

# Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Project

## Report 3 of 3: Strategy Report

### Summary



**Buchan Consulting**

**June 2011**

This project is supported by:



Trade & Investment  
Office of Environment & Heritage  
Department of Premier & Cabinet



## 1. Upper Hunter Region

This report provides a summary of the detailed Strategy Report for the Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Project.<sup>1</sup> The Strategy Report is the final report of the project, which was commissioned by the New South Wales Government and the six Councils in the Upper Hunter Region in 2010. The focus of the project was on examining the future of the region and the emerging business and employment opportunities over the next 20 -25 years.

### 1.1 Regional Economy

There are differences in the local government areas (LGAs) that make up the Upper Hunter Region (population size, industry mix and current trends) and the medium and longer term economic development challenges that the areas face, in developing sustainable local economies.

The growth in mining activity and this has driven jobs growth in mining operations and support services (in Singleton and Muswellbrook). Skill shortages and competition for employees with the mining sector have impacted on a range of industries in the region. There are also issues in terms of competing land use and future access to water. Agricultural activity has been impacted by continued consolidation and price/cost squeezes.

Those areas experiencing population growth (Great Lakes, Singleton and Muswellbrook) have seen increases in activity and jobs in population-related services (eg. retail, health, education, and other services). Areas with smaller populations have experienced limited employment growth (eg. Dungog had a major decline in local jobs).

### Current Economic Trends



The following are the specialisations in each of the areas. A few sectors are the major economic drivers and this includes the mining areas of Singleton and Muswellbrook; the equine and agricultural region of Upper Hunter LGA; the agricultural regions of Dungog and Gloucester; and the population and tourism driven region of Great Lakes.

<sup>1</sup> Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Project, Report 3: Strategy Report June 2011 Buchan Consulting.

The industry specialisation in each area tends to be narrow, which creates vulnerabilities with cyclical and structural changes in these sectors. In the case of the mining regions, there are support industries that are servicing mining (that will be affected in the longer term as mining activity winds down in specific locations). Over the last decade there have been substantial changes in employment locations, particularly with the strong industry and services growth in Newcastle and in other areas of the Lower Hunter and the major expansion in mining in the Upper Hunter. While there is a need to strengthen local economies, the regional linkages between areas will become increasingly important over longer term horizons. The following are the specialisations in each of the areas.

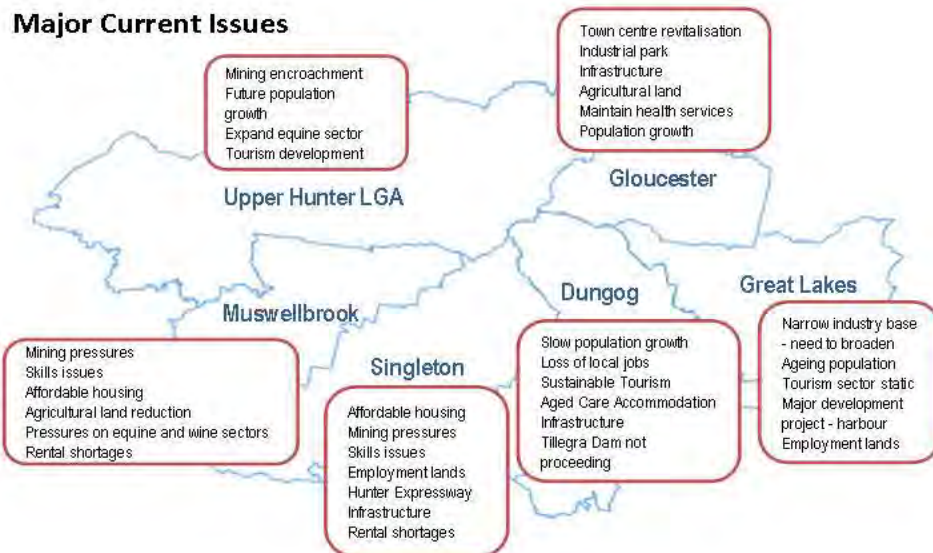
**Major Current Economic Drivers (Key Sectors) in Each Local Government Area**

