



Australia's property industry

Creating for Generations

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NSW Department of Planning and Environment

Email: activationprecincts@dpc.nsw.gov.au

RE: PROPERTY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA – REVISED DRAFT SPECIAL ACTIVATION PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

The Property Council of Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide comments to the Revised Draft Special Activation Precinct Masterplan (Revised draft WSAP Masterplan), on public exhibition by the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department).

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.

The Property Council acknowledges the important role Special Activation Precincts play in accelerating economic growth and attracting business and investment to designated regional areas. The Williamstown precinct will provide a thriving commercial and business hub, supporting local industries and growing local jobs.

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 black ink that reads "Anita Hugo".

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

The Property Council welcomes the government's attention to the Revised draft WSAP Masterplan and the opportunity to provide the following comments.

This submission does not attempt to address every element of the Revised draft WSAP Masterplan. Instead, it focuses on specific elements contained in the Revised draft WSAP Masterplan and further acknowledges comments provided in the Property Council's submission to the Draft SAP Master Plan of 2022.

Masterplan boundary

We acknowledge the revision comes off the back of government reducing the size of the Precinct and changing its approach for enabling development, as well as mitigating and managing flooding and drainage.

As stated in our prior submission, we appreciate the additional effort that has gone in to refining what was initially a large investigation area. It is important to strike the right balance in defining a boundary that does not overburden the Government with acquiring land surplus to need, but also does not exclude important opportunities to contribute to the future success of the Precinct and its integration with the wider community.

We note the following changes that have been made to the previous draft, that will have a negative impact to economic benefit. The Revised draft WSAP Masterplan does not appear to seek to activate land in a cost-effective sequence e.g. activate lower cost land first, and this has potential to significantly impact future development. The Revised draft WSAP Masterplan seeks to release high-cost land first with a flow on impact on flood levels up-stream where the Airport and RAAF base are located. This will make further development in this area unsustainable in the long term.

There is a current, appropriate zoning which is allowing development to progress. Overriding this zoning stalls development and investment decisions which could take up to 5 years to resolve. The proposal to override this zoning will come at a cost. WSAP planning may take up to 5 years to resolve, proving excessively costly and removing viability of future development.

We further note that there are western precinct properties which have been removed from the new boundary, which represent low development cost opportunities and make sense to activate prior to high cost, more complex land. We encourage the department to reassess the boundary in consultation with industry and existing land holders to maximise economic outcomes for the region.

We also request the revision of the boundary on Nelson Bay Road to include those parcels of land that sit south of the roundabout as highly prominent and visible parcels of land for activation. As stated in our previous submission:

In our view, further consideration should be given to ensure appropriate land uses and design treatments are applied at what is already set to become a prominent gateway along the area's main transport route. It can serve a critical role in providing non-competing uses catering to the needs of the surrounding workforce – both within Williamstown and the major employment centre at Tomago – as well as people commuting between Nelson Bay and Newcastle. This could include, for example, opportunities for community focused transport-related uses (e.g., car hire, or public transport interchange services), convenience food and retail, childcare, banking, and other daily personal or business productivity support services. It is important to ensure these opportunities are built-in to the SAP process now so that they can also be advantaged by the streamlined planning framework emerging for the precinct rather than relying upon Council to resource additional strategic planning initiatives in future.

Documentation supporting the Masterplan suggests additional permitted uses allowing for the types of outcomes described above to occur north of Cabbage Tree only. We ask for re-consideration of the treatment of this intersection holistically to

ensure broader workforce and community needs are adequately met, and that development is managed to provide a visually appealing, safe, and functional gateway to and through the SAP.

We further question the removal of the western entry to the site that was in the Draft SAP Masterplan, contained in the Newcastle Airport Masterplan and was already approved under the DAREZ DA. A western entry provides significant advantages and development activation and could be operated in conjunction with a secondary eastern entry off Cabbage Tree Road. We believe the removal of the western entry entirely should be reconsidered.

Infrastructure

It is important to maximise land use adjacent to existing infrastructure. This includes land in the Eastern precinct that is already serviced and provides opportunity for greater growth and employment generation. Development on this site overall will require a level of productivity support so planning needs to consider the proximity to these services and where they would be best developed. This may be considered in conjunction with the recommendation above to reconsider the current boundary lines.

The demand for land is greatest in the most prominent and visible locations so it would seem counter-intuitive not to consider this in planning for infrastructure and prioritising implementation.

Potential Land Use Conflict

As per our previous submission:

In line with its 2018 letter of support to the Regional Communities Development Fund, the Property Council recognises that Newcastle Airport (NAPL) is a major contributor to the region's economy and provides a vital link for business, commerce and tourism in New South Wales. Further that Newcastle Airport is one of the Hunter's most significant individual resources, with its services having significant and positive impacts on business productivity, expansion and diversification, communications, visitor experience and regional identity.

The Property Council recognises the local, regional and State benefit of the Newcastle Airport and recognises the direct benefit its continued growth and expansion, as expressed in the Newcastle Airport Master Plan, provides to the broader economic success of the precinct.

We would caution that the draft Williamstown SAP Master Plan must consider the continued operations, and the implementation of the strategic master planning already undertaken, in the 2036 Newcastle Airport Master Plan so as not to compromise future opportunity in this regard with the establishment of development on neighbouring land earmarked for the expansion of Airport amenity and support services.

Future land use needs to be considered in context of the 2036 Newcastle Airport Master Plan as well as the ANEF (Australian Noise Exposure Forecast) to ensure best possible outcomes for development in the precinct as well as avoiding encroachment issues where conflict may arise.

We note that the Revised Draft WSAP Masterplan depicts areas located adjacent to the Eastern runway end which have been identified for manufacturing. Consideration has to be given to the compatibility of this use from a noise exposure perspective. The Airport Master Plan designates this for airport specific purposes such as freight, logistics, hangars, maintenance activities. We encourage government to work with Newcastle Airport to realise responsible outcomes that support its development and in turn, its contribution to growth and sustainability of our regional economy.

Delivery Plan

The delivery plan needs to be fast tracked and should consider: the delivery of enabling infrastructure, land that is cost effective to deliver and compatible with growth plans already developed (including Newcastle Airport Masterplan) and includes land that is highly prominent and visible that can provide supporting uses, such as those sites along Nelson Bay Road.

It is smart investment to begin early activation of the low-cost land and land that presents high impact opportunity as a priority, before moving to developing more complex, higher cost land. Boundaries and rezonings that do not support this should be re-evaluated as now is the opportunity to maximise future benefit.

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