

Chairman's Summary Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan – Stage 2 Consultations

Thank you for your comments and feedback to the Draft Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan - they have been wide and varied. It has given us a lot to consider and as such we have made many changes to the Plan. This Chairman's summary seeks to respond to some of the common themes raised and highlight the areas that the plan has changed as a result of this feedback.

Feedback has been a combination of market research, and two stages of active consultation over three months between September 2015 and March 2016. At each stage over 7000 flyers were sent to PO Boxes and additional flyers placed on the counter of service stations, shops and offices at 40 locations across the rural area. The Commission spoke to over 1000 people at shops, markets, briefings sessions and a community workshop, and received over 200 written submissions in total.

We have listened and made changes between each stage – this can be seen on page 14 of the independent consultation report, where feedback from stage 1 was addressed in stage 2 – including the Pine Forest.

It is important to stress that this plan does not require anyone to develop or change their land use. If or when someone does wish to develop or change the use of their land, this plan will provide the guidance about the best future land use considering the long term growth needs.

This Chairman's Summary seeks to answer the topical questions coming out of the feedback provided during Stage 2. Changes have been addressed in this summary in the same order they appear in the plan, being Land Use Structure, Urban Development and the Rural Activity Centres.

The Commission has more work to do to develop more detailed area plans for the rural activity centres, including additional studies, and is always interested to keep in touch with people as we hit milestones with our mailing list, and to learn more from residents. You can fill out the form at www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au/lslup or send us an email to ntpc@nt.gov.au and we will add you to the list.



The Hon Gary Nairn AO
**Chairman
NT Planning Commission**

20 April 2016

Land Use Structure

Subregional plan in the hierarchy

The Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan updates and supersedes the Litchfield Planning Concepts and Land Use Objectives 2002 to provide a contemporary response to strategic planning challenges in line with the direction set by the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2015.

The rural activity centre concept plans set the potential future land use to undertake further studies, for example, into traffic assessments and intersection designs. The outcomes of these studies will be included within area plans that give direction to the future zone of the land, should the land owner wish to take up the opportunity.

Land Use Structure Map

Submissions highlighted that the site of the Inpex workers camp at Howard Springs is a location that they are comfortable to see reused for residential development or aged care. Given the established power, water and sewer connections and the type of development accepted, the land use structure now identifies this area as urban / peri-urban.

Rural Area

We have added more discussion to emphasise the importance of preserving the established residential amenity of the rural area on page 6 of the plan. The rural area still includes opportunities for additional 2ha and 8ha residential lots, but equally supports the variety of other uses that exist, including agriculture, cattle and extractive industries.

The plan includes additional criteria (page 11) for consideration when rezoning land for Zone R (Rural) and Zone RL (Rural Living), ensuring a reliable water supply adequate for residential use, stormwater drainage not adversely impacting on the receiving environment and provision of infrastructure and roads.

The Environment

The environment was a strong topic in the feedback we received. The draft plan has been amended to include additional discussion on the water resources, wildlife corridors and Priority Environmental Management Areas (page 8). Environmental Management statements of policy have been included (page 13) and a map of the Priority Environmental Management Areas at page 37. Reference has been made to the water allocation planning for the Howard Groundwater system and Berry Springs Dolostone system.

Waste Management

Feedback was received querying the timing and suitability of the future regional waste management facility site, including the ability to accommodate the emergency storage of waste as a result of a natural disaster. Timing will depend on the ongoing monitoring of the current facility at Shoal Bay. Initial studies show the future site at Howard Peninsula is suitable, and more detailed studies will refine the exact location. Studies will be undertaken immediately prior to the need for the facility to reflect best practice, including future advances in technology. These points have been added on page 10 of the plan.

Local Road Networks

Local road networks have been carried forward from the 2002 document, to create an interconnected local road network with route choice as part of future subdivisions. This will mean that traffic is distributed through more roads (not funnelled creating fewer busy roads) and that if one road becomes blocked, that an alternative route is available. Other local road networks are outlined on the rural activity centre concept plans. The principles are on page 13 and maps on pages 34 and 35.

Industry and local government

The Commission has worked closely with industry and local government to update our information. We have met with industry bodies and representatives to address concerns raised in submissions. We have added additional heavy vehicle access roads to reflect locations of predominant horticultural activities, in addition to the roads leading to extractive industry sites. Consultation with the cattle industry also highlighted the importance of access to arterial roads, and locating export facilities within a viable distance of port.

Statements of Policy

Statements of policy have been updated to include additional principles for: urban, rural residential and rural development; commercial uses; industrial uses; and the environment on pages 11 to 13.

Key points include:

- Urban residential uses to be located within urban / peri-urban areas and rural activity centres with a range of densities to enable more affordable housing choices
- Rural residential land uses on town water and close to community facilities. Lots within rural residential transition areas to be no less than 4000 m², and lots outside to be no less than 1 ha.
- Rural lots are supported by creation of 2 ha and 8 ha lots on suitable land with reliable water supply.
- Commercial and industrial land uses are encouraged to co-locate within rural activity centres and urban areas.
- Environmental Management statements of policy have been added to conserve natural systems and biodiversity, and to minimise detrimental impacts of development on the environment.

Urban Development

Weddell

Many submissions were received that suggested that Weddell was the solution to all growth needs. Weddell is still featured on the land use plan, as it always has, and will be an urban area – like Darwin or Palmerston. The land use structure identifies the approximate location of the city centre, and the major roads through the site. The city will have commercial and office uses, apartments, multiple dwellings and single dwellings within the pink urban / peri-urban area. While Weddell and surrounding area will provide for a large proportion of the region's growth, it is unlikely to meet the need for rural lots, or for people who want different housing choices in their established community. This is why rural activity centres are such an important aspect of this plan.

Timing

Feedback included questions about when various land uses would be developed. This plan looks at what a regional population will need within the next 40-50 years. It is up to the government or private land owner to decide if or when they take up the option to develop. This land use plan identifies the highest and best use of land in the long term, which may mean that additional infrastructure will be required to realise the opportunity.

So when will Weddell will be built?

It is the responsibility of the government of the day to make that decision. A government will likely consider the cost to build infrastructure, how quickly the population is growing, the type of lots that will be provided, and what other locations are delivering similar lots. Currently, urban lots are being built at Zuccoli and Muirhead. Infrastructure is being provided to the Palmerston Hospital to enable urban development right next to the services and facilities at Palmerston CBD, and a similar situation exists at Lee Point with Casuarina. Infill development of the inner and mid suburbs will also provide homes. As these areas fill up over time, locations such as Weddell will become attractive for urban development.

Hughes, Noonamah and Noonamah Ridge

A number of people raised questions in relation to potential developments in the Noonamah and Hughes localities and an area referred to as Noonamah Ridge. These areas were the subject of consideration in 2013 and 2014 under the significant development provisions of the Planning Act. They were seen as having potential for future development as urban / peri-urban areas given their proximity to the future city of Weddell. At that time, the Planning Commission made it very clear that any development in these areas would be subject to the completion of extensive studies, including the potential need of environmental assessment and rezoning, development and subdivision applications.

Rural activity centres

Balancing growth and established lifestyles

Stage 1 community consultation and independent market research asked people where growth should be located. People indicated that apartments, multiple dwellings and single dwellings in rural activity centres could be a reasonable compromise provided the remainder of the rural area was protected. Participants suggested that the highest housing densities should be closest to the shops, decreasing with distance from the centre, with 1 acre blocks at the fringe as a buffer for larger lots. The same questions were asked in our discussion paper and of the 700 people we spoke to during stage 1, which reaffirmed that growth around the rural activity centres was appropriate if the rest of the rural area was left alone.

As such, the draft plan supports a continuation of the minimum lot size of 8 ha or 2 ha in the rural area, with 1 ha and 4000 m² lots around and within the rural residential transition areas on town water, and single and multiple dwellings within the rural activity centres on water and sewerage.

Size, shape and design

On page 20 of the plan, the planning principles that underpin the shape and design of the concept plans are clearer, and including among others:

- providing reticulated (town) water to the whole of the centre, reducing reliance on ground water
- providing a long term vision for growth over the next 40 - 50 years
- providing housing diversity to offer choice and more affordable options
- preventing 'strip commercial development' by managing access to arterial roads, and directing commercial and industrial land use to establish within rural activity centres

We have also looked at the way that we have presented the centres, and made changes to better communicate the intensity of development that can be expected. We have:

- reduced the rural activity centre boundary to include the commercial, community and urban residential uses, which will all be on town water and sewer
- changed the outer boundary to be a Rural Residential Transition Boundary, including a range of lot sizes from the minimum of 4000 m² lots to larger rural living lots

Timing

People were interested to understand when development of rural activity centres would likely happen. Development often will not commence until water and/or sewer infrastructure has been upgraded or provided. Further studies will help to understand the infrastructure required and delivery strategy to give a clearer indication of timing. It is expected that the provision of lots will meet growth demands for the next 40-50 years.

