



MOREE SPECIAL ACTIVATION PRECINCT

# Response to Submissions Report

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Moree Special Activation Precinct Master Plan and  
Discussion Paper

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## Acknowledgement

We acknowledge Country and pay respects to the Gamilaroi people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters on which the Moree Special Activation Precinct site is situated and connected to via a broader landscape. We recognise the continuing living culture of Aboriginal people and the significance of Moree in that living culture. We wish to design places where Aboriginal people are socially, culturally and economically included. We also acknowledge all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in our community and acknowledge their physical and spiritual connections to their land.

# Introduction

## Purpose of the report

The draft Master Plan for the Moree Special Activation Precinct (the Precinct) was publicly exhibited by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) from 18 May to 15 June 2021. During this time, landowners, stakeholders and the wider community were invited to provide submissions on the proposal. At the same time, the Department also exhibited a Discussion Paper outlining the explanation of intended effect of an update to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Activation Precincts) 2020 (Activation Precincts SEPP) that enables the planning and delivery of the Precinct. The Department received a total of 18 submissions.

This report summarises:

- the engagement program during the exhibition period of the Moree Special Activation Precinct draft Master Plan and Discussion Paper,
- the feedback received, and
- the Department's response and actions related to the feedback.

The responses have guided the refinement of the Moree Special Activation Precinct Master Plan and updates to the Activation Precincts SEPP.

## Background

In July 2018, the Deputy Premier announced the establishment of Special Activation Precincts as part of the NSW Government's 20-year economic vision for Regional NSW. Special Activation Precincts are one of the five regional priorities funded by the NSW Government's \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund. All \$4.2 billion is earmarked to be spent in regional NSW to build on the rapid growth and opportunities in the regions.

In December 2019 the NSW Government announced Moree as the location for the third Special Activation Precinct, following the announcements of Parkes and Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precincts.

## What are Special Activation Precincts?

Special Activation Precincts are dedicated areas in regional NSW, identified by the NSW Government, to become thriving business hubs. The Special Activation Precinct program facilitates job creation and economic development in these areas through infrastructure investment, streamlining planning approvals, investor attraction and supporting businesses to establish in the precincts.

Special Activation Precincts are unique to regional NSW. By focusing on planning and investment, the goal is to stimulate economic development and create jobs in line with the competitive advantages and economic strengths of a region. Locations are chosen because they align with:



The economic enablers in the 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW



The growth opportunities for new and existing industries



The projected population and jobs growth indicators



Catalyst opportunities or other key infrastructure projects that are either coming online or are underway (such as Inland Rail)

The planning framework for each Special Activation Precinct includes three key parts:



State Environmental Planning Policy (Activation Precincts) 2020	Special Activation Precinct Master Plans	Special Activation Precinct Delivery Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies each Special Activation Precinct.</li> <li>Requires that an Activation Precinct Certificate be sought prior to a development application or complying development certificate being issued, to ensure the development is consistent with the Master Plan and Delivery Plan.</li> <li>Provides zoning and land use controls for each Precinct.</li> <li>Identifies Exempt and Complying Development pathways for certain development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Made by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and approved by the Minister.</li> <li>Identifies the Vision, Aspirations and Principles for the Precinct.</li> <li>Provides more detailed land use controls where required.</li> <li>Identifies Performance Criteria at a Precinct-scale for amenity, environmental performance and infrastructure provision.</li> <li>Identifies the matters to be addressed as part of the Delivery Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepared by Regional Growth NSW and approved by the Planning Secretary.</li> <li>Identifies site-level development controls.</li> <li>Provides detailed strategies and plans for:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal cultural heritage</li> <li>Environmental protection and management</li> <li>Protection of amenity</li> <li>Infrastructure and services</li> <li>Staging.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Provides procedures for ongoing monitoring and reporting.</li> </ul>

## Planning for the Moree Special Activation Precinct

The Moree Special Activation Precinct was chosen due to the region's existing strengths in agriculture and the economic opportunities associated with Moree's strategic location at the junction of the Newell, Gwydir and Carnarvon Highways, and direct interface with the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail. Further strengthened by rail access to Newcastle and Botany Ports and connections to other regional centres in south-east Queensland and regional NSW, the Precinct will build on the significant solar energy potential of the region and Moree's access to high quality water supplies and productive soils to generate economic growth, and business and employment opportunities for the New England North West region.

