



Penrith Scenic & Cultural Landscapes Study

For Exhibition

Penrith Scenic & Cultural Landscapes Study

Prepared for Penrith City Council

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Executive Summary



The protection of scenic and cultural landscape values is important to residents of Penrith, as well as those that visit the area or work within it. Penrith City Council (Council) recognises that without adequate identification and protection, the inherent values of Penrith's scenic and cultural landscapes could be eroded or lost through development and/or mismanagement. Landscapes can be important for a number of reasons, such as scenic quality, a sense of community, connection to place and local pride. It is therefore important to identify what is important and how best to protect and manage these valued areas.

As the primary land use manager and consent authority, Council has a critical role in managing and protecting Penrith's scenic and cultural landscapes. Council can fulfil this role through the strategic planning and development assessment processes that culminate in local environmental plans (LEPs), development control plans (DCPs) and other strategic planning work.

The prime purpose of this document is to satisfy the objective identified in Council's Study Brief, that being:

> *To identify the unique and valued scenic and cultural landscapes of the City, including but not limited to the rural areas, which are in need of protection and enhancement. While this Study will inform the development of the Rural Lands and Villages Strategy, it will also inform Council's other strategic planning work such as its Local Housing Strategy and local planning instrument.*

In essence, the study is primarily concerned with achieving two main outcomes:

1. Identifying which areas and places we wish to protect and improve
2. Identifying how we will protect and improve them.

Report outline

The study focusses on delivering the most relevant information to Council officers for input into other Council planning and assessment processes.

The report is based on the following format:

- Overview of Penrith's landscapes (**Section 2.0**)
- Identification of important regional vistas and view corridors (**Section 3.0**)
- Identification of priority landscapes (**Section 4.0**)
- Strategies and implementation (**Section 5.0).**

What are Scenic and Cultural Landscapes?

The study is a strategic-level document that broadly describes landscapes across all parts of Penrith's Local Government Area (LGA) while concentrating on the most valued or 'priority' landscapes. Within the broad landscape are particular landscape types with remarkable characteristics associated with scenic qualities or cultural significance. These are referred to as 'Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes' and should be afforded a higher level of protection based on a common understanding of what makes them so unique.

Two specific landscapes have been identified as having significance of a regional or higher level:

1 - Mulgoa Valley (including Mulgoa and Wallacia)

2 – Nepean River Corridor.

Four specific landscapes have been identified as having significance of a local level:

3 - Northern Nepean River/Castlereagh Road

4 - Northern Low-hill Backdrop/ Castlereagh Road

5 - Castlereagh Junction

6 - Northern Road Regional View Corridor.

A Statement of Significance for each of these landscapes is provided in **Appendix A**. In addition, large tracts of vegetation, and major creeklines, have also been identified as having scenic and cultural significance as described further in **Section 5-0.**

Many parts of Penrith are highly visible from places people often visit, such as along major transport corridors or scenic drives, or from popular visitor destinations and elevated lookouts. Land uses and the form of development in these areas should be carefully managed to positively influence the broader scenic qualities of the LGA. Their qualities and roles should also be considered should re-development be considered.

Five particularly highly visually-sensitive areas (VSLs) (in addition to the Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes) are associated with:

- VSL1 – Orchard Hills: Views from the M4 Motorway southward across Orchard Hills
- VSL2 – Emu Plains flats: Views across the northern fringe of Emu Plains
- VSL3 – M4/Nepean River eastern interface: Views from the Nepean River crossing toward Penrith, Regentville and Jamisontown
- VSL4 - South of Glenmore Park
- VSL5 – Near intersection of The Northern Road and Park Road.

Further detail on the identification of priority landscapes is provided in **Section 4-0** and these landscapes are illustrated in **FIGURE 4-1** (reduced version overleaf).

Strategies

Four strategies represent the overarching desired study outcomes to protect and manage the landscape character, scenic quality and the public's viewing experiences of Penrith's landscapes. The strategies seek to protect valued landscapes and improve visual outcomes in existing urban, rural and transitioning areas.

- **Strategy 1** – Conserve, maintain and improve landscape characteristics
- **Strategy 2** – Protect important vistas and view corridors
- **Strategy 3** – Protect and/or manage priority landscapes (i.e. significant scenic and cultural landscapes & highly visually-sensitive landscapes)
- **Strategy 4** – Measures to improve visual outcomes across the LGA.

Information on these strategies is provided in **Section 5.0**.

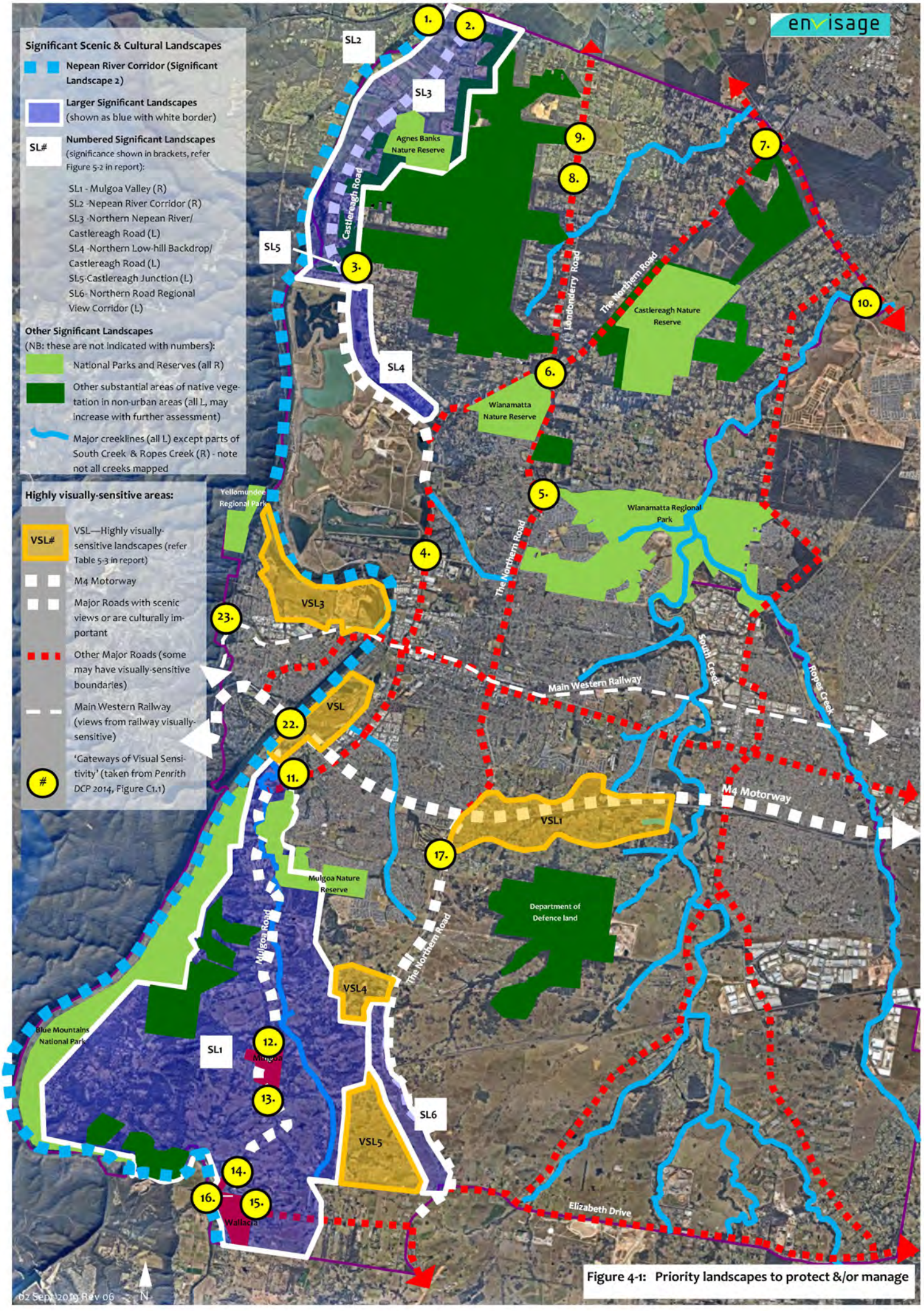


Figure 4-1: Priority landscapes to protect &/or manage

Implementation

The Penrith Scenic and Cultural Landscapes Study (PS&CLS) can be used and implemented in many ways, including:

- Through Council's strategic planning process where the PS&CLS can act as a guideline for new development or redevelopment
- At the planning proposal stage in regard to proposed new urban release areas and other major developments
- Assessment of proposed development
- Through ongoing Council and community activities to educate, promote and place value on the importance of scenic and cultural landscapes and their preservation or management.

Recommendations for implementing the study outcomes is provided in **Section 5.0**.

1. Introduction



1.1 What is the purpose of this study?

The protection of scenic and cultural landscape values is important to residents of Penrith, as well as those that visit the area or work within it. Penrith City Council (Council) recognises that without adequate identification and protection, the inherent values of Penrith's scenic and cultural landscapes could be eroded or lost through development and/or mismanagement. Landscapes can be important for a number of reasons, such as scenic quality, a sense of community, connection to place and local pride. It is therefore important to identify what is important and how best to protect and manage these valued areas.

As the primary land use manager and consent authority, Council has a critical role in managing and protecting Penrith's scenic and cultural landscapes. Council can fulfil this role through the strategic planning and development assessment processes that culminate in local environmental plans (LEPs), development control plans (DCPs) and other strategic planning work.

The prime purpose of this document is to satisfy the objective identified in Council's Study Brief, that being:

> *To identify the unique and valued scenic and cultural landscapes of the City, including but not limited to the rural areas, which are in need of protection and enhancement. While this Study will inform the development of the Rural Lands and Villages Strategy, it will also inform Council's other strategic planning work such as its Local Housing Strategy and local planning instrument.*

In essence, the study is primarily concerned with achieving two main outcomes:

1. Identifying which areas and places we wish to protect and improve
2. Identifying how we will protect and improve them.

The Penrith Scenic and Cultural Landscapes Study (PS&CLS) can be used and implemented in many ways, including:

- Through Council's strategic planning process where the PS&CLS can act as a guideline for new development or redevelopment
- At the planning proposal stage in regard to proposed new urban release areas and other major developments
- Assessment of proposed development
- Through ongoing Council and community activities to educate, promote and place value on the importance of scenic and cultural landscapes and their preservation or management.

Section 5.0 provides recommendations for implementing the outcomes of this study.

1.2 What are scenic and cultural landscapes?

The study is a strategic-level document that broadly describes landscapes across all parts of Penrith's Local Government Area (LGA) while concentrating on the most valued or 'priority' landscapes. Within the broad landscape are particular landscape types with remarkable characteristics associated with scenic qualities or cultural significance. These are referred to as 'Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes' and should be afforded a higher level of protection based on a common understanding of what makes them so unique.

Priority should also be given to landscapes that may not be 'Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes', yet nonetheless are also highly visually-sensitive to change. Those landscapes generally have a high visibility from places people often visit, such as along major transport corridors or scenic drives, or from popular visitor destinations and elevated lookouts. Land uses and the form of development in these areas should be carefully managed to positively influence the broader scenic qualities of the LGA, particularly if re-development is considered.

Further detail on the identification of priority landscapes is provided in **Section 4-0**.

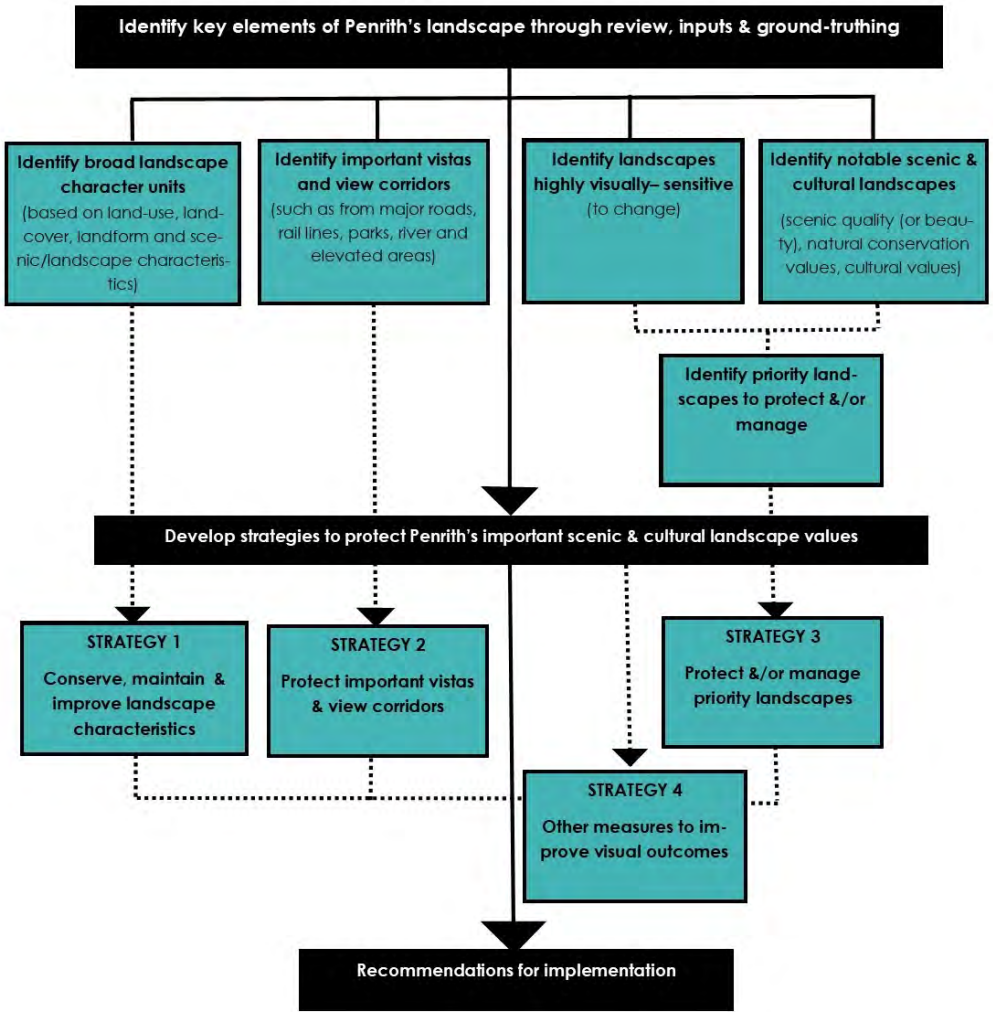
1.3 Scope and methodology

Figure 1-1 illustrates the broad methodology and primary focus on outcomes – that being the delivery of strategies to protect valued landscapes and improve visual outcomes in existing urban, rural and transitioning areas. More detailed descriptions of the methodology are provided within the relevant sections.

The report is based on the following format:

- Overview of Penrith's landscapes (**Section 2.0**)
- Identification of important regional vistas and view corridors (**Section 3.0**)
- Identification of priority landscapes (**Section 4.0**)
- Strategies and implementation (**Section 5.0).**

FIGURE 1-1: BROAD STUDY METHODOLOGY



2. Overview of Penrith's landscapes



2.1 Overview

Penrith has a diverse landscape created from three main elements – the wide Nepean River, the flat Cumberland Plain and the rugged Blue Mountains. The forested escarpment rises abruptly on the western edge, forming a strong visual backdrop that contrasts with the broad plains and undulating hills that extend east, and lapped by the Nepean along its base.

Running south to north through the eastern LGA are South and Ropes Creeks, creating valued green corridors that break-up the urban areas. A number of local ridgelines also run in a general south to north direction, descending slowly towards the north and providing opportunities for local and regional views. Panoramic vistas to the escarpment are a marked characteristic from higher parts of the city centre, Werrington/Caddens, St Marys and from surrounding major roads and rural areas.

The river flows in a south to north direction from the southern LGA near Wallacia through to its northern tip at Yarramundi Bridge. Landform changes dramatically just south of Emu Plains and the M4 Motorway, marking the boundary of the forested valley to the south and the transition to the flatter floodplain extending north.



BLUE MOUNTAINS FOOTHILLS LOOKING WEST OVER MULGOA VALLEY



REGIONAL VIEW ACROSS PENRITH LAKES TO BLUE MOUNTAINS

Penrith's landscape has long been valued for the fertile floodplains of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River, which wind from Windsor and Richmond towards Camden and Campbelltown. 'Prior to 1789, the land district around Castlereagh and the Nepean River was the territory of a number of neighbouring Aboriginal groups...The rivers and creeks were a valued natural resource to the local people, providing food, drinking water, swimming and transport. The river also provided stones important for making tools'. 'The occupation of the area by Europeans from early 1800s resulted in the serious disruption of the traditional lifestyles' (excerpt from Godden Mackay Logan, 2008 – refer further detail in **Section 4.1.2**).

