

Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan: Responding to Stage 2B submissions

The NT Planning Commission has been consulting with community and stakeholders to prepare a land use plan for the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre since 2018.

The Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan (HDAP) is a plan for the long term, facilitating development of new urban residential and rural residential land, additional commercial and tourist commercial opportunities within the existing activity centre, expansion of community facilities and public open space. The HDAP also integrates land use transport planning by identifying and confirming locations for new road networks and service infrastructure to support the Arnhem Highway duplication project.

The HDAP supports the land use concept plans and policies for Litchfield's activity centres contained within the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan (2016), by providing a detailed planning framework for the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre.

The Planning Commission's third stage of consultation in the preparation of the HDAP, referred to as Stage 2B, occurred in May and June 2023. This stage of consultation asked community and stakeholders to consider and provide feedback on a draft area plan incorporating the outcomes of the Arnhem Highway Duplication Planning Study including, a North-South connection either side of Arnhem Highway.

Key matters raised during Stage 2B consultation included:

- protection of waterways, lagoons and seasonal wetlands;
- identification of ecologically significant fauna and flora populations and habitat;
- rural character and amenity;
- concerns about additional traffic and associated light and noise pollution;
- infrastructure and the capability of infrastructure to service a growing population; and
- community facilities, including pedestrian and shared path networks.

Taking into account feedback received through 3 stages of community and stakeholder engagement and a range of technical and specialist advice, the Planning Commission has now finalised the draft HDAP, an outline of changes made to the draft Area Plan since Stage 2B consultation is provided overleaf for your information.

Next steps

The NTPC has prepared a final draft Area Plan and requested the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics consider amending the NT Planning Scheme 2020 to include the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan.

The Minister has decided to consider the request and the Area Plan and supporting documentation will be subject to public exhibition. This presents an additional opportunity to review and make a submission on the Area Plan, which will ultimately be considered by the Minister.

The proposed Planning Scheme Amendment will be on exhibition from Friday 5 July 2024 to Friday 2 August 2024.

To view the exhibition documents or make a submission visit Development Applications Online (<https://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/planning-notices-online/notices#/index>)

Response to Stage 2B feedback and submissions and stakeholder feedback.

The NTPC has prepared a final version of the draft Area in response to Stage 2B feedback and submissions. Key issues and a summary of how the NTPC have considered these matters are detailed below:

Ecologically significant flora and fauna within the Area Plan study area

- In addition to a number of community submissions, the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (DEPWS) provided advice around the intensification of land uses proposed by the Area Plan and impacts on ecologically significant fauna and flora populations within the study area. The presence of these species has been identified as a significant constraint on some sites within the study area and the NTPC final draft Area Plan has been modified to address these concerns as below:
 - identifying parcels within the Metcalfe Lagoon and Edwins Creek intact woodland corridor as 'Development Restricted by Constraints/Natural Environment'. The woodland corridor is shown on the Landscape and Constraints Plan whilst the Land Use Structure Plan reflects this land use designation, with reference to specific objectives
 - identifying Section 3219 Hundred of Strangways as a 'Future Investigation Area' on the Land Use Structure Plan
 - including additional objectives and development responses within the Natural Environment section of the Area Plan, which provides additional considerations for development within the abovementioned parcels and highlights the presence of significant fauna and flora populations, including the black footed tree rat and brush tailed possum, within the study area.

The NTPC final draft Area Plan also stipulates the need for development to respond to whole-of government approaches for sustainable development and regional conservation, acknowledging that future studies, including a Regional Conservation Strategy, will require development proposals to give greater consideration to environmental elements.

North of Arnhem Highway adjacent the core Humpty Doo Activity Centre

- Much of the area north of the Arnhem Highway, adjacent to the Rural Activity Centre core area, was identified in consultation materials as 'Rural Residential'. This has been retained in the final draft Area Plan prepared by the NTPC.
- More intense land uses in this area, particularly urban residential and commercial land uses, have the potential to fragment the core of the activity centre with implications on traffic management contrary to the Arnhem Highway duplication project

Changes to identified land uses east of (future) Challoner Circuit extension

- A submission to Stage 2B consultation requested the Planning Commission consider a reconfiguration of existing uses and zones in this area to facilitate mixed use commercial, tourism commercial, community, medical and residential land uses.
- The proposed reconfiguration of land uses and zones could result in further ribbon style development along the Arnhem Highway and detract from the functionality of the existing activity centre.
- Development in accordance with the current zoning is considered to complement the existing activity centre and provides additional opportunities for further tourism related land uses within the locality.
- The NTPC final draft Area Plan continues identification of land uses consistent with the existing zoning in this area.

Industrial land uses

- The Planning Commission received submissions regarding demand for General Industry land within the study area, including some specific development suggestions.
- The NTPC final draft Area Plan continues the Light Industry identification of sites in the Spencely Road locality and does not identify any sites for General Industry or similar land uses.
- The NTPC considers the land use changes suggested could have potential for impacts beyond property boundaries that could prejudice nearby development.

Extent / Boundary of Rural Activity Centre Area Plan

- Consultation on the draft Area Plan in 2018 specifically discussed a number of areas on the periphery of the rural activity centre, and whether these areas should be retained within the Area Plan. Feedback received at that time supported not including an area near to Edwins Creek and Zamia Road.
- Submissions during Stage 2B consultation requested the reinstatement of an area near to Edwins Creek and Zamia Road to support the further development and expansion of existing businesses in this area.
- Areas previously excluded from the draft Area Plan remain outside of the Area Plan boundary in the NTPC final draft in order to consolidate commercial and tourism land uses within the identified core area of the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre.

Minimum density and underdevelopment

- The Area Plan provides for a range of lot sizes and housing choices to cater for varying lifestyles in the locality. For the vision of the draft Area Plan to be realised, the provision of cost effective infrastructure is imperative to support development opportunities.
- Consideration of advice for the cost-effective delivery of infrastructure identifies that underdevelopment of a site, where the development does not meet the densities envisaged by the draft Area Plan, could reduce the effective provision of supporting infrastructure and cause additional costs and barriers to development.
- The Area Plan identifies a large area for potential Rural Residential development compared to the area identified within the core for Residential which is relatively small. Anticipated demand for Rural Residential development is considered to be accommodated and not under pressure for development contrary to Rural Residential purposes.
- The draft Area Plan includes acceptable land uses and development responses, including a target density and maximum lot size, to achieve residential development on land identified for 'Urban Residential' and to prevent development contrary to Urban Residential purposes.
- Avoiding underdevelopment, including staged or sequential development of Rural Residential type development, will ensure 'Urban Residential' land is developed at the intended density within the core area of the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre, and that the provision of required infrastructure is cost effective and timely to provide for new development. This will support the vision of the Area Plan to provide housing diversity within the locality including entry-level housing and opportunities for residents to downsize or 'age in place' and remain within their community.

Contact

If you would like to discuss the Planning Commission's preparation of the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan or next steps, please contact NT Planning Commission Secretariat on 08 8924 7540 or email ntpc@nt.gov.au