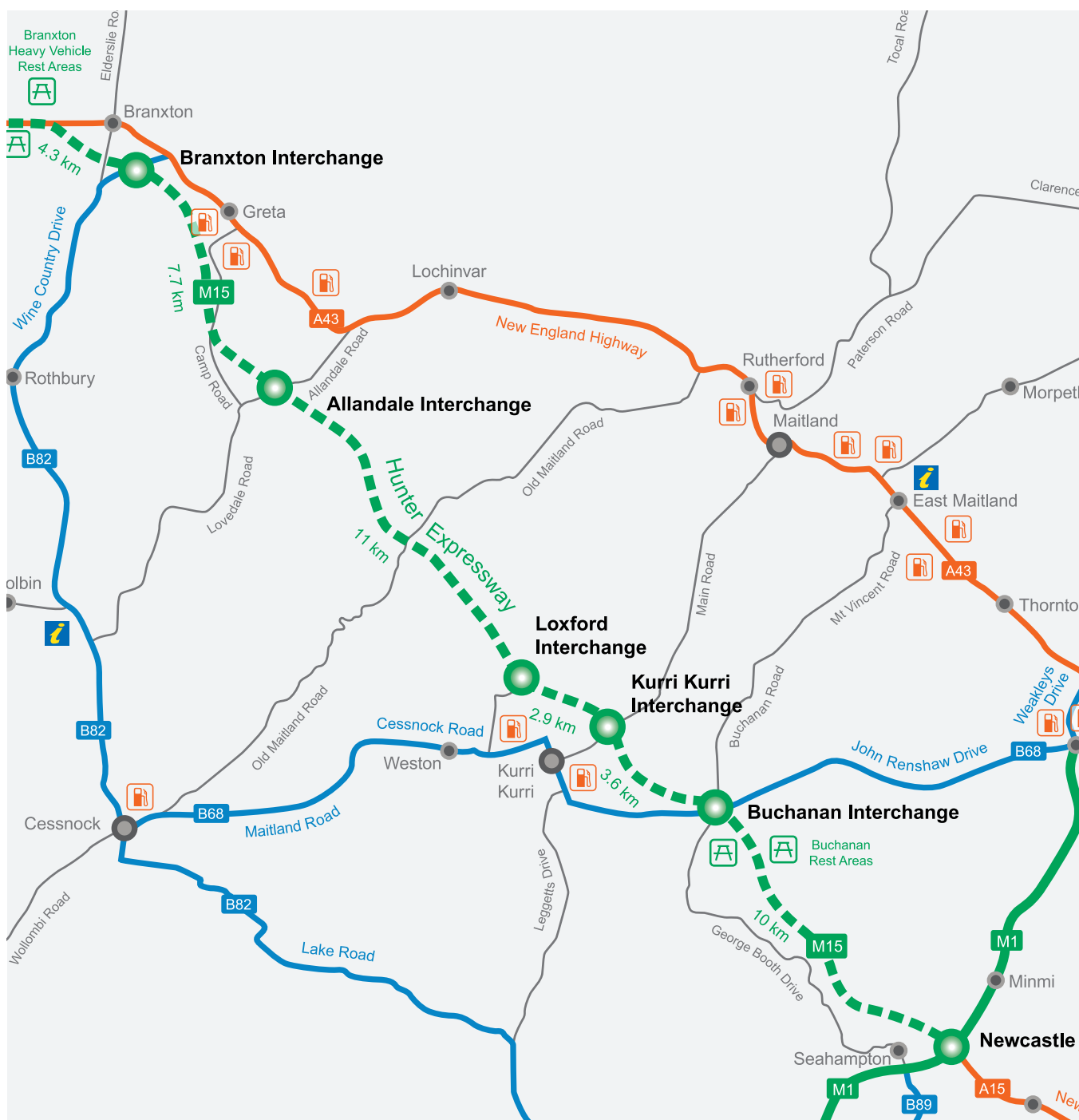
The opportunities provided by the Hunter Expressway will require land for certain categories of development, namely intermodal, freight and logistics. Freight and logistic uses, warehousing and distribution centres depend on efficient supply chains, access to customers, land availability and access to main roads. Planning for these elements and not restricting these opportunities in the interchange growth areas will make the best use of existing and future improvements to the road and rail network.

