

**GO6 – Sydney Peri-Urban Network of Councils (SPUN) 2015 Action Plan**

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**Sydney Peri-Urban Network of Councils (SPUN) 2015 Action Plan**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The purpose of this report is to inform Council of Wollondilly's participation in the Sydney Peri-Urban Network of Local Councils (SPUN).
- Council's participation has resulted in the development and implementation of objectives and terms of reference for the Network and the development of the 2015 Sydney Peri-Urban Network (SPUN) Action Plan.
- SPUN has become a platform for Peri-Urban Councils to share knowledge and good practice, strengthen the strategic capacity of Local Government through regional resource sharing and the development and implementation of solution focused initiatives.
- It is recommended that Council note the work that the Sydney Peri-Urban Network (SPUN) has completed to date and continues to support and be a member of SPUN.
- It is also recommended that Council endorses the 2015 Sydney Peri-Urban Network (SPUN) Action Plan and this plan be considered in Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, through the Community Strategic Plan review process and the Wollondilly Issues Paper.

**REPORT**

The Future Directions for NSW Local Government – 20 Essential Steps, released by the Independent Local Government Review Panel in April 2013, highlighted the need to strengthen the strategic capacity of Local Government through regional resource sharing and managing the PeriUrban fringe issues.

The Peri-Urban areas are currently undergoing dramatic change, bringing significant growth and opportunities however these opportunities are not without their challenges. The Future Directions paper identified Wollondilly Shire Council as having a specialised role in managing the peri-urban fringe and as a response to this, Wollondilly Shire Council invited other Peri-Urban Councils to join in a partnership to develop and implement a Sydney Local Government Peri-Urban Group of Councils.

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The intent of this partnership and networking has been to develop better relationships, greater understanding to manage conflicts and develop tailor-made policies and solution focused initiatives for issues impacting upon Peri-Urban areas. The network has been and continues to be, an advocate for broader understanding and awareness of the challenges communities in NSW Peri-Urban areas are facing.

Peri-Urban areas form belts of non-urban land fringing metropolitan centres that are often neither fully urban nor rural, contain important natural resources, remnant biodiversity and significant landscapes. These areas are important for agriculture and recreation and attract diverse populations of people.

Peri-Urban areas have resilient landscapes that are capable of withstanding potential environmental and socio-economic shocks and can provide effective strategies and opportunities vital to the resilience of the metropolitan and greater area of Sydney.

An inaugural meeting of the Sydney Local Government Peri-Urban Group of Councils, hosted by Wollondilly Shire Council, occurred on 19 September 2013. As a result twelve (12) Councils on the periphery of the Sydney Metropolitan Area formed The Sydney Peri-Urban Network of Councils (SPUN). The Network includes the following Councils:

- Wingecarribee
- Camden
- Gosford
- Hawkesbury
- Hornsby
- Kiama
- Wollondilly
- Shellharbour
- Shoalhaven
- The Hills Shire
- Penrith
- Blue Mountains.

Currently 1.19 million people live in our SPUN member Council areas and this is expected to grow significantly into the future.

A Terms of Reference for the Network was agreed to at the September 2013 meeting and are as follows:

**Sydney Peri-Urban Network of Councils (SPUN) - TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

- Advocating recognition for peri-urban areas across NSW in State and Federal policy making. There is a need for legislative reform and policy recognition as urban doesn't stop and rural start. There is a mediating role between rural and urban.
- Acting as a platform for peri-urban regions to share knowledge and good practice.
- Building partnerships and resource sharing initiatives.
- Promoting connections and productive cross-fertilisation between networks and existing projects.

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- Developing the economic potential of peri-urban areas.
- Ensuring long term viability for peri-urban agricultural and horticultural production – promoting short food chains and production which enhances regional identity.
- Achieving sustainably managed open space, which conserves local landscapes (including peri-urban forests and wood-lands), takes account of local biodiversity and provides access and recreation.
- Improving multi-functional land use with strengthening of infrastructure.
- Improving resilience to climate change in peri-urban areas.

