

# Submission

## IN RESPONSE TO THE GREATER CITIES COMMISSION DISCUSSION PAPER

### *THE SIX CITIES REGION – DELIVERING GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS AND LOCAL LIVEABILITY*

#### INTRODUCTION

Penrith City Council welcomes to the opportunity to respond the Greater Cities Commission's Discussion Paper, *The Six Cities Region - Delivering global competitiveness and local liveability*. Council welcomes the Commission's engagement with local councils, communities and stakeholders in the development of the new Region Plan and City Plans. In developing these new plans, it is critical that the commitments of the Western Sydney City Deal and the priorities of the Western City District Plan are fully incorporated and implemented.

Since the introduction of the 2018 Region and District Plans, all councils have developed Local Strategic Planning Statements. Penrith City Council has also undertaken substantial strategic planning at the local level to implement the regional planning priorities, as set out in our Penrith Green Grid, Employment Lands, Rural Lands and Local Housing Strategies. These local strategies should form the basis for detailed actions when developing the new 2023 Region Plan and City Plans.

The Discussion Paper also states that in the Western Parkland City, "the Blueprint produced by the Western Parkland City Authority (WPCA) will also be a significant input" (page 65). Penrith City Council provided input to the Blueprint that there would need to be clear strategic alignment between the implementation of the Blueprint with councils' Local Strategic Planning Statements and associated land use strategies. A copy of Penrith City Council's submission to the Blueprint is attached (Appendix A) for the Commission's information. Penrith City Council seeks clarification on the status of the Blueprint and of the role of WPCA and of Western Parkland City councils in the governance and development of the new Region and City Plan. Council recommends ongoing close collaboration with all Western Parkland City Councils as well as with the WPCA.

Council seeks the State government's continued commitment to delivering the actions in Western Sydney City Deal and the priorities of the Western City District Plan. Of particular importance to Penrith and the Western Parkland City is the continued development of the existing Collaboration Areas and city centres. The Discussion Paper identifies three "important innovation districts: Tech Central in the east, Westmead in the centre and the Aerotropolis in the west" and proposes to shape the development of three more, one in each city outside of Greater Sydney to complement these, linked to each other. Given that a fully functioning Aerotropolis will be many years away, Council recommends that the Commission ensure that the existing Collaboration Areas of the Western Parkland City - Liverpool, Greater Penrith and Campbelltown- Macarthur - and their associated city centres are linked into the emerging innovation ecosystem to ensure that the opportunities for growth of knowledge jobs in these areas can be realised in the meantime.

Penrith City Council also recommends that the new Region Plan and City Plans provide clear guidance related to the protection of the Metropolitan Rural Area and the role of productive agricultural land and

rural industries in the vision for the Six Cities Region. Agricultural industries are important for the regional economy and offer opportunities for export as well as ensuring availability of fresh food and local produce for the region's growing population. Diverse agricultural activities in Greater Sydney, the Hunter and the South-East NSW region contribute over \$2 billion, or one-fifth of the state's gross value of production<sup>1</sup>. Clear direction on the protection or otherwise of the Metropolitan Rural Area in the Region and City Plans will greatly assist strategic planning at the local level.

Council is generally supportive of the identified 'Region Shapers' and proposed actions to progress these. Many of these initiatives mirror Council's own strategies and plans. However, much more detail will be required to ensure there are appropriate mechanisms to facilitate these actions, and that these initiatives can be resourced and implemented in a reasonable timeframe.

In particular, Council recommends that the new Region and City Plans specifically address flooding and evacuation in the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment. Clarity is required in relation to the capacity for future development in the catchment area, including in Penrith City Centre, as well as the need for adequate infrastructure for evacuation.

It is critical that Plans to address flooding and evacuation involve councils working in close collaboration with agencies to develop effective cross-jurisdictional resilience responses. These solutions need to be underpinned by high quality, transparent information on flooding in the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment.

Council recommends the Commission works closely with local councils during the development of the Region and City Plans to ensure that targets and priorities are realistic and achievable and take into account local differences and local strategic priorities.