The accessibility of the Expressway may also attract retail and businesses uses. The development of bulky goods, 'big box' superstores and factory outlet style retailing in the interchange growth areas need to be in accessible locations that will not lead to queuing onto the Hunter Expressway.

These are matters that will need to be considered when defining Investigation areas in the interchange growth areas, which represent potential future land release opportunities. Not all of these areas will be suitable for development and further detailed assessment will be required.

In order to ensure efficiencies in land utilisation and freight infrastructure, the NSW Government and councils will manage growth of new land releases at the interchanges by directing residential and rural residential development to locations outside the mapped interchange growth areas. This will focus new housing to nearby existing towns and centres and ensure the interchanges are primarily used for employment land uses. No further rezoning for residential or rural residential development, other than land in a current proposal or future endorsed local strategy, will be permitted to commence in the interchange growth areas.

**Figure 4: Hunter Expressway and Interchanges**





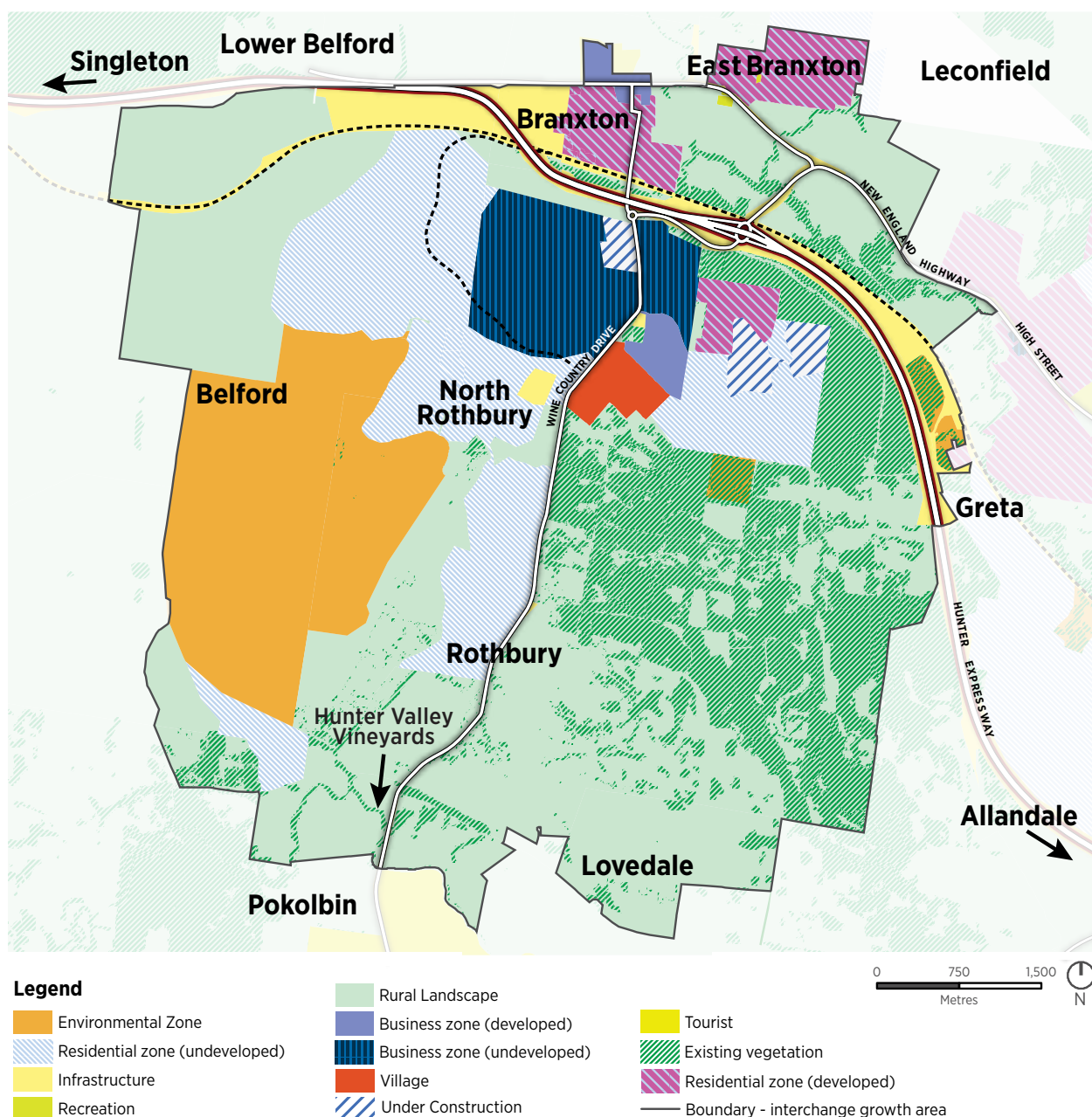
# Branxton Interchange

## Gateway to the Hunter wine and tourist district

The town of Branxton is situated on the north side of the expressway and the developing town of Huntlee is on the southern side. Huntlee will become the primary location for housing, employment and services within this part of the region and will include a new