The master planning process for the Moree Special Activation Precinct began in late 2019 by investigating an area of 5,800 hectares spanning out from the existing industrial estate to the Moree Solar Farm in the south, and Moree Regional Airport west of the Newell Highway. Technical experts investigated a broad range of issues including biodiversity, water, infrastructure, transport, sustainable development, Aboriginal culture and heritage, social and community infrastructure and economic modelling to inform the Master Plan and updates to the Special Activation Precincts SEPP. This was underpinned by an extensive community and stakeholder engagement program, including with the local Gamilaroi community. Please refer to the *Aboriginal Community Engagement and Cultural Input* report for the Moree Special Activation Precinct prepared by Murawin for further details about the Aboriginal engagement program that supported the Moree Special Activation Precinct Master Plan.

The Moree Special Activation Precinct Master Plan will be realised over 40 years with planning outcomes forecasted to 2061.

The Special Activation Precincts program adopts a collaborative and integrated whole-of-government approach, bringing together the local Council and a range of other relevant State and local agencies. The agencies that have been involved in guiding the planning of the Moree Special Activation Precinct through an established Project Control Group include:

- Moree Plains Shire Council
- Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation
- Department of Regional NSW (including Primary Industries)
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (including Heritage NSW)
- NSW Environmental Protection Authority
- NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment (including Environment, Energy and Science and Water)
- Transport for NSW
- NSW Crown Lands
- Local Land Services

## Structure of this report

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 1 – Engagement approach
- Section 2 – Overview of submissions
- Section 3 – Response to key issues raised in submissions
- Section 4 – Improvements to the Master Plan and Activation Precincts SEPP
- Section 5 - Next steps



# 1. Engagement approach

A core foundation of planning for the Moree Special Activation Precinct has involved community consultation. The approach to community consultation was to inform the community of what was being planned for, communicate in an open and transparent manner and seek feedback ahead of releasing the draft Master Plan and Discussion Paper.

The Department led community engagement alongside Moree Plains Shire Council.

The Department would like to thank the Moree community for its participation and involvement.

## 1.1 Engagement leading up to the exhibition of the draft master plan

Community engagement commenced some twelve months before the draft master plan was exhibited with landowners in and adjoining the investigation area, key community stakeholders and the broader Moree community. The intention of early engagement was to keep the community and key stakeholders updated and informed as plans were being developed.

Engagement activities included hosting online and face to face business forums, community meetings, pop-ups and landowner briefing sessions, one on one meetings and writing to landowners to inform them of progress and consultation activities.

## 1.2 Engagement during the exhibition of the draft Master Plan

The Department exhibited the draft Master Plan for a period of 28 days from 18 May to 15 June 2021. The aim of the engagement program was to raise awareness and seek feedback on the draft Master Plan, respond to issues and continue to maintain a dialogue with the community and key stakeholders.

## 1.3 Who we engaged with

During the exhibition period, the Department communicated and engaged with:

- Landowners in the Special Activation Precinct
- Immediate neighbours and the broader Moree community
- Business Chamber members
- Moree Plains Shire Council Planners and Councillors
- Moree Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Key Aboriginal community members and service providers





## 1.4 How we engaged

The Department's engagement program involved several ways and activities to reach key stakeholders outlined above to provide information to help with submissions during the formal exhibition period.

Prior to the exhibition of the draft Master Plan, the Department held a series of community and business meetings that outlined the main elements of the draft Master Plan, including the boundary of the Special Activation Precinct, including one on one meetings and other individuals where

requested. This provided the community and key stakeholders with an opportunity to preview maps, land uses and performance criteria ahead of the formal release of the draft Master Plan.

Key engagement and communication activities during exhibition included:

	<p><b>Notification</b></p> <p>235 letters were mailed out to landowners' street and postal addresses in the Precinct, as well as 67 letters to immediate neighbours notifying landowners of the exhibition of draft Master Plan, technical studies and the Discussion Paper, including inviting landowners to community meetings.</p> <p>The Department also issued an email to 186 stakeholders on its database notifying of the exhibition of the draft Master Plan, ways to provide feedback and details about consultation events.</p> <p>Printed copies of all documents were made available at Moree Plains Shire Council.</p>
	<p><b>Consultation events</b></p> <p>The Department held individual landowner meetings, drop-in sessions, community meeting with Burrington Road residents, a briefing for Councillors and a pop-up stall at Balo Square, each specifically tailored to landowner and community audiences.</p> <p>The meetings detailed the elements of the draft Master Plan, the new zones, land uses and planning pathway.</p> <p>The activities were promoted on the Department's project webpage, via social media channels, in the local media, letters to landowners and through the Department's electronic direct mail database.</p>
	<p><b>Digital</b></p> <p>The Department of Regional NSW promoted the exhibition period on its social media channels. The campaign reached 10,030 people resulting in 839 clicks to the Moree SAP website.</p>
	<p><b>Media</b></p> <p>The local member, Adam Marshall MP announced the exhibition of the draft master plan in Moree on 18 May 2021 and issued a media release, which resulted in positive media coverage.</p> <p>The Department placed two notification ads in the Moree Champion Post, one in the Koori Mail and one in the National Indigenous Times. Thirty-six radio spots ran on 2VM and NowFM promoting the exhibition of the draft Master Plan, encouraging the lodgement of submissions and pointing people to the Moree SAP website.</p>

## 2. Overview of submissions

A total of 18 submissions were received during the exhibition of the Draft Master Plan. This includes the following.