Post-European settlement, the local soils became recognised as some of the richest in Sydney and led to the establishment of intensive agricultural production that is still evident. Pockets of market gardens, turf farms, poultry farms, and equine businesses remain common outside the main urban areas.

Nestled across the rural areas are a number of villages. The villages of Wallacia and Mulgoa are within the attractive Mulgoa Valley - an area widely acknowledged for its scenic and cultural values. Other rural villages are at Luddenham in the far south, and Londonderry in the north, with Castlereagh and Llandilo having smaller rural centres. The southern LGA is soon to experience substantial change through planned urban expansion associated with the new airport at Badgerys Creek. The rural area in the south-east of the LGA, which includes the village of Kemps

Creek, has been identified at a NSW State level for substantial future urban development. Such development is already occurring in pockets and will occur more widely in the future.



WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY IS PART OF AN INSTITUTIONAL/PARKLAND GREEN CORRIDOR IN CENTRAL URBAN AREA



OLDER RESIDENTIAL AREAS RINGING CITY CENTRE

The Penrith LGA comprises a central urban area, with rural and conservation uses situated to the north and south. Penrith city centre consists of a moderate-sized central business district focussed around a railway station, with a mix of established residential areas and newer higher density urban areas nearby. For the most part, the residential areas are predominantly lower density, with new urban release areas largely of detached housing. The low scale urban area of Emu Plains lies across the Nepean River from the city centre, nestled at the foot of the Blue Mountains.

Dividing the central urban area is a parkland/institutional corridor that also acts as a green break and incorporates Western Sydney University. To the far east of the LGA, separated by the South Creek corridor and its many linear parklands, is the town centre of St. Marys, supporting a bustling main street alongside a railway station. Integrated within the residential areas are smaller suburban centres such as those at St Clair, Erskine Park, Cranebrook and Werrington County. The newer residential suburb of Jordan Springs is situated to the north-east, as is the large Wianamatta Regional Park which provides a valuable green break and recreational area. The LGA also boasts part of the Blue Mountains National Park and other valued reserves, including Mulgoa Nature Reserve, Wianamatta Nature Reserve, Agnes Banks Nature Reserve and Castlereagh Nature Reserve.

Older residential areas lie south of the city centre, around the Jamisontown and Regentville areas and around Cranebrook to the north. More contemporary residential areas, including substantial medium density areas, are situated to the south around Glenmore Park.

Penrith's key landscape features are illustrated in **FIGURE 2-1**.

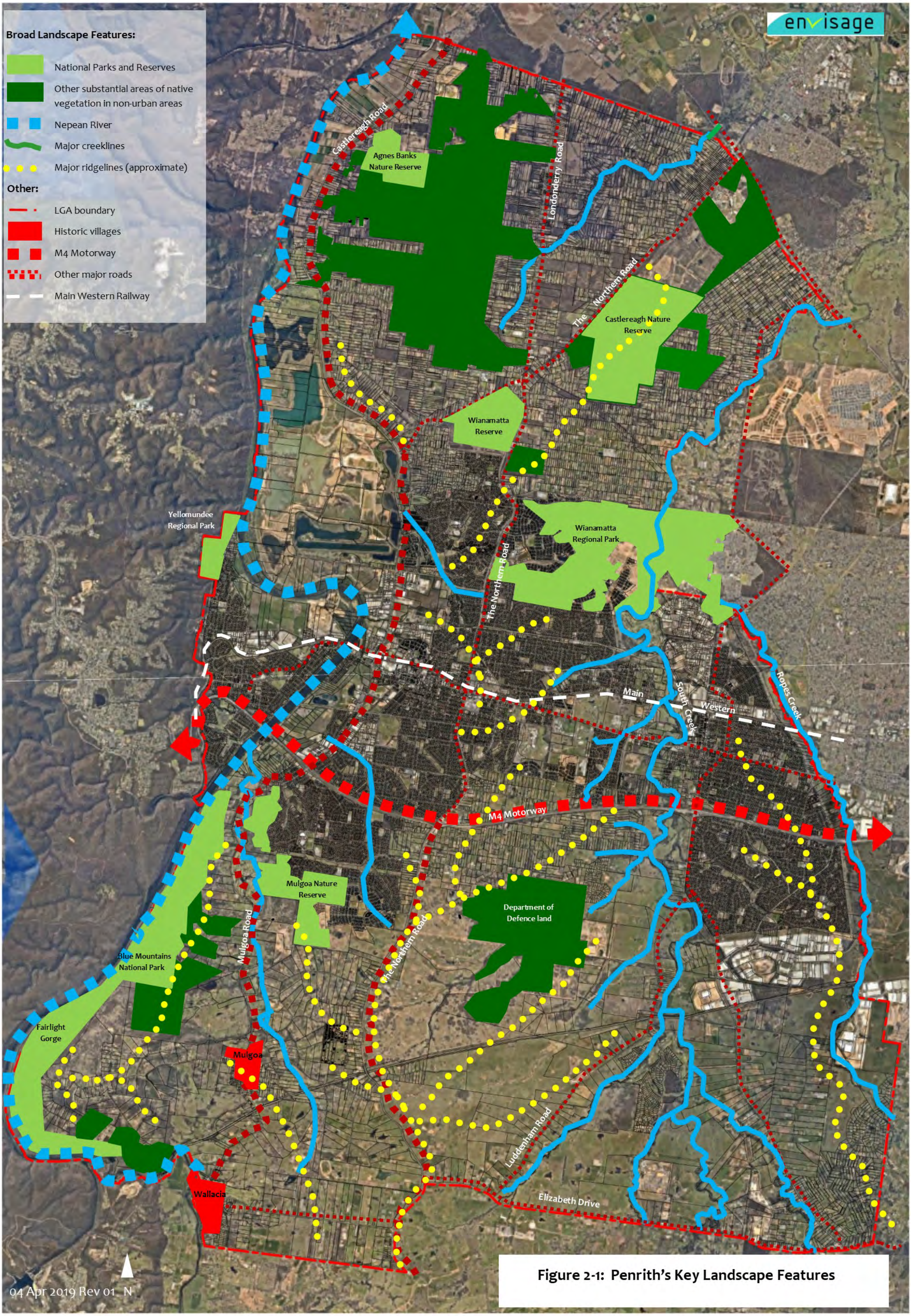


Figure 2-1: Penrith's Key Landscape Features

2.2 Penrith's unique geological conditions and vegetation communities

Penrith's unique geology, encompassing sandstone, shale, alluvial soils and dune-like sands, leads to distinct and varied vegetation communities (Benson & Howell, 1990; and Council's vegetation mapping).



HAWKESBURY SANDSTONE GEOLOGY AND VEGETATION IN SOUTH



CUMBERLAND PLAIN CLAYS AND WOODLAND IN THE NORTH

Particularly notable geology and vegetation communities can be briefly summarised as (refer to **FIGURE 2-2**):

- In the south-west the Nepean Gorge cuts through the sandstone upstream of Penrith, supporting the surrounding Hawkesbury Sandstone Woodland within the Blue Mountains National Park.
- Further north around the Mulgoa Nature Reserve the shale-sandstone boundary occurs, resulting in shale cliffs and the Shale Hill Woodlands.
- Further north of Penrith, between Castlereagh and Richmond, are extensive sand and clay deposits of the Tertiary age with the distinctive broad Castlereagh Woodlands. These are conserved in the Castlereagh Nature Reserve - with Ironbarks characterising the clays (Cooks River Castlereagh Ironbark Forest) and Scribbly Gums characterising the sands (Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland). Another large area of this vegetation, not conserved, occurs east of Castlereagh Road.
- In the far north, along Castlereagh Road, is a small patch of Agnes Banks Woodland conserved within the Agnes Banks Nature Reserve and its dune-like soils.
- Along the Nepean River are alluvial flats supporting the River Oaks of Alluvial Woodland, with other poorly drained sites away from the river dominated by Swamp Oak, such as a large patch of Castlereagh Swamp Woodland west of Agnes Banks Nature Reserve.
- Within Penrith's central urban area, and south to the LGA boundary, are areas of the broad Shale Plains Woodland, some conserved within the Wianamatta Regional Park and another large patch occurs within the Department of Defence land at Orchard Hills.

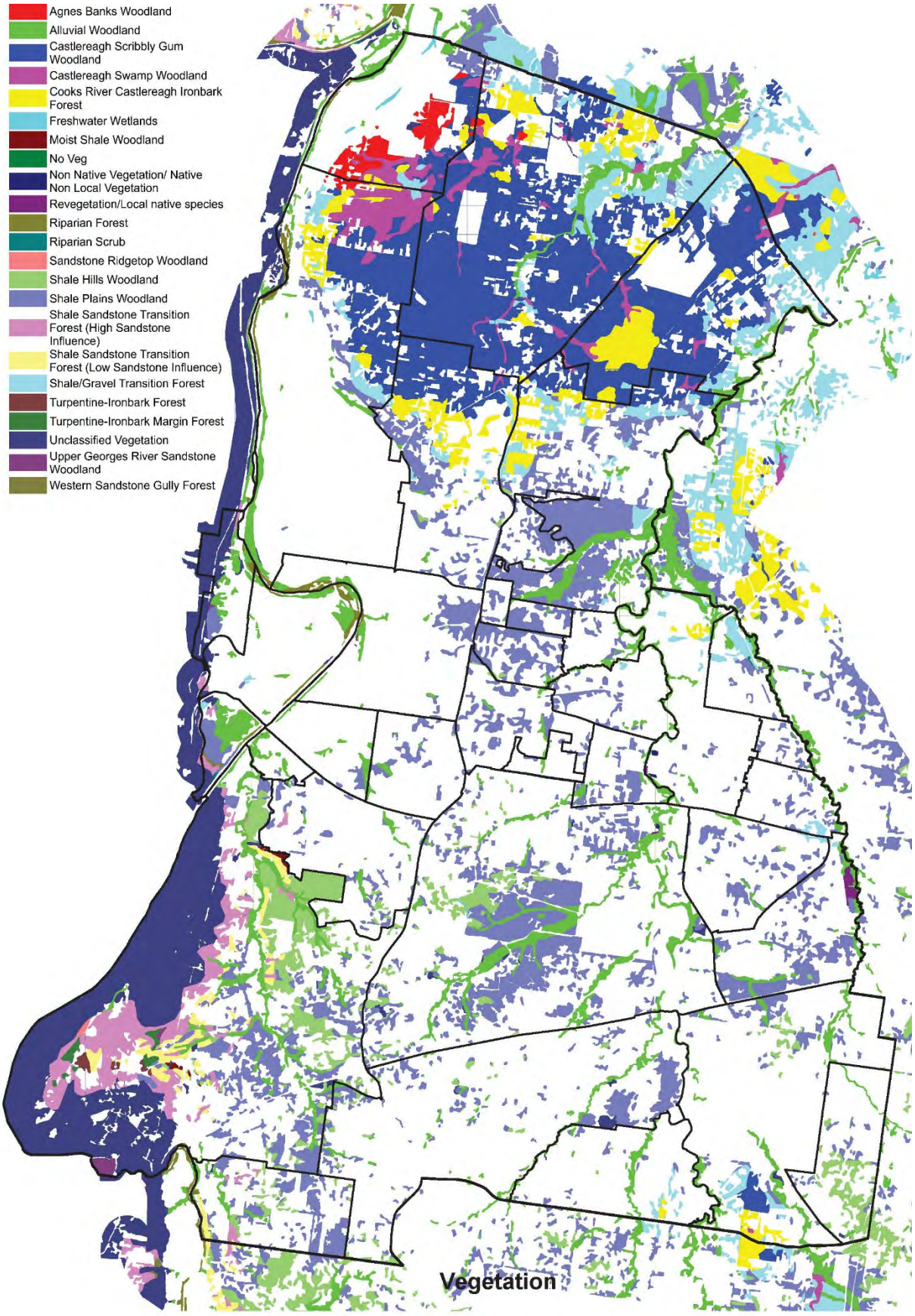


FIGURE 2-2: PENRITH'S VEGETATION (MAP SUPPLIED BY PENRITH CITY COUNCIL, 2019)

2.3 Landscape Character Units (LCUs)

Landscape character of a place describes the distinctive physical elements that combine to create a 'sense of place' and make one landscape different from another. These physical elements can include landform, land use, vegetation type, presence of water, availability of views and the built environment.

Landscape character units (LCU's) have been used to identify the different types of landscape character across Penrith and provide identifiable units with which to base strategies and recommendations in this report.

The landscape structure of Penrith LGA has been categorised into eight broad landscape character units (LCUs) based on characteristics such as landform, land use and vegetation cover:

- Western forested hills
- South-western hills and valleys
- South-eastern low hills and valleys
- Nepean River corridor/flats
- Blue Mountains foothills
- Northern Cumberland Plain
- Central rural hills
- Central urban area.

For each LCU the dominant landscape characteristics have been identified, with the intent that positive characteristics should be conserved, and where possible improved. Similarly, negative landscape characteristics should be better managed through Councils' available processes or future management options considered.

FIGURE 2-3 and **FIGURE 2-4** illustrate these Landscape Character Units (LCUs) and summarises the positive landscape characteristics of each. Detailed descriptions of each unit are subsequently provided.

envisage

Broad Landscape Character Units (LCU)

National Parks and Reserves

Other substantial areas of native vegetation in non-urban areas

Major creeklines

M4 Motorway

Other major roads

Nepean River

Railway

Nepean River Flats

- Northern agricultural flats and rural uses seen along Castlereagh Road
- Penrith Lakes developing recreational precinct, proposed to include some future residential
- Views of Nepean River between Emu Plains and Penrith city centre
- Regional views of Blue Mountains backdrop

Northern Cumberland Plain

- Many vegetated creeklines providing 'green breaks' across the landscape
- Many large tracts of vegetation provide vegetated backdrops to rural areas, Londonderry & major roads
- High level of trees in many rural areas

Blue Mountains Foothills

- Strong forested edge at base of Blue Mountains
- Mostly low-scale buildings
- Regional views over Cumberland Plain

Central urban area

Refer Figure 2-4 for further detail

Central rural hills

- Remnant orchards on southern side of M4
- Vegetated creekline alongside M4
- Currently provides 'green break' to main urban area

Western forested hills

- Integrated rural areas with high tree cover
- Built element mostly non-dominant
- Regional views over Cumberland Plain
- Native tree cover & Fairlight Gorge in Blue Mountains National Park

South-western hills & valleys

- Winding, treed Mulgoa Road
- Historic villages of Mulgoa & Wallacia & high number of heritage properties
- Mostly intact rural setting & high tree cover

South-eastern low hills & valleys

- Many vegetated creeklines providing green breaks across the landscape
- Large tract of vegetation in north (Dept of Defence land)

Castlereagh Road
Londonderry Road
The Northern
M4 Motorway
Mulgoa Road
The Northern
Mulgoa
Wallacia
Luddenham Road
Elizabeth Drive

02 Sept 2019 Rev 06 N

Figure 2– 3:

Landscape Character Units (LCUs)

2.3.1 Western forested hills

These mostly heavily vegetated areas form a strong visual backdrop to the Mulgoa Valley. The boundary of this landscape unit begins on the western side of the Mulgoa Valley floor where it rises and the vegetation becomes denser. These hills are an integral component of vistas to the Blue Mountains from some areas – greening the foothills of the escarpment. In some locations rural development has occurred, such as along Fairlight Road to the west of Mulgoa.

In most places a high level of tree cover means that the integrity of the visual backdrop remains. Along the western edge is the Blue Mountains National Park which incorporates the notable Fairlight Gorge. The Nepean River cuts through the sandstone geology and supports the unique vegetation of the Hawkesbury Sandstone Woodland, characterised by the magnificent Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*).

The scenic quality of this landscape is high.

Important positive landscape characteristics include:

- Dense, tall native tree cover over an expansive area, including within the Blue Mountains National Park and along the Nepean River to the west
- High level of tree cover within the integrated rural areas
- The majority of built elements being recessive and not dominating
- Regional views possible from some areas over the eastern valleys and plain (see photograph).

Some negative landscape characteristics include:

- Some rural development with buildings of an overly dominant scale
- Rural properties with substantial amounts of rubbish or storage elements such as shipping containers.



WESTERN FORESTED HILLS - RURAL USES ALONG FAIRLIGHT ROAD



WESTERN FORESTED HILLS - REGIONAL VIEWS TO EAST FROM UPPER FAIRLIGHT ROAD

2.3.2 South-western hills and valleys

This area incorporates the two catchments/valleys in the south-west of the LGA and is generally bound by The Northern Road to the east, the urban edge to the north and the LGA boundaries to the south. The landscape is widely recognised for its scenic and cultural values.

The majority of the area is covered by the Mulgoa Valley which arguably extends from the historic village of Wallacia in the south, north through the historic village of Mulgoa and to the urban fringe of Penrith. North of Mulgoa the valley's landform is well-defined, yet south of Mulgoa the landform effectively splits into two valleys – one extending south to Wallacia, and a smaller, shallower valley extending east. Mulgoa Nature Reserve is situated where the shale-sandstone boundary occurs in the north, resulting in unique shale cliffs and the Shale Hill Woodlands.

