



Lake Macquarie

5 May 2005

The Committee Manager
Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Our Ref: F2005/01005
ABN 81 065 027 868

Dear Sir/Madam

**SUBJECT: LAKE MACQUARIE CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION - INQUIRY INTO
INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION IN COASTAL GROWTH AREAS**

Please find enclosed Lake Macquarie City Council's submission to the Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas. The submission is set out in the following manner:

1. Introduction to Lake Macquarie City
2. Lake Macquarie City Council's Response to Inquiry Issues
3. Summary of Key Points

Should you require further information, please contact me on (02) 4921 0342.

Yours faithfully

Erica Southgate
Social and Community Planning Coordinator

Keep our waterways clean - only water should go down the drain.

Cover letter

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Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas

Lake Macquarie City Council Submission

1. Introduction to Lake Macquarie City

The City of Lake Macquarie with its estimated population of 190,000, is the largest City in the Lower Hunter, and the fourth most populous City in New South Wales. Flanked by beautiful beaches, mountains and the ocean, the City is strategically positioned one and half hours driving time north of central Sydney, 20 minutes from Newcastle and 40 minutes from Hunter Wine Country and the Central Coast.

From its beginnings as a natural resource base in the mid 1800s, Lake Macquarie has developed into a major hub for the small to medium business sector, dominating employment growth in the Lower Hunter over the past 15 years. The City currently accommodates in excess of 11,000 businesses, houses a workforce of 90,000 people, and provides over 70,000 jobs. With the continued focus on knowledge-based industries, the City of Lake Macquarie is well positioned to meet the challenges of the new millennium.

The City of Lake Macquarie offers:

- Quality lifestyle;
- Industrial, commercial and residential property values with sound capital growth potential;
- 750,000 customers within 45 minutes drive;
- Commutable ease (both air and road);
- Proximity to Sydney metropolitan area;
- Proactive planning controls allowing up to three employees in a home business;
- A sound infrastructure of roads, rail, air, electricity, gas, water and sewerage;
- Accessible global technology;
- Wide range of business and community support services;
- Extensive small business assistance infrastructure including the Lake Macquarie Small Business Incubator;
- Cost benefits in terms of access to Australia's major markets;
- Further education opportunities for employees including a University, private University College, several campus of the Hunter Institute of Technology as well as private business schools;
- Commercial and industrial Council rates lower than surrounding Councils; and
- A variety of lifestyle opportunities.

An important development for the future of employment and work in our City is the growth of self-employment and home based business. Lake Macquarie is well suited geographically to capitalise on this growth with major employment centres spread around the area, but distant enough to enable people to enjoy the lifestyle advantages. The City is well located between Sydney and Newcastle offering relatively easy access to both.

Recent economic research indicates:

- The sector employs 14,558 full-time, part-time and casual workers representing 15.4% of the City's working population;

Lake Macquarie City Council Submission – Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas, May 2005.

- Lake Macquarie's key employment is in retail and wholesale services, manufacturing, and health and community services. The City employment structure is dominated by small to medium businesses with 90% employing 10 or fewer employees;
- There are approximately 6,875 home based businesses within the City with an estimated total turnover in excess of \$1.3 billion;
- Between 1997 and 2002 retail space in the City's nine major commercial centres grew by 26% to over 200,000sqm, while bulky goods retail space increased by 150% to 87,000 square metres in five centres;
- Employment in retail has expanded by 22% in this period. Bulky goods areas employ over 1000 people;
- Over 7000 people or 12% of the workforce are employed in manufacturing, many in smart technology driven operations; and
- Although not self sufficient in providing jobs for its resident population, Lake Macquarie has been a major net provider of new jobs as employment opportunities in our regional capital, Newcastle, diminish.

Social research indicates:

- Lake Macquarie has a slightly older population than the State average;
- The area is experiencing a "premature ageing" of its population.
- The residents of the area have slightly higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, including lower incomes, lower levels of postgraduate educational attainment and higher levels of unemployment; and
- Lake Macquarie has relative ethnic and cultural homogeneity compared to other metropolitan areas in NSW.

