

business @ hornsby



Hornsby Shire Council

Economic Development Strategy

2007-2011



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Mayor's Message



As Mayor of Hornsby it is my great pleasure to share with you a little about our shire and the investment opportunities that exist in our region.

Hornsby Shire is the second largest local government area in the Sydney region. Located on the Upper North Shore, it takes in land from Epping to Wisemans Ferry and Brooklyn, and has a population of more than 150,000.

Hornsby Council is committed to building an even stronger future for the shire and its residents. We aim to do this by creating more employment opportunities and attracting businesses to the area.

As the northern gateway to Sydney, Hornsby is ideally placed to provide additional investment growth opportunities in the Sydney region. Conveniently located along major metropolitan transport corridors, such as the F3 freeway and the northern rail line, Hornsby offers employers excellent access to a large labour force from across Sydney and the Central Coast as well as a highly skilled local labourforce.

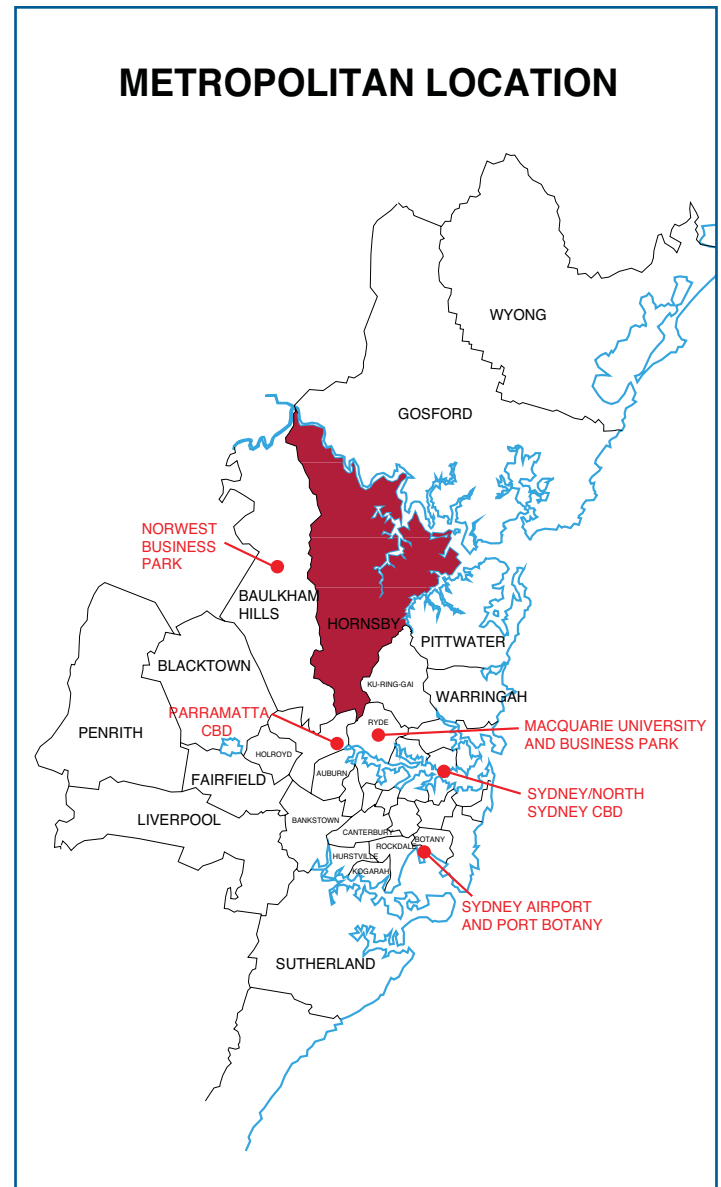
Hornsby Shire is a great place to work and live. It features diverse areas reflecting urban, rural, bushland and river settings. Hornsby Shire Council has the special responsibility to conserve the unique character of the Bushland Shire while meeting the needs of residents today and in years to come.

Regardless of the size of your business, Hornsby Council wants to make the Shire your investment opportunity of choice.