There are six rural heritage properties that are listed on the State Heritage Register. There are views to some of those properties from Mulgoa Road, such as Fernhill and Glenmore. The surrounding mostly intact rural setting contributes to the uniqueness of this landscape so close to the metropolitan areas of Sydney.

Important positive landscape characteristics include:

- The winding and treed Mulgoa Road
- The attractive villages of Wallacia and Mulgoa, particularly their heritage buildings
- A high number of heritage rural properties (including Glenmore and Fernhill estates, parts of which are visible from Mulgoa Road)
- The surrounding mostly intact rural setting with a high level of vegetation
- Integrity of a defined edge to the development (i.e. as occurs at Mulgoa and Wallacia villages)

Some negative landscape characteristics include:

- Some rural development with buildings of an overly dominant scale
- Rural properties with substantial amounts of rubbish or storage of elements such as shipping containers and old cars and machinery
- Poor presentation and inappropriate development within some parts of Wallacia and Mulgoa (e.g. 1970ish small shopping area in Mulgoa).



AREA TO WEST, BETWEEN MULGOA AND WALLACIA - BLUE MOUNTAINS AS BACKDROP



VIEW OVER MULGOA VALLEY FROM EASTERN SIDE, VIEWS TOWARDS MOUNTAINS

2.3.3 South-eastern low hills and valleys

This area is generally bound by The Northern Road to the west, parts of the M4 to the north and the LGA boundaries to the east and south. The area is dominated by rural and semi-rural uses interspersed with small settlements, with generally less vegetation than other parts of the LGA. The landform is mostly undulating to rolling, and in some places there are quite wide vistas towards the distant Blue Mountains.

In the south-eastern corner of the LGA is Mount Vernon (elevated above the plain) which incorporates rural-residential land use and around Luddenham Road there is some more recent rural-residential. The water supply pipeline is also a notable industrial -like feature across this landscape.

Most vegetation is along South Creek and the smaller creeklines that feed into it, and within the Department of Defence land in the north. The vegetated creeklines are important in providing green breaks that are often quite visible. The smaller centres of Kemps Creek (Elizabeth Drive) and Luddenham (elevated location on The Northern Road) are in the south. Many areas display a mixed character related partly to spatial transition from rural to a more urban landscape, with scenic quality generally unremarkable.

Important positive landscape characteristics include:

- The many vegetated creeklines that provide green breaks across the landscape
- The large tract of native vegetation in the north which is Department of Defence land
- Regional views from some locations (including parts of Luddenham Road, Elizabeth Drive and Mamre Road)
- Agricultural built forms, particularly greenhouses in the market gardens.

Some negative landscape characteristics include:

- Rural properties with substantial amounts of rubbish or storage elements such as shipping containers.
- Generally lower level of native vegetation than other rural areas in Penrith LGA.



RURAL AREA AROUND KEMPS CREEK



RURAL VIEWS FROM LUDDENHAM ROAD

2.3.4 Nepean River flats

The Nepean River flats bound the Nepean River from Regentville to the north of the LGA. It includes the land along the immediate river edges, the floodplain flats around Emu Plains, the lower areas west of the city centre, the developing recreational/potentially residential precinct of Penrith Lakes and the area along Castlereagh Road.

The river flows in a south to north direction from the southern edge of the LGA near Wallacia through to its northern tip at Yarramundi Bridge. The landscape changes dramatically just south of Emu Plains and the M4 Motorway, marking the beginning of the flatter floodplain extending to the north.

The northern floodplain is an attractive agricultural landscape, with steep embankments transitioning to flatter floodplain areas. Its scenic value is increased by the presence of the Blue Mountains forming a strong, vegetated backdrop. Situated on the substantial river bend that the Nepean forms at this junction is a rural- like land area, comprised of land associated with an existing quarry and prison farm, combined with surrounding public reserve. This forms part of the rural setting of Emu Plains. In many places alongside the river, views of the waterway are obstructed by vegetation, including weeds.

Important positive landscape characteristics include:

- The rural area on the visually-distinct river bend at Emu Plains
- The northern agricultural flats and rural land uses
- Views of the Nepean River from Penrith urban areas and Emu Plains
- Regional views from some locations of the forested Blue Mountains, particularly along Castlereagh Road from Penrith Lakes to the north
- The attractive threshold crossing of the Nepean at Yarramundi Bridge, M4 and Yandhai Nepean crossing.

Some negative landscape characteristics include:

- Some rural development with buildings of an overly dominant scale
- Limited opportunity for views of the Nepean River near Emu Plains and Penrith's city centre's urban edge
- The prevalence of light-industrial/commercial warehouse buildings that can be seen alongside the M4 Motorway between Castlereagh Road and Mulgoa Road.



SEMI-RURAL AREA (PRISON FARM/QUARRY LAND) NEAR RIVER BEND AT EMU PLAINS



NORTHERN RIVER FLAT AGRICULTURAL AREAS

2.3.5 Blue Mountains foothills

This unit generally comprises the urban area of Emu Plains and Emu Heights at the foot of the Blue Mountains.

To the west of the Nepean River the low-density urban area sits along the lower river flats and then rises abruptly to the west into the foothills of the Blue Mountains. Where the dense Hawkesbury Sandstone Woodland extends down from the mountains it meets the rear of the existing low-density residential area. The majority of this vegetation is conserved in the Blue Mountains National Park and other reserves.

Emu Plains is mostly low rise with detached housing in established areas. The Main Western Railway winds through on its way to and from the Blue Mountains, with a railway station within the main centre. There is also a large industrial/commercial zone to the north. Any further urban development of the elevated areas has the potential to be quite visible due to the elevation.

Important positive landscape characteristics include:

- The strong forested western escarpment that forms part of the foothills to the Blue Mountains
- The mostly low-scale buildings that are visually compatible and not dominant
- Regional views to the east over Penrith and the Cumberland Plain
- Riverside parks, walking trails and river access points.

Some negative landscape characteristics include:

- Visual-disconnect between many parts of Emu Plains and the Nepean River
- Lost opportunities to create strong vistas and visual corridors orientated towards the Nepean River
- Views onto industrial areas from elevated locations.



VIEWS TO NEPEAN RIVER FROM NEARBY PARKLAND AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS



VISTAS WEST TO BLUE MOUNTAINS FROM MANY EAST-WEST STREETS

2.3.6 Northern Cumberland Plain

This LCU covers most of the landscape north of Penrith's main urban area, extending from Castlereagh Road to the eastern LGA boundary. The landform varies from undulating to flat, with slopes so gentle that it is difficult to discern the small changes in elevation. The landscape is almost equally divided between large tracts of native vegetation and areas currently under rural land use.

In the north-east are found the distinctive broad Castlereagh Woodlands, conserved within the Castlereagh Nature Reserve. Another large area of this vegetation, not conserved, occurs east of Castlereagh Road. North along Castlereagh Road is the unique geology and vegetation of the Agnes Banks Nature Reserve. Other native vegetation is within Wianamatta Nature Reserve.

Low tree height, combined with the low landform, limits views to immediately bordering viewpoints such as roads or where the vegetation acts as a backdrop to other land uses. Rural uses vary from small rural-holdings and market gardens around Llandilo to the more treed rural landscape in the central area west of The Northern Road. Londonderry village occurs near the centre of this unit, with other smaller settlements of Llandilo and Castlereagh junction.

Important positive landscape characteristics:

- The many vegetated creeklines act as green breaks over the landscape
- The many large tracts of vegetation form backdrops to the rural areas and views from major roads, with a substantial portion in reserves
- Vistas of Blue Mountains on the western side of low north-south running ridge, particularly from east-west orientated roads
- Mostly low-scale buildings and high level of trees in large pockets.
- Occasional rises in landform afford district vistas across rural landscapes
- Rural centres of Llandilo, Londonderry and Castlereagh junction.

Some negative landscape characteristics:

- Some development of a dominant scale in rural areas
- Many instances of rubbish dumping within the larger tracts of vegetation (mostly not in reserves)
- Some commercial/industrial uses appear out of place, particularly where located away from main settlements, or of a dominant scale when within them, and detract from the rural character.



FLATTER, VEGETATED RURAL AREAS IN NORTHERN CUMBERLAND PLAIN UNIT



TYPICAL RURAL AREAS IN THIS LCU WITH TREE COVER QUITE HIGH

2.3.7 Central rural hills

This unit is near the centre of the LGA around Orchard Hills, both north and south of the M4, providing a green break between Penrith, urban areas to the south and some parts of St Marys. Historically the area was used for fruit production and a small number of remaining properties still display this recognisable pattern. The landform is quite hilly which means that the higher areas are visible from some distance away. Vegetation cover is generally more extensive on the southern side, with larger clumps of native vegetation alongside the M4 Motorway which restricts views. Land use is mostly small rural lots, with some rural-residential south and a school to the north.

Parts of the southern side can be seen from the higher residential and rural areas to the north of the M4 Motorway, however, views from the motorway itself are mostly blocked by a combination of noise walls and vegetation until west of the Kingswood Road overpass. From Kingswood Road to The Northern Road overpass, the northern side is more visible from the M4 Motorway. Although the lower areas immediately beside the M4 are also generally blocked by noise walls and vegetation, a large area of higher land can be clearly seen in the vicinity of the northern side of Frogmore Road and Castle Road. There are also some views of the higher elevated areas on the southern side, including of some orchards.

Important positive landscape characteristics include:

- The remnant orchards on the higher hills on the southern side are particularly attractive and also quite unique in this part of Sydney
- The vegetation alongside the M4 Motorway serves to limit views from it and acts as a green corridor
- Vistas towards the Blue Mountains from some of the higher areas on both sides of the M4 Motorway and the M4 Motorway itself
- The landscape creates a semi-rural green break between the nearest urban edge of Penrith, St Marys and rural uses further south, which serves to break-up urban sprawl with a less developed character, with this particularly associated with the land on the southern side of the M4 Motorway.

Some negative landscape characteristics:

- The location of the M4 Motorway which serves to split the former agricultural landscape in two.
- No distant rural views from M4.



REMAINING ORCHARDS AROUND ORCHARD HILLS



VIEW SOUTH FROM HILLY AREA (NEAR SCHOOL) ON NORTHERN SIDE

2.3.8 Central urban area

Penrith's main urban area is situated within the centre of the LGA and takes in suburbs from the eastern edge through to the Nepean River. **FIGURE 2-4** identifies the main landscape features and major viewpoints of the central urban area.



CITY CENTRE


MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL NORTH OF CITY CENTRE (THORNTON)


HERITAGE BUILDINGS ADD CHARACTER TO THE CITY CENTRE

Running east west through the central urban area are two major transport corridors: The Main Western Railway and the Great Western Highway, with the M4 Motorway to the south creating a barrier to urban development further south around Glenmore Park and South Penrith. North-south are two arterial roadways: The Northern Road/Parker Street, almost centrally located, and Mulgoa Road/Castlereagh Road to the west.

City centre

The city centre is visually defined by a small cluster of higher commercial buildings and the recently upgraded contemporary railway station, encircled by the developing medium density residential area of Thornton on the northern side. Interspersed are public spaces, the Council administration building, heritage buildings, offices, the large Westfield shopping complex and smaller shops.

The landform means that the existing commercial and residential buildings of the centre sit quite low in the landscape. When seen from surrounding elevated vantage points, such as from Werrington/Caddens, the buildings are concealed within existing trees and present quite a green landscape from afar. Many east-west running streets, within and close to the city centre, also provide view corridors to the Blue Mountains.

West

West of the city centre, towards the river, the flat landform supports a mixture of mostly industrial, commercial, medium density and recreational land uses. Bordering the main transport corridor through this area, Mulgoa/Castlereagh Road are large commercial buildings, as well as the substantial Panthers Penrith (Rugby Leagues) club. There are is also a stand of large gums towards the M4 intersection that are an attractive landscape feature yet are planned for removal as part of future road widening.



CASTLEREAGH ROAD MAJOR CITY ROADWAY WITH FLANKING COMMERCIAL WEST OF CITY CENTRE



INSTITUTIONAL/PARKLAND CORRIDOR AROUND WERRINGTON/THE KINGSWAY CREATES IMPORTANT VISUAL BREAK IN URBAN FORM



OLDER RESIDENTIAL AREAS TEND TO HAVE MORE VEGETATION & BE GREENER

Werrington

Further to the east, south and north there are lower density, mostly established urban areas extending across a number of low hills encircling the city centre. A local ridgeline extends from south of Orchard Hills and terminates north of the Great Western Highway at Werrington. Through this area are a number of large institutions, including Western Sydney University and TAFE campuses, and a juvenile justice centre, and large tracts of open space such as around The Kingsway. The landform and land uses form a noticeable green break from the encircling residential and industrial/commercial areas and provide an important visual relief.

St Marys

To the far east of the LGA, separated by the South Creek corridor and its many linear parklands, is the large suburban centre of St. Marys. From St Marys there are regional views toward the mountains from some local topographic high points. St Marys town centre supports a bustling main street alongside a railway station. There is a substantial industrial/large scale commercial area on the northern side, and Ropes Creek corridor marking the eastern LGA boundary.

Suburban centres and industrial areas

Integrated within the residential areas are a number of smaller suburban centres such as those at St Clair, Erskine Park, Cranebrook and Werrington County. The newer residential suburb of Jordan Springs is situated to the north-east, as is the large Wianamatta Regional Park which provides a valuable green break and recreational area.

Older residential areas lie to the south-west of the city centre, around Jamisontown and Regentville, and around Cranebrook to the north. More contemporary residential areas, including substantial medium density areas, are situated to the south around Glenmore Park. There is an emerging large new area with a light industrial/commercial focus to the south-east of Erskine Park.

Important positive landscape characteristics:

- Location of CBD in low point means that view opportunities are possible over higher buildings and the landscape appears quite treed from a distance
- Regional views from high points and where view corridors are possible (such as across Parker Street Reserve and along E-W streets) and from M4 Motorway bridges
- Local views over urban area from Great Western Highway at Quarry Hill (UWS/TAFE), plus the open space/green break provided by this land at Werrington
- Larger lots in older residential areas with generally a far greater tree canopy evident
- Surrounding rural areas & large tracts of vegetation provide green breaks to the main urban area.

Some negative landscape characteristics:

- Visual-disconnect between the city centre and river (due mostly to large buildings)
- Lost opportunities to create strong visual corridors orientated towards the Blue Mountains escarpment
- Poor presentation of some development alongside Castlereagh Road, including the dominance of car parking, low numbers of large street trees and buildings of overly dominant scale
- Some residential areas and parts of the city centre are quite bare of street trees
- Poorly placed overhead transmission lines, which restrict valuable greening by street trees and sometimes local view corridors
- Newer residential areas with smaller lots tend to have less tree coverage and are therefore less green and can have a poorer amenity.



