

# Community slams estate

BY MATTHEW KELLY

A DECISION on the Hunter's largest residential housing subdivision at Minmi is likely to be deferred following a meeting that saw residents accuse the developer of destroying local communities and the surrounding environment in the pursuit of profit.

Ten community and City of Newcastle representatives attacked the proposed Minmi Estate during a two hour Joint Regional Planning Panel meeting on Monday afternoon.

The panel is considering separate subdivision applications in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Local Government Areas that make up the latest stage of the \$200 million project proposed by Winten Property.

City of Newcastle and Transport for NSW sought to have the proposal rejected while Lake Macquarie Council argued the project should be deferred.

City of Newcastle warned of a potential conflict between the estate and a planned major new access



Land clearing currently underway on the eastern side of Minmi, which will form part of the housing estate. Picture by Peter Lorimer

road to the Summer Hill Waste Management Centre.

"Our objection is based on its seeming ignorance or disregard for the neighbouring Summerhill Waste Management Centre and the

adverse impact a road that we are advanced in planning will have on the 6000 people who will one day call the estate home," City of Newcastle chief executive Jeremy Bath said.

Minmi resident Christine Baker warned the status of the internationally recognised Hunter Wetlands could be put in jeopardy by the loss of habitat in the wetland's catchment.



The proposed Minmi Estate

"A development of this magnitude should have been better presented to the community so that they could understand the enormity of the project and the detrimental impacts that it will potentially have on the day to day life," she said.

"This is a greedy development; It's a poorly planned urban sprawl without supportive infrastructure and no regard to any previous planning protecting the sanctity of Minmi."

But Winten representative Christina Renner argued that the project was in the public interest and that the proposed development was

consistent with an approved concept plan for Minmi.

She noted that a rezoning process had resulted in 1561 hectares of environmental conservation land to offset the development of the 512 hectare - a three to one ratio.

"This development is of great regional significance. The site's strategic importance is identified through the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 and the Greater Metro Plan 2018. Approval of these applications will unlock a substantial proportion of the Hunter Region's much needed housing stock," she said.

The panel will publish its decision in coming days.