Since September 2013, SPUN has been meeting on a quarterly basis implementing the objectives and terms of reference for the Network, establishing many good partnerships with academics at various universities.

SPUN has become a platform for Peri-Urban Councils to share knowledge and good practice, strengthening the strategic capacity of Local Government through regional resource sharing and solution focused initiatives. SPUN has also become a strong advocate for a broader understanding and awareness of the challenges communities in NSW Peri-Urban areas are facing and has had an impact in resilience planning particularly in relation to climate change initiatives. One major achievement for the Network has been a partnership with the Institute of Sustainable Futures (UTS) for a climate change project that has attracted State Government funding of \$77,500. SPUN has been the lead partner to implement a food shed mapping research project in the Peri-Urban areas.

The Minister for Planning, the Hon. Rob Stokes, has also consulted with the Network regarding Peri-Urban issues and subsequently the Department of Planning have included PeriUrban issues in Metropolitan and District Planning as well as Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plans. There is starting to be a greater recognition for Peri-Urban areas across NSW in State and Federal policy making.

A discussion and issues paper has been developed by SPUN (provided under separate cover) to consider a strategic direction and as a result of this the Network developed the 2015 Sydney Peri-Urban Network (SPUN) Action Plan (Attachment 1).

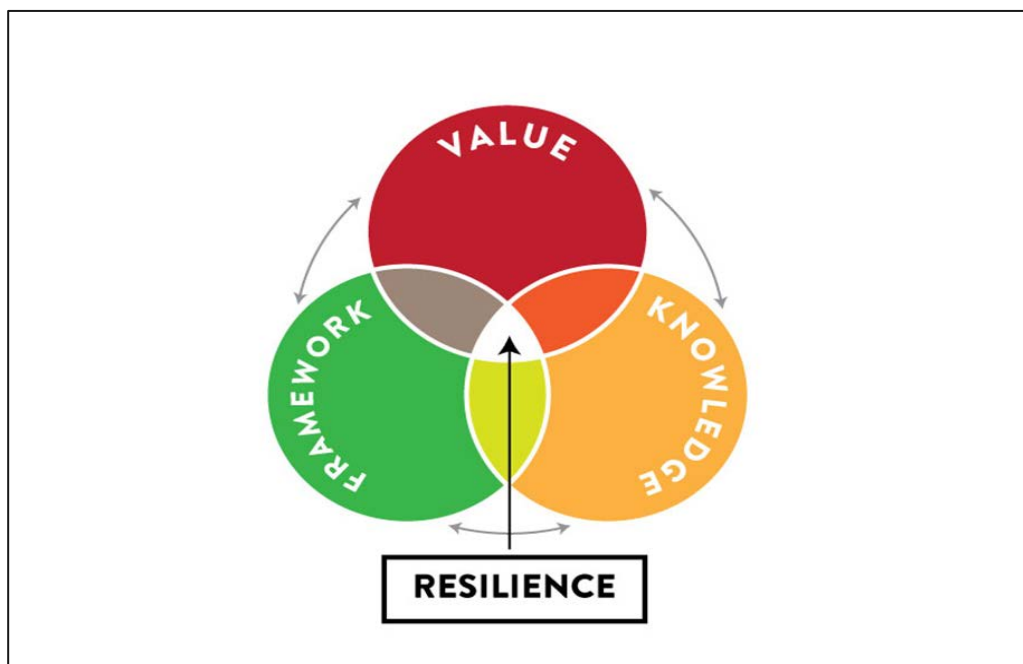
The Action Plan identifies the key issues confronted by Peri-Urban areas and outlines why these areas are so valuable.

The SPUN Action Plan identifies three (3) interrelated priority themes for action and they are:

- **Value the peri-urban** – better recognition and understanding of value and significance
- **Framework for Protection** – legislation, policy settings and other innovative mechanisms
- **Knowledge** – evidence based decisions and approaches.