Nick Berman

Mayor

Hornsby Shire Council



Introduction

Hornsby Shire Council has decided to develop an economic development strategy to increase and strengthen business and employment opportunities in the shire. Inherent in Council's decision is a commitment to:

- (a) retain existing businesses in the shire and to work with them to ensure their long term sustainability;
- (b) attract new investment into the shire;
- (c) increase local employment opportunities;
- (d) promote and market the shire as an investment opportunity of choice in northern Sydney; and
- (e) work with other levels of government and the business community to facilitate the start-up of new investment ventures.

The Strategy is intended to position Hornsby Shire as an investment opportunity of choice by articulating, marketing and promoting those attributes that make it different from, and stronger, as an investment location in northern Sydney specifically and the metropolitan area generally.

The Strategy is also an important part of implementing the state government's metropolitan planning strategy for Sydney in that it provides a framework for building a partnership with the state government on achieving regional employment growth in the Hornsby Town Centre of about 3000 over the next 25 years.

The success of the Strategy will be founded on effective partnerships and strong relationships with local business, governmental and non governmental organisations, regional bodies (such as the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC*) and GROW, industry players and service providers.

*Comprise the Councils of Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, North Sydney, Ryde and Willoughby.



Shire Profile

Hornsby Shire at a glance

1. Business employment

Hornsby Shire is already home to over 10,000 business establishments. The businesses provide over 40,000 jobs (about 50% of which are primarily for the residents of the shire). This represents about 16% of NSROC's regional jobs and 2.2% of the jobs in the metropolitan area. About 3,000 of the shire's jobs are home based.

The local economy generates about \$7.2 billion in gross regional product, which is about 25% of the NSROC region and 3.8% of the Sydney metropolitan area.

The shire's employment is dominated by property and business services (17%), retail trade (13%), health and community services (11%), education (9%) and finance/insurance (7%).

Most of the business and employment are concentrated in the key centres of Hornsby, Pennant Hills, Thornleigh, Carlingford and Epping.

2. Retail and wholesale trade

Retail trade is distributed among the shire's 37 centres with Hornsby Town Centre (130,000 square metres and 6,000 employees) being the focal point of retail activity. The other major retail centres are Carlingford (31,000 square metres), Pennant Hills (12,000 square metres), Epping and Dural.

3. Manufacturing

The shire has some 194 hectares of land zoned for manufacturing which supports about 6,000 jobs or 20% of the total available jobs in the shire.

The major industrial precincts are located at Mt Kuring-gai, Asquith, Waitara and Thornleigh.

Opportunities for new employment areas are limited by environmental considerations. Council is therefore committed to protecting and maintaining the existing lands.





4. Property, business services, finance and insurance

The property and business services sector has been the key growth sector in the shire; growing by over 20% between 1991 and 2001. In 2001 there were over 12,000 people employed in this sector.

5. A diverse community

Hornsby Shire offers one of the most attractive environments in which to invest, live, work and enjoy recreational activities.

The shire comprises about 510 square kilometres, the majority (about 70%) of which are natural areas offering a wide range of passive and active recreational opportunities, including tourism.

The shire has an estimated population of about 150,000, making it one of the most populous local government areas in the Sydney metropolitan area. The shire is increasingly becoming a cosmopolitan area with 29% of the population born overseas. The increasing cultural diversity is a reflection of both the diversity of housing opportunities and the shire's environmental amenity.

The shire has one of the most skilled labour forces in the Sydney metropolitan area. As at 2001:

- almost 50% of the labourforce had a tertiary qualification;
- there were about 75,000 persons working or looking for work, representing a participation rate of about 65%;
- the median household income was \$66,000 per annum compared to about \$51,000 for the Sydney metropolitan area; and
- there was a large pool of professionals, managers/administrators.

The shire is also home to a wide range of health, educational and community services.

6. Recent developments

The last 10 years has seen strong residential growth in the shire, especially around the Hornsby Town Centre. This is expected to slow in the foreseeable future due to the market conditions and the absence of major new areas for development.