Beginning in 1997, Council embarked on the *Lifestyle 2020 Project*. This project established the strategies necessary to manage the population and employment growth expected to occur in the City up to the year 2020, and ensure that future development within the City is sensitive to the physical, social, and economic environment as well as to local and regional issues and conditions. Outputs from the *Lifestyle 2020 Project* include:

- Lake Macquarie Lifestyle 2020 Strategy, a strategic plan that established future strategic directions to manage growth and change in the City;
- Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2004, a new comprehensive planning instrument for the City that reflects the strategic directions established under Lifestyle 2020 Strategy ;
- Lake Macquarie Development Control Plan Nos 1 – Principles of Development, and DCP No 2 – Complying Development; and
- A comprehensive Corporate Implementation Plan is under preparation that will act as a guide to Council in preparing its annual and 5-year budgets, management plans and capital works programs.

Key platforms of *Lifestyle 2020* are:

- The protection and enhancement of the physical, social and environmental setting of the City;
- A balance achieved between population and employment growth, community, commercial and investor aspirations, and environmental management, that ensures more efficient use

Lake Macquarie City Council Submission – Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas, May 2005.

- of existing land and infrastructure;
- A well-designed, liveable City, including recognising and reinforcing the character and attributes that provide opportunities for diverse urban and rural living, working and recreational opportunities;
- Maintenance and enhancement of the City's economic base and provision of opportunities for sustainable economic growth that recognises and responds to emerging trends; and
- The integration of land use and travel systems so that residents and visitors can travel safely, economically and conveniently throughout the City by a range of transport modes.

Discussion surrounding the proposed *Metropolitan Strategy* indicates that the Lower Hunter Region is expected to accommodate some of Sydney's growth over the next 30 years. The presence of substantial greenfield urban development sites in the South East and West Lakes areas is expected to be a drawcards for young families and older people seeking affordable homes in an attractive location just 2 hours north of Sydney. The presence of a rail corridor to Sydney will be attractive for commuters.

One of the most pressing issues facing Council in the medium to long term will be the ageing population. In terms of sheer numbers (numerical ageing), Lake Macquarie local government area (LGA) has the second highest number of people aged 65 and over in NSW (behind Gosford LGA). When looking at structural ageing, or a decrease in the proportion of the population that is young and an increase in the proportion that is aged, Lake Macquarie is the 53rd oldest LGA in NSW. By 2022 it will be NSW's 44th oldest. The average increase in the aged population for Lake Macquarie is 0.50 percentage annually compared to 0.33 for NSW Total, 0.28 for Sydney and 0.43 NSW Balance. Research undertaken by the Local Government and Shires Association indicates that Lake Macquarie is prematurely ageing. This typically occurs with the migration-related loss of young working age people and/or a gain of older people. Any population increase of older retirees coupled with a continued exodus of younger, work-force aged residents will have significant social and economic impacts on the City.

2. Lake Macquarie City Council's Response to Inquiry Issues

2.1 Common Infrastructure

The City of Lake Macquarie is approximately 750km², of which 110km² is Lake. The area is serviced by an extensive road system, public and private bus networks, and a rail corridor that runs the length of the West Lakes area to Newcastle CBD. Council has 1172km of sealed road of which 68% are estimated to be in good condition, with the remaining being in fair or poor condition. Of its 72 km of unsealed road, 27% are estimated to be in good condition with the remaining in fair or poor condition. There are 698 km of footpaths in the City, with approximately 44% in good condition and the rest in fair or poor condition. Finally, there are 555 km of drainage lines, with 33% being in good condition and the remainder in fair or poor condition.

The most popular mode of transport is the car. There has been a marked decline in the use of public transport in the last 20 years (7% in 1981 to 2% in 2001). Population growth is expected at the outskirts of the West Lakes and in the Wallarah area due to the availability of land and proximity to Sydney. The dispersed nature of town centres and the sheer geographic size of the City mean that the popularity of the car as a mode of transport will remain. Any increase in cars on local roads will lead to more congestion, pollution, and an increase in traffic accidents. Council is required to provide additional facilities to mitigate

safety and congestion problems. In addition, increased traffic on roads requires the installation of more pedestrian facilities. Council is also required to provide additional parking, including more accessible parking as an ageing population takes up residence in the City. Any increase in these facilities and programs due to population growth will add to the existing financial burden carried by Council. The infrastructure and service implications of an ageing population are evident in the mundane example of motor scooter use amongst the elderly. With a population increase in the aged, there will be a need for extra footpaths and kerb ramps to accommodate safe scooter use and programs to promote safety on footpaths and the road. There will also be a demand for formalised programs aimed at assisting potential scooter users to choose an appropriate vehicle.