- 14 submissions received from members of the community, including landowners within the Precinct. Of these, seven objected to the proposal in full or part. It should be noted that some submissions that objected to the proposal did raise support for certain aspects of the proposal. One submission provided support to the draft Master Plan and six provided comment.
- 2 submissions received from a non-government organisation Just Reinvest, and community college, Community College Northern Inland, Inc
- 2 submissions received from NSW Government agencies being:
  - Heritage NSW, and
  - NSW Department of Environment, Energy and Science, within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Many of the submissions gave support to the project recognising the benefits it would bring to the broader Moree community as summarised below:

- The 40-year vision to establish a world class high value, agricultural and horticultural production, processing and distribution hub is generally supported and has potential to improve social and economic opportunities for the local Aboriginal community,
- The transition of road freight to rail will improve operating safety across the eastern seaboard, and
- It was recognised that an influx in business and people in town would grow the local economy but would require effort to ensure the successful establishment of businesses.

The main themes arising from the public exhibition process included:

- Impacts of rezoning relating to incompatibility of land uses, road access and flooding, and impact on land values on residences along Burrington Road,
- Impacts of future development on residents in Stanley Village / Top Camp,
- Zoning of land as Rural Activity west of the Newell Highway and the associated restriction of land uses,
- Zoning of some land north of Halls Creek, west of the Newell Highway, to Rural Activity,
- Greater clarity sought on the alignment of key transport corridors and provision of utility services with respect to private landholdings,
- Social and community issues including crime, housing demand and the lack of community facilities, particularly for Aboriginal people,
- Engagement and co-design with the Aboriginal community and the need to better engage with local Gamilaroi community members, and
- Realisation of benefits to the Aboriginal community throughout the project's delivery.

Details of the response to key issues raised as part of submissions received from the community, Government agencies, non-government organisations are discussed in Section 3 of this report.

Following consideration of the submissions received, amendments have been made to the Moree Master Plan and Activation Precincts SEPP Schedule for the Moree Special Activation Precinct, as detailed in Section 4 of this Report.

### 3. Response to key issues raised in submissions

The following section provides a summary of the key issues raised in submissions and the Department's response to these issues.

#### 3.1 Theme: Land use and zoning

Concern was raised that rezoning land from RU1 Primary Production to Rural Activity Zone on Lots 21 and 22 in DP 876425, Newell Highway, Moree (refer to **Figure 1**) will restrict the use of the land which is already exposed to the impacts of industrial activity on land east of the Newell Highway.

Lots 21 and 22 in DP 876425 were originally proposed to be rezoned to the Rural Activity Zone under the Activation Precincts SEPP in the Draft Master Plan, following advice from Todoroski Air Sciences that the expansion of industrial land uses in the proposed Regional Enterprise Zone would further impact on the subject lots. In particular, the results of the technical analysis concluded that the properties would be exposed to air quality, odour and noise emissions over the 40-year development of the Precinct. The proposed Rural Activity Zone was therefore proposed to prohibit sensitive land uses and thereby avoid further land use conflicts and amenity impacts. It is noted that the existing dwelling on Lot 22 DP 876425 is located west and outside of the proposed Rural Activity Zone boundary.

An objection was received from the landowner to the proposed rezoning based on concerns that it would limit land uses that are permitted in the RU1 Primary Production Zone under *Moree Plains Local Environmental Plan 2011*. Following further consideration of the landowner's concern and a review of the specialist technical advice in consultation with NSW Environment Protection Authority, it has been determined that the Rural Activity Zone is required to manage the modelled impacts of development within the boundaries of the Special Activation Precinct. The result of the land use zoning change will prevent the construction of any new sensitive land uses such as residential dwellings but will retain agricultural and light industrial uses as development permitted with consent in the Rural Activity Zone.

