

# Minmi estate's traffic win

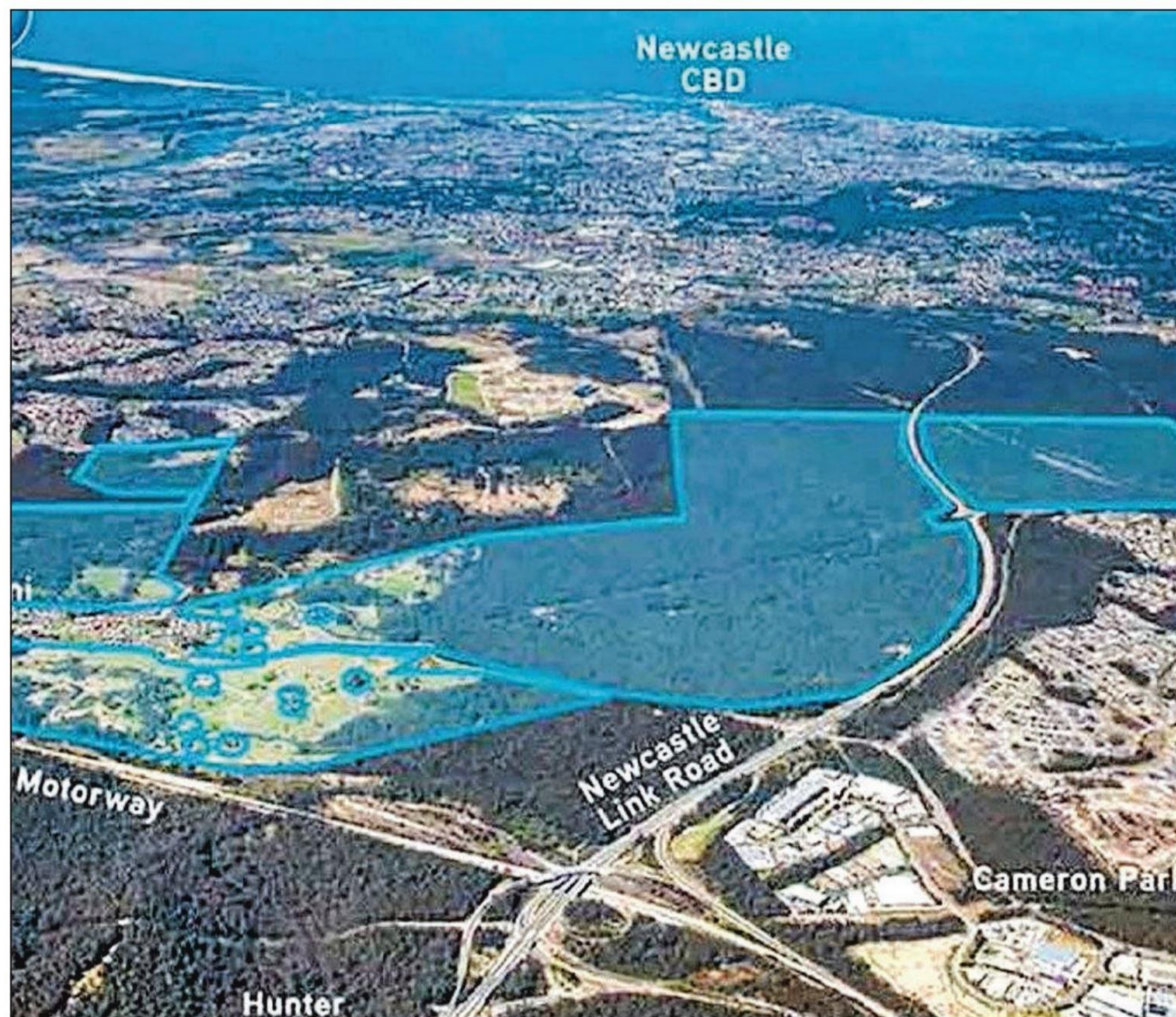
BY MICHAEL PARRIS

THE company behind the massive Minmi residential estate has cleared a major hurdle to the development going ahead after reaching an agreement with Transport for NSW to resolve traffic concerns.

Minutes from a recent Hunter Central Coast Regional Planning Panel briefing refer to an agreement between developer Winten and TfNSW to convert a roundabout on Newcastle Link Road to traffic lights, which would allow half the proposed 2000 housing lots to go ahead.

Winten Property Group won concept approval in 2013 for a 3300-lot subdivision spanning land in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie local government areas. It lodged separate development applications in 2018 for 948 lots in Newcastle and 1064 in Lake Macquarie, but the HCCRPP refused the proposal in December, citing road impacts as a major reason.

Lake Macquarie City Council had recommended the proposal be deferred for



The proposed Winten housing subdivision, in blue, around Minmi and Cameron Park.

further information, while City of Newcastle recommended refusal. Winten applied for a review of the decision this year, and both councils and the planning panel have started reassess-

ing the development application.

Briefing notes from last month's planning panel meeting say TfNSW has "come to a resolution of issues with the applicant and

believe there are no further issues". TfNSW told the meeting that Winten would enter an agreement to contribute financially to converting the link road roundabout at Minmi Road to traffic lights.

"Once it is upgraded the applicant can release 1000 lots across the DAs," the minutes say. "Beyond 2000, other mitigation measures need to be in place or alternatives could be put forward."

TfNSW told the meeting that it had started a broader study of what road improvements were required for the full development to proceed.

The *Newcastle Herald* understands the 1000 lots which could be released under the agreement would be in both council areas on either side of the link road.

The federal government's classification of koalas as an endangered species in early 2022 could prove another hurdle for the developers.

Lake Macquarie council representatives told the briefing that koalas had been "up-listed" since the original development application, which could trigger a requirement for a species impact statement.

"Council understand that there may be a local koala population, meaning the site would be classed as core koala habitat and a koala plan of management would be

required," briefing notes say.

The meeting was told "possible significant impact" on koalas was "considered likely with many more recent records".

The National Parks and Wildlife Service objected to the original development application in Newcastle LGA because it did not satisfy elements of the 2013 concept plan approval in relation to protecting and improving the neighbouring Blue Gum Hills Regional Park.

The twin development applications represent the bulk of a 517-hectare site Winten bought from mining company Coal and Allied in 2015 for \$65 million. Winten took both councils to the Land and Environment Court in 2019 over their deemed refusal of the applications.

In assessing the 2018 development application, City of Newcastle argued the project was not consistent with the concept approval, failed to comply with flood planning requirements and included insufficient information to assess the risk of mine subsidence and impact of traffic noise.