

‘Hunter City’ gets the chop in new regional plan

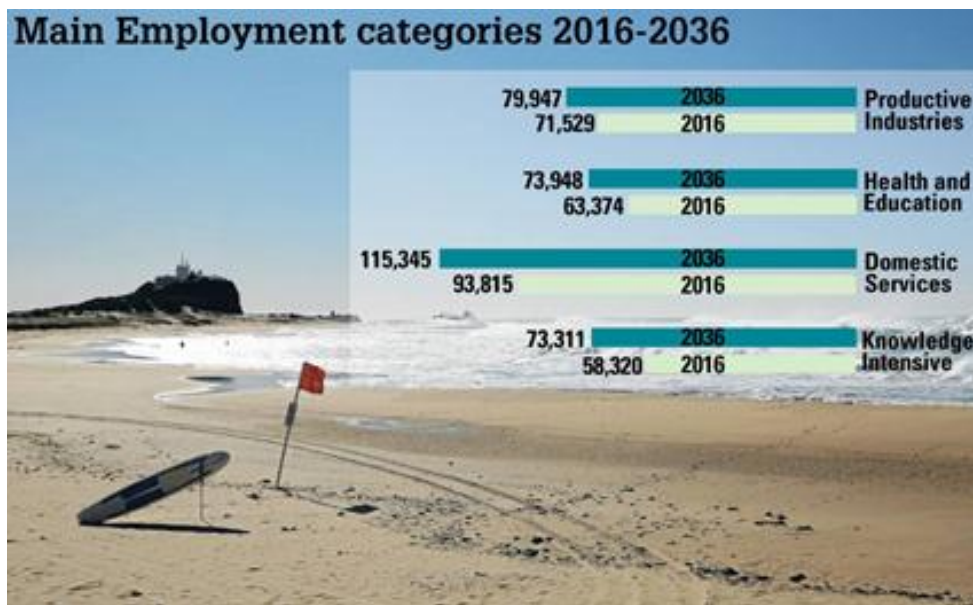
HUNTER City is gone. Greater Newcastle has been born.

The new Hunter Regional Plan, to be released by Planning Minister Rob Stokes on Friday, wipes all mention of the controversial tag given to the region when the draft document was released last year.

Instead, the government says it will turn its attention to “Greater Newcastle”, a continuous urban area crossing local government boundaries that stretches from Newcastle Harbour in the east, Cessnock in the west, Maitland and Raymond Terrace in the north and Morisset in the south.

The document lays out what the government calls the shift the Hunter from a “regional centre” to a “metropolitan city”.

“The plan aims to create a strong diversified economy with a vibrant metropolitan city at its heart that takes advantage of the region’s global gateways, the Newcastle Airport and the Port of Newcastle,” Mr Stokes said.



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As well as outlining plans to focus on increasing residential density, the document reveals where the government wants people to live.

Potential growth areas like the “Maitland Corridor” and corridors centred on Cooranbong, Morisset and Wye are all identified as are development areas like Kings Hill in Port Stephens.

The current population of the Hunter is 732,400, and the government estimates the region will need to accommodate for 130,000 more people living in 70,000 more homes in the next two decades. The plan is to make sure the majority of those people around 19 “strategic centres”, including existing towns like Maitland, Cessnock and the Newcastle City Centre, and “emerging” population centres like Broadmeadow and Glendale.

Employment was projected to rise in manufacturing, agribusiness, health, education and research.

“The Hunter region is a popular place for people to call home with a diverse natural environment, and this plan is about providing new homes and jobs and protecting the area’s landscapes,” Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter Scot MacDonald said.