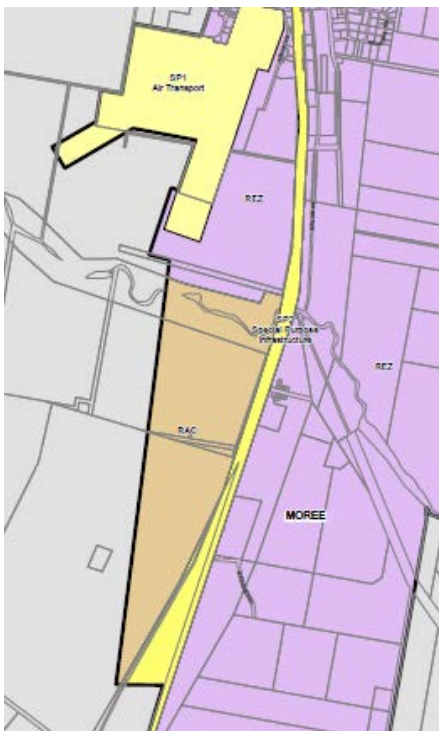


Figure 1 Rural Activity Zone applying to part Lots 21 and 22 in DP 876425 (Land Zoning Map extract)

**Rural Activity Zone extent north of Halls Creek:** A separate submission questioned the rationale in the draft Master Plan for land north of Halls Creek and west of Newell Highway to be zoned as Rural Activity, highlighting the potential of that area for enterprise development. Upon review, it has been confirmed that the area is unconstrained and is suitable for industrial and commercial development, consistent with those uses permitted within the Regional Enterprise Zone. Accordingly, the Land Zoning Map has been amended to reflect this change (refer to **Figures 2 and 3**).

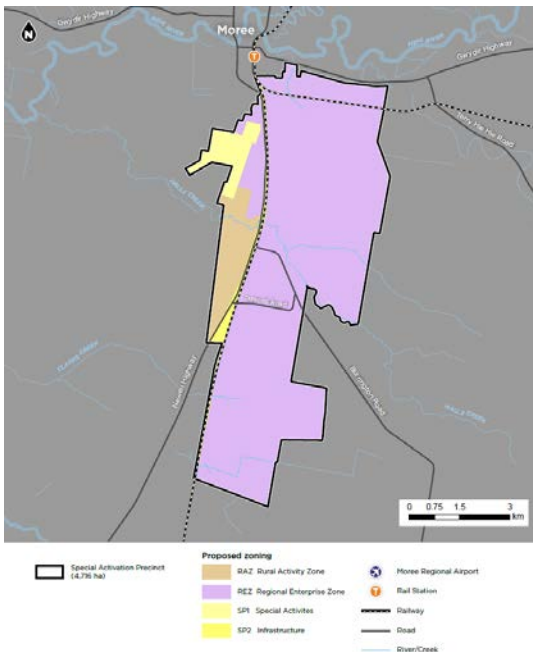


Figure 2 Exhibited Land Zoning Map

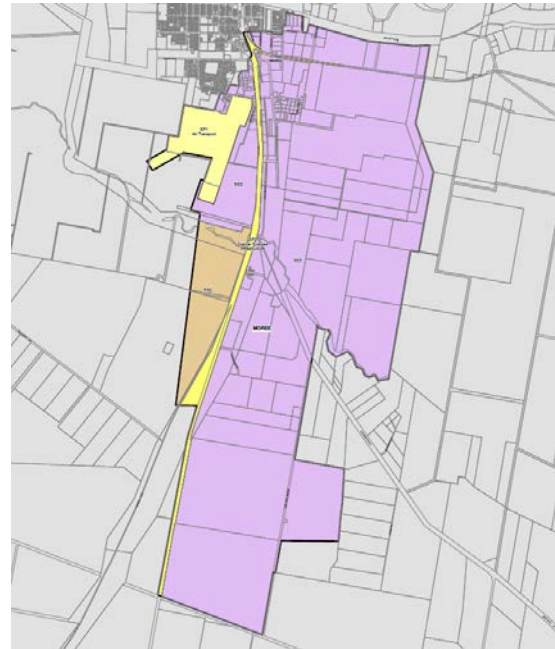


Figure 3 Final Land Zoning Map

**Scale of development:** Another submission questioned the scale of the Regional Enterprise Zone across the Precinct, suggesting that a much smaller precinct area would accommodate an intermodal and other related development. The extent of the Regional Enterprise Zone aligns with advice received by the Centre for International Economics on the potential for businesses to be attracted to and establish within the Precinct. In particular, this includes a target for the Precinct to become energy self-sufficient through the expansion of solar energy farms which require significant land areas. The broader area of the Precinct will allow for such uses to be established, whilst supporting industrial land uses in the north and centre of the Precinct.