NEWER SUBURB OF GLENMORE PARK WITH MOUNTAIN VIEWS



NEWER RESIDENTIAL AREA OF CADDENS ON LOCAL RIDGE, WITH VIEWS OF MOUNTAINS TO WEST FROM ROGER NETHERCOTE PARK



NEWER RESIDENTIAL AREAS MOSTLY HAVE SMALLER LOTS AND ARE LESS GREEN (GLENMORE PARK)

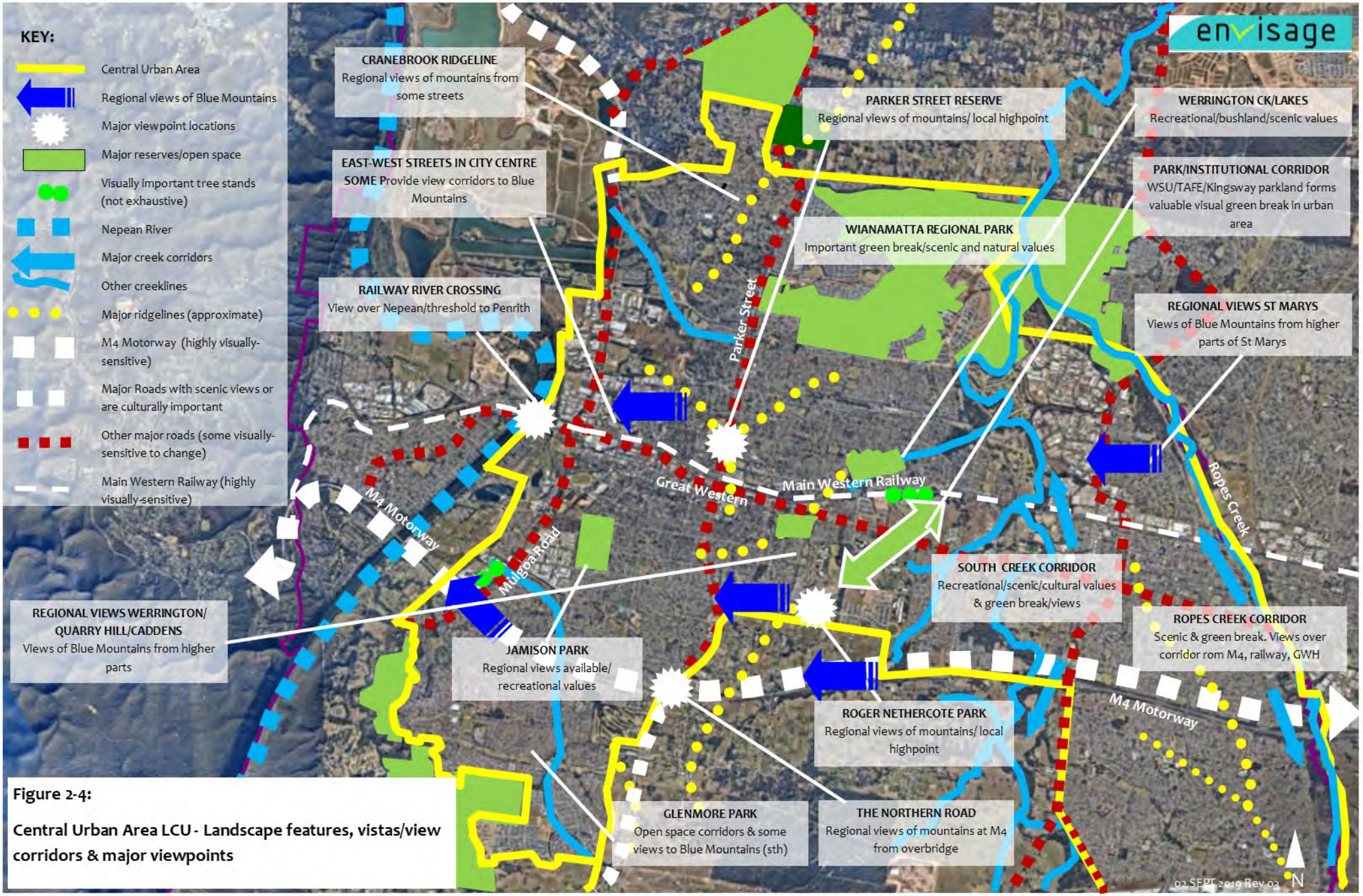


Figure 2-4:

Central Urban Area LCU - Landscape features, vistas/view corridors & major viewpoints

3. Important regional vistas and view corridors



Regional vistas and view corridors are those that encompass distant and generally wide views of major landscape features such as the Blue Mountains and Nepean River and are important for a number of reasons, including:

- Visual connectivity across Penrith – allows viewers to orientate themselves and improves 'wayfinding' (i.e. being able to easily navigate an area)
- Allowing both residents and visitors to enjoy attractive views of these regional landscape elements
- Serving to reduce perceived urban sprawl, as the overall urban area is punctuated with recognisable and valued vistas and views
- Enhances the landscape character and scenic quality of the Penrith LGA and draws attention to these valued landscape elements
- Provides a strong reference to landscape place and identity to the community.

The most important regional vistas and view corridors are illustrated in **FIGURE 3-1** and subsequently described. A more detailed description of viewpoints, view corridors and vistas for the central urban area is provided as **FIGURE 2-4** (refer **Section 2.0**).

Regional vistas and viewpoints are available from many locations across the LGA of the dominant Blue Mountains which provide an attractive backdrop west of Penrith. Although this landform is effectively outside the LGA, its visual largesse makes it integral to the character of Penrith and its sense of place, particularly from the city centre and western parts of the LGA.



BLUE MOUNTAIN VISTAS ACROSS PENRITH LAKES



VIEW OF BLUE MOUNTAINS ESCARPMENT ALONG NORTHERN CASTLEREAGH ROAD

3.1 To the Blue Mountains

The more dramatic vistas of the mountains occur:

- For motorists when heading west and approaching along the M4 Motorway (with the main area from just west of Kingswood Road)
- From higher parts of the central urban area of Penrith including across the Parker Street Reserve, and other higher parts of Werrington/Quarry Hill/Caddens and from hills within St Marys further to east (refer **Section 3-4** also)
- From higher parts of Orchard Hills, particularly on the southern side of the M4 Motorway
- From elevated sections of The Northern Road in the southern LGA, from approximately Park Road north to Littlefields Road
- From some parts of Elizabeth Drive and Mamre Road

- From Castlereagh Road north of the city centre, starting near Penrith Lakes and continuing north
- From local elevated areas such as Cranebrook.

3.2 To Nepean River

There are also valued vistas possible to the Nepean River corridor, with those mostly confined to quite close locations due to vegetation alongside the river obscuring many viewpoints. The level of the river is also mostly hidden by the high riverbanks that extend along the river from just south of Penrith's urban area to the north of the LGA, preventing more prevalent views.



SOUTHERN VIEW OF NEPEAN RIVER FROM YANDHAI NEPEAN CROSSING



YANDHAI NEPEAN CROSSING PROVIDES PANORAMIC RIVER VIEWS

The most notable vistas of the Nepean River occur from:

- The M4 Motorway when travelling west where the river is seen just before passing over it, with the water seen as well as the nearby urban areas on both sides
- The M4 Motorway when travelling east where there are slightly longer views possible of the river in the foreground of views of Penrith's city centre
- Other river crossing points at the Yarramundi Bridge on the northern LGA boundary and the Silverdale Road bridge crossing near Wallacia
- The immediate riverbank areas on the western side of the city centre and the eastern side of Emu Plains
- To the north of Victoria Bridge, the railway bridge crossing parallel to the Great Western Highway (a high solid-railing on the vehicular bridge prevent such views)
- Yandhai Nepean Crossing (i.e. new pedestrian bridge) south of Victoria Bridge and the associated Great River Walk recreational trail
- Blue Mountains Lookouts (e.g. Fairlight Gorge).

3.3 Other regional views

Other notable regional views are possible toward the east over the wider Cumberland Plain, parts of the Blue Mountains and rural valleys from:

- The higher parts of Emu Plains, including the Old Bathurst Road which descends the escarpment
- Brief glimpses from the M4 Motorway as it also descends from the Blue Mountains
- Some parts of the forested western hills west of Mulgoa around Fairlight Road

- A number of lookouts located mostly on the upper edge of the Blue Mountains which are mostly accessed by distant walks on foot (e.g. Old Bathurst Road, Mitchells Pass and Hawkesbury Heights)
- Mountain View Reserve, Cranebrook.



REGIONAL VIEWS FROM WESTERN FORESTED HILLS ALONG FAIRLIGHT ROAD



REGIONAL VIEWS TOWARDS CITY- ROGER NETHERCOTE PARK, CADDENS

3.4 Central Urban Area

The central urban area has been assessed in greater detail due to its more complex land use mix and varied physical characteristics, as indicated in **FIGURE 2-4** (**Section 2.0**). In an urban landscape such as this natural landscape elements such as trees, parks, creek corridors and ridgelines are particularly valuable as visual assets that form green breaks, terminate local views, improve landscape character and create a sense of place. **FIGURE 2-4** highlights those elements across the central urban area, building upon the more regional vistas and view corridors described earlier in this section.

Main elements include:

- Views of the South Creek corridor, including from the Main Western Rail Line, M4 and Great Western Highway
- Views of the Ropes Creek corridor, including from the Main Western Rail Line, M4 and Great Western Highway
- Major recreation areas such as The Kingsway and other sporting fields (Werrington), Jamison Park (South Penrith - including views from south eastern corner), Chapman Gardens (Kingswood), Glenmore Park open space corridor
- Bushland areas such as Wianamatta Regional Park (Jordan Springs), Werrington Creek/Lakes
- Elevated hilltop parks like Roger Nethercote Park in Caddens (see photograph)
- Other significant trees such as those on the northern boundary of the Western Sydney University, Werrington North campus adjacent to rail line, Grey Gums along Mulgoa Road, South Penrith (which will be lost with the widening of Mulgoa Road))
- East-west streets beyond the City Centre that provide views to the Blue Mountains, as well as elevated sections of north-south streets like The Northern Road and streets along the Cranebrook ridgeline.

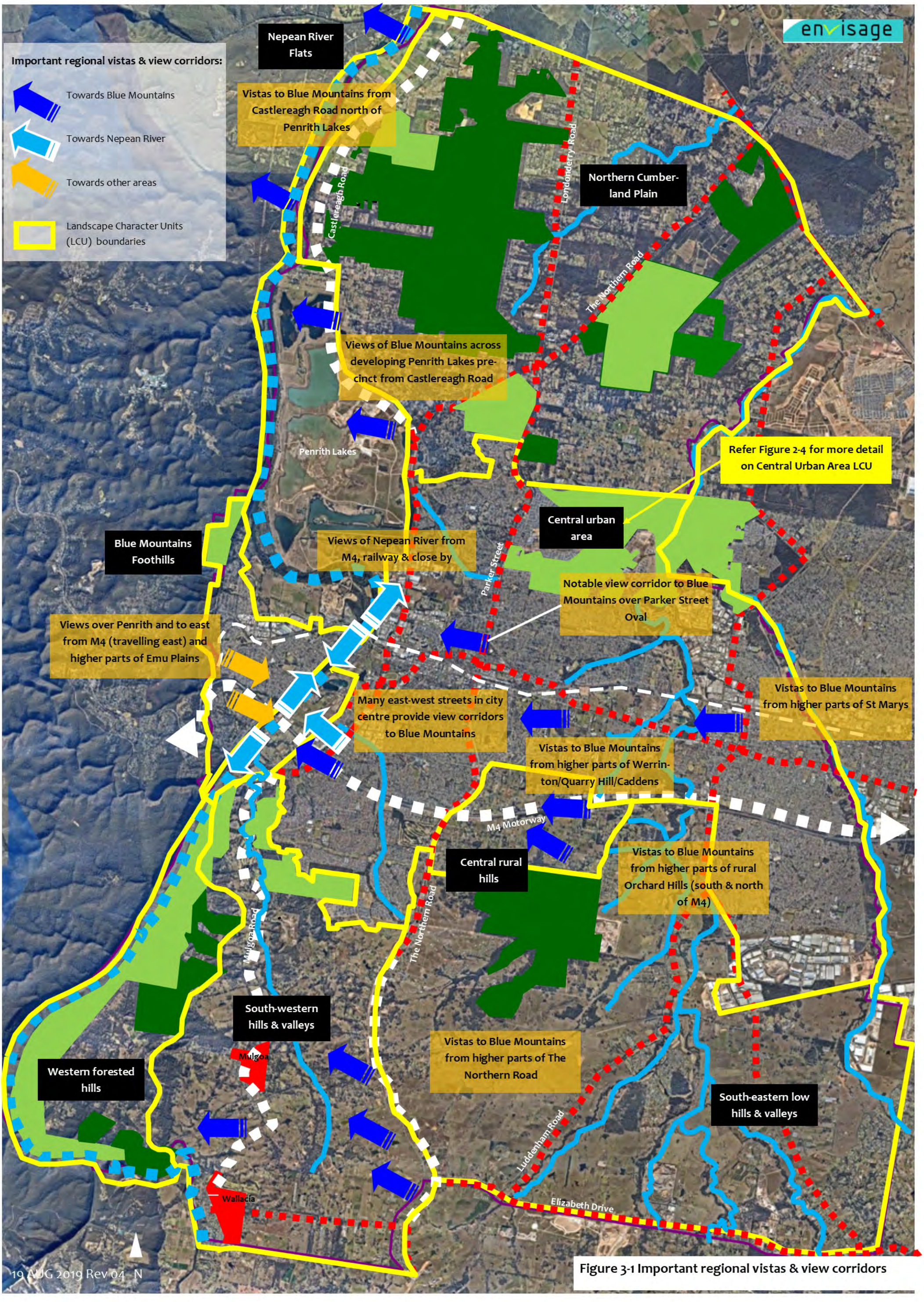


Figure 3-1 Important regional vistas & view corridors

4. Priority landscapes to protect &/or manage



4.1 Identifying priority landscapes

Within the broad landscape character units (LCUs) are smaller areas and particular landscape types with remarkable characteristics associated with scenic qualities or cultural significance. These are referred to as 'Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes' and should be afforded a higher level of protection based on a common understanding of what makes them so unique.

In addition, many parts of Penrith are highly visible from places people often visit, such as along major transport corridors or scenic drives, or from popular visitor destinations and elevated lookouts. Land uses and the form of development in these areas should be carefully managed to positively influence the broader scenic qualities of the LGA. Their qualities and roles should also be considered should re-development be considered.

This section therefore identifies two types of priority landscapes that should be managed and/or protected through Council's planning processes and documents:

- 'Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes' (SL)
- Highly visually-sensitive landscapes (VSL).

These landscapes are identified in **FIGURE 4-1**at the end of this section.

4.2 Identifying significant scenic and cultural landscapes

For this study, scenic and cultural landscapes are defined broadly as those particularly valued for one or more characteristic, such as scenic quality (or beauty), natural conservation values, cultural values and availability of attractive vistas.

Two studies of particular importance have informed the identification of scenic landscapes:

- *Hawkesbury -Nepean Scenic Quality Study* (NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 1996)
- *Penrith Landscape Character Strategy* (Penrith City Council, 2006).

The insert summaries the study approach to identifying scenic and cultural landscapes, with more information on cultural landscapes subsequently provided.

Scenic Landscapes:

Scenic quality is by its nature difficult to define, as the same landscape that may be valued highly by one person may not be by another. Scenic quality is a product of landscape characteristics, built and natural landscape patterns, vegetation cover, landform, available vistas and its value to an individual. For this study, the intent has been to identify locations or landscape types where there is a general consensus that the scenic quality is highly valued and this has been further explored through ground-truthing and professional judgement. In many instances, landscapes considered to have significant 'scenic' values have also been shown to align with landscapes considered to have cultural values (e.g. the Mulgoa Valley and northern part of Castlereagh Road).

It is to be noted that there was no specific information available on scenic preferences and hence landscapes with scenic values have been identified as those where there is a general consensus that the scenic quality is highly valued, supported by ground-truthing and professional experience in this area. A workshop was also held with Council officers to collect anecdotal information and general feedback in regard to landscapes particularly valued by the local community for scenic and cultural landscape values. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the lack of a comprehensive

survey of community values is a shortcoming of this study and thus such a study has been recommended to subsequently occur and be used to update this report.

Cultural Landscapes:

The identification of cultural landscapes (comprising landscapes of both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal cultural importance) is complex. There are many properties in Penrith listed as having potential non-Aboriginal cultural or heritage values, with most protected by Council and other legislative controls.

Landscapes that are significant for Aboriginal cultural values have not been the subject of a specific LGA wide study. In response, it has not been possible to fully appreciate which landscapes may be of high significance and hence a recommendation has been made for more detailed assessment of this important aspect of Penrith's past and present (refer **Section 5.0**), and to update this Study as more information becomes available.

4.2.1 Non-Aboriginal cultural landscapes

Penrith's landscape has long been valued for the fertile floodplains of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River, which wind from Windsor and Richmond towards Camden and Campbelltown. Post-settlement, the local soils became recognised as some of the richest in Sydney and led to the establishment of intensive agricultural production that is still evident.

Penrith developed as an agricultural town on the eastern bank of the Nepean River. The fertile river flats were most eagerly sought for cultivation. During the nineteenth century vegetation across the Cumberland Plain was gradually cleared to increase grazing lands.

For this study, non-Aboriginal cultural landscapes were firstly identified from the *Penrith Landscape Character Strategy* (Penrith City Council, 2006) which defines:

> *Historic landscape settings...as lands within the Mulgoa Valley, where numerous heritage-listed properties reflect early stages of the City's European settlement.*

Other guidance was given by Council officers who identified certain landscapes, outside of the Mulgoa Valley, that they felt were culturally important to the community.



MULGOA VILLAGE - HERITAGE BUILDINGS ADD CHARACTER



HISTORIC FERNILL ESTATE IN MULGOA VALLEY

On that basis, and taking into account on-site assessment and professional experience, the following broad landscapes have been identified:

- The Mulgoa Valley (entire valley from Wallacia, through Mulgoa and to the urban edge to the north)
- Area along Castlereagh Road north of Penrith Lakes (reflective of Penrith agricultural heritage, minimal intrusive uses and high scenic values)
- The Nepean River corridor.