Generally, Council is beginning to see the impact of an increase in infrastructure such as roads and parks, due in part, to developer-funded assets. This has led to increasing maintenance and capital renewal costs due to increases in the cost of labour and material. Council's ability to maintain the current condition of road infrastructure will be significantly affected by the steady growth in the asset base, ever-increasing customer expectations, and diminishing resources (in real terms). In relation to this latter point, the rate income generated by Council is not keeping pace with labour and material costs.

In terms of public transport, there is inadequate coverage of the private bus network operating in the West Lakes area. Even though there is a train line linking the West Lakes to Newcastle CBD, bus connections to trains are very limited. This limited connectivity coupled with a lack of timetable coordination adversely affects public transport users with special needs, such as older people, youth, and families with young children. For example, there are only two disability accessible train stations in the West Lakes area - Fassifern and Morisset railway stations. A lack of accessible train stations makes it difficult for older people, those with a disability, and parents with prams, to access health and social services and employment opportunities, many of which are located in Newcastle CBD or Wyong. Compounding this problem is an extremely limited community transport system in Lake Macquarie.

Mercy Community Services operate the only community transport available in Lake Macquarie. This is funded by Home and Community Care (HACC), and gives priority to frail aged people and those in danger of being institutionalised due to a disability. Currently, community transport is at capacity. Any growth in an aged population in the LGA would require a substantial increase in community transport infrastructure, major upgrades of railway stations to enhance disability access, and an overhaul of bus timetables and routes. Integration of transport systems is required. Of high priority for the City is the construction of an Integrated Transport Centre at Glendale and an adequate bus interchange at Charlestown. Both these are major commercial/retail hubs which attract large numbers of shoppers by public transport, the majority of which are older people and youth. From an economic perspective, these hubs also provide employment opportunities for young people, so ease of access is vital.

Housing and centres strategies within Council's *Lifestyle 2020 Strategy* and *Lake Macquarie LEP 2004* encourage growth in existing areas to maximise use of existing infrastructure. As a strategy for addressing infrastructure planning, Council disseminates urban growth data to the Hunter Water Corporation, Energy Australia and other infrastructure providers, and

Lake Macquarie City Council Submission – Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas, May 2005.

participates in on-going liaison ensure implementation of its urban strategy is in keeping with infrastructure capacity and provision.

2.2 Social and Community Services

Council provides over 700 community and sporting facilities in the City ranging from small assets such as picnic shelters to large multi-purpose community Centres. The types of facilities Council provides are community and youth centres, multipurpose and neighbourhood centres, senior citizen centres, libraries, childcare centres, and a range of indoor and recreation facilities such as sporting fields, swimming pools, skate parks, playgrounds, walking paths, jetties, and boat ramps. The age characteristics (typically more than 20 years old) of the infrastructure, and the environment in which they operate, combine to pose an increasing demand for maintenance and capital renewal that will continue to escalate into the future.

The bulk of Council's inventory of some 700 community and sporting facilities, do not comply with current standards. Typically, many older facilities are deficient in access for people with disabilities, and this leaves Council open to the possibility of legal action under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Most older facilities also fail to comply with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Any increase in older people retiring to the area will exacerbate current service provision and infrastructure issues associated with the existing ageing population of Lake Macquarie, and place significant strain on Council's resources. For example, many parts of the City do not have footpaths or kerb ramps. Often existing footpaths or kerb ramps do not meet standards for disability access. In addition, there will be an increasing need to modify sporting, recreation and entertainment facilities, and modify household waste collection due to frailty and mobility issues. Furthermore, such a population creates a need for qualitatively different library and cultural facilities (collections, technologies, programs). There will be a need to increase accessible active recreation space that promotes active ageing, and quality passive recreation space that creatively deals with potential conflicts between users (for example, young people and older people).

An issue of increasing importance is the supply of affordable aged housing and the provision of different models of aged housing. The vast majority of older people reside in their own homes, with only 8% over the age of 70 years living in residential aged care. The most common assistance required by those living at home relates to property maintenance, transport, and housework. Planning that ensures older people shift to conventional housing within their existing communities is vital, in order to address the issue of social isolation amongst the elderly and continued access to general practitioners and social service providers. This requires a neighbourhood lifespan approach to planning, and funding common and community infrastructure and services. Part of this is the promotion of sufficient adaptable (AS4299), accessible (AS1428), safe (minimise slips and falls), and sustainable housing stock. Currently, Council is dealing with a number of development applications for large residential aged villages on the outskirts of the City. These villages would create a rapid growth in the aged population for areas in which HACC, health and other social services are unavailable. HACC services are at capacity in Lake Macquarie and general practitioners have generally closed their books to new patients. A significant boost in health-related and home care services is required to accommodate any growth in older aged population.