### 3.2 Theme: Impacts on Burrington Road residences

Concern was raised from submissions received from Burrington Road residents that surrounding development within the Precinct, as well as the Inland Rail, would impact on the amenity of existing residents on Burrington Road and that appropriate buffers should be introduced to protect the residents.

The amenity impacts of Inland Rail are a matter for Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) to manage in accordance with its approved conditions of consent to mitigate impacts. However, the analysis of amenity impacts in the Precinct's Air, Noise and Odour technical study considered the cumulative impact of the development, combined with road and rail impacts. Outcomes of the analysis concluded that mitigation measures should be implemented to protect residential amenity where possible by containing the extent of modelled impacts of development within the Precinct boundary which will result in impacts generated on the Burrington properties. This land is currently subject to the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* which will continue to apply these dwellings following rezoning.

Concern was also raised that existing residents would be unable to replace dwellings in Moree and securing finance with high land values and low rental availability. Landowners will be able to continue residing in the precinct in the short term, however no additional residential properties will be able to be developed under the Master Plan. The impacts of development on existing residences have necessitated the development of a property acquisition strategy to apply to the residences on Burrington Road. An engagement strategy is to be led by the Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation in accordance with NSW Government's guiding principles and standards of property acquisition.

A separate issue was raised in relation to access arrangements for Burrington Road residences with the planned closure of the Burrington Road/Newell Highway intersection, the flood impacts experienced on Burrington Road, and the timing of the upgrade of Tapscott Road. The design of the upgrade of Tapscott Road and connection to Burrington Road is being undertaken as part of enabling road infrastructure required to support development within the Precinct. Specialist technical investigations into the road design will address flooding and access requirements as well as the need to maintain property access to residences on Burrington Road.

### 3.3 Theme: Impacts on Stanley Village / Top Camp residents

Clarification was sought in submissions on the scale of impacts on the Aboriginal community living in Stanley Village / Top Camp. A critical focus of the master planning was to ensure that impacts of future development within the Precinct do not negatively impact on the livelihood of adjacent residents. A detailed air quality, odour and noise assessment was undertaken to inform the master planning and made recommendations to ensure that developments do not exceed the modelled exposure limits set out in Section 4 of the Master Plan which will ensure that land uses and industries are suitably located.

### 3.4 Theme: Environmental impacts

**Ambient light pollution:** Concern was raised in a submission that ambient light pollution would result from the development of the Precinct, potentially negatively impacting on night sky viewing.

Whilst it is acknowledged that proposed development within the Precinct will largely be industrial by nature, the existing design requirement within Section 3.2.2 of the Master Plan requiring the Delivery Plan to encourage best practice approaches to lighting design has been strengthened with practices such as shielding the light source to minimise glare and light trespass beyond the Precinct. Where this is unable to be achieved, lighting within the Precinct is to be directed internally or downward as much as possible, whilst not compromising safety.

**Energy production:** In a submission it was recommended that a reference to a carbon-neutral vision be incorporated within the Master Plan. Concern was raised that the proposal to permit gas and hydrogen production would include blue hydrogen using fossil fuel gas, with opposition to coal seam gas raised.

The Master Plan and associated amendment to the Activation Precincts SEPP will permit gas and hydrogen production within the Precinct. However, any such proposal will not be permitted as complying development and will require a merit-based assessment to be undertaken as part of a development application process.

**Water resources:** Concern was raised regarding references to 'secure' water supply and resources in light of varying water demand across potential horticultural land uses.

With water security being of paramount importance to cities and regions, regional water strategies prepared by the NSW Government seek to support safe and secure water for towns and communities, support regional industries, boost economic prosperity and safeguard and enhance the environment. In particular, the draft Gwydir Regional Water Strategy recognises the importance of a secure and resilient water supply to regional centres, towns and outlying areas is vital for the

long-term sustainability of the region, particularly in the context of a changing, more variable climate. These priorities are supported by the objectives of the Master Plan.

### 3.5 Theme: Traffic and Transport

A request was made in a submission to maintain the current property access traversed via the travelling stock reserve.

Infrastructure concept design work is being undertaken by Regional NSW in parallel with the master planning process, allowing for infrastructure corridors and utility services to be planned with greater certainty. As part of this work, realignment of the existing property access is to be incorporated into the proposed road network to ensure the continuation of property access.

Further certainty on road corridor alignments on private landholdings was sought by a number of landowners. The road network is being designed as part of the development of enabling infrastructure and, where necessary, discussions will be held with affected landowners by the Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation.