Further comments that specifically address the vision and proposed directions in each Region Shaper section set out in the Discussion Paper are outlined below.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Primary Industries Regional Output 2020-21, <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/publications/pdi/2021/regional-output>

## COMMENTS BY SECTION

### The Vision

The vision for the Six Cities Region emphasises global competitiveness and local liveability but there is no reference to the economic directions that will help achieve this, apart from the reference to the innovation districts for education and knowledge jobs. Industrial and rural industries, tourism, cultural and creative industries and preservation of natural and cultural assets should also be highlighted as key elements of our unique cities region.

- Clarify the protection of the Metropolitan Rural Area and the contribution of agriculture to the regional economy, future food security and resilience and include in the vision.

The vision mainly emphasises the liveability aspects of housing and infrastructure that supports housing. Council recommend that the Commission should be clear about the need for balancing urban development and various land uses including land for employment, recreation, nature conservation or agricultural production. The Commission should fully investigate the need for retaining rural lands for agriculture and agribusiness in the region, such as for fresh food availability and to create opportunities for more diversified economic development and export.

- Clarify the protection of the region's unique biodiversity and include as part of caring for Country

Sustainability is discussed in terms of use of natural resources. The need to preserve areas of native vegetation and habitat for native species needs to be highlighted and clarified.

- Address the need to change the way we plan, build, move around and live in our cities to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change needs to be more fully addressed.

The stated goal of transitioning the economy to net zero carbon emissions is noted as a priority to help mitigate climate change, however, there is a more immediate need to adapt our cities to minimise the impacts of climate related extreme weather events including heatwave, fires and flooding, storms and coastal erosion.

## SIX REGION SHAPERS

### An Embedded First Nations Voice

Penrith City Council welcomes the proposal (page 29) that the Commission will establish a First Nations Advisory Panel to advise on regional strategic planning and will coordinate engagement with the range of Aboriginal organisations and agencies in the development of the Region Plan and City Plans.

It will be important to match the intent of "creating mechanisms for First Nations voices to be embedded into the strategic planning of the Six Cities Region" with tangible actions. This may require tailored initiatives in each City determined through engagement with communities.

### A connected Six Cities Region

Penrith City Council supports the discussion on universal digital access, fast data connectivity, an integrated and efficient road, rail and freight system with a network of ports and airport and planning for fast rail. These are all critical to economic development of the region. The Discussion Paper refers to a staged approach for delivering better connections, however, this should not mean one form of connection should be prioritised over another as is suggested. There are urgent needs for digital access in some areas of the region and for road and rail in others, so a systematic gap analysis and needs assessment should be undertaken to identify the connections in each City that should be prioritised to support the greater connectivity of the Six Cities Region as a whole.

## Linking freight ports and airports for economic growth

As noted in the Discussion Paper, the opening of the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport in 2026 will be a game changer for the Six Cities Region, but its success depends on continued delivery of an integrated and efficient road, rail and freight system.

- Prioritise delivery of an efficient road, rail and freight system to ensure the successful integration of the Western Sydney Airport and adjacent business precincts into the Region's ports and airports system.

An efficient road rail and freight system be critical for the Western Parkland City and Penrith, not only to support the development of Western Sydney Airport and the adjacent business precincts but the wider network of employment lands across the Western Parkland City

- Develop a strategic plan for connection to and from Western Sydney Airport and ports which minimises truck freight movements to reduce impact on communities.

The efficient movement of freight and the impact on local communities are a major issue for Penrith. Council supports the proposed development of a new rail connection to Western Sydney as a crucial link that would support additional rail freight capacity in and out of Port Kembla and the Illawarra-Shoalhaven City. Details of freight rail to the Western Sydney Airport connecting to Freight hubs and ports are needed.

## Public transport

The Discussion Paper identifies the delivery of a fast rail connection between Newcastle and Wollongong with an extension connecting Greater-Macarthur to the Southern Highlands and Canberra as having "the potential to be among the most important Region Shapers" (page 34). While recognising that the fast rail is considered a longer-term goal, Council recommends that a holistic strategy should consider connecting fast rail through the Western Parkland City.

- Deliver on the City Deal commitment to complete the full length of the North South rail in the Western Parkland City

More important in the short term, is the need for planning how public transport and active transport will support access to local labour markets in the Western Parkland City. Council welcomes the proposal (Action 2.7) for the Region Plan and City Plans to continue to prioritise rail links to connect the Western Parkland City to the rest of the city region. Council recommends that the Region and City Plan prioritises investigation of integrated transport and delivery options to complete the full length of the North South Rail Link from Schofield to Macarthur.