	Cluster 1			Cluster 2		Cluster 3
Major Drivers Rank	Singleton	Muswellbrook	Upper Hunter	Dungog	Gloucester	Great Lakes
1	Coal Mining	Coal Mining	Equine	Agriculture-beef, dairy	Agriculture-beef, dairy	Population Services – retail/services
2	Mining Support	Power generation	Agribusiness-beef, dairy, crops, food processing	Population Services – retail/services	Population Services – retail/services	Tourism
3	Power generation	Mining Support	Population Services – retail/service	Tourism	Health & Aged Care	Health & Aged Care
4	Population Services – retail/services	Equine	Tourism	Education	Tourism	Building and construction
5	Agriculture – beef, dairy	Wine	Education		Education	Education
6	Defence	Agriculture – beef, dairy			Coal Mining	Agriculture – aquaculture, fishing, beef, timber
7	Wine	Population Services – retail/services				
8	Tourism	Tourism				
9	Education	Education				

Source: Buchan Consulting analysis based on ABS Census 2006 data (industry of employment of residents and jobs located in the LGA)

## 1.2 Regional Issues

There are a number of key issues for the future, which will shape the context for the diversification strategy.



### Industry Structure

There are major industry issues in the region.

- Structure of industry - a reliance on a narrow industry base with the major sectors linked to local resources nexus (mining and agriculture). Ongoing pressures of a dual speed economy, with the growth in mining and its impacts on other sectors and on communities.
- Competing land use and resource issues - the growth of existing key sectors (agriculture) and diversification options are dependent on maintaining critical mass in these sectors (eg. equine, wine).
- The long-term future horizon of coal mining and the levels and location of employment over the next 20-30 years. There will be a number of local jobs to replace over longer term horizons (although mobile workforces are largely covering the current rapid jobs growth). This issue is mainly focused on the populations of Singleton, Muswellbrook and to a lesser extent in Upper Hunter LGA.

### Population and Jobs

There are issues in relation to population and jobs.

- Differences in population growth, with Dungog and Gloucester experiencing limited growth. This slower growth has implications for maintaining and developing sustainable communities in these areas.
- Recognition of the link between jobs and population growth. Future growth in area populations is dependent on the availability of accessible jobs, while growing populations will increase local markets.
- An increasing integration of regional labour markets, with some Upper Hunter residents travelling to jobs in the Lower Hunter and in adjacent areas; and residents from the Lower Hunter commuting to jobs in the Upper Hunter.
- An ageing of the population and a need to develop accommodation and services for seniors.
- Based on population growth projections, the Upper Hunter Region (including Great Lakes) would require a total of 13,440 additional jobs over the 25 year period to 2036. The major requirements are in the larger population areas of Great Lakes, Singleton and Muswellbrook. Projected population growth will generate only 45% of job requirements. Meeting the full

target will require an increase in jobs that are servicing broader regional, state and national markets (including mining and mining related jobs).

### **Environment**

Environmental issues are important for the region.

- Environment issues, including: the potential impacts of climate change on regions and sub-regions (on agriculture, and tourism); any impacts of a proposed carbon tax and an ETS on the mining sector and the power generation sector; and future opportunities for carbon trading and carbon sequestration.
- Availability of water to service growing populations, regional industries and agriculture.
- Maintenance of productive land for agriculture and ensuring appropriate buffers.

### **Competitive Position**

The Upper Hunter Region has a number of advantages.

- Overall the Upper Hunter has a number of major advantages including: access to a major port, national road and rail networks, well located industrial land; a growing population; workforce skills; access to a major regional airport; a significant defence presence; access to a large regional market and proximity to the Sydney market. Improvements in regional highways are having impacts and will make the Upper Hunter Region more accessible as an industry location.
- Major constraints include: slow population growth in some areas; ageing populations; competing land use; perceptions of location and access; availability of developed industrial estates; and competition with other regions (eg. Lower Hunter, Mid North Coast, Central Coast, and Western New South Wales (eg. Dubbo, Tamworth, and Parkes)).