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The diagram following illustrates the interconnectedness of these three (3) themes. A new framework for protection and management can only be achieved if the value of these lands is understood and widely recognised, and both of these themes are in turn dependent on sound knowledge.



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**CONSULTATION**

Consultation has been undertaken with Council's Executive and management team and the twelve (12) SPUN member Councils.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This matter has no financial impact on Council's adopted budget or forward estimates.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2015 Sydney Peri-Urban Network (SPUN) Action Plan
2. Sydney Peri-Urban Network Issues Paper (to be provided under separate cover)

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That Council note the work that the Sydney Peri-Urban Network (SPUN) has completed to date and continues to support and be a member of SPUN.

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2. That Council endorses the 2015 Sydney Peri-Urban Network (SPUN) Action Plan and this plan be considered in Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework through the Community Strategic Plan review process.
3. That Peri-Urban issues be included as Tier one Advocacy issue in the Wollondilly Issues Paper.

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SYDNEY  
PERI-URBAN  
NETWORK  
OF COUNCILS

02/10/15

Action Plan

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**INTRODUCTION**



Sydney's Peri-urban areas are currently undergoing dramatic change, bringing significant growth and opportunities. However these opportunities are not without their challenges. The ongoing lack of sound strategic approaches to the management of peri-urban areas is contributing to the disappearance of Sydney's rural landscapes and perpetuating the key issues faced in these areas. The enormous value and importance of the peri-urban fringe is not adequately recognised and the particular issues faced by peri-urban areas are not well understood.

This has triggered the need for discussion and action to ensure Sydney's peri-urban areas are managed and adequately protected so that Sydney's future generations are bestowed with an urban fringe that

supports resilience and prosperity.

The Sydney Peri-Urban Network of Councils comprises 12 Councils on the periphery of Sydney and was formed to stimulate discussion and action by all levels of Government.

A discussion and issues paper was prepared for the Network to consider a strategic direction and this Action Plan is the Network's response.

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# WHAT IS PERI-URBAN?

**PERI-URBAN  
THE INTERFACE BETWEEN  
URBAN AND RURAL AREAS.**

Peri-urban lands comprise a mix of urban and rural residential areas with productive agricultural lands, biodiversity areas and diverse topographies.



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**WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES CONFRONTED BY PERI-URBAN AREAS?**

- Management of urban growth pressures
- Productive agricultural lands being lost to urban development and fragmentation
- Lack of affordable transport options
- Increasing conflicts between rural and urban land uses
- Limited infrastructure capacity – e.g. communication, transport, sewerage
- Lack of “soft infrastructure” – health, education, social services
- Funding and policy “limbo” - Lack of policy settings and funding programmes which acknowledge the peri-urban areas as unique and complex (not entirely metro, not entirely rural)
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Lack of affordable housing opportunities
- Increasing community expectations that don't align with the reality of peri-urban living

**WHY ARE PERI-URBAN AREAS SO VALUABLE?**

Sydney's peri-urban lands are critical to the future resilience of the city as a whole. The value of these lands relates to the following:

- Significant growth pressures are occurring in peri-urban areas so Sydney's overall urban footprint is being “played out” on the peri urban fringe.
- Consequently the peri-urban areas are forecast to accommodate a significant proportion of Sydney's future population growth.
- As population increases in the peri-urban areas there will be an increasingly larger population susceptible to the effects of climate change and severe weather events (bushfire / heat wave / flooding etc.) The peri-urban areas are where the risks of these kinds of disasters are heightened.
- Infrastructure is literally “stretched” and “challenged” on the peri-urban fringe so Sydney's overall infrastructure capabilities (provision / cost / efficiency) are significantly affected by what happens on these lands.
- The peri-urban areas play a vital food security role for Sydney (as a food bowl and due to relatively low “food miles”)
- The peri-urban areas have multiple environmental values:
  - as a carbon sink
  - as a biodiversity resource
  - as a water catchment for Sydney
  - as “green lungs” replenishing Sydney's air quality and minimising urban heat island effects
- The peri-urban areas are a recreation and tourism resource contributing to the health and psychological well-being of Sydney's residents
- The peri-urban areas are culturally significant, containing a rich heritage of European rural landscapes and settlements as well as significant Aboriginal heritage.
- The peri-urban areas play an important economic role, particularly through agricultural production and tourism.