- Deliver safe and accessible active transport links between homes and rail transport hubs to support mode shift to walking and cycling

Wherever new passenger rail infrastructure is being built (such as Sydney Metro), there needs to be consideration of funding of connectivity by active transport to support mode shift to walking and cycling and use of public transport.

- Prioritise and establish rapid bus services from the metropolitan centres of Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown to Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport and to the Western Sydney Aerotropolis to fulfil the Western Sydney City Deal commitment.

Council welcomes the proposal (Action 2.8) that the Region and City Plans will support a rapid bus strategy (including new fleet, services, technologies and infrastructure) that services key centres and corridors across Sydney, prioritising Parramatta Road and Victoria Road, and between the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport and key metropolitan centres of Liverpool, Campbelltown and Penrith. The details about funding and timing are vital and this is a Western Sydney City Deal commitment

to have the rapid bus services established before the Airport opens in 2026.

- Address transport disadvantage in low socio-economic areas and in areas of poor service availability, such as rural and semi-rural areas

There are many areas in the Western Parkland City that remain outside of the 30-minute city. These need to be identified and considered in the delivery of programs to improve public transport. Consideration of new mobility options to address transport disadvantage need to be incorporated into the Region and City Plans.

## Universal digital access

Council supports attention to universal digital access to support for economic and social participation. This will be critically important for our economic development and welcomes the proposal (Action 2.2) that the Commission will work with the NSW Government, local councils, the private sector and the Federal Government to prioritise increased digital connectivity in high priority precincts in each of the six cities. It will be important to identify and support digital access in high priority precincts, including each of the three metropolitan clusters in the Western Parkland City, to ensure the equitable access to the opportunities of the digital economy across the Western Parkland City.

Delivering universal digital access and transport accessibility should also be prioritised in lower socio-economic areas. Improving digital access in these areas offers the potential to improve educational and vocational outcomes and to ensure accessibility within the community.

The Region Plan and City Plans should continue to support delivery of Smart Cities technologies within Metropolitan and strategic centres to enable real-time localised data collection and dissemination such as for weather warnings, traffic hazards. These technologies can support local councils and government agencies to maintain the efficient functioning of centres and places within cities.

## Housing supply, diversity and affordability

Penrith City Council welcomes the attention in the Discussion Paper on housing supply, diversity and affordability. Council's local housing strategy is consistent with the stated intention of "providing resilient, connected and affordable homes that support good lives" (page 39). Council supports in principle the proposal (Action 3.1) of setting of targets for resilient, adaptable, affordable and diverse housing, but emphasises that the definition of these terms will be critical.

In relation to the proposal (Action 3.3) that the Region Plan and City Plans will identify priority housing areas proximate to existing and future transport hubs over the first 10 years of the Plans...' (page 42) it will be equally important to define the meaning of a transport hub and identify which hubs will be the focus for residential development.

- Setting of housing targets needs to incorporate Council strategic planning priorities and involve councils to respond to local differences and place characteristics

Council agrees in principle with the proposal (Action 3.5) of City Plans setting a target for housing to be delivered in locations within 800 metres of a strategic centre or transport hubs with a minimum 25% delivered through higher density and a proportion of affordable housing. However, Council recommends that local councils should be involved in the setting of targets to consider different characteristics and functions of places at the local level. A one-size fits all approach does not necessarily allow for a diversity of other land uses near strategic centres and transport interchanges including specific locations for employment, education, retail and commercial development. In some locations 800 metres may be too small a radius to allow for a wider mix of uses. In other locations better active and public transport connections can expand the catchment of housing to centres and City to City transport interchanges.

- Ensure that medium and high-density housing incorporates sufficient communal green space, landscaping and tree canopy to provide cool zones for residents.

There is a need to understand in full what is considered 'higher density housing types'. Some examples are

provided, but further detail is required to understand what can be included in any future housing target. There should be a greater emphasis put on identifying relationships between housing and health and wellbeing. Higher and medium density housing needs to be balanced with sufficient communal green space, landscaping and tree canopy to provide cool zones and active play areas. Equally important is good urban design and local infrastructure to support walking and cycling.