### **Future Development**

Future development and diversification involves a number of elements.

- Building on areas of clear competitive strengths in the region (equine industry; mining support/engineering; power generation; renewables; tourism; and agriculture and processing). A key focus is on building on advantages through a supply chain approach that captures value adding and support activities.
- Encouraging innovation - there is potential for innovation in the region including: low-emissions coal initiatives; clean energy technologies (gas and renewables); and agriculture (eg. wine, cattle, equine, intensive horticulture). Much of this involves the development of industry/university research and development linkages and partnerships.
- The increasing skill levels in most sectors and the need to deliver vocational education and training in the region, with stronger business involvement in skills development.
- Action on both regionally linked opportunities and on specific opportunities in each LGA.

### **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure development is critical for future diversification.

- Improvements in key strategic infrastructure including roads, rail, water, sewer, industrial land, town centres and broadband. A regional approach is required to planning and the funding of infrastructure.
- Development of industrial estates to provide for specialist industry requirements and for light industrial activities (servicing local and regional markets).

## **2. Diversification Strategy**

### **2.1 Strategy Elements**

The future development of the region requires the generation of sustainable jobs, which are based on building on current advantages and on creating new areas of advantage. A key issue is taking a regional approach, as there will continue to be linkages between the LGAs and between the Upper Hunter Region and the Lower Hunter Region. These interrelationships relate to: industry supply chains; regional markets for businesses; and the operation of regional labour markets. The strengthening and diversification of the Upper Hunter Region has a number of components:

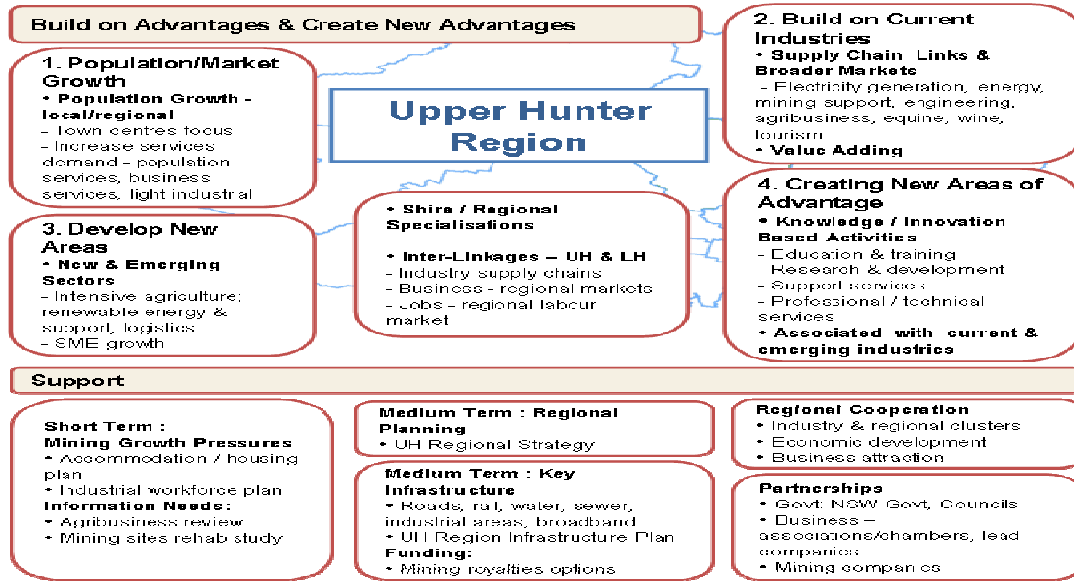
- Increasing area populations to build ongoing critical mass for service industries and to develop associated jobs.
- Building on specific industry strengths and local advantages and leveraging these as a foundation for future industry diversification and growth.
- Developing new areas of industry that are based on emerging opportunities (eg. logistics based on improved highway access; and new areas of agriculture).
- Developing knowledge intensive activities. This includes: the development of renewable energy support activities; education and training delivery; and industry research and development activities.