4.2.2 Aboriginal cultural landscapes

The *Great River Walk Interpretation Plan*, prepared by Godden Mackay Logan in 2008, summarised the Aboriginal history of the Castlereagh district and Nepean River prior to European settlement as follows:

> '*Prior to 1789, the land district around Castlereagh and the Nepean River was the territory of a number of neighbouring Aboriginal groups...*
>
> *The local Aboriginal people are said to believe that the Blue Mountains were created in the Dreamtime and the rivers and creeks were formed when the aquatic animal Gurangaty attempted to escape from a tiger cat named Mittigin.*
>
> ...[Local Aboriginal people] *lived in open campsites and sheltered under temporary gunyahs or dwellings of wide sheets of bark bent into an A-frame. The men hunted possums, birds, ducks, wallabies, kangaroos and reptiles and used digging sticks, spears, boomerangs and traps. The women harvested yams by churning up the river bank, collected berries, grubs and shoots and cooked their food over an open fire. Mullett, although the most common fish in the river, was not liked and seldom eaten.*
>
> *The rivers and creeks were a valued natural resource to the local people, providing food, drinking water, swimming and transport. The river also provided stones important for making tools. Chert was used for making sharp cutting tools and basalt pebbles for grinding and making hatchets and axes.*
>
> *The occupation of the area by Europeans from early 1800s resulted in the serious disruption of the traditional lifestyles...breaking the traditional territorial boundaries and isolating previous areas of food gathering and shelter. The 1828 census recorded 156 Aboriginal people living in the Penrith area... Today Penrith has many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents from many different nations'.*

Landscapes that are significant for Aboriginal cultural values have not been the subject of a specific LGA wide study. In response, it has not been possible to fully appreciate which landscapes may be of high significance and hence a recommendation has been made for more detailed assessment of this important aspect of Penrith's past and present (refer **Section 5.0**).

4.2.3 Determining significance

Six criteria were used to determine which landscapes and places could be considered of significance in Penrith, with those criteria being:

1. High scenic values
2. Visibility
3. Availability of regional views
4. Cultural values
5. Importance to urban setting &/or as green breaks
6. Role as a major vegetated backdrop.

Significance has then been assigned on the basis of whether these criteria apply, and to what extent. Where significance has been determined, a judgement has been made as to the likely level of significance, with the two levels of 'Regional or Higher Significance' and 'Local Significance' applied.

Table 4-1 presents a summary of the identified Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes in Penrith, illustrating how the criteria apply and the judged significance of each landscape. Note that should more information become available over time, then ratings should be reviewed for the relevant landscapes.

4.3 Landscapes of scenic and/or cultural significance (SL)

Two specific landscapes have been identified as having significance of a regional or higher level:

1 - Mulgoa Valley (including Mulgoa and Wallacia)

2 – Nepean River Corridor.

Four specific landscapes have been identified as having significance of a local level:

3 - Northern Nepean River/Castlereagh Road

4 - Northern Low-hill Backdrop/ Castlereagh Road

5 - Castlereagh Junction

6 - Northern Road Regional View Corridor.

A Statement of Significance for each of these landscapes is provided in **Appendix A**. In addition, large tracts of vegetation, and major creeklines, have also been identified as having scenic and cultural significance as described further in this section.

All Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes should also be considered highly-visually sensitive.

4.3.1 National Parks and Nature Reserves

National Parks and Reserves across the LGA have been given a scenic/cultural value significance of 'regional or higher' due to their inherent natural landscape and cultural values. These are shown in **FIGURE 4-1**, with the main ones being the:

- Blue Mountains National Park (to west)
- Mulgoa Nature Reserve (Mulgoa Valley)
- Castlereagh Nature Reserve
- Agnes Banks Nature Reserve (Castlereagh Road)
- Wianamatta Nature Reserve

- Wianamatta Regional Park (east of Jordan Springs).



BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, FAIRLIGHT ROAD



VEGETATION ALONGSIDE MAJOR ROADS ADDS TO LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.3.2 Large Tracts of Native Vegetation

Larger tracts of native vegetation have been mapped from Council mapping, aerial photography and the approximate location of parks and other reserves, thus the focus is on the larger areas of native vegetation within Penrith. **FIGURE 4-1** identifies where the larger tracts of native vegetation occur, and their nominal significance based largely on their likely extent of visibility and location.

All native vegetation, particularly larger tracts and along creeklines, generally have at least a scenic/cultural value of local significance due to their inherent natural landscape values. Determining the actual level of value requires a more comprehensive assessment based on vegetation types and extensive ground-truthing, and therefore it was not practical for a study of a strategic level such as this one. Such an assessment should focus on the role the vegetation has in terms of being a visual backdrop to areas with a high visibility (e.g. from main transport corridors or urban areas/villages) and whether it provides a valuable green break or landscape screening to other surrounding development.

4.3.3 Major Creeklines

Vegetated major creeklines have an important scenic role in providing green breaks across the rural landscapes and separating urban areas from each other. Creeklines that are not currently vegetated provide an opportunity to create, extend and link green breaks. Areas with taller native trees, low weeds and a visible creekline are likely to be the most scenic, however, more degraded areas can be improved with appropriate rehabilitation and management.



SOUTH CREEK CORRIDOR NEAR WERRINGTON

South Creek and Ropes Creek were recognised for their scenic significance in the *Hawkesbury-Nepean Scenic Quality Study* (NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 1996) and on that basis have been assumed to have regional significance.

Other creeks have been assumed to have potentially local scenic and/or cultural significance in general, however, a more case-by-case detailed assessment should occur if substantial vegetation loss or land use change is proposed.

Table 4-1: Summary of Penrith's Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes							
Significant Scenic & Cultural Landscapes	**Main Attributes**						**Significance**
	High scenic values	**Likely high visibility**	**Regional views**	**Recognised or potential cultural values**	**Important to urban setting &/or as Green Breaks**	**Important vegetated backdrop**	**R= Regional (or higher) Significance L=Local Significance** + = preliminary level as vegetation varies
1 - Mulgoa Valley	*	*	*	*	*	*	**R**
2 – Nepean River Corridor	*	*	*	*	*		**R**
3 - Northern Nepean River/Castlereagh Road	*	*	*	*			**L**
4 - Northern Low-hill Backdrop/ Castlereagh Road		*	*			*	**L**
5 - Castlereagh Junction (Castlereagh Road, Hinxman Road and Post Office Road)		*	*	*	*		**L**
6 - Northern Road Regional View Corridor		*	*		•		**L**
Large tracts of native vegetation – National Parks & Nature Reserves	* (some)	* (most)	* (some)	*	*	*	**R+**
Large tracts of native vegetation – Not protected	* (some)	varies	* (some)		*	*	**L+**
Major Creeklines	* (some)	Not relevant	* (some)		*		**L+** (general) **R+** (South & Ropes Creeks)

4.4 Highly visually-sensitive landscapes and places

It is also important to identify landscapes with a high visual-sensitivity (particularly to change) so as to protect and retain places with high visual amenity and implement location-appropriate long-term planning. For the purposes of this study, landscapes that are the most visually-sensitive (in addition to Significant Scenic and Cultural landscapes defined above) have been identified as those that are:

- Most visible from major transport corridors and along recognised scenic drives
- Recognised tourist destinations (outside main urban area)
- Particularly elevated locations
- Identified 'gateway' sites.

These landscapes with a high visual-sensitivity were identified through existing information, input from Council officers, analysis of on-line topographic and aerial mapping and ground-truthing.

Highly visually-sensitive landscapes and places are illustrated in **FIGURE 4-1**. Recommendations for the management of these VSLs are provided in **Section 5.0**.

4.4.1 Highly visually-sensitive landscapes

Five particularly highly visually-sensitive areas (**VSL**s)are associated with:

- **VSL1 – Orchard Hills**: Views from the M4 Motorway southward across Orchard Hills, an area that forms part of a visual green break to Penrith's main urban area yet is likely to be subject to re-development pressure due to its location on the urban fringe.
- **VSL2 – Emu Plains flats**: Views across the northern fringe of Emu Plains that contributes to the rural setting of Penrith and is in a location with potentially a high visibility on a major river bend.
- **VSL3 – M4/Nepean River eastern interface**: Views from the Nepean River crossing toward Penrith, Regentville and Jamisontown which is quite visible from the M4 Motorway.
- **VSL4 - South of Glenmore Park**: An area on the urban fringe which is just outside the identified Mulgoa Valley boundary, yet could potentially be seen from parts of the lower Valley.
- **VSL5 – Near intersection of The Northern Road and Park Road:** At this location the top of the Mulgoa Valley flattens out yet could potentially be seen from parts of the valley.

4.4.2 Major transport corridors

These include major transport corridors such as the M4 Motorway, Main Western Railway and other arterial roadways. New major transport corridors may need to be added over time.

4.4.3 City Gateways

For 'gateways', 'City Gateways and Areas of High Visual Sensitivity' have previously been mapped by Council in *Penrith DCP 2014, Chapter C1 (Section 1.1.2, Figure C1.1)*. These include 'village bookends', crossings, land use interfaces and intersections.

envisage

Significant Scenic & Cultural Landscapes

Nepean River Corridor (Significant Landscape 2)

Larger Significant Landscapes (shown as blue with white border)

SL# **Numbered Significant Landscapes** (significance shown in brackets, refer Figure 5-2 in report):

SL1 - Mulgoa Valley (R)
SL2 -Nepean River Corridor (R)
SL3 -Northern Nepean River/ Castlereagh Road (L)
SL4 -Northern Low-hill Backdrop/ Castlereagh Road (L)
SL5-Castlereagh Junction (L)
SL6- Northern Road Regional View Corridor (L)

Other Significant Landscapes
(NB: these are not indicated with numbers):

National Parks and Reserves (all R)

Other substantial areas of native vegetation in non-urban areas (all L, may increase with further assessment)

Major creeklines (all L) except parts of South Creek & Ropes Creek (R) - note not all creeks mapped

Highly visually-sensitive areas:

VSL# VSL—Highly visually-sensitive landscapes (refer Table 5-3 in report)

M4 Motorway

Major Roads with scenic views or are culturally important

Other Major Roads (some may have visually-sensitive boundaries)

Main Western Railway (views from railway visually-sensitive)

'Gateways of Visual Sensitivity' (taken from *Penrith DCP 2014*, Figure C1.1)

SL2
SL3
SL4
SL5
SL6
Agnes Banks Nature Reserve
Castlereagh Road
Londonderry Road
The Northern Road
Castlereagh Nature Reserve
Wianamatta Nature Reserve
Wianamatta Regional Park
Yellomundee Regional Park
VSL3
VSL
VSL1
VSL4
VSL5
Main Western Railway
South Creek
Ropes Creek
M4 Motorway
Mulgoa Nature Reserve
Mulgoa Road
Department of Defence land
Blue Mountains National Park
SL1
Mulgoa
Wallacia
Elizabeth Drive
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 22. 23.
02 Sept 2019 Rev 06
N

Figure 4-1: Priority landscapes to protect &/or manage

5. Strategies & implementation



This section recommends strategies that Council can implement to protect and manage the most valued landscape characteristics, regional vistas/view corridors, priority landscapes and improve visual outcomes across the LGA.

5.1 Recommended strategies and implementation

Four strategies represent the overarching desired outcomes to protect and manage the landscape character, scenic quality and the public's viewing experiences of Penrith's landscapes.

- **Strategy 1** – Conserve, maintain and improve landscape characteristics
- **Strategy 2** – Protect important vistas and view corridors
- **Strategy 3** – Protect and/or manage priority landscapes (i.e. significant scenic and cultural landscapes & highly visually-sensitive landscapes)
- **Strategy 4** – Measures to improve visual outcomes across the LGA.

5.1.1 Strategy 1 – Conserve, maintain & improve landscape characteristics

Penrith's lands are made up of eight broad Landscape Character Units (refer **FIGURE 2-3**), providing a basis for describing more localised landscape characteristics. Maintaining or improving on these characteristics will ensure local areas can retain a familiar sense of place.

Actions to support this strategy:

1. Map the boundaries for the Landscape Character Units within Council's LEP in support of a local provision that requires developments within these areas to have regard for the identified landscape characteristics (**TABLE 5-1**, end of section).
2. Define the landscape characteristics and incorporate into Council's planning controls as a basis for assessment.

5.1.2 Strategy 2 – Protect important vistas and view corridors

Visual connectivity to recognisable features is important for several reasons. It allows people to orient themselves, adds to their positive experience and impression of an area, and offers a sense of familiarity and attachment with a place.

Penrith already offers important vistas (long views) from viewpoints in several locations across the LGA. The Blue Mountains are a dominant attractive backdrop and defining feature of the LGA. While less visually dominant, the Nepean River is another significant feature that is strongly valued by residents and visitors. Other notable vistas include those across the Cumberland Plain in the north of the LGA and across rural valleys in the south of the LGA.

Protecting important vistas and viewpoints through the control of land use and development within associated view corridors will allow people to maintain visual connectivity to important natural and cultural features, fostering a strong sense of place.

Actions to support this strategy:

3. Utilise mapping provided in this study (**FIGURE 2-4** and **FIGURE 3-1**) to identify the viewpoints supporting important vistas and associated view corridors in Council's planning controls.
4. Utilise major planning initiatives to identify new view corridors as urban transformation and other major developments are proposed, such as those from:
   i) Major transport corridors (e.g. motorway or railway); or
   ii) Publicly accessible elevated viewpoints.
5. Manage the bulk and scale of built form within identified view corridors through planning controls (e.g. building height and FSR standards).

5.1.3 Strategy 3 – Protect and/or manage priority landscapes

Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes

Within the broad LCUs are smaller areas and particular landscape types with remarkable characteristics associated with scenic qualities or cultural significance. These are referred to as 'Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes' and should be afforded a higher level of protection based on a common understanding of what makes them so unique.

Two specific landscapes have been identified as having significance of a regional or higher level:

- SL1 - Mulgoa Valley (including Mulgoa and Wallacia)
- SL2 – Nepean River Corridor.

Four specific landscapes have been identified as having significance of a local level:

- SL3 - Northern Nepean River/Castlereagh Road
- SL4 - Northern Low-hill Backdrop/ Castlereagh Road
- SL5 - Castlereagh Junction
- SL6 - Northern Road Regional View Corridor.

In addition, National Park and Nature Reserves, large tracts of native vegetation, and major creeklines also have scenic and cultural significance. All of these landscapes are illustrated on **FIGURE 4-1**, providing a basis for identifying and protecting their significant features.

The study also acknowledges that there is currently limited information about natural landscapes that are significant for Aboriginal cultural identity and connection to land.

Actions to support this strategy:

6. Incorporate Statements of Significance (**Appendix A**) for each of the Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes into Council's DCP as a basis for assessment.
7. Map the boundaries of the six Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes, National Parks and Nature Reserves, identified large tracts of native vegetation and major creeklines (the last two on the basis of Council's more detailed mapping of these natural resources), within Council's LEP in support of a local provision that requires developments within these areas to have regard for their significant features and a higher-degree of visual impact assessment.
8. Investigate and identify a common understanding of how to protect Significant Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes in Penrith's rural areas.

Highly Visually-Sensitive Landscapes

Many parts of Penrith are highly visible from places people often visit, such as along major transport corridors or scenic drives, or from popular visitor destinations and elevated lookouts. Land uses and the form of development in these areas should be carefully managed to positively influence the broader scenic qualities of the LGA. Their qualities and roles should also be considered should re-development be considered.

Five particularly highly visually-sensitive areas (VSLs) (in addition to the Significant Scenic and Cultural Landscapes) are associated with:

- VSL1 – Orchard Hills: Views from the M4 Motorway southward across Orchard Hills
- VSL2 – Emu Plains flats: Views across the northern fringe of Emu Plains
- VSL3 – M4/Nepean River eastern interface: Views from the Nepean River crossing toward Penrith, Regentville and Jamisontown
- VSL4 - South of Glenmore Park
- VSL5 – Near intersection of The Northern Road and Park Road.

Areas alongside major road corridors and the rail corridor were also identified as highly visually-sensitive, as well as a number of City Gateways. Other highly visually-sensitive areas may emerge as land uses change and new major transport corridors are established in the south-eastern part of the Penrith LGA.

All currently identified highly visually-sensitive areas are illustrated in **FIGURE 4-1**, providing a basis for achieving specific desired outcomes in each area.

Actions to support this strategy:

9. Prepare area-specific guidelines for any future development within each highly visually-sensitive areas and incorporate into Council's DCP as a basis for assessment.
10. Map the boundaries of all Highly Visually-Sensitive Areas (including road and rail corridors) within Council's LEP in support of a local provision that requires a higher-degree of visual impact assessment for development proposals within these areas.
11. Review and update 'City Gateways and Areas of High Visual Sensitivity' previously mapped by Council in Penrith DCP 2014, Chapter C1 (Section 1.1.2, Figure C1.1), in view of those situated within areas planned for dramatic change in the future due to planned urban transformation (such as in the south of the LGA). New Gateways should also be identified where new urban areas interface with existing rural areas.

5.1.4 Strategy 4 - Measures to improve visual outcomes

More general strategic measures have been developed to improve visual outcomes across the LGA and reduce negative landscape and visual impacts of existing and future development.

It is acknowledged that detailed guidelines are already contained in Council's DCP and other relevant documents, such as the *Nepean River Masterpla*n, that address many of the visual issues that can arise through the development process and other land use management activities of Council.

