

28 February 2018

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Transport for NSW
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Draft Greater Newcastle Future Transport Plan*.

The Hunter Chapter of Property Council Australia supports the development of the Future Transport Strategy as transparent, long term transport planning is critical to efficient and equitable land management. The Hunter Chapter of the Property Council of Australia also welcomes the detail on key issues that will affect the Hunter's transport and land planning future.

New transport investment, in Greater Newcastle, is critical for economic growth in the region as well as to cater for the increasing population in these areas and the achievement of a 30-minute city. It is also critical for the efficient movement of goods and the productivity of employment land.

As you are aware, the *Draft Greater Newcastle Future Transport Plan* has been released concurrently with draft versions of several interrelated metropolitan-level plans and delivery tools, including the draft Hunter Region Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC), the draft Lower Hunter Urban Development Program preliminary data, and the draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.

We will provide separate submissions in response to each of these initiatives separately, but we recognise that they cannot be considered in isolation. We urge the NSW Government to ensure the overlapping policy and operational aspects are considered collectively before they are finalised.

The Property Council strongly supports the stated objectives in the draft plan. We would, however, wish to place on the record our disappointment that there is no concrete commitment to either funding or timeframes.

Implementation of the Transport Plan

The Property Council welcomes the strategic planning outlined in the plan for the region. We note the plan outlines ongoing investigation into initiatives that would benefit the Greater

Newcastle region and the Hunter Chapter of the Property Council and its members would appreciate continuing to have ongoing input.

A local Transport NSW strategic planning team that is based in the Hunter should be formed to implement the Plan. This ensures that planning occurs with local knowledge and focus. It also enables local stakeholders to have ongoing consultation on the Transport plan as its recommendations are investigated and implemented.

Recommendation:

A Transport NSW strategic planning team be based in Newcastle to ensure local knowledge is incorporated into the next stages of planning as well as the implementation of the Plan. This would also allow for ongoing consultation with stakeholders about the transport requirements of the region.

Supporting new urban land release areas

Transport NSW needs to support new urban release areas by providing the enabling road infrastructure required to facilitate this development. This involves the construction of overpasses, bridges, slip lanes, roundabouts and the like. These works should not be left to individual developers as very often the cost of these works makes the projects unviable and the road infrastructure involved supports multiple developments. These works should be funded by the state government and the cost or part of the cost at least recovered via the Hunter SIC. Similarly, any works of this nature carried out by a developer should be able to be offset against the SIC. We suggest \$100 million be allocated to a Hunter Infrastructure Loan Fund to be established for this purpose.

The industry is also experiencing substantial delay in obtaining approvals from the Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) which in many cases is adding in excess of 12 months to the delivery of residential land. This has a direct impact on the cost of delivery and is therefore a direct impact on housing affordability. We suggest the RMS approval process should be reviewed, working closely with stakeholders and examining areas for reform. This should include key performance indicators for delivery of service as other agencies have instigated for example, Hunter Water and Hunter Subsidence Advisory.

Recommendation

Allocate \$100 million to establish for a Hunter Infrastructure Loan Fund to assist in accelerating housing supply in the Greater Newcastle area.

The NSW Government review the RMS approval processes and examine areas for reform to improve service for stakeholders.

Local Public Transport Initiatives

The Hunter Chapter supports the recommendations to decrease the heavy reliance on private transport by implementing improvements to the local public transport system and active transport networks. We strongly support the proposed expansion for the ferry network as well as extension of the light rail to the University of Newcastle at Callaghan.

Whilst we support reducing parking in the inner city, reducing parking prior to having a better public transport system will hinder the current CBD revitalisation efforts. Prior to further parking being removed further investment in the light rail should occur as well and increasing the park and ride or kiss and ride facilities. Rail frequency will also need to be increased to minimise waiting times and make utilising the train service more convenient and appealing.

Currently there is the potential to increase the patronage of the heavy rail system. The draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan recommends increased density of residential development around existing stations and ferry terminals. We strongly support this recommendation, particularly in relation to the growth areas identified along the Newcastle-Lake Macquarie Western Corridor and the Maitland Corridor and Stockton within 1.0km of the ferry terminal. We would urge Transport NSW work closely with the Department of Planning and Environment to implement this policy.

The industry sees the potential for the Newcastle Showground site, located within the “Hunter Sports and Entertainment Precinct” of the Broadmeadow Catalyst Area to be transformed into a high-activity mixed use place. The light rail expansion to Broadmeadow would lessen the reliance on cars commuting to the site, as well as improving access to public transport for local residents.

In denser, high development areas the development of bike paths and walking routes should be prioritised to increase the use of multi-modal transport options and reduce car use. Investment in bike paths in denser areas will ease the impact of new development on the community.

Recommendation:

\$500 million should be allocated for the Construction of Newcastle Light Rail Stage 2 – Wickham to Broadmeadow. Planning work should also be funded to undertake the route analysis for the extension to the University of Newcastle’s Callaghan Campus.