It is recognised that both the current situation and future prospects of the local areas differ due to their resource base, population trends, industry structure, location and accessibility. The larger areas (Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter LGA) are experiencing population growth and an increase in industry jobs. The smaller areas (Gloucester and Dungog) will need to increase their populations to maintain themselves as sustainable communities. Great Lakes as a coastal area will experience continuing population growth and will need to diversify employment by broadening its industry base.

A major feature of the strategy is taking a regional cluster and industry cluster approach, which involves recognition of the areas of specialisation in each of the LGAs. In pursuing economic diversification in the Upper Hunter, there will be a need for: funding for key infrastructure; strategic regional policy and industry policy support from the New South Wales Government; and access to Australian Government regional and industry programs.

It should be noted that Great Lakes is not traditionally seen as part of the Upper Hunter Region. While it may partner with the Upper Hunter Councils in some areas of the strategy, in other areas its linkages would be with the other coastal Councils in the Mid-North Coast.

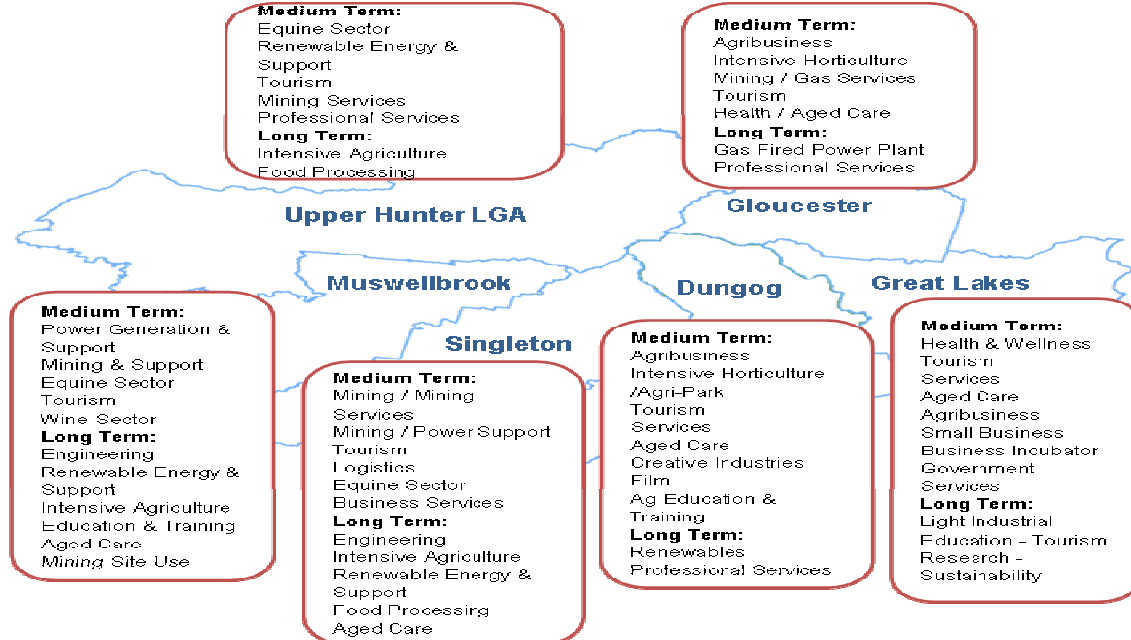
## Strategy Elements



## 2.2 Upper Hunter Region Opportunities

Opportunities for growth and diversification have been identified for each local government area.