As such, it not intended to replace or replicate these documents, but instead draw attention to the most strategic measures that can be implemented to improve visual outcomes across the LGA and allow for a check against current practices.

Actions to support this strategy:

12. Review Council's DCP in terms of measures presented in **TABLE 5-4** and incorporate measures and/or strengthen existing controls to improve visual outcomes.
13. Develop criteria for determining when a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be undertaken for proposed developments and incorporate that requirement into Council's DCP.

5.2 Subsequent investigations

The following subsequent investigations are recommended:

14. Acknowledge that the lack of a comprehensive survey of community values is an unavoidable shortcoming of this study at this time, and that such a survey of places and landscapes valued by the community should subsequently occur and be used to update this report.
15. Further assessment of large tracts of vegetation that is in private ownership or otherwise unconserved to better understand its scenic and cultural values and future role ahead of development pressure.

TABLE 5-1: CONSERVE, MAINTAIN OR IMPROVE LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS			
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER UNITS (LCUS)	**Conserve** (inherent natural or heritage elements)	**Maintain** (positive elements of the existing built environment)	**Improve** (negative elements of the existing built or natural environment)
Western forested hills	▪ High level of tree cover within the integrated rural areas	▪ The majority of built elements being recessive and not dominating ▪ Rural development with a rural character and appropriate scale ▪ Regional views possible from some areas over the eastern valleys and plain.	▪ The visual detraction associated with rural properties with substantial amounts of rubbish or storage of elements through a combination of DCP controls and monitoring compliance. ▪ Council DCP controls to ensure rural buildings of an appropriate type (i.e. not overly dominant in scale, particularly outbuildings and the visually-perceived length of houses) and that there is sufficient landscape planting.
South-western hills & valleys	▪ The winding and treed Mulgoa Road ▪ The attractive villages of Wallacia and Mulgoa, particularly their heritage buildings ▪ The high number of heritage rural properties (including Glenmore and Fernhill estates).	▪ The surrounding mostly intact rural setting with a high level of vegetation ▪ Regional views from some locations including particularly spectacular views from the southern section of The Northern Road.	▪ The visual detraction associated with rural properties with substantial amounts of rubbish or storage of elements through a combination of DCP controls and monitoring compliance. ▪ Controls to ensure rural buildings of an appropriate type (i.e. not overly dominant in scale, particularly outbuildings and the visually-perceived length of houses). ▪ Improve visual outcomes for new transitioning areas in south of LGA, including integrating Luddenham shopping area.
South-eastern low hills and valleys	▪ The many vegetated creeklines that provide green breaks across the landscape ▪ The large tract of native vegetation in the north which is Department of Defence land ▪ Existing vegetation due to relatively lower levels than other rural areas.	▪ Regional views towards the Blue Mountains from Mamre Road, Luddenham Road, Elizabeth Drive and the higher residential areas of Mt Vernon.	▪ The visual detraction associated with rural properties with substantial amounts of rubbish or storage of elements such as shipping containers through a combination of DCP controls and monitoring compliance. ▪ Controls to ensure rural development with buildings of an appropriate scale (i.e. not overly dominant in scale, particularly outbuildings and the visually-perceived length of houses).

			▪ Lower level of native vegetation via strengthening of/compliance with Tree Preservation Orders, identifying opportunities for new trees (within new developments/public parkland), minimising vegetation loss with appropriately sited new development and through master planning processes. ▪ Improve existing unattractive and poorly integrated development associated with transitioning from rural to more urban uses, including some light industrial/commercial areas.
Nepean River flats	▪ Views of the Nepean River from close to Penrith's western urban areas and Emu Plains ▪ Regional views from some locations of the forested Blue Mountains, including from Castlereagh Road near Penrith Lakes precinct and further north - future development should consider these view corridors/vistas and seek to ensure that they are taken into account as new development is planned (particularly important if new, raised residential areas are proposed at Penrith Lakes) ▪ The attractive and low scale threshold crossing of the Nepean River at Yarramundi Bridge.	▪ Partially undeveloped land adjacent to large river bend at Emu Plains (consisting of land associated with existing quarry, prison farm and public reserves) presents partly as open space/rural. This land is integral to the relationship of Emu Plains to the river and contributes to the rural setting of this area of Emu Plains. ▪ The landscape character of the northern agricultural flats and rural land uses, that being low scale buildings, a rural setting, large tracts of vegetation, an open space aesthetic (e.g. paddocks) and lower intensity development.	▪ Nepean River Corridor is highly visually-sensitive, particularly alongside the river where seen from M4 Motorway and within main urban area and some parts could be improved with landscape planting. ▪ Controls to ensure rural buildings of an appropriate type (i.e. not overly dominant in scale, particularly outbuildings and the visually-perceived length of houses). ▪ The potential to increase view opportunities of the river, particularly near the city centre and Emu Plains. ▪ Weed infestation in some areas ▪ Visual dominance of light industrial/commercial buildings seen from M4 Motorway towards Nepean River edge (e.g. by increasing landscape screening and appropriate design/building colouring).
Blue Mountains foothills	▪ The strong forested western edge that forms part of the foothills to the Blue Mountains ▪ Regional views to the east over Penrith and the Cumberland Plain.	▪ Mostly low-scale buildings that are visually compatible and not dominant (buildings should not be of a height that interrupts views of foothills).	▪ Improve visual-disconnect between many parts of Emu Plains and the Nepean River (plan for view corridors to be opened-up with redevelopment opportunities, consider viewing platforms and instigate weed management).

Northern Cumberland Plain	▪ The many vegetated creeklines that provide green breaks across the landscape ▪ Consider increasing the conservation of large tracts of native vegetation that create vegetated backdrops to the surrounding rural areas, villages and major roads. ▪ A high level of trees in many rural areas.	▪ Mostly low-scale buildings in the rural areas ▪ Any future development should be sited so as to not block view corridors of Blue Mountains along west-east running streets.	▪ The visual detraction associated with rural properties with substantial amounts of rubbish or storage elements through a combination of DCP controls and monitoring compliance. ▪ Controls to ensure rural development with buildings of an appropriate type (i.e. not overly dominant in scale, particularly outbuildings and the visually-perceived length of houses). ▪ Opportunities for vistas towards the Blue Mountains on the western side of the low north-south running ridge, particularly from east-west orientated roads (if re-development occurs). ▪ Improve the planning of some commercial/industrial uses which can appear out of place, particularly where located away from the smaller settlements, or of a dominant scale when within them, which detracts from the rural character. ▪ Prepare masterplans for the rural villages of Castlereagh, Llandilo and Londonderry, focussing on defining appropriate village boundaries and responding to landscape character.
Central rural hills	▪ The remnant orchards on the higher hills on the southern side are particularly attractive and also quite unique in this part of Sydney. However, it is recognised that future planning may need to consider its future role and viability. ▪ The vegetated creekline alongside the M4 Motorway which serves to limit views from it and acts as a green corridor.	▪ Opportunities for vistas towards the Blue Mountains from some of the higher areas on both sides of the M4 Motorway ▪ The rural uses which create a green break between the nearest urban edge of Penrith and rural uses further south, with this particularly associated with the land on the southern side of the M4 Motorway (or if future urban extension is considered then investigate other measures to achieve this).	▪ Any future development should be sited so as to not block the view corridors along west-east running streets and ideally orientate any new streets to maximise the view corridors. ▪ Higher areas and those close to M4 Motorway should be carefully managed with any future development. ▪ A Master Plan should be prepared to guide any future development (refer **TABLE 5-3**).

Central urban area (note Table 5-4 includes more general strategies for urban areas)	▪ Regional views from high points and where view corridors are possible (such as across Parker Street Reserve).	▪ Maintain regional vista opportunities over the city centre from higher areas to east through ensuring buildings are limited to an appropriate height ▪ Surrounding rural areas and tracts of native vegetation provide green breaks, differentiate urban areas and create visual relief. The development of any new urban areas around the main urban boundaries should consider alternative green breaks if these are eroded or lost.	▪ Improve the visual-disconnect between the city centre and the Nepean River (identify opportunities when sites are re-developed to open-up views and public access). ▪ If re-development opportunities arise create new visual corridors orientated towards the Blue Mountains escarpment ▪ Improve poor presentation of some development alongside Castlereagh Road next to the city centre (plan for better outcomes with re-development opportunities and increase street trees and landscaping) ▪ Number of street trees within established and new urban areas through a coordinated street tree planting program. ▪ Any development on areas on either side of the riverbank that are seen from the river and the M4 Motorway should be of high visual quality ▪ Improve important landscape features, vistas/view corridors and major viewpoints identified across the central urban area LCU (refer to **FIGURE 2-4** and **FIGURE 3-1**) when considering: 1) the impact of future development proposals and associated opportunities to improve visual outcomes in general and in the public domain 2) planning for widescale public domain improvements instigated by Council (such as street tree planting, other streetscape landscape improvements and embellishing of public reserves); and 3) managing the bulk and scale of built form within identified view corridors through planning controls (e.g. building height and FSR standards).

TABLE 5-2: PENRITH'S SIGNIFICANT SCENIC & CULTURAL LANDSCAPES (REFER FIGURE 4-1)		
SIGNIFICANT SCENIC AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES	**Important characteristics to protect and/or enhance**	**Other recommendations**
SL 1 - Mulgoa Valley	▪ The winding and treed Mulgoa Road ▪ The attractive villages of Wallacia and Mulgoa, particularly their heritage buildings ▪ A high number of heritage rural properties (including Glenmore and Fernhill estates) and any views from Mulgoa Road ▪ The surrounding mostly intact rural setting with a high level of vegetation ▪ The visual separation of Wallacia and Mulgoa that is enhanced through a change in landform and the intervening rural landscape.	▪ A Master Plan should be prepared for Mulgoa Road, in consultation with the RMS, to ensure the unique characteristics are identified and protected through any future upgrading projects, particularly its tree border and alignment. ▪ A Master Plan, or similar, should be prepared for the entire valley that: ➢ further defines which land should remain rural/ undeveloped ➢ Protects the surrounding rural setting, ensuring green breaks remain to the north and south and around Mulgoa and Wallacia ▪ The visual separation of Wallacia and Mulgoa should be protected from future development that would erode its characteristics. ▪ Western forested hills area (western side of valley) - implement controls to ensure rural development with buildings of an appropriate type (i.e. not overly dominant in scale, particularly outbuildings and the visually-perceived length of houses) as well as limiting tree clearance.
Mulgoa (within SL1 Mulgoa Valley)	▪ The many heritage buildings and properties throughout the village ▪ The strong and almost intact triangular landscape formed by Fernhill, Saint Thomas' Church and Cox Cottage is considered quite unique and of state heritage significance. ▪ The meandering, narrow nature of Mulgoa Road, flanked in many parts by mature trees is also a crucial part of its character.	▪ A Master Plan should be prepared for Mulgoa and surrounding area that further defines which land should remain rural/undeveloped, key parts of that plan should focus on: ➢ Retention of the character of Mulgoa Road, recognition and protection of the view corridors between Fernhill, Saint Thomas' Church and Cox Cottage and views of them from Mulgoa Road ➢ Protection of the surrounding rural setting, ensuring an obvious visual break remains between it and the urban area.
Wallacia (within SL1 Mulgoa Valley)	▪ The village of Wallacia is also important for its heritage values and many heritage buildings and properties, including the dominant and well-recognised Wallacia Hotel. The village is in a pleasant rural setting at the base of the mountains, with the	▪ A Master Plan should be prepared for Wallacia that further defines which land should remain rural/undeveloped. Key parts of that plan should focus on: ➢ Retention of the character of Mulgoa Road where it approaches

	Nepean River situated within the gorge to the west. There are also dense corridors of native vegetation to its west and east which have served to limit the village's expansion and create a unique setting.	from the north, including the creek threshold which heralds the main entry from this direction ➢ Protection of the surrounding rural setting, ensuring an obvious visual break remains between it and the urban area. ➢ Retention of the rural break between Mulgoa and Wallacia.
SL2 - Nepean River Corridor	▪ The recreational/semi-rural area that remains on the visually-distinct river bend at Emu Plains ▪ The bordering of the river corridor with agricultural flats and rural land uses in the north ▪ Views of the Nepean River from close to Penrith's western urban areas and Emu Plains ▪ Regional views from some locations of the forested Blue Mountains ▪ The attractive and low scale threshold crossing of the Nepean River at Yarramundi Bridge.	▪ Some areas require environmental management due to weed invasion, particularly along the river ▪ Investigate ways to improve potential views of the Nepean River near Emu Plains and Penrith's city centre's western edge ▪ Improve prevalence of light-industrial/commercial warehouse buildings that can be seen alongside the M4 Motorway between Castlereagh Road and the Nepean River edge (built form controls/increased landscaping).
SL3 - Northern Nepean River/Castlereagh Road	▪ Views across the rural river flats in the direction of the Nepean River with the Blue Mountains in the background ▪ The dominance of rural land uses and buildings of a low scale ▪ The most intact example of Penrith's cultural association with its agricultural heritage.	▪ A Master Plan should be prepared for the northern section of Castlereagh Road, in consultation with the RMS, to ensure the unique characteristics are identified and protected through any future upgrading projects.
SL4 - Northern Low-hill Backdrop/ Castlereagh Road	▪ High extent of native trees ▪ The dominance of rural land uses and buildings mostly of a low scale	Consider controls to restrict tree clearing, specify building envelopes and restrict the potential dominance of built elements such as extensively large homes, particularly on the most visible part of the ridgeline.
SL5 - Castlereagh Junction (Hinxman Road and Post Office Road)	▪ The treed, triangular land situated within the three roads as a central focus ▪ Keeping low scale and high amenity development in close vicinity, with future uses complementing the dominant buildings such as the school and hall.	▪ A master plan should be developed that provides appropriate planning to draw together the school, public reserve, and triangular area in a consolidated way that enhances the visual amenity.

SL6 - Northern Road Regional View Corridor	▪ Elevated, panoramic views are possible of the Blue Mountains, which are enhanced by a rural landscape in the foreground and minimal intervention by built elements.	▪ Any future development should be sited so as not to block vistas by being set back from the road and of a low height until where the land starts to drop away to the west. Alternatively, it may be possible to allow some development and maintain appropriately located view corridors. More detailed investigations should occur to support any planned development proposals.
Large tracts of native vegetation – National Parks and Reserves	▪ These include areas of vegetation are on the forested hills to the west of Penrith, including those at the foothills of the Blue Mountains in Emu Plains, as well as reserves in the Mulgoa Valley and other parts of the LGA. ▪ Their scenic significance lies in their role as forming part of the vegetated backdrop to parts of Penrith, the Mulgoa Valley and from major transport corridors.	▪ These areas already have substantial protections yet in some cases there may be degraded areas that could be improved with rehabilitation and management.
Large tracts of native vegetation – Other areas	▪ All large tracts of native vegetation have a scenic value due to their relative uncommonness, as most parts of the LGA have been cleared, with the larger tracts particularly notable.	▪ The edges alongside major roads are the most visible and therefore contribute most to the rural and treed character of parts of Penrith and should be considered with any proposed development. ▪ Degraded areas should be improved with appropriate rehabilitation and management.
Major Creeklines	▪ Major creeklines have an important scenic role in maintaining green breaks across a rural landscape and visually separating urban areas from each other. ▪ Areas with larger native trees, low weed presence and a visible creekline are likely to be the most scenic.	▪ Degraded areas should be improved with appropriate rehabilitation and management.

TABLE 5-3: HIGHLY VISUALLY-SENSITIVE LANDSCAPES (REFER FIGURE 4-1)		
VISUALLY-SENSITIVE LANDSCAPES (VSLS)	**Reasons for High Visual-Sensitivity**	**Strategic measures to improve visual outcomes**
VSL1 – Orchard Hills: Views from the M4 Motorway southward across Orchard Hills	An area that forms part of a visual green break to Penrith's main urban area yet is likely to be subject to re-development pressure due to its location on the urban fringe. The rural uses which create a green break between the nearest urban edge of Penrith and rural uses further south. The remnant orchards on the higher hills on the southern side are particularly attractive and also quite unique in this part of Sydney.	▪ It is recognised that future planning may need to consider its future role and viability of the rural use. If so, a Master Plan should be prepared to guide any future development, including: ➢ Ensuring any future development seen from the M4 Motorway, or on the more visible, elevated parts, is of a high visual quality and of a scale and type suitable for this location. ➢ Any future development should be sited so as to not block the view corridors along west-east running streets and ideally orientate any new streets to maximise the view corridors. ➢ Its role as a green break to urban/rural uses further south should be considered, and how maintaining at least a partial green break can still be achieved.
VSL2 – Emu Plains flats: Views across the northern fringe of Emu Plains	Views across this site from the northern fringe of Emu Plains contribute to the rural setting of Penrith. It is also situated on a major river bend with potentially high visibility.	▪ Any future development of the river bend location at Emu Plains should consider its high visual-sensitivity and opportunity to improve visual and public connections to the river.
VSL3 – M4/Nepean River eastern interface: Views from the Nepean River crossing toward Penrith, Regentville and Jamisontown	M4/Nepean River eastern interface: Views from the Nepean River crossing toward Penrith, Regentville and Jamisontown which is quite visible from the M4 Motorway.	▪ The visual dominance of light-industrial/commercial warehouse buildings that can be seen alongside the M4 Motorway between Castlereagh Road and the Nepean River edge, through increased landscape planting and built form controls.
VSL4 - South of Glenmore Park	An area on the urban fringe which is just outside the identified	▪ At this location the top of the Mulgoa Valley flattens out

	Mulgoa Valley boundary, yet could potentially be seen from parts of the lower Valley.	yet could potentially be seen from parts of the valley. This location should be subject to more detailed assessment of its potential visibility to the valley should re-development be proposed, and appropriate controls be identified to minimise any visual impact to Mulgoa Valley.
VSL5 – Near intersection of The Northern Road and Park Road	At this location the top of the Mulgoa Valley flattens out yet could potentially be seen from parts of the valley.	▪ At this location the top of the Mulgoa Valley flattens out yet could potentially be seen from parts of the valley. This location should be subject to more detailed assessment of its potential visibility to the valley should re-development be proposed, and appropriate controls be identified to minimise any visual impact to Mulgoa Valley.