Of particular concern in Lake Macquarie, is the proportion of older people living in mobile home parks. Often these mobile home parks are marketed as “Over 55s Villages” and there is no doubt they are an attractive and affordable option for older people on low or fixed incomes. Of the almost 2,000 residents of mobile home parks in the City, 40% are aged over 65, with another 21% aged between 55-64 years. With an influx of retirees, this is likely to grow. Generally, mobile home villages have limited infrastructure suitable for the needs of older residents. For example, many do not provide on-site community meeting rooms and do not meet disability access standards. A primary issue is that Council is unable to condition mobile home villages to the same standard of those covered under the SEPP Seniors Living policy.

Perhaps the most pressing issue facing residents of the City, is access to health care. Recent research published in *Australian Doctor* indicates that Lake Macquarie is ranked 6th worse for general practitioner shortages in urban NSW and 37th in urban Australia. The Hunter Urban Division of General Practitioners also reports a decline in bulk billing in the City over the past 5 years. Residents of Lake Macquarie access Belmont, John Hunter and Wyong Hospitals for emergency, inpatient and outpatient services. Travel time to hospital for residents of the far West Lakes (Rathmines, Wangi, Morisset, and Cooranbong) can take between 30-60 minutes by car, depending on whether the destination is Wyong or John Hunter hospital. This relative isolation is particularly concerning in an emergency. While Hunter New England Health Service offer a range of outpatient and allied health services at the Toronto Polyclinic and a limited baby health at Morisset (both in the West Lakes area), any large population influx would require the provision of an emergency department services in the West Lakes area. A number of specialised health services, available at the Toronto Polyclinic, such as speech pathology, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy, already have long waiting lists that will be exacerbated by population growth. Finally, a trip to John Hunter Hospital without the use of a car, can often take up to two hours with three connections required. This can be very stressful for older people, parents with young children, and those with a disability. A substantial increase in resources for health-related community transport is required if the relatively centralised provision of health services in the lower Hunter is maintained.

Mental health services, including support and outreach services, are sorely lacking in Lake Macquarie. This is a pressing issue given that a large numbers of people with mental health issues have continued to reside in the Morisset area after the closure Morisset Hospital and associated boarding houses. The provision of adequate mental health services will be vital if current and expected needs are to be addressed.

On a related issue, Lake Macquarie does not have adequate family support programs despite pockets of extreme disadvantage within its boundaries. There are few services addressing domestic violence, problem gambling, financial stress, drug and alcohol problems, and parenting skills. For example, there are only two family support program in Lake Macquarie, each with four FTE workers. These cater for over 50,000 families with dependent children or students. Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services are scarce in the LGA. Despite the populous nature of the City, there are only two women and children’s refuges, one youth crisis refuge and two medium term youth refuges with recurrent funding. Population increase demand better resourcing for SAAP services.

Lake Macquarie has a TAFE at Belmont (east side of the Lake) and one at Glendale (north end of the Lake). There is no TAFE in the West Lakes area, even though this is the area in which population growth is projected to take place. Access to the University of Newcastle from Lake Macquarie can be difficult. For example, it can take up to two hours and three transport connections to get to the University from some parts of the City. While school infrastructure is generally considered adequate, some new schools will be required in the West Lakes area to accommodate young families. A current concern however is access to alternative education for children and young people at risk of leaving school early. Currently, some Lake Macquarie students are required to travel up to an hour and a half into Newcastle CBD to access alternative education.