## Future Opportunities



**Opportunities Summary – Upper Hunter Region**

Regional Cluster 1			Regional Cluster 2		Regional Cluster 3
Singleton	Muswellbrook	Upper Hunter	Dungog	Gloucester	Great Lakes
Medium Term	Medium Term	Medium Term	Medium Term	Medium Term	Medium Term
Mining support Mining services Power Generation and support Tourism Logistics hub Engineering training centre Government services Business services	Mining Mining support and services Power generation and support Equine industry growth and development. Tourism Wine industry development Professional and technical services Cultural and creative industries (visual art and music) Business services Government services	Equine industry growth and development. Tourism Renewable energy and support , education and research Services to mining industry Professional services	Agriculture revitalisation Intensive agriculture and development of an agribusiness park Agribusiness education and training (regional role) – extend Tocal College programs into Dungog Film sector – development of a residential film school, capitalising on film festival Tourism – market segment development Aged care	Agriculture revitalisation Intensive agriculture and development using Gloucester Growers Cluster Wine sector Mining and gas support – engineering services Tourism : market segment development – short breaks - adventure, nature based, agri-tourism Retail revitalisation  <Potential for regional partnering with Dungog on tourism and agriculture> Health and Aged care	Forster Tuncurry Crown Harbour Project Health services - extend and develop broader health and wellbeing focus Aged care Small business development and incubator Agriculture revitalisation – existing sectors and intensive agriculture Tourism: continue market segment development - active tourism/lifestyle, adventure sports, water based; eco-tourism and nature-based tourism. Building and construction – environmental focus Small business development and incubator Professional and technical services Government services
Long Term	Long Term	Long Term	Long Term	Long Term	Long Term
Engineering Agriculture – intensive horticulture, wine , beef Food processing Renewable energy and support Aged care	Renewable energy and support Engineering Education and training Use of mining sites Aged care	Agriculture revitalization -Intensive horticulture Food processing expansion	Renewables - part of Hunter Renewable Energy Precinct : some limited opportunities for wind and solar generation Professional and technical services	Power generation (small gas fired plant) Industrial Park Professional and technical services	Light industrial – develop businesses in industrial area Environmental services (Centre of Excellence– in sustainability - research and training) Tourism training centre

**2.3 Implementation**

The strategy has both short term/medium term requirements and longer term horizons. The short term/medium term focus is on addressing the current impacts of the mining boom on industry and on communities (the major current pressures of the mining sector boom in the region are on accommodation and on regional workforces). There is a need for a planned approach to address these issues through: development of a mining regions accommodation plan (examining demand and supply options); and developing an *Upper Hunter Regional Industry Workforce Plan* (assessing demand and supply issues over 5 year and 10 year horizons, with a focus on recruitment, retention and skills development across the mining sector and the other key industries).

The long term involves: developing long term sustainable economic development opportunities for the Upper Hunter Region, which are based on competitive advantages of the region and the local government areas; replacement of some mining jobs as industry location and activity levels change; and encouraging continued population growth to underpin the development of local service activities and jobs. This requires local action and regional action on major industry opportunities.

There are a number of development requirements and these include:

- Technical and business studies: covering intensive agriculture opportunities in the region; and the potential uses of rehabilitated mining sites.
- Regional strategy: development of an *Upper Hunter Regional Strategy*, which is equivalent to the *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy* and can provide a foundation for planning decisions.
- Infrastructure: develop an *Upper Hunter Region Infrastructure Plan*, which would set priorities for key infrastructure development across the region. This would include the development of freight related infrastructure. Three key projects have been identified and these are: Rail - Scone Rail Overpass Proposal (fast-tracking), and Singleton 'Gowrie Gates', and Roads - the construction of F3 Freeway to Branxton.
- Strategic Projects: there are a number of strategic projects identified in this report, which will shape the future of the region and these include: renewable energy projects (eg. Kyoto Park); Forster-Tuncurry Harbour development; regional extension of the agriculture diversification projects; power sector - future investment in generating capacity and technologies; and housing development projects in the region.
- Employment lands: the development of a regional delivery plan for industrial areas.
- Funding: the development of a *royalties for regions* type program to fund key infrastructure requirements in mining related regions and in adjacent areas. This could be developed on the WA model and cover community infrastructure to service larger regional populations; and funding for economic diversification projects.

