



Australia's property industry

Creating for Generations

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NSW Department of Transport

Email: HunterRTP@transport.nsw.gov.au

RE: PROPERTY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA – DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2041

The Property Council of Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide comments to the Draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan 2041 (draft Plan), currently on public exhibition by Transport for NSW (TfNSW).

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

Property is the nation's biggest industry – representing 13% of Australia's GDP and employing more than 1.4 million Australians. Our members are the nation's major investors, owners, managers and developers of properties of all asset classes. They create landmark projects, environments, and communities where people can live, work, shop and play. The property industry shapes the future of our cities and has a deep long-term interest in seeing them prosper as productive and sustainable places.

We acknowledge and appreciate Government's work regarding the draft Plan and invite ongoing industry engagement regarding the draft Plan with opportunity to provide more extensive comment following consideration of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, once it is released.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Hunter Regional Director, Anita Hugo on email at ahugo@propertycouncil.com.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Anita Hugo".

Anita Hugo
Hunter/Central Coast Regional Director
Property Council of Australia

1. Summary

The Property Council welcomes the opportunity to provide the following brief comments to the Draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan 2041 (draft Plan).

A key issue for industry is that opportunity be provided for it to consider the draft Plan in conjunction with the Hunter Regional Plan 2041, with the final version yet to be released. We invite TfNSW to engage more closely over the coming weeks with industry, to provide clarity around some of the detail of the draft Plan and an opportunity for industry to provide feedback on the draft Plan once the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 has been released and considered.

Given this, this submission does not attempt to address every element of the draft Plan. Instead, it focuses on some general comments around the draft Plan and its direction.

2. General Commentary

We welcome and support government's attention to providing vision for transforming the way people and goods travel within, to, from and through the Hunter region.

INITIATIVES

We acknowledge the key 94 initiatives across three categories of In Delivery, In Planning and, For Investigation, that the draft Plan highlights. We welcome further discussion around these initiatives to understand the detail behind these and what type of work they are i.e. research, service delivery infrastructure, policy etc. While it is good to have a comprehensive list of initiatives to consider, it would be helpful to understand what the piece of work really is and what would be required to deliver it. It would be good to consider how this action plan might be presented in a more practical way and how it would be implemented.

Industry would welcome the opportunity to understand these initiatives and their feasibility in conjunction with how they might contribute to the outcomes of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041.

CONNECTED

Objective 1 – Improve connectivity between key centres and towns within the regions.

We acknowledge the important role that a fast rail line would play in connecting and growing the region and support the exploration and prioritisation of key corridors linking Sydney to Newcastle and Port Macquarie, the Shoalhaven, Central West and Canberra.

This could be a game changer for the region and it would be helpful in understanding where key stops would be and if there were interchanges or town centres at these points. There is further benefit in how connected these fast rail stops are to other modes of high frequency transport such as buses, to get consumers to end point destinations.

In understanding how job mobility and regional migration is also driving a need for greater transport access, we welcome initiatives around exploration of faster, more efficient transport options to destinations such as Newcastle Airport (the Airport).

The Airport is a key strategic transport gateway, employment enabler and important economic generator through regional growth and tourism. Newcastle Airport, together with the Astra Aerolab development, RAAF Base Williamtown and the broader Williamtown Special Activation Precinct, is a pivotal component of the Hunter Region's transport system.

The 2036 Newcastle Airport Vision Master Plan was released in March 2018. Currently, Newcastle Airport facilitates passenger and freight civil aviation services for the Hunter, and the broader region stretching from the Central Coast to northern New South Wales.

In order to support and realise this growth and contribution, as it relates to this plan:

- There is a need for greater focus and alignment of transport initiatives identified within the Plan with the immediate growth opportunities for the airport passenger and freight business
- The need for other road upgrades to ensure optimum access for passengers, employees, businesses and freight, in addition to large infrastructure projects such as the Pacific Highway M1 – Raymond Terrace.
- The opportunities to better articulate future public transport and alternative transport opportunities within the short term.

It is further important to understand, in conjunction with existing strategic plans, where the key centres of activity are across the region and ensure that transport planning is aligned, and infrastructure provides opportunity for greater connection between these centres. This needs to address key corridors between Greater Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens and the Lower/Upper Hunter.

Objective 14 - Strengthen freight connections to Williamtown Special Activation Precinct, Newcastle Port and major freight generating precinct

We acknowledge and support the Plan's attention to freight and logistics as significant contributors to both regional and state economies. As a region we need to be clear about the future of both the Newcastle Airport and Newcastle Port. Both these assets are critical gateways and contribute widely to the Hunter economy through direct employment, supply chain employment, goods and services. Flexibility in forward planning around these precincts is required with a strong need to support their growth. Transport infrastructure and connections play an important role in this regard and initiatives should be identified and prioritised accordingly.

3. Conclusion

The Property Council supports TfNSW in their efforts to provide long term vision to planning for transport needs across the Hunter and would invite further consultation around this draft plan so that we might get clarity around the 94 initiatives and how they support the draft Plan's objectives across its key themes of Connected, Safe, Liveable, Sustainable, Productive and Resilient.

We provide in principal support for the draft Plan based on the opportunity to engage more extensively with TfNSW and provide more detailed feedback to the draft Plan following the release and consideration of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041.