### 3.6 Theme: Development enablers

The absence of detail within Section 7.1 of the Master Plan on development enablers, and the staging of development, were queried in submissions. It is noted that the availability of such details is critical to landowners who wish to understand how infrastructure alignments and footprints may affect individual properties. Investigations undertaken by Regional NSW to identify the suitable location of enabling infrastructure will inform discussions with landowners on delivery options. The timing of development in the Precinct will be influenced by access to existing infrastructure and the early delivery of new infrastructure such as roads and utilities.

Access to telecommunication services was sought within a private landholding and raised in a submission. Plans to deliver utilities and telecommunication services are being managed by Regional NSW as part of the design of enabling infrastructure to support development. It is intended to provide new and/or extended water, sewer, electricity and telecommunication services in the north east, central east and north west of the Precinct to support the expansion of development.

The preparation of a Delivery Plan for the Moree Special Activation Precinct is underway and is to be finalised before development approvals can be issued using the Activation Precincts SEPP. The Delivery Plan will provide guidelines and controls, along with strategies and plans for infrastructure and services, staging, environmental protection and management, Aboriginal cultural heritage, and protection of amenity. A draft of the Delivery Plan will be publicly exhibited to allow landowners to provide feedback before it is finalised.

### 3.7 Theme: Social, community and housing

Concern about the lack of a community facility for youth was raised, as well as the demand for housing supply and temporary accommodation in Moree.

In parallel with the master planning for the Precinct, the NSW Government has been facilitating a collaborative engagement approach with NSW Government agencies in the areas of health, education and housing to Moree in recognition of the need to improve social outcomes and opportunities for the Gamilaroi community. This ongoing integrated approach will lead to a social action and delivery strategy that is supported by NSW Government and service providers to address long-standing social disadvantage, education attainment along with vocational skills and training, housing and crime in conjunction with Aboriginal Affairs NSW, NSW Department of Education, NSW Police, NSW Health and other stakeholders in conjunction with Moree Plains Shire Council.



The Master Plan seeks to direct and support strategies that will:

- provide employment and training opportunities for all residents of the Moree community, including Aboriginal people,
- encourage the employment of Aboriginal people in line with NSW Government procurement policies, and
- develop an Indigenous Business and Employment Plan in conjunction with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council that promotes economic independence for Aboriginal people within the Precinct.

Additionally, Regional NSW is working to optimise social outcomes with NSW Government agencies, service providers and the community by collaborating to develop housing, education and health initiatives to achieve specific outcomes.

A number of strategies are being undertaken by Moree Plains Shire Council to address housing demand and community and social infrastructure provision. Council is undertaking a housing and residential land supply analysis, with a particular focus on the demand for housing as a result of business investment within the Precinct. Informed by employment drivers and population forecasts as well as long-term agricultural productivity trends, a local housing strategy will be implemented by Council to meet the projected residential demand.

Council is reviewing the Moree Plains Community Strategic Plan 2027, as informed by technical investigations into Social and Community Infrastructure prepared for the Special Activation Precinct, to identify the necessary infrastructure required to support the needs of existing and incoming residents and workers. Council will work with the community to identify priority areas of strategic focus as these investigations progress. Council anticipates housing, safety and access to services will be critical for the Moree community.

### 3.8 Theme: Consultation and Engagement

Concern was raised about a perceived lack of consultation with Gwydirville property owners during the planning phase. Written notification to all landowners within the Precinct was issued by the Department at various stages of the project, including:

- June 2020 – Letters to landowners within the Precinct, including surrounding landowners, with an accompanying fact sheet
- November 2020 – Letterbox drop to Burrington Road residents inviting them to drop in sessions
- April 2021 – Letters to landowners within the Precinct inviting them to drop-in sessions and one on one meetings
- April 2021 - Calls made by Council staff encouraging Burrington Road residents attend drop-in sessions
- May 2021 – Notification letters to landowners within the Special Activation Precinct informing of exhibition of draft Master Plan and consultation activities

Concern was also raised that the Moree Aboriginal community had not been sufficiently engaged and that the voices and lived experiences of young people should be brought into the Master Plan's processes and decision-making. For the outcomes of the Master Plan to benefit the Gamilaroi community, the level of engagement and communication with the Aboriginal community should be increased with greater scope for involvement in and leading decision making. It was further stated that the role of the recommended Aboriginal Reference Group requires further investigation due to the risk of duplicate engagement processes.

The Department engaged an Indigenous-owned business, Murawin Pty Ltd, to take a lead engagement role with the local Aboriginal community. The staged planning approach allowed for

ongoing conversations to be held with the Aboriginal community to give input into the design process, a first for the Special Activation Precincts program.

