

Hon. David William Tollner MLA
Minister for Lands and Planning
Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment
GPO Box 1680
Darwin NT 0801

18 February 2015

Dear Minister Tollner

Draft Compact Urban Growth Policy

Firstly, congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister for Lands and Planning; the Property Council of Australia looks forward to working with you in your new role and as Treasurer.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the draft *Compact Urban Growth Policy*. The draft policy is very important to the property sector, as it gears up to meet the challenge of building highly liveable and fast growing urban centres in the Northern Territory.

The Property Council of Australia is the leading advocate for Australia's property industry and development sector. Our members represent the broad spectrum of businesses that own, manage and develop property, as well as providing services to the property industry in the Northern Territory.

We have consulted widely within the development sector and there is general support for the draft *Compact Urban Growth Policy*, specifically as the policy encourages density and mixed-use developments in strategic areas such as activity centres, and transport corridors.

However, the Property Council has also identified some concerns and a number of opportunities for improvements to the draft policy.

Property Council of Australia

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Absence of Strategic Planning

The intention of the draft policy is to assess the appropriateness of compact urban growth in a considered locality. However, we consider the draft policy is presumptive in the absence of a high level strategic planning.

The draft policy needs to identify each activity centre, and its ranking in the Activity Centres Hierarchy, as these are integral to the basic working of this policy. The ranking of a centre must not be assumed.

Absence of Infrastructure Provision Plan

The draft policy needs to be underpinned by an infrastructure provision plan to deliver the desired policy outcomes, as well as inform the property development and investment sector where and when these infrastructure investments will be made.

Specifically, a transport provision plan (public transport focused) is needed to demonstrate how the desired increased use of public transport will be met and a supporting service infrastructure provision plan is also necessary to underpin envisioned areas of growth.

At this stage, the Property Council is unsure how the service authorities plan to underpin the growth outlined in the draft policy. The Property Council believes it is critical that the public transport and service infrastructure provision plans are developed to underpin this draft policy. The absence of infrastructure provision frameworks would undermine the draft policy's main objective.

Comments on Performance Criteria

The Property Council understands that the draft policy would allow for some flexibility when Performance Criteria cannot be met. This is supported as it allows for innovation in the property sector and the ability to respond to ever-changing market demands while delivering to government's primary objectives.

Concluding Remarks

The Property Council is a strong supporter for balanced development outcomes, including infill development as well as opportunities to grow the urban form of cities. The draft Compact Urban Growth Policy would contribute to this balanced development outcome.

We believe that the Draft Compact Urban Growth Policy has the potential to encourage compact and mixed activity places that play a role in improving people's lifestyle, whilst creating healthy people, sustainable economies, sustainable environments and sustainable communities.

We look forward to continuing discussions about the draft policy, including more investigation about the practical application of the policy.

Should you require further information, please contact the President Elect, Adrian Handford (office@grcproperties.com.au).

Yours sincerely



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