The major commercial development has been in the vicinity of the Hornsby Mall. The construction of the Chatswood to Epping rail link is expected to result in greater investor interest in Epping.



Challenges

The economic development of the shire in the next five years will be shaped by a wide range of international, national and local influences.

At an international level, some of the key factors will include:

- (a) continuing globalisation and mobile nature of investment;
- (b) business clustering; and
- (c) continuing trade liberalisation.

At the national level, some of the key factors will be:

- (a) taxation and monetary policy;
- (b) Sydney's primacy as the entry point for immigration; and
- (c) ageing of population and internal migration.

At a local level, some of the factors will be:

- (a) the impact of the state government's Sydney Metropolitan Strategy on the shire's competitive position;
- (b) improvements in transport infrastructure, especially the Chatswood to Epping rail link and the construction of the fifth platform at Hornsby Station;
- (c) pressures for greater environmental sustainability of businesses in areas such as waste management, recycling and building design; and
- (d) the investment readiness of the local planning controls.



An Excellent Investment Opportunity

What makes Hornsby Shire an excellent investment opportunity?

There are 10 factors which make Hornsby Shire an excellent investment opportunity and enable it to meet the challenges ahead. These are:

- an already established, dynamic, thriving and diverse local economy;
- a diversity of employment areas offering choice of location and investment opportunities;
- close proximity to the Sydney CBD, airport and port and linked by great rail and road networks;
- a wide range of housing opportunities to meet a variety of employer and employee needs;
- a highly skilled local labour force, and access to a regional workforce, to meet most employer needs;
- a high quality, attractive, comfortable and safe living environment supported by excellent community facilities and services;
- a supportive Council with an organisational culture passionate about, and committed to, attracting new, and supporting existing, businesses;
- the role of the Hornsby Town Centre as an employment node in the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy;
- excellent links to major roads and freeways and proximity to some of the state's premier technological and business parks as well as testing institutions; and
- a responsive and streamlined planning and development assessment system.



Context

Economic development in the context of Council's Management Plan

The Hornsby Shire Council Management Plan 2006-2009 is the strategic document that outlines the way ahead for the shire. Under the Plan, the Council is committed to "Creating a living environment".

One of the strategic themes of the Council's Management Plan is "Supporting a diverse economy - providing a climate that encourages and attracts sustainable economic growth and local jobs...".

Some of the initiatives outlined in the Plan are:

- (a) to develop an economic development strategy that confirms economic growth and employment generation in the shire;
- (b) to review the planning controls for the Hornsby Town Centre and the masterplans for key employment centres;
- (c) to prepare masterplans for the major district centres of Pennant Hills and Carlingford;
- (d) to undertake a feasibility study for a Main Street program for the western precinct of the Hornsby Town Centre; and
- (e) to progress options for the redevelopment of strategic council owned sites in Hornsby Town Centre.

Council's Economic Development Strategy builds on these directions outlined in the Management Plan.



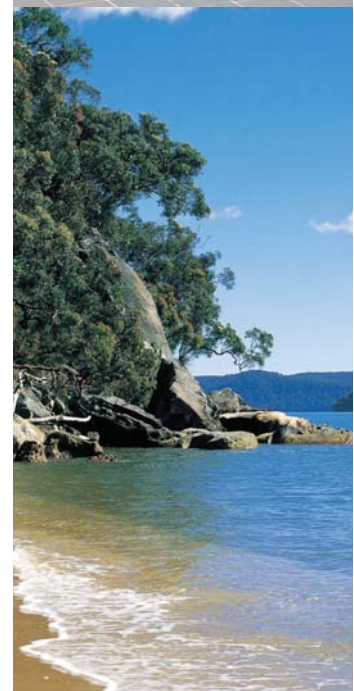
Economic Vision

The economic vision describes where the shire wants to be in 2011 and beyond characterised by the following:

- a thriving and sustainable economy with a diverse range of businesses generating increased growth and wealth for the residents of the shire;
- a wide range of retail, commercial and industrial services for residents and businesses resulting in more local jobs and a reduction in retail expenditure leaving the shire;
- increasing levels of business investment in targeted areas such as education, health services, tourism, research and innovation;
- an economy that complements and enhances the particular environmental features of the shire;
- a greater and stronger business mix building on the strengths of the property and business services and the new economies of information technology, hospitality and recreation;
- establishment and growth of innovative and environmentally sustainable businesses;
- a distinct retail trade sector focused on the Hornsby Town Centre and the district centres of Pennant Hills, Epping, Thornleigh, Carlingford and Dural;
- a growing home based sector;
- a transport network that effectively and efficiently links the shire with the other key economic activity centres such as Parramatta, Chatswood and the business/technology parks as well as the regional labourforce.

To achieve its economic vision, Council has adopted the following principles to underpin its decision making:

- Council will develop broad policies (goals) and implement them through targeted actions;
- Council will work in partnership with the community, business and other levels of government to ensure its policies and programs are sustainable and reflect the needs of its broad constituency of interest;
- the focus will be outcome oriented and seeking solutions to the challenges facing Council's economic development agenda;
- there will be a disciplined program of monitoring, review and evaluation based on an adaptive management model;
- ongoing funding will be provided for the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy; and
- Council will celebrate its economic development successes.



Strategic Actions

Hornsby Shire Council is committed to working cooperatively and in partnership with the community, business groups and other levels of government to realise its economic development vision. Over the next five years, Council proposes to focus on the following strategic actions:

- (i) information and support services to business;
- (ii) marketing and promotion of the shire;
- (iii) promoting business growth in its subregional and district centres;
- (iv) supporting the retention of existing business;
- (v) facilitating new, and expansion of existing, business investment;
- (vi) making investment ready development opportunities in the shire;
- (vii) ongoing infrastructure development;
- (viii) ongoing funding for economic development; and
- (ix) identifying opportunities for business clusters in the shire.

1. Information and support services to business

Evidence and experience suggest that the availability of information and local support services is a key ingredient in the success of business and industry. The information and support services include, *inter alia*:

- (a) an understanding of the social and economic dynamics and characteristics of the local area;
- (b) a sound awareness of the wide range of governmental policies, programs and services that impact on business;
- (c) a good knowledge of the mix and performance of existing businesses;



- (d) instant accessibility to comprehensive databases and directions on new and emerging opportunities, markets and trends in business; and
- (e) regular liaison between council and business.

Council's response to these requirements will include:

- (a) the regular updating of its community profiles and the development of a business profile (directory);
- (b) undertaking an audit of businesses operating in the shire with a view to gaining a good understanding of the range and mix of businesses;
- (c) organise regular fora to disseminate information encouraging further business investment and diversification in the shire;
- (d) develop and regularly update a dedicated website focusing on investing and doing business in the shire;
- (e) through partnerships with government agencies, provide and maintain information on key contacts, services and funding for business; and
- (f) develop advisory information to assist business with Council's planning and development processes.

2. Marketing and promotion

Both council and business need to be responsive to the changing economic environment. It is critical to address local economic development issues and to promote the ways Council is dealing with them. And in a constantly changing and competitive environment, it is vital for Council and business to market the shire's particular advantages to retain strong existing businesses and encourage their expansion as well as attract new businesses.





As part of its Economic Development Strategy, Council will:

- publish a brochure on the services offered by its Economic Development Unit as well as a regular feature in local papers on economic development issues in the shire;
- investigate the feasibility of establishing a business levy to fund the marketing and promotion of its major economic activity centres;
- participate in economic development fora locally and regionally; and
- advocate on behalf of the local business community to government.

3. Supporting existing business

By working in partnership with business, the community and other levels of government, Council is confident of delivering tangible benefits to its business community. Council is particularly committed to retaining its small and medium sized business establishments which form a significant element of the shire's economy. Experience shows that these scales of business face a number of challenges such as staff recruitment, customer service requirements, skills development and business planning.