Further studies

The concept plans establish a framework to guide further studies that will inform more detailed draft area plans, which will be subject to further community consultation. This has been reinforced in the forward, and also the introduction to rural activity centres (page 20).

Further consultation

Consultation with affected land owners and the community will occur during the preparation of area plans. These plans do not require anyone to develop or change their land. If or when someone does wish to develop or change the use of their land, this plan will provide the guidance about the best future land use considering the long term growth needs. We will keep interested people updated as we reach milestones throughout the project. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please fill out the form at www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au/slup or send an email to ntpc@nt.gov.au.

Useful Terms

We have included a list of useful terms in the document. This list will be familiar to those who saw the booklet released during Stage 1, which is still available on our website.

Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan Stage 2 Community Consultation Report

April 2016

Prepared by Associated Advertising & Promotions and PR Button

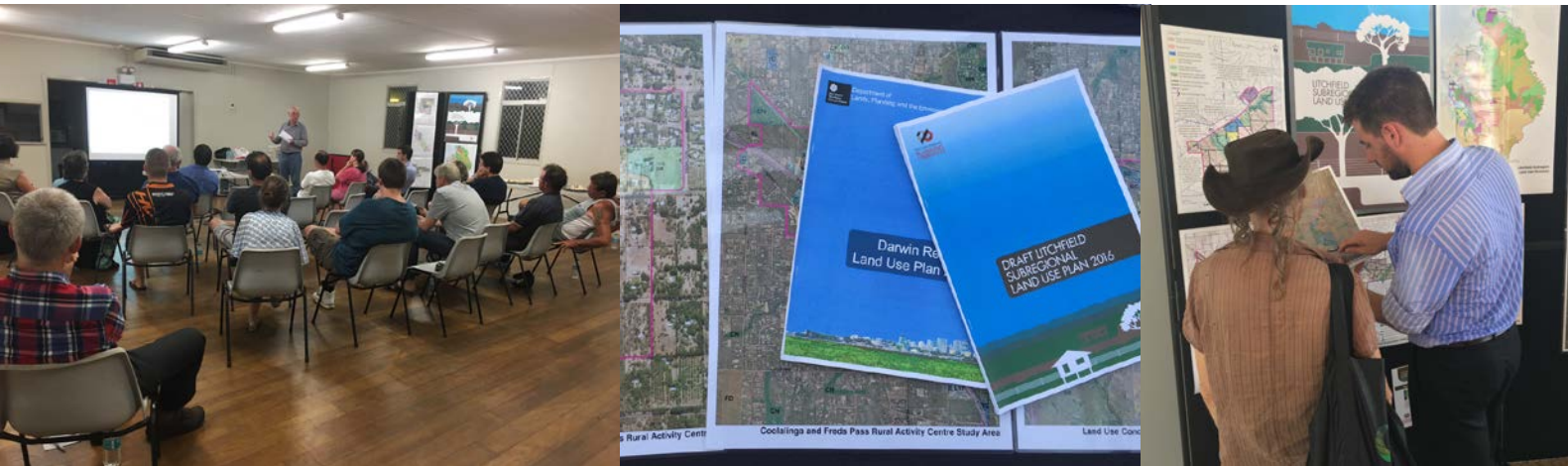


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Draft Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan was released by the NT Planning Commission on Tuesday, 16 February 2016. The draft Plan aimed to deliver a long-term plan that identified land to support a growing population and still protect the established rural lifestyle.

Following on from the information provided and proposed in the Stage One discussion paper, the draft Plan released in Stage Two provided more specific information on proposed future land use, identified opportunities for some growth around Rural Activity Centres (RACs) as well as more detail around future roads, infrastructure and essential services, and other impact areas.

The additional information and detail provided in the draft Plan in Stage Two was guided by:

- Feedback and information received from Stage One community consultations
- The Darwin Regional Land Use Plan
- Specific information provided from other investigations (eg. Biting insects studies, social infrastructure studies etc).

The release of the draft Plan marked the second stage of community consultation and provided further opportunity for the Litchfield Community and stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the plan, ask questions, obtain information and provide feedback to the draft Plan before it is finalised and proposed as an amendment to the planning scheme. The Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan 2016 will supersede the Litchfield Planning Concepts and Land Use Objectives 2002.

Stage Two community consultation for the Plan ran from 16 February until 14 March. Engagement was sought from across the Litchfield community of more than 22,000 residents as well as special interest groups, industry stakeholders, local and Territory Government.

During the consultation period the team, consisting of representatives from the NT Planning Commission, the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment (DLPE) and the consultants Associated Advertising & Promotions (AA&P) and PR Button, achieved the following engagement outcomes:

- Met with more than 344 people at information stands in shopping centres and community markets
- Held 4 Stakeholder Briefings which were open to all community members, these meetings attracted over 40 participants
- Presented the draft Plan to the Litchfield Council at the March meeting
- Received 129 submissions from a range of stakeholders including residents, interest groups, businesses, Government

As Stage Two provided a greater level of detail around each RAC, such as proposed boundaries, zoning, traffic access and new roads, a variety of comments and feedback from residents, land owners, businesses and other stakeholders about the proposed future land use recommendations was received.

Participants in the community consultation were keen to find out more information and to contribute their ideas and concerns about the future of the rural area. There was a strong

request to provide more information regarding industry specific land uses outside of the RACs, for industries such as agricultural and horticultural land, cattle holding facilities, and mineral extraction. There was also strong feedback that the environment and wildlife must be protected and preserved, especially the aquifers. More information was also requested regarding the proposed future developments at Noonamah, Noonamah Ridge, Hughes and Weddell.

Residents of the rural area are passionate about where they live and about protecting the amenity, safety and privacy that a rural lifestyle offers. They highly value the natural environment, including waterways, wetlands, bushland and conservation areas. Most respondents were resistant to see change take place that was not supported by relevant environmental protection, infrastructure development, social support mechanisms and traffic management. Having said that a proportion of respondents saw the draft Plan as an opportunity to leverage off potential development of their land holdings and contribute to the growth of the Rural Activity Centres.

The draft Plan addresses future land use in the Litchfield area under three main chapters these being: Land Use Structure, Urban Development and Rural Activity Centres.

Consultation responses to these chapters is summarised below:

Land Structure

While this chapter of the Plan identifies a range of land uses for the Litchfield region and related policy positions, many of the responses received request greater detail regarding particular land use interests and express concern that the Plan focuses on the Rural Activity Centres instead of the overall Litchfield subregion which is also characterised by extractive minerals, agriculture, horticulture, areas of conservation and sites of heritage and cultural significance.

Urban Development

There was significant interest in the development of urban centres through all feedback channels. The question of “when will you build Weddell?” was the most common question raised at all community briefings and information displays.

While this chapter explains the potential for three new urban centres in the region, namely Holtze, Weddell and Murrumujuk, consultation feedback sought more detail as to how the cities will be developed particularly with regard to timing and investment.

Rural Activity Centres

The concept of a RAC will see urban residential development within the centres supported by reticulated services and community infrastructure, decreasing in density to larger lots as a buffer to the rural lifestyle areas. The Plan has a strong focus on Rural Activity Centres (RACs), as this is where the majority of change is planned to occur. Planning in the Activity Centres endeavours to balance accommodating population growth in the rural area with minimal impact to the amenity of the established rural lifestyle. The locations identified as RACs are Berry Springs, Coolalinga/Fred’s Pass, Howard Springs and Humpty Doo.

Feedback regarding each of the Rural Activity Centres was captured and expanded on as follows:

- Arrangement and location of land uses
- RAC Boundary lines
- Local road networks and traffic