The master planning process signalled the commencement of ongoing dialogue with Gamilaroi Elders and community members. The establishment of relationships with various parts of the community through Murawin's groundwork has led to the recognition that the planned development of the Precinct will bring opportunities to the Gamilaroi community, but that a stronger response and integration across service providers, NSW Government agencies and local community members is required to give effect to the change that is needed in Moree.

The proposal to establish an Aboriginal Reference Group is premised on enabling ongoing dialogue with the Aboriginal community. The coordination of such a group will be undertaken to avoid duplicate engagement processes whilst integrating a common platform for voices to be heard and influence outcomes. Through Murawin's ongoing involvement jointly the WSP Australia, and under the leadership of Regional NSW, work has commenced on a Social Action Plan that straddles health, education and housing services, recognises previous and concurrent engagement and planning processes, and provides a youth focused lens amongst other principles.

### 3.9 Theme: Business attraction, and skills and training

Key concerns raised in submissions:

- Community College Northern Inland Inc.: Section 3.2.2 of the Master Plan should recognise community colleges as an alternate training option, in particular the Community College Northern Inland Inc.
- Planning for the establishment of viable businesses is required, with slow uptake of commercial development in Council's Gateway Precinct adjacent to Moree Regional Airport cited.
- Just Reinvest: Further intent to support and grow Aboriginal enterprise to yield short, medium and long-term benefits from the Special Activation Precinct is needed.

Section 3.2.3 of the Master Plan seeks to recognise the role that a range of education and skills and training providers will play across a range of technical disciplines and academic qualifications. An amendment has been made to Performance Criteria A to note that the NSW Government will work with vocational training providers and universities to develop education and training that aligns with the needs of the core industries in the Moree Plains area and, specifically, within the Precinct.

The establishment of commercial enterprise within the Gateway Precinct adjacent to Moree Regional Airport has been slow. An Economics Analysis undertaken to inform the estimated land uptake across a range of land uses that could be accommodated within the Precinct emphasised the strengths of the Moree region and established businesses. Undercover and outdoor horticulture, early-stage processing and increasing value from the grain/cotton supply chain, along with circular economy and energy generation land uses will create opportunities to diversify the local agricultural economy, unlocking measures to value-add, embrace new technologies and develop innovative energy solutions. Some of these uses are also forecast to require labour thereby generating employment across each sector. Ongoing activity is being undertaken by the Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation to develop a business attraction framework to ensure the viability of the project.

Specific aims of Section 3.2.3 of the Master Plan seek to create long-term employment opportunities and build better quality of life for the Gamilaroi people and the youth of Moree. Furthermore, the Master Plan seeks to enable investment opportunities for the Gamilaroi people. These aims are supported by specific Performance Criteria to encourage the use of the NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy, representation of Indigenous residents across a range of occupations, and encouraging Aboriginal-owned businesses. Furthermore, the Master Plan sets the framework for the NSW Government to collaborate with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to

develop an Indigenous Business and Employment Plan that promotes economic independence for Aboriginal people within the Precinct, and to develop a Workforce Development Strategy to consider the services that are required to support participation of the Indigenous community.

### 3.10 Government agency submission: Protection of areas with biodiversity value

The following matters were raised by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Division:

1. The retention of high value biodiversity on land to be zoned SP2, between the Newell Highway and existing rail line, is inconsistent with the intent of that zone.
2. Active transport links in areas of high biodiversity value will require clearing of native vegetation, to be considered in biodiversity offset calculations.
3. Land use zone objectives for Regional Enterprise Zone and Rural Activity Zone should protect and enhance the local character of the Precinct and contribute to the surrounding environment and its amenity.
4. Any clearing of native vegetation that is not approved under a strategic biodiversity certification for the Moree Special Activation Precinct will need to be assessed and offset in accordance with the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*

The objectives of the SP2 zone will permit the use of the land for infrastructure purposes, however existing native vegetation on the land will be protected by way of the environmental protection overlay. The function of the land is to operate as a travelling stock reserve and this land use will continue.

Planning for active transport links has been planned or otherwise directed in the Master Plan to avoid areas with high biodiversity value. These areas are captured in the Strategic Biocertification Assessment Report which advises that any active transport links are to be located outside of areas documented in that report.

Land use zone objectives for both the Regional Enterprise Zone and Rural Activity Zone have been amended to ensure the protection and enhancement of the local character of the Precinct and to contribute to the surrounding environment and its amenity. These objectives are reinforced by the aims and performance measures relating to built form set out in the Moree Special Activation Precinct Master Plan.