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**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:**

The Sydney Peri-Urban Network of Councils has identified three interrelated priority themes for action:

1. Value the peri-urban – better recognition and understanding of value and significance
2. Framework for Protection – legislation, policy settings and other innovative mechanisms
3. Knowledge – evidence based decisions and approaches

The diagram adjacent illustrates the interconnectedness of these three themes. A new framework for protection and management can only be achieved if the value of these lands is understood and widely recognised, and both of these themes are in turn dependent on sound knowledge.



**ACTION PLAN**

We encourage all sections of our community and all relevant agencies to pursue these actions in their own strategic planning processes.

| VALUE                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All about identity; leadership; advocacy; education; awareness; community engagement.   |                                                                                                                                  |
| ACTION                                                                                  | HOW                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Lobbying for policy at the Local, State and Federal Levels</b>                       | Establish an agreed definition and terminology for peri-urban land categories                                                    |
|                                                                                         | Acknowledgement of peri-urban areas as unique and complex; different to Metro, rural and regional areas in Policy considerations |
|                                                                                         | Identify a peri-urban funding category and seek adoption of that by NSW Government                                               |
|                                                                                         | Seat on the Greater Sydney Commission                                                                                            |
|                                                                                         | Advisory committee to examine how the planning system can better support agriculture and urban growth in the PeriUrban areas     |
| <b>Peak bodies awareness of peri-urban issues i.e LGNSW, ALGWA, SASA, UDIA, RDA etc</b> | Resolutions that value peri-urban issues                                                                                         |
|                                                                                         | Raise awareness of peri-urban issues                                                                                             |
| <b>Proactive involvement in major strategic planning initiatives</b>                    | 100 Resilient Cities Project                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                         | Metropolitan and District Planning                                                                                               |
|                                                                                         | Regional Growth & Infrastructure Plans                                                                                           |
|                                                                                         | Greater Sydney Commission                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                         | Other strategic alliances eg: SASA                                                                                               |
| <b>Increase local awareness of peri-urban issues and value of peri-urban areas</b>      | Development of strategy to educate and create awareness to address expectations of new residents                                 |
|                                                                                         | Develop an Awareness Campaign for Policy and decision making                                                                     |
|                                                                                         | Presence at significant events (e.g. a stand at the Royal Sydney Show)                                                           |

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**FRAMEWORK**  
All about subregional and Metro-planning; Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR); infrastructure coordination; local planning strategies; legislative change; new governance models; issues management; policy and regulation; market based mechanisms and incentives; innovative approaches.

| ACTION                                                           | HOW                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sustainable balanced growth and protection of agriculture</b> | Development of policy framework regarding agriculture in the Sydney Region. e.g. establish a "fence line in the paddock"<br>Implement policy approaches that encourage development of the infill areas within existing centres "footprint" |
| <b>Appropriate infrastructure</b>                                | Coordinated planning to address infrastructure shortfalls and deliver appropriate infrastructure outcomes in peri-urban areas                                                                                                              |
| <b>Specific legislation (and governance)</b>                     | Develop appropriate legislation e.g. a "Greater Sydney Agriculture Lands Protection Act" or an equivalent SEPP<br>Establish an agency with peri-urban responsibilities and focus – "Greater Sydney Peri Urban Authority"                   |
| <b>Other mechanisms and approaches</b>                           | Implement other mechanisms and approaches based on findings of research ( e.g. rating incentives, transferrable development right schemes)                                                                                                 |
| <b>Integrated Planning and Reporting</b>                         | Use the IPR framework to create integrated overarching policy directions for all levels of Government                                                                                                                                      |