- Environment, water and conservation
- General comments

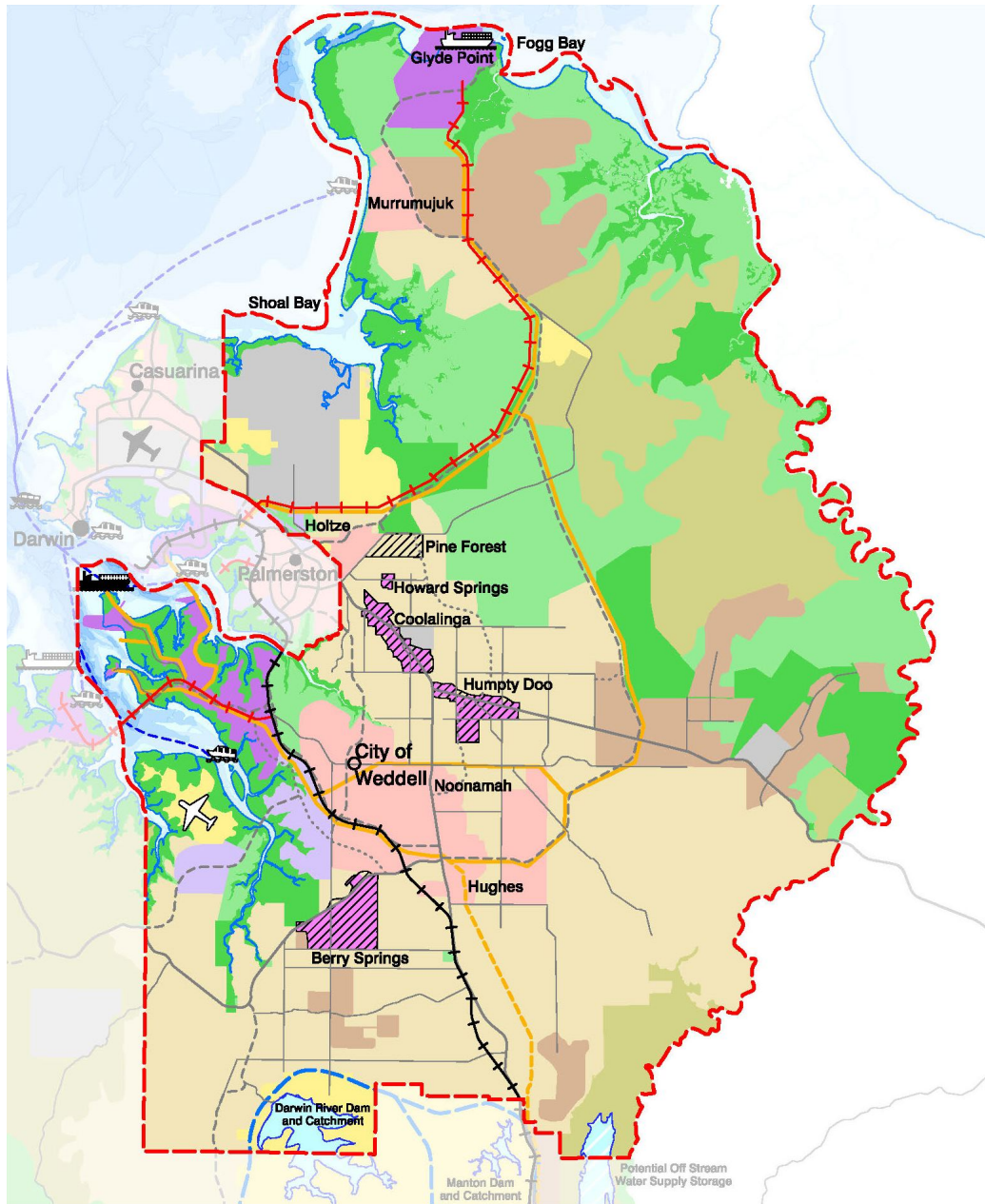
Generally feedback from the community consultation indicated that while the Plan sets the direction for long-term future land use, respondents were more concerned about 'when' the changes would take place. Respondents sought details regarding timelines for delivery, and a broad funding model for the provision of the infrastructure required to support the future population growth.

Further engagement is required with residents whose properties are directly impacted by the draft Plan, for example, residents with proposed roads through their properties (regardless of whether or not the roads are indicative).

Future communication regarding the Subregional Land Use Plan also needs to reinforce that the Plan is setting a high level framework for population growth over the long term in line with the direction set by the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2015 and that changes suggested through the Plan are not immediate or even mandatory, but should instead act as guidance for future development of the Litchfield region.

BACKGROUND

The NT Planning Commission is now in the second stage of consultations about developing the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme. Whilst the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2015 sets the overarching guidelines for land use, structure and key principles, the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan will provide more specific details and understanding of future land use in the Litchfield municipality, guided and informed by community consultation feedback as well as other studies and investigations.



The Litchfield subregion is an area of 3100 km² extending from Gunn Point in the north to Manton Dam in the south and from Adelaide River in the east to Harvey Creek in the west. Developing as an alternative to suburban living, Litchfield has a distinct identity and its own constraints and opportunities. Litchfield is particularly important for its potential to accommodate population growth close to the urban centres of Palmerston and Darwin.

Litchfield has a population of 22 123, living in 7539 dwellings (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

The draft Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan provides detailed land use planning for the Litchfield municipality, including concept plans for Rural Activity Centres (RACs) in Berry Springs, Coolalinga / Fred Pass, Howard Springs and Humpty Doo.

The NT Planning Commission engaged Associated Advertising & Promotions, in partnership with PR Button, to observe and record community engagement across a number of different feedback channels for this next stage of consultation. This report aims to provide an overview of the consultations that took place and a summary of community feedback that was received.

Stage One Consultations

Community consultation for the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan (LSLUP) commenced in September 2015 with the release of a consultation discussion paper. This aimed to provide information to the community about the Litchfield subregion, the issues to be considered in accommodating future population growth and gain community feedback to assist with the development of a draft Plan.

Community feedback during Stage One consultations was generally open and positive about the planning process. Litchfield residents, like most, are passionate about where they live and their lifestyle and wanted to find out more information about the future development and planning for the area. A number of recurring themes developed throughout the Stage One consultation activities, these being:

- Water
- Lot sizes
- Services
- Environment and conservation
- Recreation
- New developments – such as Noonamah Ridge and Weddell

Stage One consultation found that:

- 74% of submissions were neutral or supportive of the planning process
- 64% of submissions were made by residents of the area
- consultation participants were willing to provide ideas and raise concerns about future development of the Litchfield area

At the conclusion of the Stage One consultation it was evident that a number of questions remained to be addressed in the development of the Plan, and needed to be included at the next stage of consultation. These are expanded on and addressed under Objective 4 in this report.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Consultations for the development of the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan will take place as outlined in the diagram below, providing a variety of opportunities for the community to provide thoughts, comments, questions and feedback to the development of the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan.

The NT Planning Commission is currently in Stage Two of a three-part consultation process to help guide the development of a high level framework for future of land use in the Litchfield region.

Stage Two consultations ran from 16 February – 14 March 2016 and provided a number of information sessions, briefings, public displays and feedback channels.



All documents, reports, maps and additional information relating to each stage of the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan are maintained on the NT Planning Commission website, under the dedicated Litchfield Sub Regional Land Use Plan page <http://www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au/lsrup>

As with Stage One, community feedback at this stage is vital to ensure that the views of the whole community are incorporated into the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan.

The NT Planning Commission set the following objectives for the Stage Two Community Consultations. The outcomes of which are detailed in the following pages:

1. To create awareness of the planning process and the draft Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan
2. Provide opportunities and a variety of feedback mechanisms to encourage comment from stakeholders
3. Seek community and stakeholder input into the draft Litchfield Subregional Plan
4. Acknowledge and address key themes from the consultation process

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

1. To create awareness of the planning process and the draft Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan

Stage Two community consultation for the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan was launched on 16 February 2016, coinciding with the release of the Draft Plan by the NT Planning Commission.

Stage Two was supported by the following community engagement activities:

- email invitation to those who participated in Stage One consultations (and provided their email addresses) advising when the draft Plan was to be released and invite their feedback and submissions. This included key stakeholders, community groups and sporting clubs, industry associations and residents who attended briefings and/or information booth displays
- a letter to residents delivered to over 7000 post office boxes in the area
- a two page flyer to 40 locations across Litchfield including local electorate offices, service stations, supermarkets and stock-feed shops
- print advertising through the NT News and The Darwin and Palmerston Sun
- a dedicated page on the NT Planning Commission website, including times and dates of public displays, online feedback form and supplementary information, maps, surveys and studies
- media engagement, the NT Planning Commission issued a media release regarding commencement of the consultation process and participated in media interviews throughout the consultation phase.

2. Provide opportunities and a variety of feedback mechanisms to encourage comment from stakeholders

The structure and approach of the two stages differed and as such the nature and level of feedback reflected this.

Stage One in the development of the Plan concentrated on gathering information while, following on feedback received in Stage One, Stage Two consultations presented community members with more defined plans for how the Rural Activity Centres may be developed, specifically around where the boundaries may fall, where potential access roads could be and how lot sizes and land use could change in the future.

With more specific details available to stakeholders in Stage Two, it was anticipated that the community would provide more direct feedback and seek more detailed information on specific locations and services. The consultation team members reported that conversations with visitors at the information stands were generally longer than in Stage One, with more specific information being sought on how future land use planning would affect residents, the community and the environment, in and around the proposed Rural Activity Centres.

As with Stage One, the community was provided with a variety of feedback mechanisms to encourage and allow participation from all stakeholders during the Stage Two consultation period, including the following channels:

Website

The Litchfield page of the NT Planning Commission website was updated to provide feedback from Stage One and information, such as maps and area studies, which contributed to the draft Plan released in Stage Two. An online response form was once again available on the website to ensure community members were able to easily provide feedback. 35 responses were received through this channel and were recorded with the submissions.