- The Region Plan and City Plans need to address how residential development that is currently being progressed outside the desired proximity to strategic centres will be supported.

There are a number of growth areas and investigation areas, including in the Greater Penrith and Eastern Creek area that are located away from strategic centres or major transport connections. The Region and City Plans need to explain how a 30-minute city will be achieved for residents of these areas.

- Region Plan and City Plans should outline mechanisms to achieve affordable and social housing targets.

Despite setting priorities for affordable and social housing in the 2018 Region Plan and District Plans, progress in this area has been slow and it has been difficult to achieve on affordable housing under current state and federal government financial arrangements. It is unlikely that new targets for affordable and social housing will be achieved without significant State and Federal government intervention.

## **Inclusive places linked to infrastructure**

Penrith City Council supports the direction for inclusive places linked to infrastructure and the continued emphasis in the vision on creating 15-minute walking and cycling access to local centres and 30-minute public transport access to strategic centres. Council welcomes the stated “greater emphasis on infrastructure delivery and social and environmental infrastructure” that will be made in the Region Plan to create “vibrant local centres that provide equal access to services and amenity” (page 46).

- Region and City plans should identify infrastructure and funding required to be invested prior to rezoning of land for new development

The majority of land identified for new housing and employment in urban investigation and growth areas is located in the Western Parkland City. There is an urgent need to have ensure that the servicing of these areas with adequate economic and social infrastructure is sequenced and funded in a systematic and sustainable way.

- Close consultation with local councils is recommended to help identify the precincts and centres identified for potential to support housing targets in the City Plans.

The emphasis on supporting infrastructure for housing supply is welcomed however there are many precincts and centres that require infrastructure to support employment and services to be located within these centres. St Marys is a good example of a centre where council is working hard to plan a vibrant inclusive centre which could support increase in housing supply, however it also requires substantial investment in social and active transport infrastructure for to provide for growth of both its population and employment.

- Involve local councils in setting targets for increasing walking and cycling and assist councils to fund, plan and deliver safe and appropriate active transport infrastructure at the local level.

Council welcomes the direction to make active or public transport the preferred choice (page 48). Active transport supports healthy living and enables vibrant placemaking opportunities. However, the nature and type of active transport infrastructure required at the local level needs to consider different demographic profiles of local communities. Setting of targets for active transport need to involve local councils to ensure that they take into account these differences. Current funding levels from state and federal government are well below what is needed to achieve this outcome. There is a gap between larger active transport projects, and funding for the myriad of small local links that will help enable communities access their local centres, schools and recreation areas as determined by community needs.



- Consider expanding on the actions for 'inclusive places' to support health outcomes

It is also recommended that the Commission consider expanding on the actions for 'inclusive places' to create healthy places. Actions outlined in the NSW Health 2020 *Healthy Places Checklist* may be helpful in this regard. The Checklist includes actions in addition to walking and cycling, such as access to fresh produce, minimising urban heat, ensuring that local infrastructure and dwelling types are universally accessible, child and age-friendly and adequate access to open, green public spaces. Other considerations for creating healthy, inclusive places include:

- shared use of local social infrastructure (such as school infrastructure out-of-hours)
- Tree canopy along walking/cycling corridors for shade
- Climate adapted bus shelters to increase comfort waiting for public transport / to encourage catching public transport
- End of trip infrastructure and facilities for cycling (safe storage racks)
- Need for accessible, digitally connected community hubs within neighbourhoods to enhance social connection and build social networks to increase community resilience.

## Powering local jobs and economies

Council welcomes the Commission's continued focus on building resilient economies based on the strengths of each City (page 53) and supporting long term investment through industrial lands (page 55). Penrith and the other Western Parkland City local government areas each make unique contributions to the region's diverse economy.

- Close collaboration with Councils will be required to develop targets for jobs growth across four categories of industry in each City as proposed (Action 5.3) as well as to implement actions that aim to help achieve these targets.

Council would also like to see greater growth and more equal distribution of knowledge intensive jobs in the Western Parkland City. The identification of Bradfield as a future innovation district, based on the recent announcement of the Advanced Manufacturing facility to be located there, signals the importance of the Western Parkland City to future manufacturing capability in the region. Given that the Aerotropolis will be many years before it is developed, the Commission should ensure that the existing Collaboration Areas and city centres of the Western Parkland City (Liverpool, Greater Penrith and Campbelltown-Macarthur) are linked into the emerging innovation ecosystem to ensure that the opportunities for growth of knowledge jobs in these areas can be realised in the meantime.