The issue of the under-resourcing of social services is of general concern to Council. Council provides a range of halls, neighbourhood centres, and multipurpose centres, available for social services to operate from, at a subsidised cost. However, many existing services cannot operate a sufficient number of programs due to lack of funding. For example, when Council opens Swansea Multipurpose Centre in March 2006, East Lakes Youth Centre will only be able to provide a service at this location for one day a week. Another example of this will be the provision of a community centre at Cameron Park, to be significantly funded from Section 94 contributions. At present, there are no youth or out-of-school-hours services funded to operate in that area, despite the present and future need. General under-funding of social services is evidenced in their inability to afford office space. The grants received by many services are not adequate to cover commercial office rates, and Council is often called on to assist with providing affordable office space in their facilities. This creates difficulties in determining priorities assisting services. For example, while office space is required, so too are purpose-built facilities for respite services (the need for respite service will grow with an ageing "sea-change" population). Resolving this conflict will only be possible if the State and Commonwealth provide realistic funding for social services generally, including funding for the commercial rental of office and operational space.

Council's recreation facilities are currently geared towards active recreation areas such as sporting ovals and skateboard parks. With the expected influx of an aging population, Council will need to provide a more balanced mix of active and passive recreation facilities. Accessible walking paths in parks, bush land and foreshore areas will need to be provided to encourage healthy ageing. At present, playgrounds throughout the City are designed mainly for primary school aged children. With young families moving to the area, there will be a need to provide playground equipment and a variance of play surfaces suitable for the very young (0-5 yrs). Population increases will generate a demand for additional swimming centres in the West and North Lakes areas. Currently, two public swimming pools, one of which is unheated, serve these areas. The provision of heated swimming pools is important for an ageing population to maintain their regular exercise programs, for those requiring rehabilitation, and for pregnant women. These swimming pools provide year round recreation and fitness maintenance for a growing community.

In terms of library facilities, while a regional library is planned at Glendale in north Lake Macquarie, the dispersed nature of the population and geographic size of the City means that small branch libraries are still required. In particular, an extension of mobile library services will be needed to accommodate population growth in the West Lakes area. At present mobile library services are fully extended.

Lake Macquarie City Council Submission – Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas, May 2005.

Statistics supplied by Lake Macquarie Area Command indicate that the area has a police to population ratio of 1:1050. This is one of the lowest ratios in the State, where the average is 1:900. Anecdotally, there are reports of slow police response times, particularly in the far West Lakes area. This can be attributed to the large geographic size of Lake Macquarie, its dispersed settlement pattern and the relative lack of police. Any population increase would need to be accompanied by a concomitant increase in police numbers.

Finally, from a social perspective, rapid growth in established communities requires careful management and planning. Rapid changes in the social fabric of a community can generate divisions between new neighbours, an increase in conflict over community facilities and open space, racial tension, and a deep sense of loss. These effects are particularly apparent with the gentrification of older suburbs and the rapid growth or transformation of areas into “commuter” or “dormitory” communities. In order to avert negative social consequences, Council will require resources for programs and strategies designed to promote social capital in communities undergoing change as a result of population influx.

From a planning perspective, Council is responding to some of the issues through its Social Plan and adjunct community plans, Section 94 Plans, and by developing a Citywide Strategy on Ageing. Many of the issues raised however, fall outside of Council’s responsibility, and relate to the inadequate funding of community and health services by the State and Commonwealth, and inadequate public and community transport infrastructure.

2.3 Economic

With the decentralisation of employment in the Lower Hunter, Lake Macquarie has provided a greater proportion of new jobs within the region over the past 15 years. Because of its central location, brown field and redevelopment opportunities, road accessibility to the region, access to the F3 Freeway and adjacent to the Great Northern Railway, Glendale/Cardiff will continue to grow. Market forces will see this area become the dominant employment zone in the Hunter Region. If Glendale/Cardiff were recognised as a regional centre, the Lake Macquarie (Glendale) Integrated Transport Centre would be a project that would build on the inherent strengths of the area to generate sustainable business investment and jobs growth.

Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges the need to ensure that a range of network of employment centres is acknowledge and supported. There is concern about that new “commuter suburbs” will arise on the outskirts of the City. Commuter suburbs have economic and social impacts including diminishing or destroying existing community cohesion and social capital and a “flight of money” with commuters spending primarily in the area they work in, rather than locally. It is also reasonable to assume that a fair proportion of older people moving to the area will be on fixed or limited incomes. Some will be asset rich but cash poor. The influx of such retirees will compound the estimated rise in rates subsidies associated with the existing local ageing population. The impacts will be reductions to Council’s rate revenue due to increased demand for pensioner rate rebates, pensioner charges supplements, or rate deferrals. At the same time demand for (and therefore overall cost of) age-friendly facilities will rise for the City.

