

# Draft Western District Plan

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Submission content: HABITAT The Critically Endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland is at serious risk of disappearing. For many people patches of bushland close to their homes provide their only direct connection with nature. It is important to preserve natural corridors of habitat in order to prevent local extinction of species. The current trend of creating a network of parks, with trees and grass, is not going to achieve the desired outcomes of preserving our natural habitat. Significant commitment to creating wildlife corridors to link and enhance key Cumberland plain woodland habitat should be included in the vision, particularly for the Western District. TREES & SHRUBS There is commitment to providing more trees in to neighborhoods which is good, however it needs to be embellished with additional understory species including shrubs, and ground covers, to achieve a more diverse habitat that supports a wider variety of birds, insects, reptiles and marsupials. This can also reduce the maintenance of such spaces as the environmentally unfriendly mowing of grass can be greatly reduced. MEASURABLE OUTCOMES FOR SHARED USE Measures, targets and initiatives are required in order to achieve shared use of facilities such as school and open space facilities for community, sports, arts, screen and cultural or recreational use when they are not otherwise required. This is a very achievable outcome, but

is not currently widely adopted as there is no driving force to do so. This vision needs to set something measurable to achieve in this regard, so that increased utilisation of these assets are achieved. Silos of particular organisations not being 'allowed' to hire out spaces or allow their use out of hours need to be broken down.

### RECREATIONAL USE OF PREVIOUSLY PROHIBITED AREAS

The upper Nepean scheme and its environs of bushland, canals, weirs, dams and rivers is an important water asset, but could also be a valuable recreation asset that should be made available to the community. This should be recognised in the vision. The prohibitory rules currently only prevent the law abiding citizens from using these spaces, the law breakers are already in there having a great time. These areas run through the districts or are closely located within an easy distance to enable their use, and enhance their value to the community, improving activity levels and people's connection with what Australia and its bush and history is. Imagine cycling along the upper canal; walking down a fire trail to picnic beside the waters edge in the upper reaches of a dam; or canoeing on a lake doing some fishing. These are all excellent activities that are enjoyed by all age groups. Recreation close to home is the way of the future, and active communities are healthy communities.

### SOLVING THE PLANETS ENERGY WOES THROUGH PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN

Embracing passive solar principles in subdivision layout and in building design can reduce the over reliance on air conditioners that seems like a disease in western Sydney. There is no need for air conditioning in adequately insulated buildings that face north with properly designed windows, eaves, and thermal mass. Designing subdivisions so a higher proportion of blocks are able to achieve this is increasingly important as housing blocks get smaller. The same principles can also be applied to apartment blocks. Gone are the days you had space to orient your house on the block, now it needs to be made the developers responsibility to size and orient the block so the house naturally faces the optimum direction. Subdivision layouts can be designed so the majority of houses meet this criteria. This vision needs to be set with measurable targets to be met to drive

this change. **NOT JUST PLANES, IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT**  
The airport is not the only feature of the western district. There is substantial population growth throughout the whole area that requires significant upgrade to train and bus services in order to meet current and future needs. For example, commitment to linking the newly proposed Wilton priority growth area by public transport with the significant economic centres that are close by. This means adding a link to Wollongong - preferably a train, but in the interim a bus, as no public transport link currently exists. All city centres in each of the districts with traffic congestion should be serviced with a free bus, particularly where there are hospitals and universities that require large numbers of people movements. Public transport is the key to achieving significant greenhouse gas emission reductions, the key to fighting the obesity epidemic, and the most environmentally friendly and safe way of people getting around.

**VISION AROUND AGING** The plans clearly identify significant increases the proportion of over 65, and over 80 year olds, yet it does not have any visionary solutions other than smaller houses and walkable cities with health facilities. This is grossly disappointing. Old people like to stay put. Where are the dementia friendly initiatives to enable them to remain independent and be able to navigate their way around their communities? Where are the suggestions that houses be built to be divided in the future allowing a house to easily be converted into a duplex to allow the aging resident to remain in place, but rent out the other half of their house and help fund their retirement, whilst also providing some low cost housing to essential service personnel? I think that this area of the vision is very under done.

**TECHNOLOGY OF THE FUTURE** There seems to be a lack of seeing what is just about to come. Where is the planning for electric cars - we need charging points, now, everywhere. Where is the planning for driverless vehicles, driverless public transport, mass automation of menial repetitive tasks. These changes are nearly upon us, yet are not even touched upon in this vision, this so-called plan for our future! I thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I hope you can take inspiration from my ideas and make this plan really

really great.