- The new City Plans need to continue to support implementation of actions in existing in Collaboration Areas as well as the identified innovation precincts.

The Western City District Plan identified a range of actions for the development of Collaboration Areas. Development of these Collaboration Areas require continued effort to realise their full potential as hubs for health and education and knowledge jobs.

- The Region and City plans need to set out the mechanism and timeframes for servicing newly rezoned employment lands across the Six Cities, and especially in the Western Sydney Aerotropolis to provide greater certainty for investment.

The inclusion of an industrial lands policy in the Region Plan is welcomed by Council. Penrith has around 40% of Greater Sydney's undeveloped zoned employment land stocks<sup>2</sup> so having a clear policy that highlights the importance of a productive network of industrial lands will help guide strategic planning of these new industrial precincts. Equally important for investor certainty will be a clear timeline for the

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<sup>2</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment, Employment Lands Development Monitor, 2021 data table: Supply of Employment Lands

servicing of rezoned employment lands. This should be part of the strategic planning for the industrial precincts within the region and especially for the employment lands surrounding the Western Sydney Airport.

- The transition to a circular economy should be embedded in the economic initiatives of the Region and City Plans

There needs to be a recognition that a circular economy is more than just waste management and that it is an initiative for sustainability. The circular economy includes the development and manufacture of products that have designed out waste and can be repurposed, reused and /or recycled through available avenues/markets. The Region and City Plans need to consider economic development opportunities that can be realised from the circular economy and identify supporting actions such as including adequate provision of employment land in suitable locations for the purposes of industries, like waste management, recycling and remanufacturing, which support the circular economy.

Penrith and the Western Parkland City are well placed to foster the circular economy with an emerging cluster of waste management and recycling businesses across the city. While some circular economy businesses, particularly for waste management require larger sites in industrial precincts, there is also a need to accommodate small and medium enterprises in locations closer to centres and to accommodate new shared space business models, such as in for makerspace hubs, tool libraries that encourage circular economy activities within the community.

## Climate-resilient green cities

Council welcomes the emphasis in the Discussion Paper on actions to reduce carbon emissions by accelerating the shift to renewable energy (page 58), transitioning to a circular economy (page 59), building resilient cities and encouraging development of sustainable homes and buildings (page 62). Council suggests that the range of initiatives to support the move to climate resilient, green cities be expanded to strengthen climate resilience across the Region.

- The Region and City Plans need to consider climate change adaptation in terms of the location of new development, and identify locations where building is appropriate to reduce risk of impact of flood and bushfire.

Council welcomes the proposal (Action 6.5) that the Region and City Plans will take into consideration learnings from recent events and the *NSW Climate Changed Adaptation Strategy* and the *2022 NSW Floods Inquiry*.

- Prioritise actions to address flooding and evacuation in the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment area, specifically in relation to development capacity and evacuation infrastructure.

Council recommends that the new Region and City Plans specifically address and prioritise mitigating risks and impacts of flooding in the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment. It is critical that the Plans specify development capacity in the catchment, including in the Penrith city centre, and the need for infrastructure for evacuation in response to future flooding events to give certainty for investors and developers. Council seeks to continue to be included in close collaboration with agencies to help develop effective cross-jurisdictional resilience solution-based responses underpinned by high quality, transparent information on flooding in the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment.

- The Region and City Plans should highlight the need for climate resilient infrastructure

Along with climate resilient urban design planning and building, the Region and City Plans could highlight the need for climate resilient infrastructure that will be needed to support communities in a range climate change scenarios and disaster responses. This may include factoring the cost of resilient utilities and upgrading existing networks such as undergrounding and/or cabling of powerlines, installing alternative telecommunications networks and planning for road upgrades for evacuations. It is essential that mobility



is looked at in terms of resilience and responding to climate related severe weather events. In this regard there needs to be consideration of evacuation routes across all transport modes. In particular, Penrith City Council has identified the delivery of the Castlereagh Connection as a critical link in the road network to ensure a safe and efficient route for flood evacuation.