**KNOWLEDGE**  
All about understanding; evidence based decision-making; research; economic data

| ACTION                                                                          | HOW                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Encourage the implementation of the outcomes from the Foodsheds Project*</b> | Research food security issues<br>Expand current mapping project to develop a model to be applied to all peri-urban lands<br>Determine best capacity of land use                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Encourage research about peri-urban issues and values</b>                    | Coordinated planning to address infrastructure shortfalls and deliver appropriate infrastructure outcomes in peri-urban areas<br>Capture and understand the socio-economic values including rural tourism<br>Capture and understand the environmental values of the peri-urban areas<br>Undertake research on the comparative costs of infill vs. peri-urban greenfield development                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Encourage research about peri-urban solutions</b>                            | Explore opportunities through rating mechanisms to support agriculture<br>Identify options for land valuation that prioritises food production and visual landscape values<br>Develop mechanisms that assist in the management of conflicting land use issues in the peri-urban area<br>Identify economic solutions to the "superannuation" subdivision approach to rural land<br>Undertake research of comparable peri-urban areas solutions around other global cities<br>Undertake research into feasibility of transferrable development right schemes (or similar) |

\* Partnership project with Institute of Sustainable Futures (UTS)

Attached to this action plan are:  
• Appendix 1 – SPUN Charter

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**Sydney Peri Urban Network (SPUN)**

SPUN represents the twelve Councils that border metropolitan Sydney.

SPUN was established in 2013 in response to concerns at the lack of a comprehensive vision for the peri urban region.

SPUN consists of the following Councils:

**Sydney Peri Urban Network**

**Councils**

-  Blue Mountains
-  Camden
-  Gosford
-  Hawkesbury
-  Hornsby
-  Kiama
-  Penrith
-  Shellharbour
-  Shoalhaven
-  The Hills Shire
-  Wingecarribee
-  Wollondilly



Our Councils are an important part of the solution for the long term sustainable management of population growth in New South Wales.

**AIM**

SPUN is a leader in advocating for peri urban issues at the state and national level.

**VISION**

Sydney and surrounding regions' Peri Urban Council areas are recognised as being part of New South Wales solution for managing growth while providing opportunities for strengthening local town & village character, settlements, lifestyle, tourism and agricultural (and economic) pursuits. The Network will assist and empower Councils in managing the significant pressures faced in peri urban areas.

Peri urban Councils are undergoing significant change, and the growth in the peri urban has brought with it many challenges and opportunities for Councils

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**The Network will:**

- Advocate recognition for peri-urban areas across NSW in State and Federal policy making. There is a need for legislative reform and policy recognition as urban doesn't stop and rural start. There is a mediating role between rural and urban.
- Act as a platform for peri urban regions to share knowledge and good practice
- Build partnerships and resource sharing initiatives
- Promote connections and productive cross-fertilisation between networks and existing projects.
- Develop the economic potential of peri urban areas.
- Ensure long term viability for peri urban agricultural and horticultural production – promoting short food chains and production which enhances regional identity.
- Achieve sustainably managed open space, which conserves local landscapes (including peri urban forests and wood-lands), takes account of local biodiversity and provides access and recreation.
- Improve multi-functional land use with strengthening of infrastructure.
- Improve resilience to climate change in peri urban areas.

**Sustainable growth solutions include:**

- Housing affordability.
- Employment land supported by the NBN roll out.
- A unique range of tourism and recreational opportunities for domestic and international travelers.
- Clear capacity to respond; the growth is already happening and much work has been done to ensure that suitable land is available to accommodate growth.
- 20 minute city - if not within a town, there will be another town within 20 minutes that provides the necessary services.
- Affordable transport options due to proximity to existing metropolitan services.
- Affordable infrastructure solutions.
- Communities with realistic expectations about the level of services that can be provided.
- Opportunity to undertake demonstration medium density sustainable development projects.

