



Australia's property industry

Creating for Generations

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1 June 2020

Mr Greg Doyle
General Manager
Wollongong City Council

Email to: council@wollongong.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Doyle

Wollongong City Council – Local Strategic Planning Statement

The Property Council of Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on Wollongong City Council's draft Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS).

As Australia's peak representative of the property and construction industry, the Property Council's members include investors, owners, managers and developers of property across all asset classes. We also represent a diverse group of members spread across all parts of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven region.

The Property Council supports the position taken by the NSW Government to use the LSPS as a mechanism for the translation of and "give effect" to *Wollongong's Community Strategic Plan* and the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan*. A LSPS should identify a range of steps Council must take in planning for the city's future and the priorities to achieve its vision.

Our members look forward to the finalisation of Council's LSPS and working with you to achieve the actions as stated in your LSPS. We acknowledge the already collaborative working relationship with Wollongong City Council and work that has been done to date with industry to collate feedback and input.

Comments on specific parts of the draft LSPS are provided in the following submission.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself on 0437 315 198 or Troy Loveday, Senior Policy Advisor on 0414 265 152.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Guido".

Michelle Guido
Illawarra Regional Director
Property Council of Australia

Themes	Property Council Response
<u>1. Overview</u>	<p>We acknowledge Council's overview of strategic measures already in place at a state and local level including the Community Strategic Plan, which is a key input into the Local Strategic Planning Statement. We encourage Council to continue working closely with the NSW Government agencies to deliver the plans and strategies as outline in this overview.</p>
<u>2. Jobs and Economic Growth</u> 2.1.1 Economic Development 2.1.2 Creative Wollongong 2.1.3 Wollongong City Centre Review 2.1.4 NSW Ports Master Plan for Port Kembla 2.1.5 University of Wollongong masterplan 2.1.6 Retail Centres Study 2.1.7 Employment Lands Study 2.2 Vision and Key Actions	<p><u>2.1.1 Economic Development & 2.1.3 Wollongong City Centre Review</u></p> <p>We support the implementation of policies in the Economic Development Strategy that support a mix of office development in the Wollongong City Centre including new A-grade commercial buildings. Commercial core protection is important, however as outlined in our submission to Council regarding the Wollongong City Centre Review, we believe the commercial core precinct should be within the areas surrounded by Kembla Street to Keira Street and Market Street to Burelli Street. There are also further redevelopment opportunities for Western Crown Street with close proximity to retail and service amenities, as well as good transport connections.</p> <p>There is a further opportunity for further commercial development in the lower part of Crown Street Mall, and a real potential here to encourage mixed use development and amenities such as outdoor dining, increasing foot traffic during the day and night. We encourage you to focus on repurposing this area as a core commercial and mixed-use precinct, which can also support the night-time economy. We have a real opportunity to make the lower end of the mall into a more vibrant, inviting space which allows eateries, cafes and bars open up to the street and create a great a place that people want to visit and spend time in. Especially in light of tourism, there is a real opportunity to reshape this part of Crown Street to make it more inviting and also support the <i>Creative Wollongong Strategy</i>.</p> <p>The revitalisation and reshaping of the Wollongong CBD to achieve its potential and the 'City for People' vision is a key priority for the Property Council in the Illawarra, and we acknowledge the work that Wollongong City Council has undertaken to recognise some of the current and future challenges in our CBD. We look forward to Council's work in this space and the next steps on the City Centre Review, and we would like to continue collaborating in examining the details of the planning policies which will impact the outcome of the City Centre Review's Urban Planning Framework.</p> <p>We encourage Council to continue implementing the 'Major Projects Panel' as described in the Economic Development Strategy to assist in achieving the economic development vision for the city.</p>

The need to implement a mechanism to expedite significant employment generating projects is vital to allow for a more effective and efficient process to support more business investment in Wollongong. These significant projects require the input from more than just the planning team, often needing a strategic lens and input from the Economic Development team and we look forward to hearing more about the outcomes of this panel.

We also support the need for a Tourism Lands Review to enable and encourage specific zoning on key coastal sites to ensure hotels are developed in the right areas to support the growing visitor economy. This has been a challenge for quite some time for the city, and we would like to see strategic planning around this to support jobs, tourism and an activated economy. We look forward to being involved in this process to input into the review and the revised planning policies.