Have Your Say forms

Were provided at all briefings and displays for people wishing to provide written comments. They were able to complete and leave their forms at the stand, or take them away and send them in later.

Information Stands

Representatives of the NT Planning Commission, the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment and the consultants attended public displays in February and March, providing opportunities for local residents and business to seek additional information and share their concerns, general comments and feedback. Feedback and comments were recorded at all of these events by the consultants. The public displays were held at the following locations:

Date	Location	Visitors
Tuesday 16 February	Howard Springs Shops	45
Thursday 18 February	Humpty Doo Shopping Centre	30
Saturday 20 February	Coolalinga Markets	70
Tuesday 23 February	Berry Springs Shopping Village	21
Thursday 25 February	Coolalinga Shopping Centre	45
Saturday 27 February	Coolalinga Markets	50
Wednesday 9 March	Coolalinga Shopping Centre	42
Saturday 12 March	Coolalinga Markets	41
	TOTAL	344



Stakeholder Briefings

The NT Planning Commission held a number of Stakeholder Briefings to provide an overview of the draft Plan and allow an opportunity for community members to ask questions. The briefings were held in both Darwin city at the NADO Office, and in the rural area to provide options for people to attend. The stakeholder meetings were advertised in the NT News and The Darwin and Palmerston Sun, listed on the website and participants from Stage One were emailed and encouraged to attend. All Stakeholder briefings were minuted and general feedback recorded. The meetings included:



Date	Location	Attendance
Tuesday 16 February	Howard Hall, Howard Springs	14
Wednesday 17 February	North Australian Development Office	6
Wednesday 17 February	Litchfield Council Meeting Room	10
Thursday 18 February	Taminmin Library, Humpty Doo	13
	TOTAL	43

Meetings with MLAs

NT Planning Commission Chairman Gary Nairn and representatives met with Mr Gerry Wood MLA (Member for Nelson), Ms Kezia Purick MA (Member for Goyder) and Mr Gary Higgins MLA (Member for Daly).

Submissions

All residents and stakeholders were invited to make a formal submission into the planning process by 14 March. Respondents were encouraged to use the draft Plan, public displays and briefings to help inform their submissions, members of the Planning Commission were also available to answer telephone enquiries and attend meetings as requested.

A total of 129 submissions were received providing a diversity of comments and views, seeking additional information and/or providing specific comment/input from stakeholders around land use issues such as intensive industries, horticulture, environment, traffic and transport, as well as mining, to list a few.

Media Coverage

Media coverage for Stage Two consultations included:

- 4 print stories (NT News & The Suns)
- 2 TV news reports (ABC & Channel 9)
- 8 radio interviews

Media coverage included comment from Mr Gerry Wood, who provided his own commentary about the draft Plan and encouraged rural residents to provide their feedback.

3. Seek community and stakeholder input into the draft Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan

Responses to the draft Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan are captured under Community Consultation in this report.

In summary the consultation team, consisting of representatives from the NT Planning Commission, the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment and the consultants Associated Advertising & Promotions (AA&P) and PR Button, achieved the following engagement outcomes:

- Met with more than **344** people at information stands at shopping centres and community markets
- Held **4** Stakeholder Briefings which were open to all community members, these meetings attracted over **40** participants
- Presented the draft plan to the Litchfield Council at the March meeting
- Received **129** submissions from a range of residents, interest groups, Local and Territory Government and stakeholders.

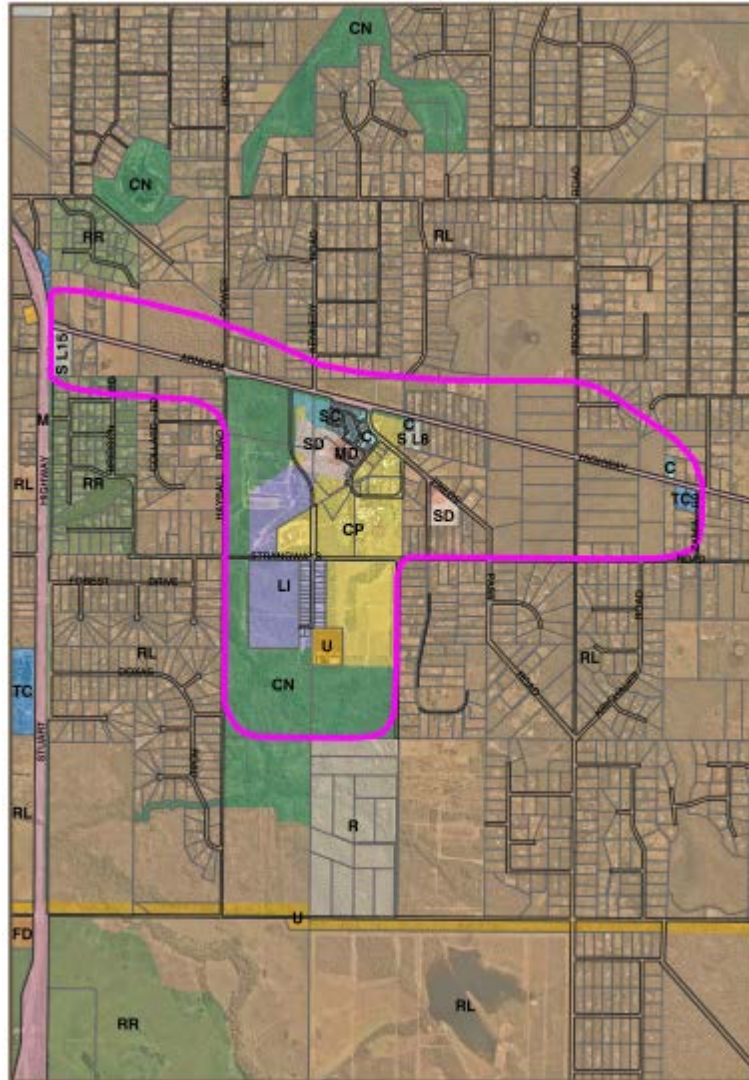
As already discussed, the draft Plan released in Stage Two provided more specific information on proposed future land use, Rural Activity Centre boundaries, proposed lot sizes, future roads, infrastructure and essential services than in Stage One.

The following images show the comparison between the indicative maps released in Stage One, and the additional detail that was released in the draft Plan, as a part of Stage Two.

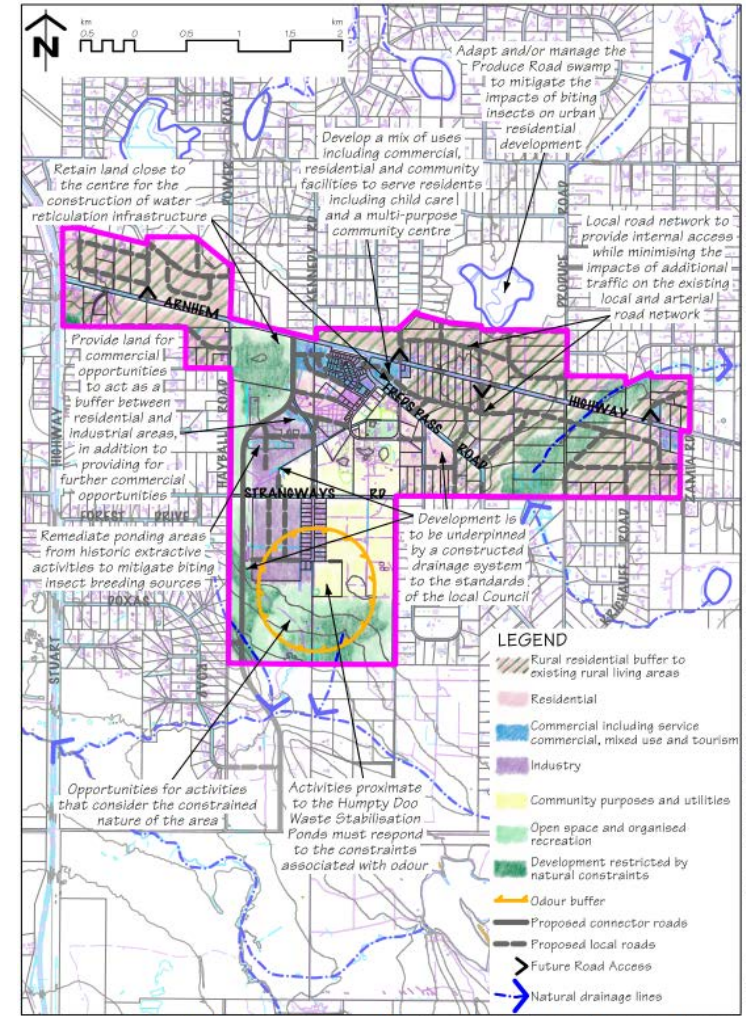
The additional information and detail provided in the draft Plan in Stage Two was guided by:

- Feedback and information received from Stage One community consultations
- The Darwin Regional Land Use Plan
- Specific information provided from other investigations (eg. Biting insects studies, traffic studies etc).