To assist existing business, Council will:

- work with the state government to provide current information targeted at small and medium sized businesses on available services, funding and assistance;
- investigate the feasibility of developing a small business support program;
- investigate and act as a catalyst for business to business communication;
- through its website, fora and local papers, provide regular information about council and government services and programs; and
- work with the Hornsby Chamber of Commerce and other industry groups on encouraging business mentoring for small business.



4. Facilitating new investment

The shire's economy is changing and it is important to continue to attract new business. In the context of its vision of "Creating a living environment", it is desirable that new businesses are environmentally sensitive, generate (local) employment and are compatible with existing land uses and do not place an unacceptable burden on existing infrastructure. Council's key actions will include:

- arranging regular fora with key business leaders, investors, developers and property owners to highlight existing and emerging investment opportunities;
- continuously improving its streamlined development approval process as well as an investment ready planning framework;
- developing and maintaining a register of significant existing or potential development/redevelopment sites, particularly those owned by council;
- actively targeting environmentally friendly development in areas such as education, high tech and medical; and
- developing clear development guidelines for, and seek expressions of interest in, council's sites in the Hornsby Town Centre.

5. Promoting growth in targeted centres

There are seven major centres in the shire providing a wide range of retail, commercial and community facilities and services. Hornsby Town Centre serves as a subregional centre while Epping, Carlingford, Dural, Thornleigh, Cherrybrook and Pennant Hills operate as district centres. Thirty other centres provide local or neighbourhood roles. As a mature area, it is considered that the current centres meet the community's needs and there are no prospects of new centres being established.





The state government recently released its metropolitan strategy for Sydney. The strategy highlights the need for centres to continue to be the focus of major change and recommends the development of an accessible network of centres to ensure mix of services. Council will:

- support the continuing development of the existing network of centres which provide a range of retailing, commercial and community facilities and services;
- provide attractive public domain environments within the centres for business and the community;
- encourage and/or support active representative business associations, particularly in the subregional and district centres;
- prepare and/or update masterplans for the subregional and district centres;
- undertake mainstreet improvement programs in the subregional and district centres; and
- work with the state government to implement the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy.

6. Investigate business clusters

Business clusters have become an important part of the business and landuse landscape. The shire's environmental qualities and existing facilities make it an attractive location for business clusters. A key action will be to investigate the existence of, opportunities for, and the marketing and promotion of, business clusters in the shire.

Resourcing Economic Development

The Economic Development Strategy represents a timely and exciting initiative. The key to Council's successful delivery of the strategic actions and roles outlined in this plan will be its commitment to the ongoing funding and maintenance of the Economic Development Unit within its Strategy Division that coordinates, monitors and implements the Strategy. Funding will be provided to, inter alia:

- (a) employ additional staff resources;
- (b) fill the information gaps;
- (c) undertake research and develop new policies;
- (d) initiate marketing and promotional activities; and
- (e) organise and participate in fora.



Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

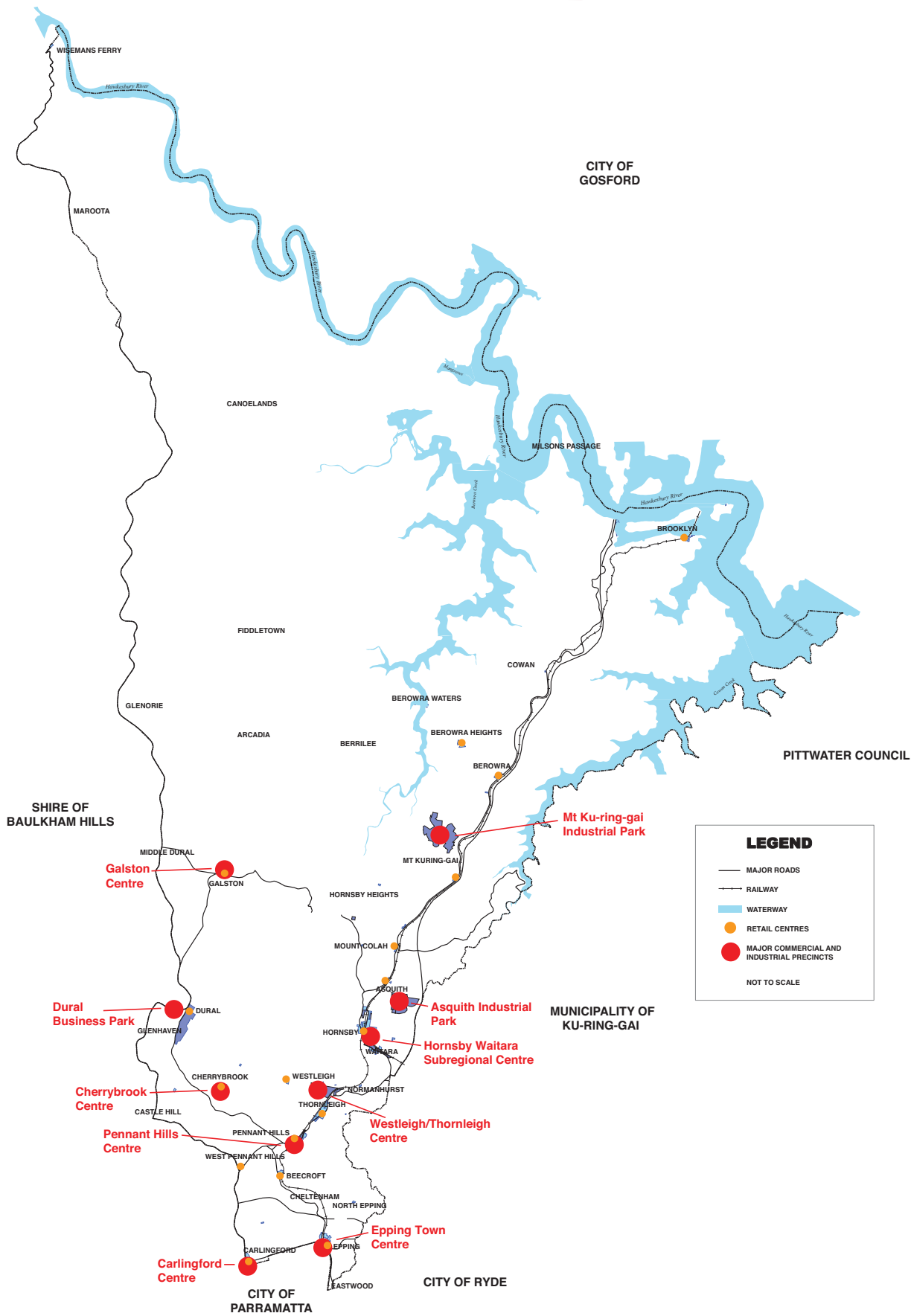
The Hornsby Shire Economic Development Strategy outlines the key strategic directions the Council will undertake over the next five years to ensure the shire's economy remains diversified and vibrant. It has also been prepared fully recognising the dynamic economic, social, political, policy and legislative environments in which the shire's economy operates. It is critical to build into the Strategy a continuous monitoring, review and evaluation regime.

The council will use an adaptive management cycle for the Strategy. This involves the following key elements:

- (a) the planning stage which determines the strategic objectives and related actions;
- (b) the action stage involving the implementation stage of the strategies and actions to achieve the objectives;
- (c) the evaluation and feedback stage which will include evaluating the effectiveness of the Strategy and reporting on the outcome of the evaluation;
- (d) annually reviewing the overall economic development program; and
- (e) adjusting actions to strengthen the Strategy's effectiveness.

This approach ensures the integration of performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting into the cycle of the Economic Development Strategy. This in turn enables Council to learn from, and improve on, past successes and failures and so continuously improve the Strategy's effectiveness.





LEGEND

- MAJOR ROADS
- RAILWAY
- WATERWAY
- RETAIL CENTRES
- MAJOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PRECINCTS

NOT TO SCALE



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