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**The Network is a stakeholder and part of the solution. We look forward to continue working with the government to manage New South Wales's sustainable growth and protect the important environmental, ecological and agricultural assets.**

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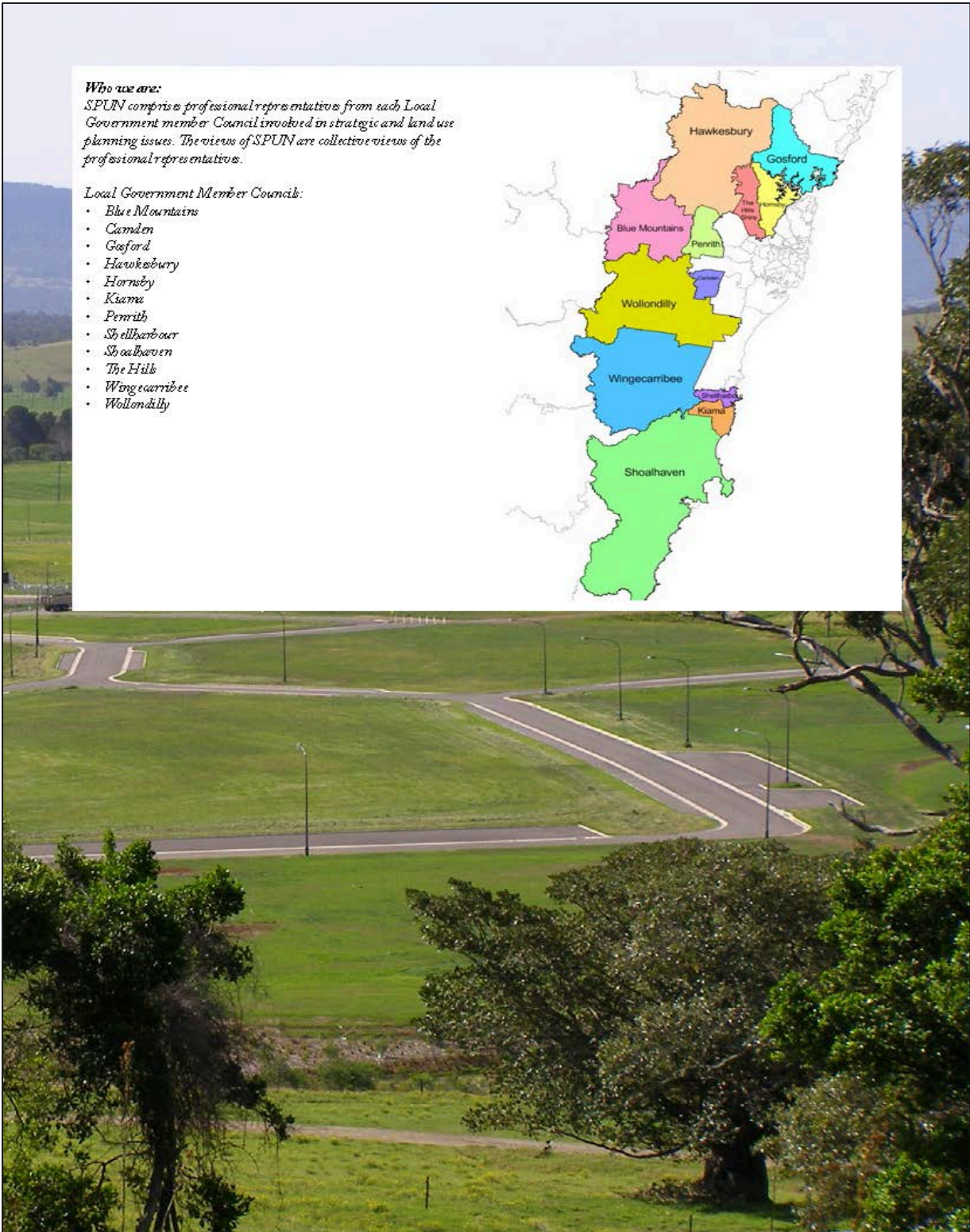
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