STAGE ONE – proposed Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre



STAGE TWO – proposed Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre



LAND USE CONCEPT FOR HUMPTY DOO RURAL ACTIVITY CENTRE

4. Acknowledge and address key themes from the consultation process

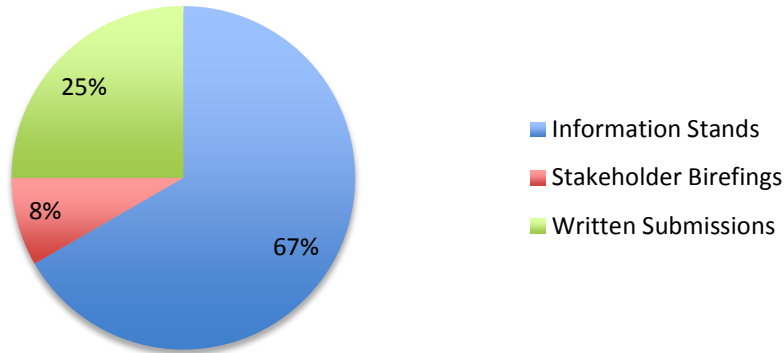
During Stage One a number of concerns or questions remained unanswered throughout the process which needed to be addressed at Stage Two, these were identified as follows;

STAGE 1 CONCERN	Confusion over the scope of Plan Consultation was primarily focused to the Rural Activity Centres, as these were identified in the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan as the predominant areas for growth and change. Stakeholders raised questions about how issues such as Weddell, Noonamah Ridge, horticulture and mineral extraction would be addressed.
STAGE 2 RESPONSE	The draft Plan sought to address the questions and concerns raised with discussion and policy statements, and draft concept plans for Rural Activity Centres to demonstrate how the centres could accommodate some population growth and improve services and facilities. The Plan reinforced the urban and peri-urban areas to accommodate the majority of growth in the longer term.
STAGE 1 CONCERN	Lack of information regarding future proposed developments and sites. Questions regarding timing and certainty of Weddell and Noonamah Ridge were raised throughout the consultation. Many residents and stakeholders were concerned that the focus on Rural Activity Centres placed a lesser weight on other future developments.
STAGE 2 RESPONSE	The draft Plan reinforced that most of the growth in Litchfield will occur in the urban and peri-urban areas of Holtze, Weddell, Noonamah, Hughes, Noonamah Ridge and Murrumujuk. Weddell is still a planned future development and will likely go ahead in the next 10-15 years, as other urban areas are fully developed.
STAGE 1 CONCERN	Why the Pine Forest?
STAGE 2 RESPONSE	Community consultations highlighted the values people place on the Pine Forest, particularly for recreation, and therefore the Pine Forest is no longer planned as a Rural Activity Centre. Investigations also indicate urban development is constrained by proximity to biting insects breeding areas. This area has environmental sensitivities and further land capability analysis is required to determine the level of development possible on the land.
STAGE 1 CONCERN	Government's commitment to the planning scheme
STAGE 2 RESPONSE	The Northern Territory Planning Commission is an independent statutory authority and provides the government its best advice on integrated land use, transport and infrastructure planning that reflect community, environmental and heritage values.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

A number of community feedback channels were provided and utilised throughout the Stage Two consultations. These included information stands at shopping centres and the markets, community briefings and written submissions.

Participation by Feedback Channels



Information Stands (shopping centres and community markets)

As in Stage One, a diverse range of views, opinions and ideas were received throughout the Stage Two consultation period. Conversations at the shopping centres and market stalls were largely positive, with most people expressing that they were:

- Happy with the proposed Plan and designated boundaries of the RACs
- Pleased to see planning taking place in the rural area
- Personally unaffected by the proposed plans and therefore unconcerned.

There were very few outwardly negative or opposing comments received at the information stalls. Compared with Stage One, visitors to the information stands appeared to have an increased awareness of the draft Plan and a greater understanding of the proposed Rural Activity Centers. Many visitors to the information stands in Stage Two had either been involved in, or were aware of, the discussion paper and community consultations in Stage One. In general, these visitors had longer conversations with representatives from the NT Planning Commission and the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment, actively seeking more detailed information about the proposed changes in the draft Plan.

Whilst most visitors to the stands were not opposed to concepts in the draft Plan, nor to accommodating growth in the rural area, some key issues/themes were raised consistently, these included comments and input that;

- RACs achieved a balance of growth
- Allocation of water and protecting the aquifers which are already under pressure, respondents were initially concerned about the impact on ground water until it was explained that town water would need to be provided in the RACs
- Concern about how population growth and smaller blocks might negatively impact the natural environment and wildlife
- Concern about how increased traffic will be accommodated on already congested and busy rural area road networks
- Potential sewage contamination

- Potential development of Weddell would mean densification of Rural Activity Centres would not be required
- More information and impact studies are required before the Plan can be approved
- Concern that increased population and smaller blocks will erode rural lifestyle
- The concept of 4000m² lots in Rural Activity Centres were generally well received at these stands

Information stands and stakeholder briefings provided the opportunity for people to ask questions, many of which also featured in written submissions, and allowed the NTPC to take on board the feedback and/or provide a response. People frequently asked about detailed studies. The NTPC was able to explain the indicative nature of the concept plans, and how more detailed area plans would be the opportunity for these studies to take place.

Stakeholder Briefings

Stakeholder Briefings provided an overview of the draft Plan and an opportunity for community members to ask questions. Attendees at the Stakeholder Briefings were generally open to learn more about the Plan and asked a broad range of questions covering all aspects from agriculture, transport, infrastructure and water to the future management of urban centres.

There were very few people who were outwardly dismissive of the Plan, but many sought greater clarity around particular elements of the Plan.



“I’m generally happy about what is proposed in the draft plan so far, happy to see planning occurring in the rural area. Lived in Virginia for 25years, lots of people with 5acres blocks want to the opportunity to be able to subdivide in half, providing access to water for these additional properties becomes available.” Rural Resident

Residents with agricultural and horticultural interests in the Litchfield area sought to understand

how population growth in the Litchfield area would be balanced against the land use requirements of farming properties, and how potential neighbour and boundary conflicts would be mitigated.

“I am a considerate neighbor, I don’t want to spray or annoy my neighbours with noise, but I need to be considered in this type of planning and the impacts it will have with additional people moving into the area”

One aspect of the Plan which was met with total support was the decision by the NT Planning Commission to remove the Pine Forest from the designated Rural Activity Centres. Community Consultation in Stage One strongly indicated that this area was important for recreation, strong community sentiment towards its preservation coupled with investigations indicating its proximity to biting insects resulted in it no longer being included as one of the RACs.

“I would like to applaud your decision to remove the Howard Springs Pine Forest as a planned Rural Activity Centre.”

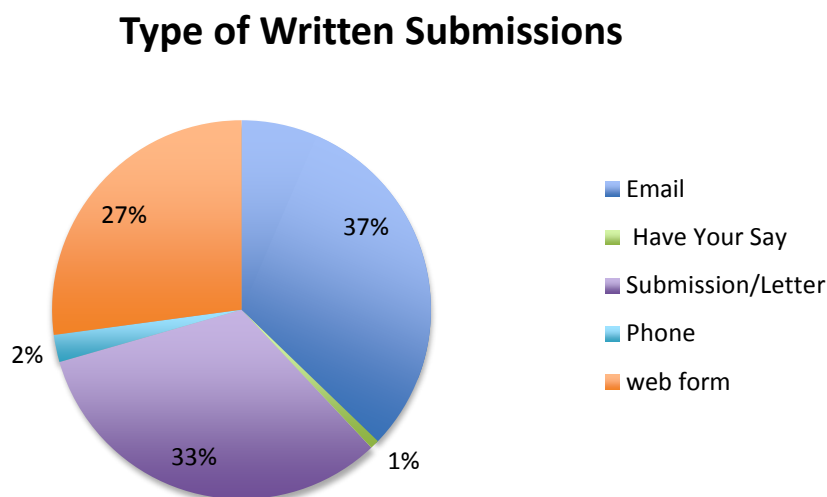
Written submissions – overview

129 written submissions were received from rural residents, as well as a variety of stakeholders with interests or activities in the Litchfield municipality, specifically relating to environmental and wildlife protection, farming, horticulture, agriculture and extractive activities, as well as from other industry associations, community groups and companies with business holdings in the Litchfield area.

Acknowledging that the draft Plan provided more specific information and maps for each of the RACs, the submissions sought further information and recognition of how their activities or interests would be impacted by the proposed Plan. The submissions also provided additional important information to the NTPC for consideration when finalising the Plan.

A number of channels were available for community members and stakeholders to provide a written response to the draft Plan.

A breakdown of the channels is provided in the graph below.