Town Centre, including core retail, commercial and bulky goods use. As the area grows the centres will retain their unique but complementary identity.

Detailed planning for the current Branxton town centre has been undertaken to capitalise on the amenity improvements to the main street as a result of the redirection of heavy freight onto the Hunter Expressway. The substantial planning that has been undertaken for this area provides a clear framework for the large amount of growth and change that is expected at the Western end of Hunter Expressway.

**Figure 5: Branxton Interchange**



# Newcastle Interchange

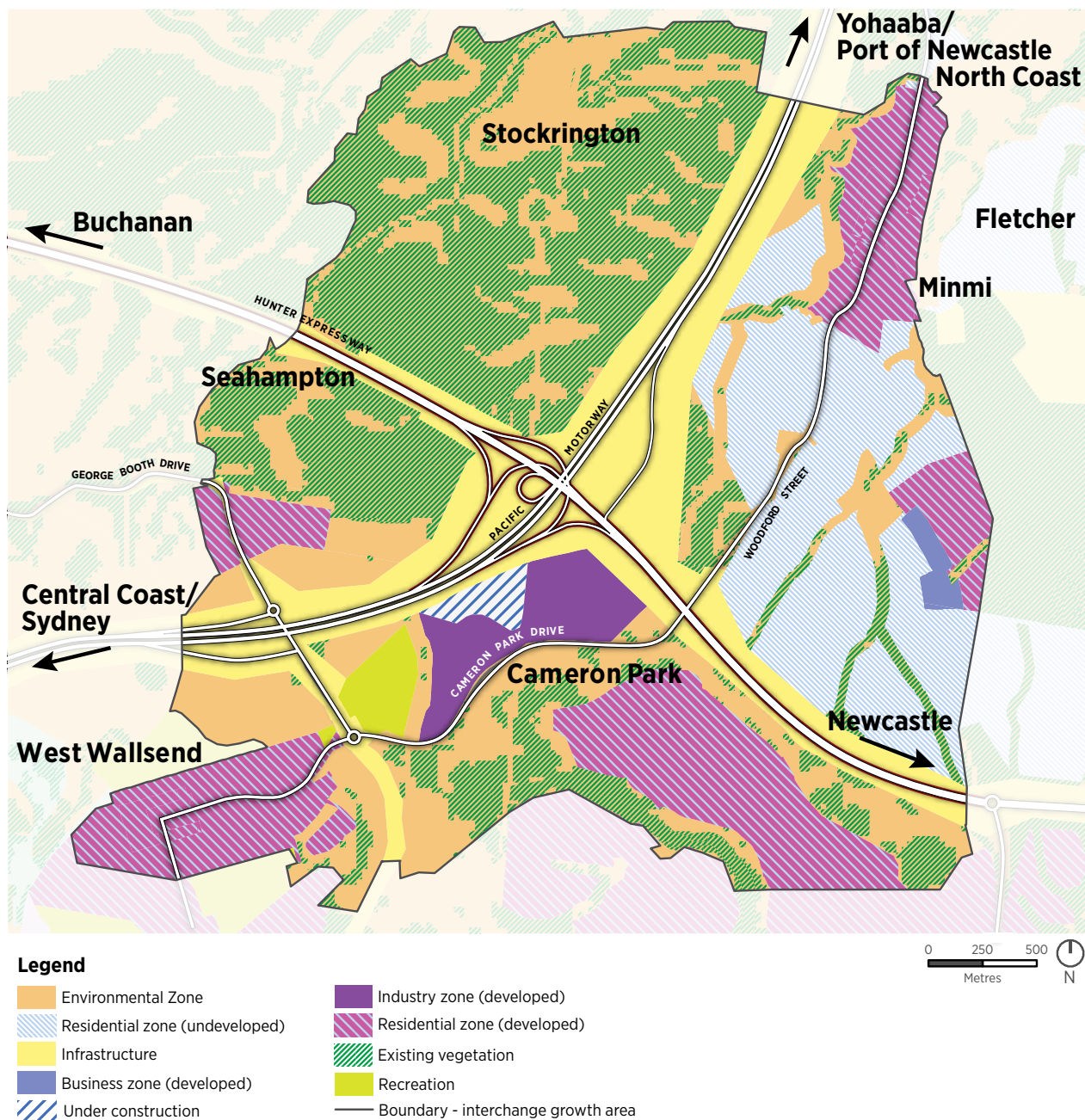
**The Newcastle Interchange is surrounded by current and developing urban land on the eastern side and ecologically important and steep land on the western side.**