That the final Plan offer greater direction for Councils to jointly prepare localised transport planning initiatives, such as park and ride and/or kiss and ride facilities, active transport networks, and commits the State Government to support Councils in these endeavours.

Work with the Department of Planning and Environment to increase residential density around existing rail and ferry infrastructure.

Prioritise bike paths in high density and development areas.

Newcastle Airport

The Draft report acknowledges the importance to the local economy of the airport and port, however public transport to and from the airport is inconvenient, irregular and does not align with flight arrivals or departures. Travelling by private transport is more convenient but it is a circuitous route to the centre of Newcastle. Better transport options to the airport would assist in attracting an international carrier as well as more visitors.

The Property Council understands that a major terminal upgrade is currently being designed. Stage 1 and 2 of the terminal upgrade which includes a dedicated international departure lounge and two air bridges should be fast-tracked.

Recommendation:

Fast-track the investigation of initiatives that will make transit links to the airport faster and more convenient.

Immediately provide direct bus services from Stockton Ferry, supported by ferry services to Wickham Interchange & Queens Wharf.

A commitment for planning for a new vehicle and/or dedicated transit link including examining the feasibility of a tunnel under the Hunter River from Carrington to Stockton with on ground activation opportunities for the Stockton to Newcastle Airport corridor.

Newcastle Airport - Terminal Upgrade. Allocate \$50 million the Construction Newcastle Airport Terminal Upgrade - Stage 1 & 2.

Improving Inter-City Commuting

The Property Council supports any investment in the rail system that will decrease the travel time between the Hunter and Sydney, however high-speed rail link is a long-term project. In the meantime consideration should be given to examining how to further reduce the travel time between Newcastle and Sydney as well as wi-fi enable the inter-city trains with some “business” carriages that have desks or tray-tables to allow commuters to use the travel-time constructively. We would also recommend Transport NSW examine the potential providing a high-speed Newcastle to Sydney Ferry service.

Recommendation:

Wi-fi enable inter-city trains so commuters and investigate providing business carriages are able to utilise the travel time constructively.

Road Congestion

Due to the heavy reliance on private transport in the region commuting time is getting longer. If work on known pinch-points is not fast-tracked, travel times will continue to increase.

Recommendation:

Fast-track work on local pinch points to decrease commuting times. The following works should be completed within the next 2 – 5 years.

- **Duplication of Hillsborough Road from Crockett Street to the Charlestown Bypass.**
- **Extension of Munibung Road Cardiff to TC Frith Avenue at Boolaroo.**
- **Duplication of Toronto Road from Fennel Bay to Teralba.**
- **Duplication of City Road from Scenic Drive to Glebe Road.**
- **Completion of Charlestown bypass from Rankin Park to Jesmond.**
- **Duplication of Lake Road from Boolaroo to Glendale**

Financing – the missing piece of the puzzle

We know that Government revenue can only meet a certain percentage of infrastructure expenditure. Currently, the funding gap is met through council rates, section 94 levies for local infrastructure, Voluntary Planning Agreements and Special Infrastructure Contributions in growth areas for larger infrastructure necessitated through population growth and development.

Additional funding for larger rail projects can often be met through public/private partnerships (PPPs), yet there is a growing demand for new infrastructure and Government revenue is constrained and largely reliant on property related stamp duty and a buoyant property market.

The transparent, consistent, and fair financing of infrastructure is integral to the successful implementation of the strategy and good land planning outcomes. The term 'value capture' has come to encapsulate a plethora of different taxes and infrastructure charges and this has instilled industry uncertainty.

Any model of value capture must be designed within the context of the already extensive federal, state and local taxes that are linked to property values and unimproved land values, including capital gains tax, stamp duty, land tax, council rates and company tax on developer profits.

Similarly, any model must consider development specific charges such as Special Infrastructure Contributions, Section 94 payments, VPA Conditions that exceed Section 94 plans, and new levies being introduced disparately by individual councils. These charges should not endlessly proliferate, and any value capture scheme should subsume all of these approaches and provide one, consistent, cost.

About the Property Council of Australia

The Property Council of Australia is the leading advocate for Australia's biggest industry – property.

The Property Council champions the interest of more than 2200-member companies that represent the full spectrum of the industry, including those who invest, own, manage and develop in all sectors of property. Creating landmark projects and environments where people live, work, shop and play is core business for our members.

The property industry contributes \$3.4 billion to economic growth, pays \$1.48 billion in wages and generates 23,287 jobs in the Hunter.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Greater Newcastle Future Transport Plan. The Hunter Chapter of the Property Council of Australia and its members looks forward to ongoing dialogue and consultation on the objectives of plan once the Plan has been finalised. Please don't hesitate to contact Emma Ashton, Regional Consultant for the Hunter on 0402 277 247 or eamshon@propertycouncil.com.au if you would like to discuss any aspect of this submission further.

Kind regards,



Jane Fitzgerald
NSW Executive Director
Property Council of Australia