A regional and industry cluster approach is required and this will deliver more effective outcomes for the region, and enable better access to industry development programs. Industry

- Clusters: this involves developing active industry clusters (involving businesses and industry organisations (chambers and specialist associations – eg equine sector, wine sector).
- Future skills: the sectors that are identified in this diversification strategy have a higher knowledge and skills component and there will be a need to develop workforce skills for these industries. This requires a *regional workforce plan* in both the short term (to deal with current skills pressures) and in the medium term to develop skills for emerging industry sectors. There is a need to further develop delivery of education and training in the region, with the establishment of several specialist centres delivering a range of TAFE programs and ACE programs.
- Partnerships: a partnership approach should be a focus of the sector development and diversification projects. These partnerships would involve: Councils, industry associations and chambers, NSW government agencies, and key businesses in each sector. Mining companies are strongly supportive of their local communities and are involved in funding a range of programs and initiatives.
- Economic Diversification Projects Fund: consideration should be given to establishing an *Economic Diversification Projects Fund*. The fund would be used to support innovative diversification projects in the region. As part of a regional partnerships approach funding could be provided by the government (through the Department of Trade and Investment - project funding); from Councils; and from contributions from mining companies.
- Upper Hunter Diversification Group: There is a need for a mechanism to drive the regional diversification strategy and to monitor progress. This would involve the formation of a task group. The group would comprise: government agencies, all Councils, and industry representatives.

## 2.4 Recommendations

	Recommendation	Partners Involved	Suggested Lead
<b>A. Short and Medium Term - Dealing with Growth Pressures</b>			
<b>The continued growth in the mining sector is generating pressures on regional housing and labour markets, there is a need for medium term plans to be developed for housing and employment.</b>			
Accommodation Plan	Recommendation 1: That an accommodation and housing review be conducted and a plan be developed for the three LGAs (Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter) affected by the expansion in mining activity.	Task Group comprising: Upper Hunter Region Councils; Mining Industry; Department of Trade and Investment; Department of Planning and Infrastructure.	Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter Councils / Department of Premier and Cabinet  Short term (12 months approx)
Regional Workforce Plan	Recommendation 2: That an Upper Hunter Region Industry Workforce Plan be developed with coverage of the mining sector and other the key industry sectors (including SMEs) in the region. The plan should cover a 5 year outlook and a 10 year outlook.	Task group comprising: Department of Education and Communities; Department of Trade and Investment; Regional Development Australia (Hunter); TAFE Institutes; and industry representatives	Department of Education and Communities / Department of Premier and Cabinet  Short term (12 months approx)
<b>B. Strategic Reviews</b>			
<b>For future diversification in the region, more detailed assessments are needed on agriculture options and on future use of rehabilitated mining sites.</b>			
Agriculture Review	Recommendation 3: That an agriculture study be conducted to provide a practical guide to diversification options in the agriculture sector in the Upper Hunter.	Task group comprising: Department; Department of Trade and Investment; Office of Environment and Heritage; Office of Water; Upper Hunter Region Councils; and agriculture sector representatives.	Department of Primary Industries / Department of Premier and Cabinet  Medium term (2 years approx)
Future use of Mining Sites	Recommendation 4: That a technical and business review be undertaken of future uses of rehabilitated mining sites in the Upper Hunter Region.	Department of Trade and Investment ; Office of Environment and Heritage; Upper Hunter Region Councils; Office of Water; Hunter Development Corporation; Minerals & Energy; and mining sector representatives.	Department of Primary Industries / Department of Premier and Cabinet  Medium term (2 years approx)
<b>C. Regional Planning and Infrastructure</b>			
<b>The Upper Hunter Region does not have a comprehensive regional strategy equivalent to the Lower Hunter Strategy, to guide infrastructure and planning decisions. As well as an overarching strategy, linked plans are required for improvements in and for the funding of key infrastructure at a regional level and at a local level.</b>			
Regional Planning	Recommendation 5: That an Upper Hunter Regional Strategy be prepared. This strategy would provide a framework for regional development and set priorities.	Department of Planning and Infrastructure; Hunter Development Corporation; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Upper Hunter Region Councils; Department of Transport; Office of Environment and Heritage; Department of Trade and Investment; Department of Primary Industries; Regional Development Australia (Hunter).	Department of Planning and Infrastructure  Short term (12 months approx)