TABLE 5-4: STRATEGIC MEASURES TO IMPROVE VISUAL OUTCOMES ACROSS LGA		
LAND USES	**Visual detractors**	**Strategic measures to improve visual outcomes**
Areas in transition – planning new urban areas	1. Poor visual outcomes in new residential areas and the interface with surrounding land uses.	▪ Maintain visual breaks between surrounding land use areas to reduce the perception of urban sprawl (e.g. via green breaks such as along creeklines and higher parts of the landform). ▪ Plan for attractive streets with sufficient space for large street trees (at least on one side) or other adequate landscape buffers. ▪ Identify and highlight visual corridors to surrounding attractive views, through measures such as aligning streets towards vistas of the Blue Mountains escarpment. ▪ Priority should also be given to planting street trees along ridgelines to increase trees in these visually prominent locations. ▪ Where identified as particularly important, such as where a location has high landscape and/or scenic values, consider detailed requirements for building design and materials to ensure a final urban character that is compatible and of high amenity.
	2. Substantial loss of existing vegetation which takes many years to replace (if at all).	▪ Loss of trees should be actively avoided through the initial design process and then carried through to subsequent design stages. It is often possible to reduce the need for clearing through master planning and a multi-disciplinary design process. For example, bushfire restrictions and road layout design can cause tree removal, and that may be lessened with better design coordination. ▪ Substantial trees should be identified on site surveys and design measures used to retain as many trees as possible through incorporating these trees into open space systems and as street trees. ▪ Commitment to a coordinated street tree planting program and increase of trees in public spaces.
	3. Ensuring areas with higher visibility are managed appropriately if future re-development is planned.	▪ Require a Visual Impact Assessment when areas with a high visibility/sensitivity are identified for potential re-development.

Existing urban areas	4. Incremental tree loss from private land in established urban areas, resulting in a net overall loss that is not being adequately replaced.	▪ Loss of trees should be actively avoided and building techniques encouraged that minimise tree loss (such as by using pier construction). ▪ Sometimes trees on private land may be identified as important in one section of Council, yet a lack of coordination may lead to other departments approving development not compatible with tree retention. A greater emphasis on tree protection and coordination across departments should be a priority. ▪ Opportunities to nominate the retention of important trees during the development assessment process should be taken where they arise. In such cases, a modest infringement in terms of required setbacks, heights or footprints should be considered as a means to negotiate an outcome that retains established trees.
	5. Inadequate tree protection.	▪ It is understood that Council's Significant Tree Register has not been closely maintained and updated over time. It is recommended that measures undertaken to improve that system, including a greater emphasis on identifying important trees in consultation with the local community. ▪ Consider public education of the importance of trees, including biodiversity benefits and climate moderation.
Major transport corridors (generally mapped as highly-visually-sensitive in Figure 4-1)	6. Poor visual presentation along major roads	▪ Major new developments proposed immediately alongside major transport corridors, or easily seen from them, should be subject to a detailed Visual Impact Assessment and appropriate safeguards put in place. ▪ Commercial/industrial development in these locations should be treated with non-garish (i.e. overly bright) colours, have limited and not visually- overwhelming signage and increase amenity through appropriate landscaping, especially large trees. ▪ Commitment and planning to increase street trees along all major roads. ▪ Design of street lighting as minimal as possible so as not to present more of an urban night time environment. ▪ Active consultation and coordination with the NSW Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) over existing and future planning for their roads, particularly where it is likely that upgrades are likely to occur. It is essential that Council make clear where certain characteristics have been identified as important to local character such as along Mulgoa Road. Early and active communication is more likely to result in positive results, and

		ideally should involve the RMS' Urban Design Unit. ▪ Design new urban areas so that rear fences do not face major roads and improve some places where this already occurs through landscaping.
Rural areas	7. Potential for visual impact due to loss of rural character and decrease in existing scenic quality.	▪ In rural areas, roadside trees and other roadside vegetation should be retained to maintain the rural character of the road landscape. ▪ Where major developments are proposed, such as tourist-related businesses, assessment should consider: views from major roads and other sensitive viewpoints, that any proposed development is of a scale, character and colour that is compatible with the surrounding setting, and opportunities for screening and landscaped setbacks. ▪ Restrictions on building materials and colours so that in areas with a high degree of vegetation, muted natural colours and non-reflective materials are used (i.e. no glass balustrades and silver roofs). ▪ All endeavours be made to retain any existing large native trees that are forward of building envelopes to partially screen views from surrounding roads, particularly major roads. Restrictions on exterior lighting to muted tones.
	8. Lack of definition of the edges of rural villages, inappropriate development within them and erosion of rural and attractive characteristics	▪ All villages in the rural areas would benefit from a Master Plan that defines the boundaries, consolidates the urban core, identifies improvements such as street tree planting and retains appropriate green breaks and vegetated backdrops to the surrounding rural area.
Public reserves	9. New development proposals that affect public reserves require careful consideration and design to minimise any visual impact.	▪ Careful design that acknowledges the type of existing recreation resources and surrounding development and how introducing new elements would relate to these in terms of scale and character. ▪ Actively avoiding any loss of existing trees and investigating opportunities to introduce new plantings.
Heritage properties	10. Ensuring the visual curtilage of heritage items and precincts is protected	▪ When assessing impacts to heritage items or precincts, consideration should be given to ensuring the surrounding setting (or visual 'curtilage') is not eroded or negatively impacted. Appropriate measures to address include: adequate screening, maintaining view corridors to and from the item or precinct, and

		increasing or protecting heritage plantings. ▪ Any trees on the Significant Tree Register, and others that may contribute to the overall setting, should be retained.

6. References

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APPENDIX A

STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE - SIGNIFICANT SCENIC & CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Statement of Significance: Significant Landscape (SL) 1: Mulgoa Valley

Level of Significance – Regional or higher



View of the winding, treed Mulgoa Road



View from northern interface of valley near Glenmore Park

Summary of identified Scenic & Cultural Significance criteria:

- High scenic values
- High visibility
- Recognised cultural values
- Regional views
- Important as 'green break' & vegetated backdrop

The landscape of Mulgoa Valley winds through the valley from the historic village of Wallacia in the south, north through the historic village of Mulgoa and to the urban fringe of Penrith near Glenmore Park. It includes the upper parts of the western forested hills which have been identified as a separate Landscape Character Unit (LCU).

The landscape is characterised by its predominantly rural land use, comprising creek flats, undulating agricultural land, wooded hills and escarpment, and large estate gardens. The backdrop of the Nepean River and Blue Mountains contributes to this landscape. Mulgoa Valley includes the rural villages of Mulgoa and Wallacia, which also have important cultural and natural heritage qualities. The Mulgoa Valley landscape is widely recognised for its scenic and cultural values.

Mulgoa Nature Reserve is situated where the shale-sandstone boundary occurs in the north, resulting in unique shale cliffs and the Shale Hill Woodlands.

There are six rural heritage properties that are listed on the State Heritage Register, with views to some of those properties from Mulgoa Road, such as Fernhill and Glenmore.

Statement of Significance:

General:

The Mulgoa Valley landscape is widely recognised for its scenic, natural and cultural values which are numerous. The valley is an important landscape buffer between the Blue Mountains National Park and the suburbs of Western Sydney. The backdrop of the Nepean River and Blue Mountains contributes to this landscape.

Mulgoa Valley includes the rural villages of Mulgoa and Wallacia, with each having important scenic, cultural and natural heritage qualities.

There are six rural heritage properties listed on the State Heritage Register with views to some from Mulgoa Road, such as Fernhill and Glenmore.

The valley also has abundant natural values, such as the Mulgoa Nature Reserve situated where the shale-sandstone boundary occurs in the north, resulting in unique shale cliffs. The attractive Mulgoa Road provides a rare



View of Fernhill from Mulgoa Road



View from Fernhill to east over Mulgoa Valley

Heritage

Mulgoa Valley has a post-settlement history that has been documented in detail by others and hence this statement only provides a brief summary. For further detail refer to the reference list in the main volume.

Mulgoa Valley 'has played an important role in the history of the State's development. From 1810, the Valley was a key area of European settlement and it became closely linked to the activities of the wealthy Cox family and other prominent figures of the colony. The Precinct's heritage significance lies in the surviving sites, buildings, gardens and pastoral landscapes developed by the Cox family. These features provide some of the best remaining physical evidence in NSW of the manner in which the country was settled and the impact that this had on the landscape.' (from DCP).

There are six rural heritage properties that are listed on the State Heritage Register:

- Fairlight Homestead
- Fernhill
- Glenmore (now within a golf course)
- Glenleigh
- Saint Thomas' Church
- Cox Cottage.

There are views to some of those properties from Mulgoa Road, although others, such as Saint Thomas' Church and Cox Cottage, are quite hidden from view largely due to vegetation. 'Historic curtilages' for the heritage properties are defined in the DCP and Penrith LEP maps 'Vistas of Heritage Items'.

opportunity to travel through a pleasant rural valley so close to Sydney.

<u>Mulgoa and surroundings:</u>

Mulgoa village has been widely recognised for its significance, which relates to its cultural heritage, rural setting and number of heritage properties and buildings.

In particular, the strong and almost intact triangular landscape formed by Fernhill, Saint Thomas' Church and Cox Cottage (north of village) is considered quite unique and of state heritage significance. The landscape setting is summarised in this excerpt (from NSW Office of Environment and Heritage website):

> *The importance of the group of 3 related sites, Fernhill, St. Thomas' Church and the Cottage is twofold: the landscape is exceptionally significant in its own right irrespective of the buildings and is as important as the architectural, historic and visual relationships of the buildings themselves.*
>
> *These three sites retain their original visual relationship to each other and demonstrate the ambitions and changes in wealth and status of an important early colonial family (the Coxes) from 1810-1880s. The landscape between the Cottage, the Church and*



Shale cliffs of Mulgoa Nature Reserve seen from Mulgoa Road



Views over south -western side of Mulgoa Valley to Blue Mountains

Landform & Vegetation:

In the south-west corner, within the Western Forested Hills Landscape Character Unit (LCU), is the Hawkesbury Sandstone geology that continues into the Blue Mountains National Park. The landform rises from the valley floor to steeper upper slopes to a height of around 200mAHD. This upper area supports 'Shale-Sandstone Transition Forest with a high sandstone influence'. The main tree species include Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*), Grey Gum (*E. punctata*), stringybarks (*E. globoidea*, *E. eugenioides*) and ironbarks (*E. fibrosa* and *E. crebra).* The native trees in this area are quite tall (up to approximately 25m) with a low to moderate height shrub understorey.

Over the valley floor shales are present, with Mulgoa Creek winding south to north along it. Flanking the creek is the vegetation of Alluvial Woodland, marked mostly by the River Oak and its distinct grey-green colouring. Other parts of the valley support Shale Plain Woodland, with these rich soils leading to the tall Eucalypts (up to 30-40m) that are a dominant landscape characteristic across the lower valley and along Mulgoa Road.

Further north around the Mulgoa Nature Reserve the shale-sandstone boundary occurs, resulting in the reserve's unique shale cliffs and the Shale Hill Woodlands. The shale cliffs can be seen from Mulgoa Road.

Mulgoa Road

Council's DCP states that:

"An important part of the Mulgoa Valley Precinct and appreciating its landscape is the drive along Mulgoa Road. Roadside vegetation, hills, gullies, bends and the changing views of heritage items and the landscape are the main attributes" The DCP controls seek to ensure that Mulgoa Road and these attributes are protected.

Fernhill has remained virtually unaltered since the 1850s. This landscape is a unique piece of evidence of a very rare attitude in the mid-nineteenth century towards the natural environment.

It is noteworthy that there are views across the eastern precinct of Fernhill from Mulgoa Road of its rural setting. This rural character is important to the rural landscape setting of Mulgoa and the road approach to the village along Mulgoa Road.

Wallacia

The village of Wallacia is important for its scenic values and the many heritage buildings and properties throughout the village, including the dominant and well-recognised Wallacia Hotel.

The village is within a pleasant rural setting at the base of the Blue Mountains, with the Nepean River within a valley to its west. There are also dense corridors of native vegetation to its west and east which have served to limit the village's expansion and its layout, forming part of its rural setting and providing a valuable vegetated backdrop.



Mulgoa Public School forms part of the village entry from the north



Wallacia Hotel is a landmark of Wallacia

Four landscape elements contribute to Mulgoa Road being unique - its narrow, two, lane nature; its winding up over hills and gullies to follow the natural landform; the fringing of Eucalypts and the views afforded of rural and heritage properties.

Western Forested Hills:

This landscape wraps along the western side of the Mulgoa Valley and is intrinsic to the valley's landscape, forming a forested backdrop crucial to the overall setting of the valley. The parts developed as rural have in most cases a high degree of tree cover. This vegetation serves to visually blend these areas with the surrounding forest in the Blue Mountains National Park, with the hills appearing quite undisturbed when viewed from some outside viewpoints, such as along Mulgoa Road between Mulgoa and Wallacia.

Scenic conservation issues to address:

- The environmental qualities of water courses particularly the Nepean River and Mulgoa and Littlefields Creeks
- Management of riparian corridors, where possible, as a continuous corridor
- Measures to maintain view corridors and vistas to heritage items
- Poor and dominant built form in some areas
- The long term landscape character of Mulgoa Road which is likely to be in danger of change in the future
- Maintaining the physical and visual separation between Mulgoa and Wallacia, ensuring urban development does not encroach into this buffer.
- Ensuring village entries are attractive
- Managing southern edge of Wallacia on shared LGA boundary.
- Maintaining tree cover on Western Forest Hills.

Key landscape elements of significance:

a) The meandering, narrow nature of Mulgoa Road, and its alignment that follows the natural landform flanked in many parts by mature trees is a crucial part of the character

b) The surrounding mostly intact rural setting and high number of heritage rural properties

c) Vistas and view corridors to: the Blue Mountains to the west, across the valley from some viewing locations on either side; and views over heritage landscapes and buildings

d) The rural setting surrounding Mulgoa when approaching from either end of Mulgoa Road (including views into Fernhill).

e) The physical and visual separation of Mulgoa and Wallacia to each other and other urban areas.

f) The rural setting of Wallacia village, which is particularly appreciated when approaching/exiting on northern side where the ascent/descent from the hill, and over the threshold creek, is integral to its landscape setting.

g) The western approach to the valley along Silverdale Road bridge is also an attractive and recognisable entry point to Mulgoa Valley.



Poor presentation of shops in Mulgoa detracts from heritage character



Rural areas need to remain visually integrated

Absorption capacity for change – Mulgoa Valley in general has a low absorption capacity for change. New development should be carefully considered with the intention of minimising visual change seen from Mulgoa Road and places that are visible from prime viewing locations seen across the rural areas.

Visual sensitivity – The landscape has a high visual sensitivity to any change. Careful planning is required to maintain its unique landscape character in the longer term and the valued setting of the heritage properties. Mulgoa village is also particularly visually sensitive, with the entry points being a highly visible part of the journey along Mulgoa Road that affects the experienced landscape character. The northern entry of Wallacia is also very visible when descending the hill and sensitive to visual change.

Detractors - Areas of weed infestation, low levels of riparian vegetation in many parts, over-scale development, poor presentation of some built form (e.g. Mulgoa shops), rubbish/shipping containers seen in some prevalent locations on private properties.

It is to be noted that Penrith DCP contains substantial controls to manage many of the current visual detractors seen across the valley. Better implementation and compliance with these controls is required.