Retention of land on the western side of the motorway as E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves is consistent with the strategic directions of the *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* and *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036*.

Opportunities to manage connectivity will be prioritised as the existing zoned land develops.

Development at the Newcastle Interchange will also need to consider the nexus with growth at the Beresfield-Black Hill and North West Lake Macquarie Catalyst Areas.

**Figure 6: Newcastle Interchange**







## Kurri Kurri and Loxford Interchanges

**The Kurri Kurri interchange has favourable land situated immediately adjoining the full interchange/ junction on the key north-south access and identified growth corridor linking the strategic centres of Cessnock and Maitland. This represents a logical urban extension to the existing strategic centre Kurri Kurri and Heddon Greta leveraging the connectivity to the expressway.**

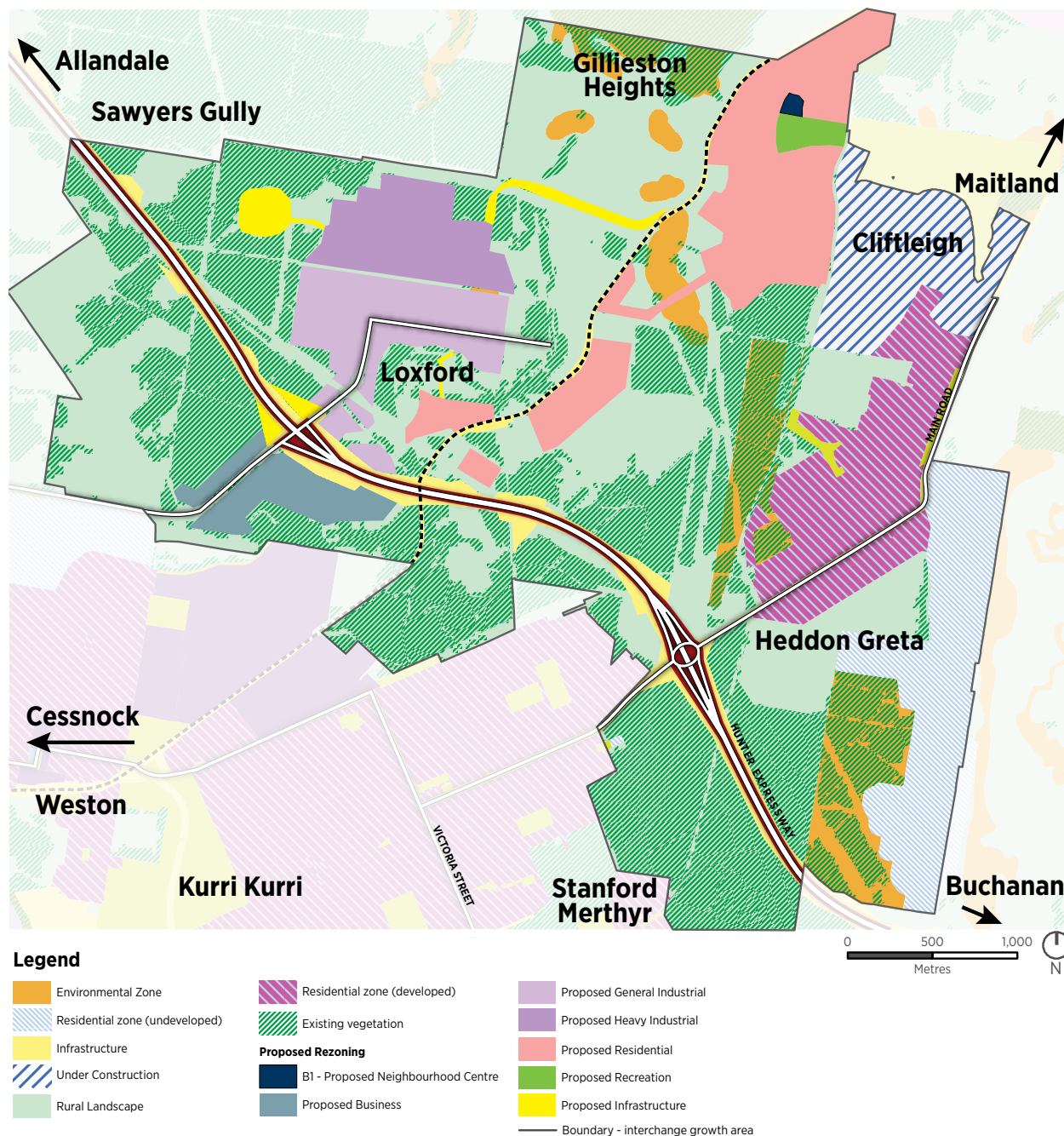
By combining and consolidating development around the Kurri Kurri and Loxford interchanges they become a regionally significant area, creating the critical mass and trading hub building on the complementary nature of the two development precincts. In addition, the interchanges incorporate renewal and repurposing of the former Hydro aluminium smelter and links the existing Urban Release Areas in the Kurri Kurri Corridor situated in proximity to the interchange.

This maximises the locational advantages and existing infrastructure capacity, tertiary education (TAFE) and community services centred on these existing centres. Proposed residential development will need to be designed in a manner that is compatible with proposed employment land which will include uses requiring 24 hour operations.

It provides the opportunity to better integrate transport and land use in this area, while maintaining the Hunter Expressway's function in the National Road Freight Network. The upgrade to Loxford interchange to a full interchange will likely be required as future development occurs nearby.