With almost double the amount of written submissions received in Stage Two (129) compared with Stage One (66), the community showed a strong interest in having their views and opinions heard and considered in the development of the Litchfield Sub Regional Land Use Plan.

Only 5% of those who provided submissions in Stage One also provided a submission in Stage Two. Without contacting all respondents to survey their motivations in responding at the different stages, it can be assumed that many of the community members who responded in Stage One saw no need to respond again in Stage Two, that their concerns had been noted, or that an increased number of the responses in Stage Two were inspired by increased media attention, public comments and meetings held by the local MLA, Gerry Wood.

A number of responses received, (29 out of 129, or 22%) were generally non-specific in their comments about the draft Plan, the submissions indicated that the respondents were resistant to change and uncomfortable with the overall concept of a new land use direction for the Litchfield region. While these responses provided little constructive feedback they should be acknowledged for voicing a very clear rejection of the Plan

Written submissions – response to Plan Chapters

The draft Plan addresses future land use in the Litchfield area under three main chapters these being:

- Land Use Structure
- Urban Development
- Rural Activity Centres.

Written submission responses to these chapters are summarised as follows:

Land Use Structure and Statements of Policy

The first section looks at the whole of the subregion in line with the guidance provided by the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2015.

Just over 10% of the written responses received addressed concerns relating to Land Use.

While this chapter of the Plan identifies a range of land uses for the Litchfield region and related policy positions, many of the responses received request greater detail regarding particular land use interests and express concern that the Plan focuses on the Rural Activity Centres instead of the overall Litchfield subregion which is also characterised by extractive minerals, agriculture, horticulture, areas of conservation and sites of heritage and cultural significance.

Stakeholders representing existing extractive industries, agriculture and horticulture expressed concern that the Plan did not address their own land use and that changes to density of rural living could have an impact on their businesses, particularly where the area of RACs were increased.

“Rural lifestyle zoning at the detriment of other rural activities” Rural business owner.

“Given that existing pre export quarantine facilities have been operating in their current locations since before the plan, I am interested to learn what impact this new plan will have on these and any proposed new facilities” Agricultural operator

A submission made on behalf of Boral suggested that the Plan *“did not include sufficient measures to acknowledge, protect and promote extractive industry within the region”*. While the agriculture industry was concerned that there would be a conflict in land uses with farming land and its related activities bordering on residential properties in areas zoned Rural Living.

All of these industries require access to transport networks, services and facilities in order to enjoy continued growth and development, they need guidance as to how their transport needs will be accommodated for into the future, including access to suitable roads.

Greening Australia and Litchfield Council both raised questions regarding social infrastructure and the availability of community land, with Greening Australia suggesting that areas need to be set aside for conservation to allow for a balance of wildlife conservation and recreation.

The City of Darwin, supportive of the Plan and commenting from the position of its involvement in the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2015, suggest that more detail is required around waste management and that consideration needs to be given to waste disposal in the event of a major event such as a cyclone.

The Urban Development Institute of Australia also welcomes the Plan but requested more detail around a number of elements of the Plan including:

- the development of land within the RACs by landowners if services were not available and the level and type of development that would be expected over time
- strategic guidance on the improvement of the road networks at a local scale
- historic access issues and “informal access roads” throughout the Litchfield region
- groundwater usage and modeling regarding the impact on the aquifer, and
- projected growth and the demand for housing stock

Other comments from a range of stakeholders included:

- more clarity around planning the development of the road network and the potential changes in usage or need
- details on management of arterial roads and the development of interconnected local road networks
- greater understanding regarding the impact of development on the ground water supply and water quality
- acknowledgment of environmental and/or cultural heritage sites
- details regarding growth outside of the RACs with consideration given to timing, constraints and demand
- inclusion of tourism opportunities and development in the Plan
- concerns that Howard Peninsular is a low lying area that is seasonally inundated limiting its capacity for expansion as the regional waste facility
- the Howard sand plains are home to a community of carnivorous plants and several threatened species which need to be protected
- the need for more protection of natural environments, waterways and natural drainage lines
- concern that the waste management facility proposed adjacent to Howard Springs nature park, the hunting reserve and shoal bay coastal reserve, contains significant wetlands, threatened vegetation, sites of significance and two recreation hunting reserves
- regional waste management needs to be preceded with an EIS. At present, there is no provision for emergency waste management and this should be addressed as a key statement of policy

“Ideally an audit of conservation values in the landscape would be made to underpin where development is appropriate. The plan does include some basic species data and the SOCS areas (as defined by DLRM), which is a positive inclusion, but these are not noted in the text as factors defining the development plan” Rural stakeholder

Urban Development

Litchfield will play an important role in accommodating urban growth in the Darwin Region over the next 40 to 50 years.

There was significant interest in the development of urban centres received through all feedback channels. The question of “when will you build Weddell?” was raised at all community briefings and information displays.

Of the written responses 20% mentioned building Weddell.

While this chapter explains the potential for three new urban centres in the region, namely Holtze, Weddell and Murrumujuk, respondents are seeking more detail as to how the cities will be developed particularly with regard to timing and investment.

Community consultation, particularly the stakeholder briefings and in the information stands, provided opportunities to explain in detail how building Weddell will require a significant investment of resources. Other proposed developments in the area in Noonamah and Elizabeth Valley may also influence its timing and the provision of infrastructure.

Despite this rationale, many respondents still requested more information on urban development so that they have a greater understanding as to how this will impact their own properties and lifestyles.

Another significant concern raised during the consultation was the lack of understanding regarding applications made on behalf the private development of Noonamah Ridge. Members of the community expected information regarding Noonamah Ridge to be included in the consultation process, highlighting local concern regarding development and caution regarding the impact on local services, infrastructure and water.

The concept of building Weddell is seen by many respondents as a solution for population growth without impacting on their current lifestyle and a way to achieve a balance of city/rural living. Having said that responses were mixed:

“Weddell is a great alternative to accommodate those who wish to live in a peri-urban or urban setting without disturbing the communities who have chosen to live in the current rural areas.”

“In the plan there is a lack of information about Holtze, Noonamah and Weddell and these areas are of significant impact on the region in general in terms of the size, development types and the locality in comparison to the ‘activity centres’”

“Building Weddell where there is still capacity for infill development in the rural area is crazy”

All submissions addressing issues relating to Urban Development requested more information in the Plan regarding future urban growth, potential demand, timing and layout.

Rural Activity Centres

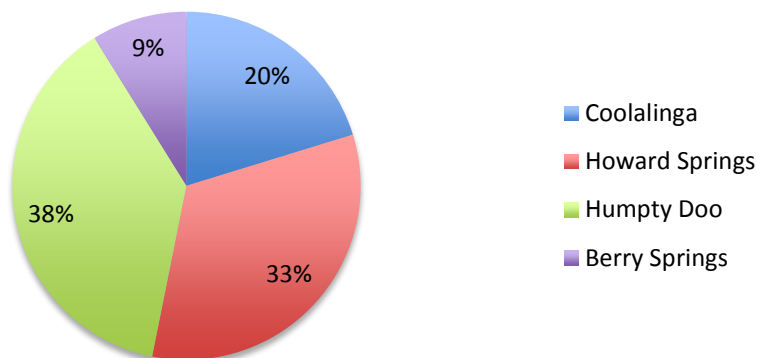
The NT Planning Commission has identified four locations in the Litchfield area to develop as Rural Activity Centres (RACs) to provide opportunities for expanded local facilities and services while allowing for the sustainability of larger rural lifestyle lots outside of the RACs. The concept of a RAC will see urban residential development within the centres supported by reticulated services and community infrastructure, decreasing in density to larger lots as a buffer to the rural lifestyle areas. The Plan has a strong focus on Rural Activity Centres (RACs), as this is where the majority of the growth will occur.

The locations identified as RACs are:

- Berry Springs
- Coolalinga/Fred’s Pass
- Howard Springs
- Humpty Doo

Of the responses received 62% indicated an alignment with a particular RAC.

Responses by Rural Activity Centres



General comments about the RACS

- Respondents expected more detail regarding infrastructure and other essential services in and around RACs, before boundary lines and smaller lot sizes were proposed.
- Changes in terminology from previous Plans – District Centres to RACs is perceived as confusing, as are zoning definitions.
- Some residents are disappointed with how Coolalinga has developed, particularly with the commercial centre divided by the highway, and are concerned that this is what is planned for other proposed RACs.
- Respondents sought more information and long term planning about how water supply, ground water harvesting and sewage management would be addressed. There was strong community desire to ensure ground water and catchments are protected
- Proposed RAC boundaries and local roads suggested on the Plan are indicative, but have caused anxiety with some residents, feeling that final decisions have been made without consultation
–Note: NTPC has been willing to meet and discuss this with residents when it has been raised - the initial surprise for some residents caused concern.