- Ensure the shift to renewable energy needs to keep pace with the electrification of transport.

Electric vehicle infrastructure will need to be considered in new multi-dwelling housing and apartment buildings, to future proof these developments. At the same time, development of renewable energy options will need to increase a rate that meets demand for electric transportation. New initiatives to support localised renewable energy generation and storage may be required to be identified in the Region Plan and City Plans to support the shift to green energy solutions for both energy generation and consumption.

- prioritise funding for infrastructure to support walking and cycling and the creation of 15-minute neighbourhoods in consultation with councils to reduce emissions within precincts and centres.

Actions to enable more people to use active transport walking and cycling for short trips, need to include funding for local shared and separated paths that connect residential areas to local centres and key facilities like schools and recreational areas. Improved amenity is vital to the uptake of sustainable transport (including walking, cycling and use of public transport). Tree canopy is vital to provide shaded paths and reduce the impact of urban heat that affect the choices people make to ride and walk or sit at a bus stop. Any proposal for active transport infrastructure and design must work hand in hand with plans to develop tree canopy investment strategies and set place-based targets for canopy cover.

- The use of gas in buildings in new developments needs clarification in line with the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings) 2022

The Discussion Paper mentions 'restricting the use of gas in new developments from 2025' (page 62) but Council notes that the proposed Sustainable Buildings SEPP 2022, includes options for use of gas where appropriate. Council seeks clarification how the Sustainable Buildings SEPP 2022 and government policy for net zero emissions will be incorporated in the Region and City Plans. Council seeks detailed direction in respect to this critical transition to lower emissions building design and net zero emission targets.

Council supports the proposal (Action 6.8) for the Region Plan to include actions to strengthen resilience to urban heat by updating urban design, planning and building guidelines. Council suggest that the updated guidelines could have a broader remit in addition to mitigating urban heat, to reduce carbon emissions, as well as reduce waste, energy and water consumption. Guidelines would need to incorporate green infrastructure, tree canopy targets, light coloured materials, low carbon construction materials, water sensitive urban design. It will be important to ensure that localised climate data for Western Sydney is utilised to reflect the urban heat challenges and ensure homes are built for adequate thermal comfort, health and safety.

## CONCLUSION

Penrith City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Greater Cities Commission Six Cities Discussion Paper. Many initiatives identified in the Discussion Paper are in line with Council's strategic planning priorities. Council recommends that local strategic planning by councils should form the basis upon which the new Region and City Plans are developed. Council looks forward to continuing to work closely with the Commission to develop the next Region Plan and Western Parkland City Plan.

## APPENDIX A

COPY OF PENRITH CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO WESTERN PARKLAND CITY AUTHORITY'S BLUEPRINT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP 2022.



Our reference: Instore  
Contact: Anne Hurni  
Telephone: 4732 7661

20 April 2022

Ms Stephanie Barker  
Chief City Planner  
Western Parkland City Authority  
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Via email: [stephanie.barker@wpcasidney](mailto:stephanie.barker@wpcasidney)

Cc: [blueprint@wpcasidney](mailto:blueprint@wpcasidney)

Dear Ms Barker,

**Penrith City Council Submission to Western Parkland City Draft Blueprint and Economic Development Roadmap**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Western Parkland City Draft Blueprint and Economic Development Roadmap.

Our submission was endorsed by Council at its Ordinary Meeting on 28 March 2022 and is attached for your consideration.

If you have any questions, please contact Anne Hurni on 02 4732 7661 or [anne.hurni@penrith.city](mailto:anne.hurni@penrith.city).

Yours sincerely,

Carlie Ryan  
**City Strategy Manager**

## **SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO THE WESTERN PARKLAND CITY DRAFT BLUEPRINT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Western Parkland City Draft Blueprint (the Draft Blueprint) and Economic Development Roadmap Phase 1 (the Draft Roadmap).

We understand the Draft Blueprint and Draft Roadmap represent high-level strategic directions and priorities for the WPCA in its role of co-ordinating infrastructure and attracting investment that leverages the opportunities of the development of the new Western Sydney International Airport.

We welcome the “fundamental shift away from incremental planning” to the recognition of the Western Parkland City as a green, connected city. Plans such as the Blueprint have the ability to catalyse leadership and action to ensure the Western Parkland City is a global exemplar of city shaping initiatives.