2.1.4 NSW Ports Master Plan for Port Kembla

We support the need to protect the port at Port Kembla and encourage Council to continue working with NSW Ports to implement the actions and key visions out of the 20-year masterplan. There is no doubt that trade will continue to grow providing further employment opportunities and appropriate planning measures, and buffers around the Port and freight corridors will need to be considered closely. We want to see employment lands protected and transport infrastructure encouraged for freight and passengers to and from this area to enable future growth and support Port Kembla as an international trade gateway, with a strong strategic framework implemented.

2.1.6 Retail Centres Study and Review of Town Centres

We support the need to implement policies and strategies that support appropriate jobs in town centres, as these centres outside of the Wollongong CBD still provide retail, commercial and hospitality jobs that are vital to our local economy. We encourage Council to review the town plans and undertake the retail centre study which now in light of the changing face of retail and trends may be outdated, with a revised strategy and vision on how these centres can support the CBD.

2.1.7 Employment Lands

We encourage Council to review and prepare a new Employment Lands Study in the short to medium term to ensure industrial lands are protected and continuing to meet the goals of the Economic Development Strategy. The availability of industrial lands is impacting the ability to attract further business investment to the city and has the potential to create jobs and diversify our local economy.

	<p>Developing a long-term plan to unlock the supply of industrial lands across the LGA and facilitating the redevelopment of large disused industrial sites is essential. We would like to continue working with Council to explore these challenges further and encourage you to engage with the industry to assist in updating planning policies, streamlining processes and developing underutilised employment lands.</p> <p><u>2.2 Vision and Key Actions</u></p> <p>Overall, we support the aspirations of Council for the next 20 years enabling the Wollongong City Centre to become a strong, diversified regional capital, encouraging trade through Port Kembla and the construction of the rail links and upgrades of road networks, supporting the protection of employment lands across the LGA, continuing to expand education across the city and at the University's campuses and achieving the jobs target as specified in the Economic Development Strategy.</p>
<p><u>3. Housing for all</u></p> <p>3.1.1 Housing Study</p> <p>3.1.2 Wollongong City Centre</p> <p>3.1.3 West Dapto Urban Release Area</p> <p>3.2 Vision and Key Actions</p>	<p>The Property Council is generally supportive of the priorities and associated actions relevant to housing. We support the review of the 2005 Housing Study and preparation of the draft Housing and Affordable Housing Options Paper which is now out on exhibition that outlines options to increase housing stock diversity, plans for future housing growth and to increase the supply of affordable rental housing stock.</p> <p>Considering the affordability issues being experienced by many, and the great need for more social and affordable housing, we welcome the Council's plans to implement a Local Housing Strategy. Our members welcome policies that incentivise partnerships between the public, private and social housing providers and can lead to the creation of new opportunities to assist to deliver on the housing needs of the community.</p> <p>It is important that as the population ages, there is also a wide choice of housing options designed for the needs of seniors. This may include small accessible dwellings at ground level and specialised accommodation for seniors including retirement villages and aged care facilities. Feedback from our members who own and manage facilities in the retirement living sector indicate there is growing demand for this product, but supply is very limited due to restrictive planning controls and a lack of suitable sites where land zoning permits this type of development. Council should investigate how its planning controls can be amended to provide opportunities for more suitable seniors housing.</p> <p>The NSW Government has also rightly identified the need for more housing to be provided in the categories known as the Missing Middle. Council should look at how it can also encourage other forms of</p>