Generic RAC Feedback topics (applicable to all centres, or not distinguishable) included;

- Minimum lot size within Rural Activity Centres: 4000m² vs 1ha
- Buffers/transition
- Social impact
- Natural and cultural heritage
- Impacts of development to the 'downstream' environment
- Provision of reticulated water and sewer
- Protection and preservation of the environment, waterways, flora and fauna

Feedback regarding each of the Rural Activity Centres is summarized as follows:

- Arrangement and location of land uses
- RAC boundary lines
- Local road networks and traffic
- Environment, water and conservation
- General comments

Berry Springs

There was mixed sentiment regarding the proposed plans for growth and development of the Berry Springs RAC. Berry Springs is strongly recognised by the community as an important environmental location, specifically in relation to Berry Springs Creek, that needs to be protected and preserved. There were diverse views on how far the boundaries of the RAC should extend and what types of lot sizes would be suitable. Of note was the potential for growth and development of special tourism areas, facilities and activities in the area.

Comments arising from the Berry Springs RAC proposal included

Arrangement and location of land uses

- No 'suburbs' type developments in Berry Springs, with nothing under 2ha
- Berry Springs should remain min 2ha given proximity to flood plains
- Primary schools should be relocated to within residential area, on Doris road and utilise the co-located community purposes block opposite
- Area designated for Tourism activities is vague and unclear – potentially limiting to tourism opportunities.

RAC boundary lines

- Would like to see RAC extended past Mala Plains road
- Why is Berry Springs planned as over 7km? How will the aquifers, Darwin river dam or bore fields support 10,000 more people?
- Would like to see extension of the study area boundary to the north side of Cox Peninsula Road so as to reinstate the land at XX Finn Road to within the RAC boundary.

Local road networks & traffic

- Hopewell Rd with the 3 proposed local roads fails to meet the requirements of A5.

Environment, water & conservation

- Berry Creek waterways are extremely important for native flora and fauna, as are the preservation of natural drainage lines. Berry Creek has regularly flowed over Cox Pen and Hopewell Rds during big wet season.
- Berry Springs water advisory committee asserts that stormwater should not be redirected into Berry Creek; there is an immediate need for reticulated water and sewer, rainwater harvesting and tanks should be encouraged.

General/ additional comments

- With the sealing of Finn Rd and Jenkins Rd – Berry Springs residents have close access to Palmerston, and therefore don't need additional growth in the town centre.

Coolalinga/Fred's Pass

Coolalinga is the most developed and urbanised activity centre in the rural area, with existing multi story dwellings, a major supermarket, shops and community services. Residents along Wells Creek Road have had water and draining issues since the development of the shopping centre, and feel that the road is not safe for further growth. The adjacent Fred's Pass Reserve is also the rural area's major designated multi-user sporting and recreational facility, and is surrounded by conservation areas, both of which are important to the community. Balancing the need for growth and

development of community facilities, whilst preserving conservation areas, has created opposing views. The importance of buffer zones and wildlife corridors was frequently voiced however there were mixed views on how big these should be and where. Given the proximity to Howard Springs, there was some cross over in comments/issues raised.

Comments arising related to Coolalinga/Fred's Pass included

Arrangement and location of land uses

- Opposed to rezoning RR blocks in McIntyre Road area to 4000sqm. Social impact of an additional 100 houses is immeasurable. The boundary should remain along the railway corridor and not encroach into the large vacant land at the end of McIntyre Road. If it has to be developed, keep it as 5 acre lots.
- Lot 30 Henning road has a specific use SL7 and is planned for shops

RAC boundary lines and buffers

- RAC Boundary should stop at Smyth Rd
- A sensible plan to put smaller blocks around RACs and not cut up rural blocks
- Would like to see RR from Stuart highway to Lowther road to allow for subdivision
- The new area for commercial should include the caravan park and back to Henning road
- Create a min 50m buffer zone of native vegetation. Immediately adjoining this should be 1ha and 2ha allotments with a min of 800sqm
- 100m buffers need to exist between proposed subdivisions and existing rural lots
- Would be better to have 800sqm blocks and 2 level units but concerned about traffic on Whitewood road and Howard Springs Village intersection
- Opposed to proposed boundaries along Wells creek road. Four of the eight properties proposed have drainage channels running across the land and could not support smaller sized blocks
- Supportive of other developments such as Noonamah Ridge and Weddell. Wells Creek Road not suitable for further subdividing
- Extending Henning through to Virginia is a sensible option but should be further south than where it is shown in the land use Plan.

Local road networks & traffic

- Do not connect McIntyre road to Coolalinga
- Abandon the proposal to join McIntyre and Edelstone Rds, and also any extension to Smyth
- Pedestrians can't cross safely from Coolalinga developments on opposite sides of roads.

Environment, water & conservation

- Must undertake environmental and hydrological studies before any developments - science should inform developments, not developers
- Concerns about what additional development will do to water drainage issues for properties along Wells Creek road
- The Coolalinga/Bees Creek proposal will cut through vital wetlands that feed the Howard River and other vital waterways in the Bees Creek area.
- Already too much pressure on ground water, especially with sporting facilities at Fred's pass
- Sattler Airstrip is a site of historical significance and should be protected
- Drainage issues have been a problem since the development of Woolworths and the installation of traffic lights and undersized culverts up into Wells Creek Road. Wells Creek Road is undersized and not safe
- Needs to be minimum 100m buffer of natural bush land green held between potential redevelopment of quarry site.

General comments

- Scared that Coolalinga will be the model that the rest of RACS are based on
- Coolalinga needs its own Police station

Howard Springs

Howard Springs is a busy and a popular centre, and the draft Plan proposes that of all the centres it will yield the least amount of future growth and new dwellings (310) of all proposed RACs. There was strong sentiment against joining McIntrye and Edleston through to Stow and Smyth to allow for connectivity with Coolalinga; traffic congestion and safety concerns are already a significant issue for residents in the area and the proposal to change cul de sacs into connector roads that would bring additional traffic was not supported. There was very strong community sentiment about preserving and protecting Wadham's lagoon and also regarding protecting wildlife and conservation areas. The community is also seeking further information about what is proposed for the INPEX workers village, with suggestions that it would make an ideal location for a retirement village in the rural area. Again, mixed views around minimum lot sizes and boundary lines.

Comments arising from the Howard Springs RAC proposal included

Arrangement and location of land uses

- Rural residents should live on a block size that allows for keeping chooks and horses
- INPEX site should be used seniors retirement village for the rural area
- More vibrant community space and sustainable services for Howard Springs.

RACs & boundary lines

- Min 5 acre blocks should be maintained except for pre-existing areas such as Howard River Caravan park and behind Howard Springs School
- Do not bring one acre blocks in Howard Springs – increased density living will bring crime
- Supportive of 0.4ha blocks in areas around existing shopping centres and the INPEX village; support infill development such as units, townhouse and flats. Do not support building Weddell while there is still capacity for infill development
- 5 acre subdivisions do not provide sufficient opportunity to maximise land use for residential growth. It makes sense to have 1ha blocks around the Pine Forest, Whitewood and Stow Rd areas - all close to power, water and roads
- Min lot sizes of 800sqm around RACS and only if access to town water and sewage - no high rise of any sort should be allowed in the rural area.
- 0.4ha blocks will create urban sprawl, and they are intensive water consumers
- Draft Plan doesn't specify what buffer zones will comprise of and 0.4ha is not enough to mitigate noise, air and traffic pollution.
- Howard Springs RAC is too large, should be reduced
- Howard Springs RAC should include the primary school and Good Shepherd, thus taking into account all businesses, in particular the caravan park, service station, vehicle repair centre and schools
- Howard Springs is already busy - develop Weddell and Herbert. 1 acre should be the minimum size of lots in town centres. 800sqm is too small

Local road networks & traffic

- Inadequate road easement to service the expansion of the RAC; the road is already becoming congested and unsafe for road users, pedestrians and residents - Whitewood Road is not safe or adequate currently and cannot accommodate further growth
- Not supportive of the proposed road link between McIntyre Road and the Coolalinga centre which will completely change the environment of a quiet low traffic cul de sac
- Concerned with making Stow Road a through road - traffic dangers and destruction to conservation areas; it would be a nice place for a bike path, not more cars.
- Traffic congestion on Whitewood road - issue with increased traffic on Stow road especially for elderly people and horse riders
- Important that Madsen Road does not get built as it would impact greatly on residents of Dougall Crt, Ninnis Crt, Collella Crt, Thornbill Cres, Stuckey Crt, Ganley Crt- many of these properties would end up with road frontage.

Environment, water & conservation

- Coolalinga has already compromised at least one spring source of the Howard River. The expansion of these boundaries to involve the paper barks and Anictomatis paddock will compromise that river source entirely - it should be conserved
- Lagoons and waterways should be preserved, not adapted. Do not support development of conservation land near Stow Road, or the western side of the railway corridor in Coolalinga. Need further studies

General comments

- Extractives industry operations and haulage routes in Howard Springs need more detail
- Holtze should be retained as RR
- How will the INPEX village be used once it is no longer needed for the project?

