

# Media Release

FOR RELEASE :: 18 AUGUST 2010

Huntlee

## Huntlee to be considered as State Significant Site



Above: The vision for Huntlee.

LWP Property Group will today lodge a State Significant Site Study with the NSW Department of Planning for its Huntlee New Town project.

If given the green light, Huntlee will be the first fully masterplanned town in the Hunter in more than 80 years. Nestled between the townships of Branxton and North Rothbury, the development represents an outstanding opportunity to showcase how leading-edge urban design and environmental planning can deliver outstanding lifestyle options for 21st Century living.

The NSW Government previously granted Huntlee State Significant Site (SSS) status and rezoned the 1740ha of land in January 2009. In September of that year, as part of an appeal against the rezoning, the NSW Land and Environment Court (LEC) ruled there was a procedural issue with the conservation offset lands proposed to support the Huntlee New Town project. As a result, the rezoning was overturned and the 2006 Environmental Offsets Agreement as it relates to Huntlee was rescinded.

The LEC decision resulted in a restructuring of ownership of the Huntlee Project. Previous significant shareholders in the company known as Huntlee Holdings Pty Ltd – being Hardie Holdings and Lehman Bros – no longer have any involvement in the ownership of the project.

A new entity, Huntlee Pty Ltd, has been formed and has two equal shareholder groups – LWP (which held a 33% share in Huntlee Holdings) and the Sydney-based Kahlbetzer family which is one of the largest owners of rural land in NSW. LWP will continue in its role as project manager.

Commenting on the restructure and the new SSS submission, LWP Managing Director, Danny Murphy, said: "While the LEC decision was undoubtedly a major setback, we appreciated it was a ruling on the process, NOT the merits of the project. While the issue of the Environmental Offsets Agreement as set out by the Government was called into question, the actual Huntlee project was not.

"With that in mind, we have taken advantage of the last 11 months to restructure – resulting in an even more robust funding arrangement – and revisit the masterplan. Taking into account positive infrastructure initiatives such as the commencement of the Hunter Expressway, we have adapted the masterplan to deliver an even more outstanding opportunity for the people of the Hunter and NSW."

In July, LWP requested Huntlee once again be considered as a SSS and the Minister for Planning invited LWP to prepare a State Significant Site Study for the project. Following assessment by the Department of Planning, the submission lodged today is expected to be placed on public exhibition in late September/early October.



Above: The vision for Huntlee.

The key parameters of the Huntlee proposal are for: up to 5,600 residential dwellings in four distinctive villages; a 200ha mixed use Town Centre catering for a range of retail, commercial, primary and secondary education uses, as well as up to 1,700 dwellings; and up to 200 rural residential lots.

Huntlee will dedicate 780ha within the boundaries for environmental lands and an additional 17ha has been set aside for the Persoonia Park, part of a comprehensive conservation program established by LWP in consultation with the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water for the propagation and protection of the endangered species *Persoonia Pauciflora*. A further 4988ha of environmental lands located elsewhere in the Hunter Region will also be dedicated as part of the planning process.

"We believe our proposal for Huntlee is sound and will bring many benefits to the region, including new, affordable homes, thousands of jobs, significant service infrastructure, growth, investment and sound environmental and ecological management," said Mr Murphy.

"The Hunter Region is the powerhouse of the NSW economy, it has the strongest and most integrated economy of any non-metropolitan area in Australia. According to the NSW Government's Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, the Lower Hunter will require at least 115,000 new dwellings by 2031. Huntlee will deliver six percent of that requirement. With more than \$1.5 billion to be spent over 20 years, Huntlee will provide a significant economic stimulus to the region."

LWP has achieved national acclaim as a developer of new towns, particularly through its involvement in the Ellenbrook project in Western Australia. Ellenbrook is the most awarded new town in Australia, receiving numerous national awards since its commencement in 1994.

"Huntlee is LWP's first project outside W.A. and we are excited by the potential for it to become a new town of State significance and a true showcase for NSW," added Mr Murphy.

"The four key elements to success which attracted us to Huntlee in the first place are all still very much evident:

1. Its scale will allow LWP to unveil our special approach to community development,
2. It is ideally located adjacent to major road and rail transport corridors,
3. The long term economic and lifestyle fundamentals of the Hunter are extremely strong and
4. It recognises and enhances the environmental attributes of the locality.

"We remain committed to working with the NSW Government and the community to deliver the best planning outcome for the Hunter Region," concluded Mr Murphy.

*Prepared on behalf of LWP by Artbeat.*

**Media enquiries should be directed to  
Sally Thompson on 0404 548 188.**



# Huntlee at a Glance

Huntlee



Above: The vision for Huntlee.

- With the new Hunter Expressway now underway, all major infrastructure items are in place to create Huntlee, the first new town in the Hunter for more than 80 years
- Huntlee has a significant role in supporting the key objectives of the State Government's Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (LHRS) 2006, which was re-endorsed by Cabinet in February 2010.
- Huntlee was identified as a major release area in the LHRS and will contribute just over 6% of the total new dwellings required under the strategy by 2031.
- The development of Huntlee will pave the way for the delivery of much needed affordable homes, jobs and services to the people of the Hunter.
- Key features of the proposal include: coordinated delivery of services and facilities which meet population growth; and a mix of housing consistent with demographic trends and affordability criteria.
- On completion, Huntlee will house approximately 20,000 people in up to 7,500 residential homes of various lot sizes. It will also boast a 200ha mixed use Town Centre for community, retail, commercial, tourism and educational uses to name a few. It is expected to generate 4,000 new jobs
- In the latest masterplan, the net developable area has been reduced by 26ha as a result of the final alignment of the Hunter Expressway and expanded rail corridor.
- In total, 5768ha of conservation land is being dedicated by Huntlee for conservation. The plan also sees a 17-hectare Persoonia Park created for the propagation and protection of the endangered species Persoonia Pauciflora.
- In addition to environment offsets, Huntlee will set a new benchmark for sustainable urban development in the Hunter.
- The Hunter Expressway will connect Huntlee directly and quickly to Newcastle and Sydney.
- Huntlee will enhance the level and quality of housing supply in the region, supporting the mining, wine, and tourism industries. Huntlee is perfectly located to bring much-needed services and infrastructure to those industries.
- Plans for Huntlee acknowledge its place in the Hunter Valley with respect to both European and Aboriginal history and cultures.
- Huntlee will be a brand new town, which will develop its own identity; its history and foundations will be built on the involvement of its new residents, as well as those in surrounding communities.
- LWP has engaged extensively with the community during the approval process to date and will continue to support the local area.