**Figure 7: Kurri Kurri and Loxford Interchanges**



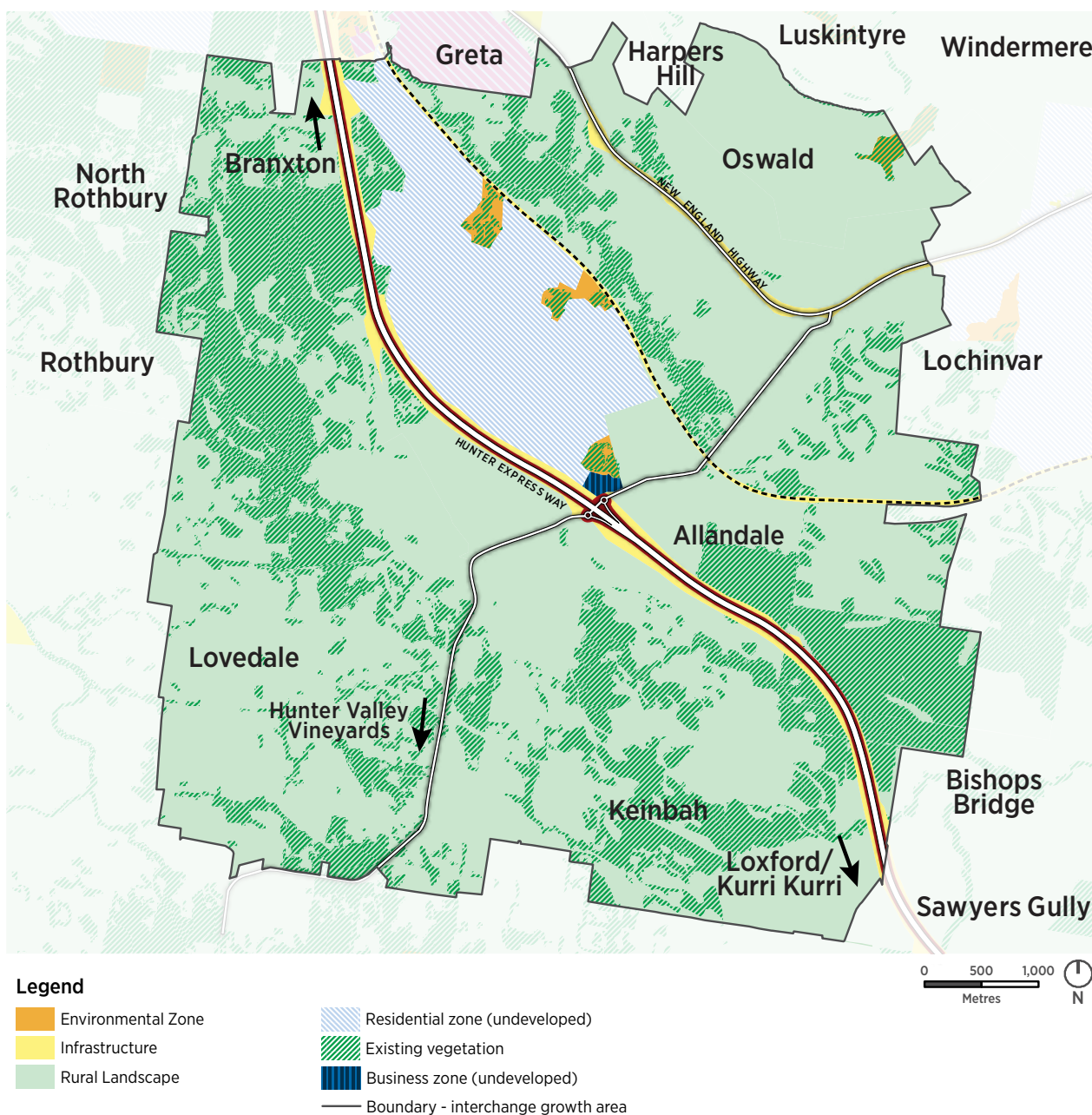
# Allandale Interchange

**Allandale Interchange is the eastern gateway to the Hunter wine and tourist district and will accommodate development at the former Greta Migrant Camp. This is proposed to operate as a boutique product, rather than competing with housing choices available in the existing settlements in this part of the region.**

This half interchange is relatively remote from existing centres and employment land. It is expected to be primarily used to service future development at Greta Migrant Camp although its use to service growing residential release areas in Lochinvar will need to be monitored.

The rural setting of this interchange provides amenity to the Hunter Valley Vineyards District and is not proposed to change further in the long term.