The coordination and timely delivery of infrastructure and services is critical for achieving the WPCA’s vision. We welcome WPCA’s stated commitment to work with the Australian Government, NSW Government agencies and the Western Parkland Councils to:

- Address coordination issues,
- Progressively deliver the priorities,
- Continue to engage with stakeholders on emerging issues, and
- Advocate for priority investment decisions.

Through meaningful engagement, ongoing collaboration and an integrated approach, there is a real opportunity for the draft Blueprint and Roadmap to unify the Western Parkland City and deliver the infrastructure we need as a region to achieve vision and the aspirations of our community.

In this regard, we seek further clarification on the role and status of the Blueprint and Roadmap in relation to other strategic planning frameworks, including the review of the Greater Sydney Region Plan and District Plan by the Greater Sydney Commission, review of the Future Transport 2056 plan by Transport for NSW and review of the State Infrastructure Strategy by Infrastructure NSW. Further, we also seek clarity on the role of the WPCA in the delivery of the priorities identified in the Blueprint and Roadmap and an identification of the funding that has been committed to achieve their implementation.

We look forward to continuing to work with WPCA to realise the vision for the Western Parkland City through the effective and timely delivery of agreed infrastructure priorities that will support it. The following comments seek further clarification on a range of issues raised in the Draft Blueprint and Roadmap and offer recommendations to help address them.

### **DRAFT BLUEPRINT**

The Blueprint is central to the WPCA responsibilities for co-ordinating infrastructure, attracting investment and delivering Bradfield City Centre, as well as guiding growth and investment for the entire Western Parkland City.

**Role of the WPCA**

In considering the Blueprint priorities and their implementation, Council seeks further clarification about:

- The role/s for the WPCA that would stem from the Blueprint and its 47 priorities,
- How WPCA's role/s would complement the existing roles of other state agencies and councils, and
- The role of WPCA in delivering the Blueprint, specifically in relation to precinct development and implementation.

**Role of the Blueprint**

The Blueprint outlines a number of interrelated strategies. Importantly, the relationship between the Blueprint and Roadmap, the planning priorities and aspirations and their strategic alignment to other land use and infrastructure strategies need to be further clarified in the context of the following:

- Review of the Greater Sydney Region Plan,
- Review of the Western City District Plan,
- Western Sydney City Deal aspirations,
- Review of Future Transport 2056 and
- Review of the State Infrastructure Strategy.

Clarity could be provided through the “policy line of sight” diagram (page 26) to reflect a clear strategic planning hierarchy.

In relation to the role of the Blueprint, it is recommended that the Blueprint:

- detail who the Blueprint represents and advocates for,
- explain how it fits into the strategic planning hierarchy, including where existing strategies for infrastructure and land use are duplicated in the Blueprint,
- detail how the Blueprint links to City Deal governance and State strategic planning and budgeting processes,
- detail what funding has been committed to the delivery of the Blueprint and Roadmap.

**Strategy approach**

The Blueprint documents would benefit from explaining the strategic criteria or assessment for the 47 priorities that were identified beyond stating that they were compiled through analysing:

- Gaps in services and infrastructure,
- The pipeline of projects slated for investigation, and
- Opportunities for new or revised government action.

The Blueprint states that “gaps in services and infrastructure have become apparent in many of the City’s greenfield and urban renewal areas”. This should be central to the Blueprint’s formulation. In relation to the “existing and future growth areas” (page 18) the Blueprint should reference content of Council’s Local Strategic Planning Statements more directly. It should also identify key precincts for jobs growth, which have not been referenced.

In relation to the assessment of priorities, it is recommended that the Blueprint:

- Adopt a clear, robust assessment and prioritisation methodology,
- Focus on strategic needs and opportunities, leveraging Local Strategic Planning Statements,
- Align strategic themes with existing plans as much as possible, and
- Reconsider priorities which are business-as-usual activities.

### **Delivery priorities**

In total, of the Blueprint's 47 Delivery priorities:

- 12 relate to Bradfield, the Airport or broader Aerotropolis
- 34 appear to be business as usual or repackaged commitments
- 1 appears to be a new commitment.