2.4 Environmental

Council and the local community are concerned about a number of environmental issues, including protecting and maintaining natural areas (especially endangered ecological communities) and maintaining adequate setbacks for coastal development. Also of concern is the issue of coastal erosion; managing recreational use of the coast; and the adverse impacts caused by construction of new road infrastructure (for example, East Charlestown bypass) and upgrading of existing infrastructure including roads, pipelines and powerlines.

Lake Macquarie's plans for balanced growth within natural resources constraints through its *Lifestyle 2020 Strategy*. The Strategy identifies key resources such as coal mines, power station sites, and priority conservation lands. The *Lake Macquarie LEP 2004* reinforces a balanced approach to natural resource management by providing :

- Adequate land in the residential and urban investigation zones in LEP 2004 to provide for 16,500 standard residential lots. These could accommodate about 26,000 – 30,000 housing units, depending on mix of standard housing/medium density housing. These lands are either greenfield, infill, or expansion of existing urban areas such as Morisset, Cooranbong, and Northlakes/Cameron Park;
- LEP 2004 provides for up[to 10,000 dwelling units provided I urban renewal sites (Residential 2(2) and Commercial 3 (1)/3(2) zones) within or adjacent to existing commercial centres;
- Current city-wide housing mix is about 80% standard housing/20% medium density housing. This is expected to change to about 70% standard housing/30% medium density housing by 2020; and
- DCP No.1 applies BASIX, Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) and other Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles to all developments.

Council has also adopted a coastline management plan, which identifies coastal erosion zones and setback requirements, management actions, and other priorities for all City's coastline. Further projects have been implemented to assist the community in the development of a system of coastal wetland parks and catchment management activities through the Office of the Lake and Catchment Co-ordinator. Landcare activities that undertake coastal rehabilitation works are also assisted by Council.

Areas of habitat value, wildlife corridors, and other areas with conservation values are maintained through the LEP 2004 conservation and environmental zoning framework. These areas are subject to limited development opportunities, predominantly single dwelling house entitlements, and are part of a strategy to maintain and enhance the scenic and landscape values to the City. The conservation provisions in the LEP are underpinned by a Green Systems strategy within the Lifestyle 2020 Strategy.

3. Summary of Key Points

1. **Pressures of an ageing population:** Lake Macquarie already has a higher than average proportion of older people. A population increase due to older people relocating to the area would exacerbate impacts relating to common infrastructure (roads and footpaths) and social and health service provision and transport. It is

Lake Macquarie City Council Submission – Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas, May 2005.

expected that a reasonable proportion of older people retiring to the area would be asset rich but cash poor, resulting in reduced rate revenue for Council due to increased demand for pensioner rate rebate, pensioner rate and charges supplements or rate deferrals. There are also a need to develop models of affordable housing for older people that allow them to remain in their local communities close to their support networks and general practitioners. Further, a primary issue is Council's inability to condition mobile home villages, which are often marketed as a retirement options, to the same standard of those covered under the SEPP Seniors Living policy.

3. **Funding and coordination of transport infrastructure:** Council's ability to maintain the current condition of road infrastructure is significantly affected by the steady growth in the asset base, ever-increasing customer expectations, and diminishing resources (in real terms). In relation to this latter point, the rate income generated by Council is not keeping pace with labour and material costs. Residents without access to a car for transportation are in many cases severely disadvantaged. Long travel times due to a lack of coordination between public and private transport providers and timetabling difficulties mean that in some cases, several hours are required for public transport users to travel to the John Hunter Hospital, or large commercial/retail for shopping or work. Access to community transport is currently based on HACC criteria and excludes many disadvantaged groups who require it to access health, educational and social services. The State should strategically consider the role of community transport in servicing special need groups. Support for the Lake Macquarie (Glendale) Integrated Transport Centre is required, as well as a substantial upgrade of the bus interchange at Charlestown.
4. **Health and community infrastructure and services:** Any population increase will require a substantial increased funding for aged, youth, and family services. This includes resources for programs, but also funds for the rental of office and operational space. With an expected population boom in the West Lake area, existing polyclinic services offered by Hunter New England Health will be insufficient. A hospital will be required to offer emergency, and in-patient and outpatient services. Current travel time for emergency and other hospital-based services from the West Lakes is unacceptable. The present shortage of general practitioners will also be exacerbated by a population increase of young families and older people. Local recruitment of student doctors, re-training of overseas-qualified doctors and relocation incentives will be required to alleviate this.