The Strategic Biocertification Assessment Report has identified those areas with high value vegetation that are to be protected. These areas align with the Environmental Protection Overlay Map. In addition, the Strategic Biocertification Assessment Report identifies those areas with high value vegetation that require offsetting as those land parcels are identified for road corridors and sites to be developed. It is acknowledged that any other native vegetation not approved under the strategic biodiversity certification will require assessment and offsetting in accordance with *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

### 3.11 Government agency submission: Non-Aboriginal heritage

Heritage NSW raised concern that the findings of the Moree Special Activation Precinct Heritage Report did not recommend heritage listing of the following items, noting that each item met at least one criteria of significance under the Heritage Act 1977:

- Inland Rail Railway Line (known historically as the Mungindi main line) - The item has potential local heritage significance against Criteria A (historic significance). The significance is intrinsic to the route and corridor, rail function and agricultural structures adjacent (such as silos), rather than being embodied in the fabric which has altered and continues to be replaced and upgraded as part of the new rail freight corridor.

- Old Inverell Railway Line – The assessment concluded that the item has potential local-level heritage significance against Criteria A (historic significance), however the assessment noted that these values are diminished by the current condition and low integrity of the corridor.
- Travelling Stock Reserve within the Moree Special Activation Precinct – The assessment concluded that the item does not meet the local significance threshold for any of the heritage assessment criteria. The biodiversity values are recognised within the Master Plan and protected through the Moree Schedule to the Activation Precincts SEPP, and the function of the travelling stock reserve will not be diminished by the Special Activation Precinct. Furthermore, the extent of travelling stock reserve within the Precinct is a small part of the travelling stock reserve network across NSW which warrants separate investigation, rather than at a Precinct level.
- Moree Grain Silos (GrainCorp site) - The item has potential local heritage significance against Criteria A (historic significance) as part of the broader assemblage of silos along the Moree rail lines. As recognised in the heritage assessment of the Inland Rail Railway Line (referenced above), there is a lack of evidence to suggest the structures are a rare or notable example of their type, or that they have comparative value in the context of approximately 300 rail side silo sites found throughout NSW. The grain storage silos are markers of Moree's agriculture history and heritage and the planned development within the Precinct is not set to impact or change the ongoing operation and use of the site to support agricultural productivity.

The Moree Special Activation Precinct Master Plan recognises these historical sites and structures and encourages changes to occur away from them. Additionally, it seeks opportunities to collaborate with local and Aboriginal artists to deliver public art which tie the Precinct together and reflect the local landscape, such as with murals on grain silos. However, it is not agreed that heritage listing of the abovementioned sites is warranted based on the results of the heritage study.

It is therefore concluded that heritage listing not be pursued for the abovementioned items and that the nominated strategies be incorporated within a site design and landscape plan as part of the Delivery Plan to celebrate and activate historical items as appropriate.

## 4. Improvements to the Master Plan and Activation Precincts SEPP

In reviewing the draft Master Plan and proposed updates to the Activation SEPP following exhibition, some additional improvements were identified. These changes are not in direct response to all the submissions received and so are not discussed in the previous section. An outline of these changes and why they have been made is provided in this section.

### 4.1 Removal of mapped air quality controls from the Master Plan

The analysis of air quality exposure undertaken to inform the draft Master Plan has been reviewed by the NSW Environment Protection Authority. It has been agreed that further refinement of these controls will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the Delivery Plan. As a result, the relevant figures have been removed from the final Master Plan.

### 4.2 Refinement of air quality, odour and noise controls around Moree Regional Airport

The air quality, odour and noise controls set out in the Master Plan will not apply to Moree Regional Airport which will continue to operate independently of the controls within the Activation Precincts SEPP. This has been clarified within Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the Master Plan.

### 4.3 Update of flood prone land map

Performance criteria A and B of Section 4.5 Flood Risk Management in the Master Plan define the Special Floodplain Considerations area which relies on the Probable Maximum Flood extent. The Probable Maximum Flood extent had not been mapped within the Flood Prone Land Map in the draft Master Plan and so has since been updated in the Final Master Plan.

## 5. Next steps

As the Master Plan and the Activation Precincts SEPP amendment are now finalised, the Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation will prepare for construction and development within the Precinct.

This will include:

- Preparing and publishing a delivery plan which outlines staging and detailed requirements for development (this plan will be placed on public exhibition for comment).
- Undertaking a tender process to select contractors to design and build the supporting infrastructure.
- Preparing a detailed design and consulting with impacted stakeholders
- Beginning construction of supporting infrastructure (roads, sewer, water).