In terms of the western forested hills:

h) Dense, tall native tree cover over an expansive area, including within the Blue Mountains National Park and within the Nepean Gorge along the Nepean River to the west

i) High level of tree cover within the integrated rural areas on the western forested hills - which means that the integrity of the visual (undeveloped) backdrop is relatively intact when seen from some outside viewpoints, such as along Mulgoa Road between Mulgoa and Wallacia.

j) The majority of built elements being recessive and not dominating

k) Regional views possible from some areas over the eastern valleys and plain.

Statement of Significance: Significant Landscape (SL) 2: Nepean River

Level of Significance – Regional or higher



Yandhai Nepean Crossing pedestrian bridge offers panoramic river views



View of Nepean River looking south from Yandhai Nepean Crossing pedestrian bridge

Summary of identified Scenic & Cultural Significance criteria:

- High scenic values
- High visibility
- Regional views
- Recognised cultural values
- Important to urban setting & as 'green break'

This landscape covers the entire Nepean River corridor through the LGA, from Wallacia in the south through to Yarramundi Crossing in the north. The whole of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system was recognised for its scenic significance in the *Hawkesbury-Nepean Scenic Quality Study* (NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 1996).

The landscape includes the land along the immediate river edges for a width of approximately 250 - 300m either side, yet the wider visual catchment includes the area that can be seen from the river.

Landform & vegetation:

The river is by its nature linear in form, flowing from the southern edge of the LGA near Wallacia through to the northern tip of the LGA at Yarramundi Bridge. The landscape changes dramatically just south of Emu Plains and the M4 Motorway, marking the change from the sandstone gorge to the south and the beginning of the flatter floodplain extending north. A substantial river bend occurs north of Emu Plains.

The Nepean flows through the Blue Mountains National Park in the south-west of the LGA, within a deep V-shaped gorge that cuts through the Hawkesbury Sandstone. Vegetation here is 'Shale-Sandstone Transition Forest with a high sandstone influence'. The native trees in this area are quite tall (up to approximately 25m) with a low to moderate height shrub

Statement of Significance:

The significance of the Nepean River is of a regional level or higher. The Nepean has inherent natural values; its majestic presence, recreational opportunities and the variety of landscapes through which it passes significantly enhance the LGA.

It has significant cultural and historical connections and has long been valued for its fertile floodplains. Post settlement, Penrith developed as an agricultural town on the eastern bank of the Nepean River. The fertile river flats were most eagerly sought for cultivation and it was a major transport corridor for transporting produce, livestock and travellers.

'*Prior to 1789, the land district around Castlereagh and the Nepean River was the territory of a number of neighbouring Aboriginal groups...The rivers and creeks were a valued natural resource to the local people, providing food, drinking water, swimming and transport* (Godden Mackay Logan, 2008).



View of Nepean River from Emu Plains riverbank



View of M4 Motorway bridge, Emu Plains side

understorey. Water Gums occur on the sandstone edges close to the river, with the taller Eucalypts on the valley slopes above.

The northern floodplain is an attractive agricultural landscape, with steep embankments transitioning to flatter floodplain areas. Flanking the Nepean River are alluvial flats supporting the River Oaks of Alluvial Woodland. In many places alongside the river, views of the waterway are obstructed by vegetation, including weeds.

Scenic value and vistas:

The river's scenic value is increased by the presence of the Blue Mountains forming a strong, vegetated backdrop. There are long views available of the river corridor from some locations including from bridges, riverside parts of Emu Plains and west of the city centre. The Nepean has inherent natural values and its majestic presence, recreational opportunities and the variety of landscapes through which it passes, significantly enhance the LGA.

Scenic conservation issues to address:

- Some areas require environmental management due to weed invasion
- Ways to improve potential views of the Nepean River near Emu Plains and Penrith's city centre's western edge
- Dominance of some large built forms, such as light-industrial/commercial warehouse buildings alongside the M4 Motorway between Castlereagh Road and the Nepean River edge
- The low degree of riparian vegetation along the river which is important for the conservation of scenic quality of the river channel.

Absorption capacity for change - The Nepean River has a low absorption capacity for change. New development of substantial scale is likely to detract from the visual dominance of the river

Key landscape elements of significance include:

a) Views of the Nepean River from Penrith urban areas and Emu Plains and bridge crossings of the M4 Motorway, Great Western Highway, railway and Yandhai Nepean Crossing pedestrian bridge
b) Regional views from some locations alongside the river of the forested Blue Mountains
c) The attractive threshold crossings of the Nepean at Yarramundi Bridge (in north) and Silverdale Road Bridge (south at Wallacia)
d) Penrith Weir
e) The northern agricultural flats and rural land uses alongside many areas north of Penrith Lakes that in general maintain a low development type and scale that does not overly dominate the existing landscape character (note - some of this is within **Significant Landscape (SL) 3**).

Visual sensitivity – The landscape has a high visual sensitivity. The riverbanks in particular are highly visible and a sensitive natural landscape.

Detractors - Areas of weed infestation, low levels of riparian vegetation in many parts, over-scale development, limited visibility of river.

Statement of Significance: Significant Landscape (SL) 3: Northern Nepean River/Castlereagh Road

Level of Significance – Local



Attractive rural areas west of Castlereagh Road



View towards Blue Mountains over agricultural flats

Summary of identified Scenic & Cultural Significance criteria:

- High scenic values
- High visibility (Castlereagh Road)
- Recognised cultural values
- Regional views (Blue Mountains)

This landscape comprises an area north of Castlereagh junction to the northern tip of the LGA. It centres around the linear corridor formed by Castlereagh Road, with the Nepean River to the west and rural areas and large tracts of native vegetation to the east.

The dominant land use is rural, consisting of a mix of turf farms, equine uses, some cultivation and rural homes. It is an attractive agricultural landscape, with steep embankments transitioning to flatter floodplain areas.

It has significant cultural and historical connections and includes part of the Nepean River's fertile floodplains. Castlereagh Road has historically been a major transport corridor connecting Penrith to areas such as Windsor and Richmond, transporting produce, livestock and travellers. Castlereagh Road is part of a scenic drive that traces the Nepean River and connects north to Hawkesbury LGA and forms a main northern gateway.

Landform & vegetation

The landform varies from the flatter floodplain in the north to undulating in the far south (near Castlereagh junction). The underlying geology encompasses shale, alluvial soils and dune-like sands, leading to varied vegetation communities:

Statement of Significance:

The significance of the Northern Nepean River/ Nepean River/Castlereagh Road is of This area represents a relatively unique landscape in this area of Sydney, that being an attractive agricultural, floodplain landscape that has the Nepean River in some foreground views and the Blue Mountains forming a strong, vegetated backdrop.

The landscape is the most intact example of Penrith's cultural association with its agricultural heritage along the Nepean River.

The landscape's significance is increased by its location along a major road (Castlereagh Road) that traces parallel to the Nepean River and is flanked by a pleasant rural landscape.

This landscape is also physically related to Significant Landscapes (SLs) 4 and 5, and together the three are integral to the overall landscape character and journey along Castlereagh Road north of Penrith city centre.



***The two-lane road width of Castlereagh Road** contributes to the rural character*



Existing turf farms are consistent with the rural character

- In the north, within the Agnes Banks Nature Reserve, is a small patch of Agnes Banks Woodland on dune-like soils
- Closer to the Nepean River are alluvial flats supporting the River Oaks of Alluvial Woodland, with other poorly drained sites away from the river dominated by Swamp Oak, such as a large patch of Castlereagh Swamp Woodland west of Agnes Banks Nature Reserve
- To the east of Castlereagh Road are Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodlands – dominated by Eucalypts of a low height (up to 15m) with a scrubby shrub understorey. Much of this area is highly infested with weeds and dumped rubbish.

Scenic value and vistas:

The landscape's location along this northern gateway to Penrith, which is part of a scenic drive, contributes to its scenic value. Views across the rural river flats in the direction of the Nepean River with the Blue Mountains in the background are a valued view and one that is quite unique. The general absence of dominant built elements means that the attractive open views over a rural landscape mostly remain unspoilt.

Scenic conservation issues to address:

- Some areas of native vegetation (unconserved) require environmental management due to weed invasion and rubbish dumping
- Ways to improve potential views of the Nepean River
- Presentation to Castlereagh Road frontage to maintain an attractive landscape, future changes to the character of this road (e.g. road widening) have the potential to substantially reduce the overall landscape character and scenic quality.

Key landscape elements of significance include:

a) Views across the rural river flats in the direction of the Nepean River with the Blue Mountains in the background
b) The dominance of rural land uses and buildings of a low scale that have allowed a relatively high scenic quality to be retained
c) Almost intact example of Penrith's agricultural heritage in association with the Nepean River
d) Relatively informal landscape character of Castlereagh Road (boundary trees, winding nature and mostly two-lane)
e) The extent of vegetation that is present, including along the eastern edge of this landscape which is formed in parts by the existing large tracts of vegetation.

Absorption capacity for change - The landscape has a low absorption capacity for change. New development of substantial scale is likely to detract from the existing attractive low-scale rural character, high extent of vegetation and vistas to the Blue Mountains. Any new development needs to be carefully planned.

Visual sensitivity – The landscape has a high visual sensitivity. The edges of Castlereagh Road (an identified 'scenic drive') in particular are highly visible and sensitive to change.

Detractors - Areas of weed infestation and degraded native vegetation, urban-like fencing/buildings close to Castlereagh Road.

Statement of Significance: Significant Landscape 4: Castlereagh Junction

Level of Significance – Local



The triangular landscape formed by the three roads creates an attractive unique-shaped space



View across Smith Park to Castlereagh Hall, showing large gums alongside park

Summary of identified Scenic & Cultural Significance criteria:

- High visibility
- Regional views
- Important to setting (of Castlereagh 'centre').

This area is centred around the junction of Castlereagh Road, Hinxman Road and Post Office Road in Castlereagh. The intersection of the roads has created the opportunity for a triangular land parcel with an attractive, treed character.

This open space provides a visual focus to the surrounding community facilities and draws them together. Along the northern edge is the small-scale primary school, with attractive heritage timber buildings, that contributes to the overall setting and acts as a defining edge to the triangle. Nearby to the south is the generous Smith Park, with large Gums along its northern boundary and a war memorial. The trees themselves are of a majestic size and a notable landscape feature seen from Castlereagh Road. On the opposite side of Castlereagh Road is the small, attractive Castlereagh Hall (which was the former Castlereagh Council chambers). The native trees and small scale of built items are essential components of its character.

This landscape is also physically related to **Significant Landscapes (SL) 3 and 5**, and together the three are integral to the overall landscape character and journey along Castlereagh Road north of Penrith city centre.

Scenic conservation issues to address:

- Maintaining visual integrity of junction and its key landscape elements (particularly if road widening is planned).

Statement of Significance:

The junction is a recognised local landmark and is integral to the overall landscape character and journey along Castlereagh Road north of Penrith city centre.

The unusually-shaped, triangular land parcel formed by these three roads has an attractive, treed character and creates a visual focus to the surrounding community facilities. The junction is also located on a slight rise and affords panoramic views over western rural properties and towards the Blue Mountains.

Key landscape elements of significance include:

a) The triangular shaped central land parcel which has a parkland character
b) The reinforcement of this visual focus by surrounding elements which contribute to its notable landscape setting – the primary school, nearby park, war memorial and the community hall
c) Panoramic vistas of the Blue Mountains, which appear in quite close proximity to the west.

Absorption capacity for change - The landscape has a moderate absorption capacity for change, however. new development needs to be carefully planned to minimise visual impact.

Visual sensitivity – The landscape has a high visual sensitivity. Views from Castlereagh Road (an identified 'scenic drive') are highly visible and sensitive to change.

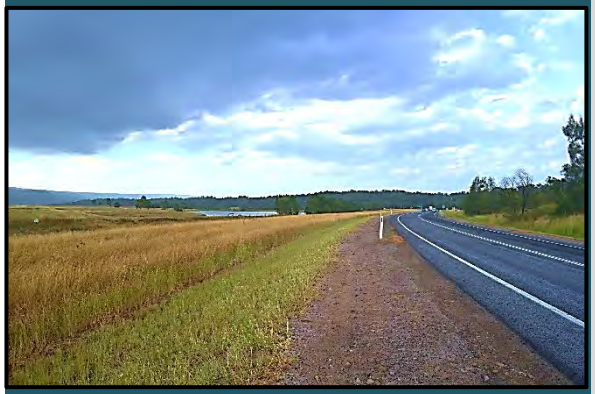
Detractors – Development of poor form such as the existing service station.

Statement of Significance: Significant Landscape 5: Northern Low-hill Backdrop/ Castlereagh Road

Level of Significance – Local



The hill acts as an important vegetated backdrop when seen from Castlereagh Road



The hill wraps around a large bend in Castlereagh Road and defines the skyline, including from parts of Penrith Lakes

Summary of identified Scenic & Cultural Significance criteria:

- High visibility
- Regional views
- Important vegetated backdrop & green break.

This low hill formation is situated to the north of Penrith Lakes, flanking the eastern site of a large bend in Castlereagh Road.

It comprises a mix of dense native vegetation interspersed with housing, mostly of lager lots. The landscape character is dominated by the native trees with most buildings subservient to it. There are opportunities for vistas to the Blue Mountains from elevated parts and the western side.

Landform & vegetation:

The hill landform extends for approximately 3.5km along the eastern side of Castlereagh Road. Its geology is based on shale and supports vegetation that is mostly Shale Plains Woodland, with the dominant Eucalypts of moderate size (15-25m).

Along the base of the hill are alluvial soils supporting mostly Swamp Oaks. There is little understorey where land has been cleared for housing, yet overall the landscape is quite heavily vegetated.

Scenic conservation issues to address:

- Maintaining visual integrity of hill and dominant vegetation cover with built form being recessive.

Absorption capacity for change - The landscape has a low absorption capacity for change. New development of substantial scale is likely to detract from the existing attractive low-scale rural character, high extent of vegetation and vistas to the Blue Mountains and its backdrop role.

Statement of Significance:

This low hill provides a vegetated backdrop to the southern section of Castlereagh Road when travelling north of Castlereagh Road. Importantly from some locations it is also seen at the same time as the Blue Mountains. The hill also forms a green break to areas further east and maintains a green urban edge to this part of Castlereagh Road.

The extent of native vegetation is high and is intrinsic to its scenic value, with scattered rural blocks and houses mostly of low visual dominance that allow the vegetated landform to be prevalent.

This landscape is also physically related to Significant Landscapes 3 and 4, and together the three are integral to the overall landscape character and journey along Castlereagh Road.

Key landscape elements of significance include:

a) High extent of native trees which means from a distance the dark native vegetation dominates views towards this landscape
b) Buildings of a low scale which are generally visually-integrated (although there are some exceptions).

Visual sensitivity – The landscape has a high visual sensitivity. Views from Castlereagh Road (an identified 'scenic drive') are highly visible and sensitive to change.

Detractors - Areas of weed infestation and degraded native vegetation, some relatively clear areas, some dominant buildings seen from Castlereagh Road.

Statement of Significance: Significant Landscape 6: The Northern Road Regional View Corridor

Level of Significance – Local



Vistas of Blue Mountains to west



This section of The Northern Road forms part of the planned rural character entrance to Penrith

Summary of identified Scenic & Cultural Significance criteria:

- High visibility
- Regional views
- Important as a green break to urban areas of Penrith to north.

This landscape covers the area along The Northern Road from near Park Road north to the intersection with the M4 Motorway. This part of the road follows the spine of a local ridgeline that divides two valleys, with Mulgoa Valley falling away to the west.

The landform is quite flat alongside the road and drops away gently on both sides. There is very little vegetation present, with individual native trees seen across the pasture. The open nature of the landscape allows for some of the most panoramic views of the Blue Mountains that are possible within Penrith LGA.

Scenic conservation issues to address:

- Maintaining the integrity of views to the Blue Mountains seen currently over a predominantly undeveloped, rural landscape against development pressure associated with rapid urbanisation of nearby areas
- Future widening/upgrading of The Northern Road which could detract from the existing rural character.

Absorption capacity for change - The landscape has a moderate absorption capacity for change. Any future development should be sited so as not to block vistas by being set back and of a low height until where the land starts to drop away to the west. Alternatively, it may be possible to allow some development and maintain appropriately located view corridors. More

Statement of Significance:

The section from Park Road north towards Littlefields Road is particularly notable as from here elevated, panoramic vistas are available of the Blue Mountains to the west. These mountain vistas are enhanced by the rural landscape in the foreground and minimal intervention by built elements.

Key landscape elements of significance include:

a) Elevated, panoramic vistas of the Blue Mountains to the west
b) Views are confined to an undeveloped, rural landscape in foreground, with Blue Mountains seen in background.
c) Minimal visual intrusion of any urban built elements.

detailed investigations should occur to support any planned development proposals.

Visual sensitivity – The landscape has a high visual sensitivity due to its high visibility along a major road and its elevated location.

Detractors – None at present.