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Upper Hunter Region Infrastructure Plan	Recommendation 6: That an Upper Hunter Region Infrastructure Plan be developed and set priorities for infrastructure development in the region.	Department of Planning and Infrastructure; Hunter Development Corporation; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Department of Transport; Office of Environment and Heritage; Department of Trade and Investment ; Department of Primary Industries; Regional Development Australia ( Hunter) Hunter Development Corporation; Upper Hunter Region Councils.	Department of Premier and Cabinet / Hunter Councils Inc.  Short term (12 months approx)
Freight Infrastructure	Recommendation 7: That the regional freight infrastructure projects (connecting the Upper Hunter to Newcastle Port) be identified as priority infrastructure and a delivery timetable be developed. This process should be linked to the NSW Freight Working Group's activities.	Hunter Development Corporation; Department of Planning and Infrastructure; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Department of Transport; Office of Environment and Heritage; Regional Development Australia (Hunter); Upper Hunter Region Councils; Hunter Councils Inc; Newcastle Port Corporation, Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator (as required)	Department of Premier and Cabinet  Short term (12 months approx)
National Broadband Network	Recommendation 8: That the Hunter Region be designated as a priority region for the NBN rollout.	Regional Development Australia (Hunter) with support of: Upper Hunter Region Councils; Hunter Councils Inc.; Department of Trade and Investment; Office of Education; and regional business organisations.	Regional Development Australia (Hunter)  Short term (12 months approx)
National Broadband Network	Recommendation 9: That the development of a regional workforce for the roll out continue to be priority project in the Hunter Region.	Regional Development Australia (Hunter) with support of Upper Hunter Region Councils; Hunter Councils Inc.; Department of Trade and Investment; Office of Education; Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations; and training providers.	Regional Development Australia (Hunter)  Short term (12 months approx)
Employment Lands	Recommendation 10: That an employment lands delivery plan be developed for the Upper Hunter Region, which includes priorities for infrastructure funding. This would be based on the frameworks provided by an Upper Hunter Regional Strategy and by as Regional Infrastructure Plan.	Department of Premier and Cabinet; Hunter Development Corporation; Department of Planning and Infrastructure; Department of Trade and Investment; Upper Hunter Region Councils.	Department of Premier and Cabinet  Hunter Development Corporation  Short term (12 months approx)