**Figure 8: Allandale Interchange**



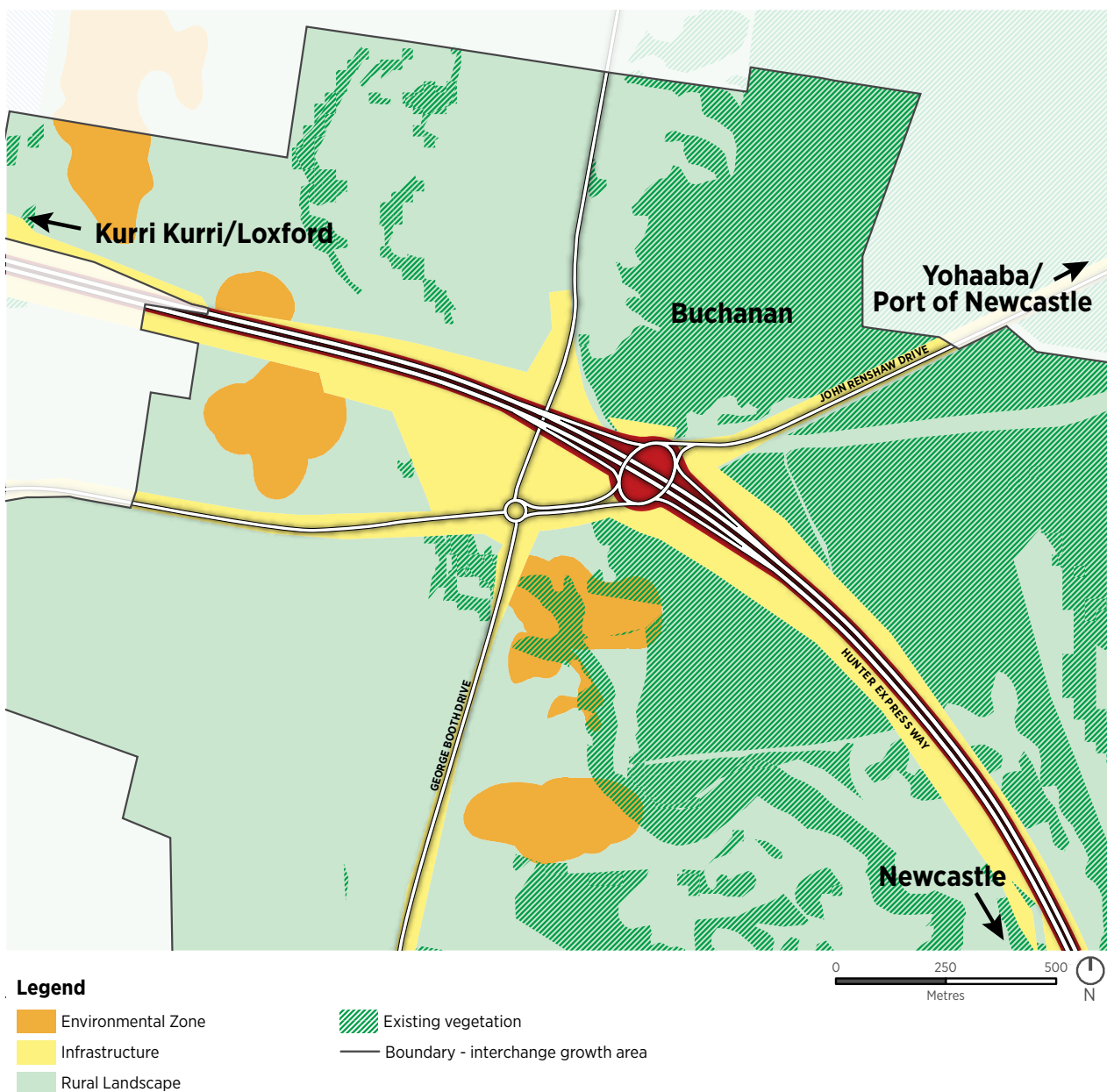
# Buchanan Interchange

**Buchanan Interchange and onwards through John Renshaw Drive is the designated heavy vehicle freight link to Yohaaba/Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport. This interchange is of critical importance to the efficiency of the national road freight route in this location and provides a flood free access. Controlled intersections will be required for new development along the John Renshaw Drive to the north of the interchange.**

It's use, in the long term, for freight and logistics at the interchange represents a logical and orderly staging and expansion of the Beresfield-Black Hill Catalyst Area.

Future investigations will consider Buchanan interchange's locational advantages as part of the broader road transport network as well as relevant economic drivers influencing employment land in the Hunter region. Until that time the rural setting of the Interchange is not expected to change. Flooding constraints and biodiversity values will influence development opportunities.

**Figure 8: Buchanan Interchange**







---

[dpie.nsw.gov.au](http://dpie.nsw.gov.au)