	<p>Missing Middle development through its updated planning controls. Council may be aware of many of the benefits that can be gained for a community by ensuring that Missing Middle development is delivered.</p> <p>It is our hope that the LEP and DCP reviews are carried out in consultation with industry in order to enable the effective and practical delivery of more diverse housing in line with a Local Housing Strategy. There are many standards that are outdated and need review, with more flexibility to some of the requirements required to align with the implementation of the recommendations of this strategy.</p> <p>In the City Centre, we agree that increasing the City's residential population will bring significant benefits to the CBD and help to activate specific areas and support local businesses. It is important that we do have the right types of residential development in the right locations and more importantly, a diverse range of housing available to citizens.</p> <p>We should be encouraging more students to live in the city with a focus on smaller, more affordable product for students, but this needs to be backed up by good data to ensure that the demand is there and what we classify as 'student accommodation.' It would be worth doing some more research on what students want, what the trends are, and co-living properties or more flexible housing are also potential opportunities.</p> <p>We look forward to providing a more detailed submission on housing in response to the paper out on exhibition and we look forward to further engagement as these steps commence.</p>
<p><u>4. Inclusive and Connected Communities</u></p> <p>4.1.1 Creative Wollongong</p> <p>4.1.2 Play Wollongong</p> <p>4.1.3 Disability Inclusion Action Plan</p> <p>4.1.4 Social Infrastructure Planning Framework</p> <p>4.1.5 Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>The Property Council is generally supportive of the actions listed in these strategies and encourage the implementation of actions for inclusive and connected communities.</p> <p>We would encourage Council to review town centre strategies that are outdated and engage with local communities and business owners as part of this process. We also encourage you to consider increasing housing types and density around these centres to attract a variety of citizens in line with your housing strategy once it has been finalised.</p> <p>Planning for the future of town centres is vitally important for the future economic, social and cultural vibrancy of the LGA. A review of the urban design and planning controls of town centres provides the opportunity to not only revitalise these commercial & social centres, but also to provide some of the</p>

<p>4.1.6 Sportsground and Sporting Facilities</p> <p>4.1.7 Ageing Plan</p> <p>4.1.8 Future Pools & 4.1.9 Public Toilets</p> <p>4.1.10 Public Art Strategy</p> <p>4.1.11 Town and Village Plans</p> <p>4.2 Vision and Key Actions</p>	<p>smaller lower cost housing that is needed in the community. Council should engage with urban designers, commercial/retail economists & the development industry to discuss the mechanisms that will encourage development, to eliminate unnecessary cost impediments and so enable the revitalisation to be achieved.</p>
<p><u>5. Climate Action Resilience</u></p>	<p>The Property Council generally supports the actions identified and we look forward to the opportunity to provide specific feedback in respect of Council's Climate Change and Resilience plans soon.</p>
<p><u>6. Protect the Natural Environment</u></p>	<p>The Property Council is generally supportive of the actions identified and understands that like many areas across the Illawarra, the Wollongong LGA is home to unique natural and built heritage assets, and we are supportive-in-principle of these steps and looks forward to further engagement and consultation with Council as these actions are initiated.</p>
<p><u>7. Enabling Infrastructure and Transport</u></p> <p>7.1.1 Rail Transport</p> <p>7.1.2 Regional Road Network</p> <p>7.2.1 Future Transport Strategies</p> <p>7.2.2 Wollongong Bike Plan</p> <p>7.3 Vision and Key Actions</p>	<p>The Property Council is generally supportive of actions and strategies identified and the development and implementation of an LGA wide Transport Plan.</p> <p>As the population continues to grow, there is no doubt that upgrades to the South Coast rail line and to the regional road network are essential to support the growth of the region and also the local economy. We encourage Council to continue their advocacy efforts together with industry bodies on the South West Illawarra Rail Link or Maldon-Dombarton Freight Rail Line, as well as the other upgrades to the road and rail network as outlined in the LSPS.</p> <p>In relation to the Wollongong CBD, considering the size of local area and distance between different precincts across the CBD including the retail/commercial precinct and the waterfront precinct, developing a more accessible and solid transport strategy to enable citizens to move around with more ease, while also supporting tourists in the area would be ideal. A Metro Wollongong Transport Strategy is also</p>

	<p>required, together with the Department of Planning we need to be looking at all modes of transport enabling access and movement around the CBD, to and from the University and to and from the various precincts across the CBD and future planning for this. The exploration of smart city concepts and innovative technology may also support this transport and movement strategy.</p> <p>The Property Council is also supportive of initiatives that encourage and facilitate authentic Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). TOD includes moderate to high density development (residential, commercial, retail etc) within proximity to public transport routes. TOD also facilitates sustainable public transport and improves accessibility to goods, services and employment.</p> <p>It can also deliver more affordable, compact, sustainable housing that ensures that the vulnerable, the ageing and skilled workers in our community are able to live close to transport routes, close to work, health, retail, education and recreational opportunities without requiring private transportation.</p>
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