	Recommendation	Partners Involved	Suggested Lead
<b>C. Regional Planning and Infrastructure</b>			
Funding Regional Infrastructure	Recommendation 11: That a <i>royalties for regions</i> program be considered for mining affected regions and for the funding of projects related to key infrastructure and regional diversification. Given the industry inter-linkages of the Upper Hunter, coverage should include the adjacent LGAs.	Association of Mining Related Councils; Minerals Council NSW; Upper Hunter Region Councils.	Hunter Councils Inc.  Short term (12 months approx)
<b>D. Diversification Implementation</b>			
<b>Diversification opportunities have been identified for each LGA in the Upper Hunter Region. Development of these will require regional cooperation between local government and industry and strategic use of government regional and industry and programs.</b>			
Local Area Implementation	Recommendation 12: That the diversification opportunities identified in this study be integrated into individual Council economic development and planning strategies.	Upper Hunter Region Councils; Department of Trade and Investment; Department of Primary Industries.	All Councils  Short term (12 months approx)
Interrelationships and Linkages	Recommendation 13: That a focus in implementing the diversification strategy be on regional cooperation on industry development and diversification opportunities; and on related infrastructure requirements.	Upper Hunter Region Councils; Hunter Councils Inc.; Department of Trade and Investment; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Department of Primary Industries.	All Councils  Short term (12 months approx)
<b>E. Industry/Regional Clusters</b>			
<b>A range of industry clusters have been identified covering: mining and energy related sectors; renewables; agriculture; wine and tourism.</b>			
Industry Clusters	Recommendation 14: That regional industry clusters (identified in this report); with active business participation, be formed to drive industry diversification and economic development projects within relevant sub-regions of the Upper Hunter Region.	Upper Hunter Region Councils; HunterNet; Local Chambers.	Department of Trade and Investment  Short term (12 months approx)
Industry Clusters	Recommendation 15: That detailed action plans be developed for each of the industry clusters.	Upper Hunter Region Councils; Hunter Councils Inc.; Local Chambers.	Department of Trade and Investment  Short term (12 months approx)
<b>F. Strategic Projects</b>			
<b>A focus needs to be on commencing those projects that will deliver results in terms of industry growth and new employment in the medium term.</b>			
Strategic Projects	Recommendation 16: That in implementing the diversification strategy, there is a focus on facilitating those key local/regional development projects that will deliver medium-term outcomes for the region.	Upper Hunter Region Councils; Hunter Councils Inc.; Hunter Development Corporation; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Department of Trade and Investment	All Councils  Short term (12 months approx)

	Recommendation	Partners Involved	Suggested Lead
<b>G. Skills Development</b>			
<b>Skills development is fundamental to future opportunities for the region and key issue is having greater local delivery of programs</b>			
Future Skills	Recommendation 17: That regional industry centres of excellence for education and training be established in the Upper Hunter in the medium term, with strong business participation in the development and delivery of skills programs. This would also include the potential to develop research centres	Upper Hunter Region Councils. Office of Education; Department of Primary Industries; Regional Development Australia (Hunter); the TAFE Institutes; Newcastle University; and industry representatives.	A Council to take the lead role in each specialisation  Short term (12 months approx)
<b>H. Partnerships</b>			
<b>Implementing the diversification strategy will require a partnership approach involving industry, government and the education sector.</b>			
Partnerships	Recommendation 18: That a partnership approach involving government (at all levels) and industry be utilised in implementing the diversification strategy.	Local Government; Hunter Development Corporation; Department of Planning and Infrastructure; Department of Trade and Investment; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Department of Transport; Office of Environment and Heritage; Department of Primary Industries; Regional Development Australia (Hunter) ; Hunter Councils Inc; TAFE and Newcastle University; industry associations/chambers and key businesses (mining and other sectors).	Department of Premier and Cabinet  Short and medium term
<b>I Diversification Projects Fund</b>			
<b>A special projects fund could be established for industry diversification projects with contributions from government and industry.</b>			
Economic Diversification Projects Fund	Recommendation 19: That an Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Projects Fund be established for regional industry diversification projects and programs.	Funding could be provided by the NSW Government (through Department of Trade and Investment project funding); from Council contributions; NSW Minerals Council; private sector funding opportunities and from contributions from mining companies.	Hunter Councils Inc., Regional Development Australia (Hunter )  Short and medium term

	Recommendation	Partners Involved	Suggested Lead
<b>J. Implementation Group</b>			
<b>A group comprising government and industry representatives is required to direct the diversification strategy and to monitor progress.</b>			
Upper Hunter Diversification Group	Recommendation 20: That an Upper Hunter Diversification Group be formed to direct delivery of the diversification strategy and its programs and to monitor progress	Upper Hunter Region Councils; Hunter Councils Inc; Department of Planning and Infrastructure; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Department of Transport; Office of Environment and Heritage; Hunter Development Corporation; Department of Primary Industries; Department of Trade and Investment; Regional Development Australia (Hunter); and industry representatives (from key sectors).	Department of Premier and Cabinet.  Short term (12 months approx)