Humpty Doo

Of all submissions received that specified belonging to a particular RAC, the strongest opposition to accommodating population growth through smaller lot sizes, came from Humpty Doo residents. There was strong opposition to 1 acre lots with the concerns that this will create peri-urban sprawl and will take away rural amenity and lifestyle; many submitters felt that 5 acres should be the minimum lot size in Humpty Doo. There was however some support for smaller blocks strictly included within RACs boundaries.

Comments arising from the Humpty Doo RAC proposal included

Arrangement and location of land uses

- Do not want to see ribbon development along the Arnhem highway – this has been a “no no” for many years, why would this now be proposed?
- Keep urban sized parcels of land strictly within the boundaries of commercial segregated areas.

RACs & boundary lines

- Happy for smaller blocks close to the shops, but some residents are concerned over proposed roads which appear to be going through existing properties
- RAC boundary should stop at Kennedy Road – delete all proposals for Power Road and Hayball intersection
- Would like to see edge of the Activity Centre extended to include Keiley Road and Collard Road
- Do not extend Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre to Lowther Road

Local road networks & traffic

- Move proposed road to north east corner on lot 25 and widen Arnhem highway with a slip lane to allow access to the existing residential properties fronting the Arnhem Highway, move the slip lane over to enable visibility from the Humpty Doo shops
- Traffic lights are needed at Arnhem Highway and Hayball Road, Arnhem Highway and Fred's Pass.

Environment, water & conservation

- Produce Road Swamp is in fact Metcalfe Lagoon and needs to be preserved
- Do not support Fred's Pass extension to sport and recreation facilities, should be kept as CN, needs more studies

General comments

- Do not want to see Humpty Doo to become the next Palmerston
- Look at considering other infill areas such as Marlows Lagoon rather than encroaching on the rural area
- What will happen to private cemeteries such as the one on Hayball Road and Arnhem Highway?
- High density living has a place around town centres such as Bees Creek and Weddell - implement those but do not allow the subdivision of blocks in the rural area below 5 acres. Most residents strongly against 1 acre blocks
- Woodside Reserve is a part of Taminmin School and not an area that can be designated for public activities.

General comments regarding the Plan

Overall people were very appreciative to be able to have their say and be a part of the consultation.

General comments about the draft Plan, in addition to specific commentary about RACs, included;

- Respondents were concerned that the proposed size and density of lots in RACs would detract from the rural lifestyle and amenity and detrimentally affect the community feel of the rural area. Social issues, traffic noise, neighbour conflict and increased levels of crime were all issues mentioned.
- There was support for the draft Plan and for smaller lot sizes and diversity of housing options but respondents wanted to see a broad funding model of how this will be supported and delivered.
- Conservation zonings should link to one another in order to provide for connected habitats or protection of areas suitable for endangered species or for other similar needs. There needs to be more criteria around designating conservation land eg. Glyde Point and associated areas need more attention.
- Some respondents didn't believe that population growth projections were correct
- There was some sentiment that the Plan is being rushed. Respondents wanted more time for consultation and more information on Holtze, Noonamah Ridge and Weddell, as well as information on how the new hospital, Defence sites, Ichthys Project, FIFO camps and the Corrections Centre will impact the future of the area.
- Although proposed RAC boundaries and the local roads suggested on the Plan are largely indicative, they have caused anxiety with some residents, some residents indicated feeling that final decisions have been made without consultation – *Note: NTPC has been willing to meet and discuss this with residents when it has been raised - but the initial surprise for some residents caused concern.*

- The Plan does not recognise local centres such as Acacia, Llyod Creek, Southport, Darwin River, Lambells Lagoon and Holtze, and only minimal mention of Giraween, also no mention of Noonamah, Noonamah Ridge or Hughes.
- The Plan hasn't asked the community what they want, it has just provided one option to consider.
- Ongoing consultation is required with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority to ensure sacred sites protection and advice.
- There is detail from the LPCUO 2002 which has not been captured in the LSLUP. Supportive of RAC hierarchy that classifies centres based on the role and function they perform.

Additional Consultations - outside of NTPC activity

Outside of NT Planning Commission initiated consultations and engagement, a number of other consultations and online conversations took place.

The new level of detail and proposed boundaries of the RACs provided in the draft Plan in Stage Two prompted a strong response from local members Mr Gerry Wood MLA (Member for Nelson) and The Hon Kezia Purick MLA (Member for Goyder), as well as from residents. Mr Wood initiated and held two additional community briefings, one at Howard Springs and one at Humpty Doo, which were attended by the community (estimated 200 people).

Mr Wood presented each of the Rural Activity Centres proposals and provided what he believed to be the positive and negatives merits of each RAC. In each case, Mr Wood compared the previous plans and ideas he and Ms Purick had developed several years ago to the current draft Plan. Mr Wood thought that people should have been given options and not presented with a single "solution". He also referred to the Macgregor Tan Research paper. Mr Wood expressed his concern over the perceived "rushing through" of the Plan and noted that he was trying to get an extension on the 14 March closing date for Stage Two.

In summary Gerry Woods' remarks included:

- There is a lot more in the draft Plan that should be considered and understood, outside of Rural Activity Centres.
- The proposed Rural Activity Centres won't keep rural communities 'rural'
- The Government needs to build Weddell – there are great plans and the concept itself was nationally awarded.

Mr Wood has submitted alternative plans to the draft Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan to the NT Planning Commission as a part of the submissions received for Stage Two.

Other social media commentary and information

There was substantial social media commentary and information about the draft Plan which primarily occurred on pages and community groups such as;

- Darwin Rural – Keeping it rural
- Litchfield Council
- No Rural Suburbs
- Darwin Off Road Cyclists
- Humpty Doo & Rural Areas Community

The Planning Commission does not have a Facebook page and is unable to respond to online commentary, which does limit engagement in this space. Facebook comments were diverse and there was strong awareness that feedback and comments about the plan needed to be sent to the NT Planning Commission with many posters encouraging others to formally submit their comments via the online form or by email.

SUMMARY

The Litchfield Municipality is a large land area with diverse stakeholders, important natural resources and varied land uses. As identified in Stage One, many rural residents who participated in the community consultation activities are concerned about potential changes to their residential environment and protecting their rural lifestyle; they are also cynical about the potential benefits of future development changes and the alleged lack of consultation that has taken place historically.

The NT Planning Commission's Draft Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan released in February 2016 aimed to deliver a long-term plan that identified land to support a growing population and still protect the established rural lifestyle. The draft Plan identified opportunities for some growth around Rural Activity Centres and land for urban living with buffers to rural areas.

Stage Two consultations were well participated in, and those rural residents who engaged in the process showed a strong interest in finding out more information about how the proposed RACs would impact their rural lifestyle.

Further consultation is required with residents whose properties are directly impacted by the draft Plan. For example, residents with proposed roads through their properties (regardless of whether or not they are indicative) need to be consulted.

Stage Two provided a greater level of detail around each RAC, such as proposed boundaries, zoning and traffic access and new roads. This prompted a variety of comments and feedback from residents, land-owners, businesses and other stakeholders about the proposed future land use recommendations.

A common response during the consultation focused on timing of the Plan and demonstrated how some respondents did not fully understand how the Plan aimed to set a high-level direction for long future land use.

One of the biggest questions received was 'when' will the changes take place? This could be addressed by providing more detail around the potential timing of the Land Use Plan and an outline regarding the provision of infrastructure and estimated timelines for delivery. Further information may also be required regarding lot sizes in the RACs and an explanation to land-owners that they will not be compelled to subdivide

Stage Two consultations generated diverse feedback from a variety of stakeholders, across all the feedback channels, expressing a mixture of views, opinions, ideas and concerns. Verbal feedback received at the information stands was largely more positive in nature, compared with written submissions, and people were positive about this type of consultation and being able to have their individual questions and concerns answered.

Participants in the community consultation were keen to find out more information and to contribute their ideas and concerns about the future of the rural area. There is a strong request for more information to be provided regarding industry specific land uses outside of the RACs, for industries such as agricultural and horticultural land, cattle holding facilities, and mineral extraction. There is also strong community sentiment that the environment and wildlife must be protected and preserved, especially the aquifers.

More information is sought from the community regarding the proposed future developments at Noonamah Ridge, Hughes and Weddell.

Residents of the rural area are passionate about where they live and about protecting the amenity, safety and privacy that a rural lifestyle offers and highly value the natural environment, including waterways, wetlands, bushland and conservation areas. Most respondents are reluctant to see change take place in the rural area that isn't predicted and supported by relevant environmental safeguards, infrastructure development, social support, traffic management and other studies. Having said that a smaller proportion of respondents saw the draft Plan as an opportunity to develop their land holdings and contribute to the growth of the Rural Activity Centres.