It is understood that delivering infrastructure to serve the Western Sydney Airport and Aerotropolis is an immediate priority, however most residents will still live closer to other Metropolitan and Strategic centres than Bradfield. These centres will have an equally important role in 'maximising the benefits of the Government's investment'. In addition, it would be helpful to clearly indicate in this section the immediate infrastructure priorities that will be delivered by WPCA and other State government agencies. The Blueprint needs to outline how these priorities will deliver much needed infrastructure beyond Bradfield and the Aerotropolis.

It is recommended that the WPCA:

- Re-evaluate priorities for geographic balance relative to the service gaps communities are enduring and forecast to endure, and
- Clarify how the Blueprint and Roadmap priorities help the Western Parkland Councils address their priorities as set out in their respective Local Strategic Planning Statements.

### **Highest priorities**

The Blueprint identifies that "without careful planning, there is a risk infrastructure provision will be slow, costly or inefficient". The Blueprint's conclusions and the recent Infrastructure Contributions Review suggest infrastructure provision is already slow, costly, inefficient and inadequate – especially in the growth centres. This is evident in the examples provided, noting that, currently, only 18% of residents in the Western Parkland City have access to centres within a 10-minute walk, compared 63% in the Central River City.

Neither addressing the "service and infrastructure gaps" nor "addressing disadvantage" are referenced among the highest priorities yet they are acknowledged as barriers to achieving sustainable development across the region. Roads are only referenced in relation to precinct activation, despite clear gaps and congestion across the broader network. These are major ongoing concerns for councils. For example, the Castlereagh Connection and Werrington Arterial Stage 2 projects are long-standing infrastructure gaps.

The interrelationships between the priorities need to be better articulated. For example, Priority C6: Develop the Mamre Road logistics hub will significantly increase road freight in Penrith and other LGAs, requiring substantial upgrades to surrounding and connecting roads keep up with the growth in truck movements.

The Blueprint outlines a project to complete investigations to prioritise a rail connection between Bradfield City Centre and Leppington, linking Bradfield City Centre to Liverpool and Glenfield by 2031. This differs from the original City Deal Commitment relating to the full length of North South Rail, south to Macarthur. It is critical that the Blueprint reflect the original wording of the marquee City Deal commitment to deliver the full length of North South Rail:

*"Investigation of integrated transport and delivery options for a full North South Rail Link from Schofields to Macarthur and a South West Rail Link to connect Leppington to the Western Sydney Airport via an interchange at the Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis."*

In relation to the priorities, it is recommended that the Blueprint:

- make the following highest priorities:



## Western Parkland City Draft Blueprint and Roadmap

- road network,
- service and infrastructure gaps,
- addressing disadvantage,
- precinct prioritisation, and
- greater infrastructure funding.
- add the need for a commitment to investigate the construction of Castlereagh Connection and Werrington Arterial Stage 2
- add the need for a commitment to master plan and unlock Penrith Lakes for the public to the section on Highest Priorities.
- In the section relating to projects, reflect the original wording of the marquee City Deal commitment to deliver the full length of North South Rail:

*“Investigation of integrated transport and delivery options for a full North South Rail Link from Schofields to Macarthur and a South West Rail Link to connect Leppington to the Western Sydney Airport via an interchange at the Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis.”*

### Consideration of Council input into the Blueprint

We would welcome more recognition of the important role of local government in delivering infrastructure. The input of Councils and suggested priorities have been put into an appendix. It is not clear to how these priorities proposed by Council staff have been assessed for inclusion and what their status is. The content of the appendix outlines that Council priorities ‘might’ be considered by future processes.

We seek clarity on how the WPCA will consider these items in the appendix in the future and how local government will be involved in this process.

### Local infrastructure challenges

The Blueprint presents an opportunity to examine and address the need for aligned infrastructure planning, funding and delivery across the Western Parkland City. The implications for the delivery of local infrastructure by Councils and the ongoing costs of these need to be considered in the Blueprint moving forward.

It is recommended that the Blueprint recognise Councils’ significant, growing cumulative resource commitments over the last decade and their forward projections (long term financial plans).

There may an opportunity for WPCA to support the funding and delivery of priorities in areas of need identified by Councils. This could include developing schemes for funding public infrastructure, facilities, places and services, and implementing them, if directed by the Minister.

Councils have dramatically expanded their capital programs over the past decade. The Blueprint could more fully explore the budget implications of the priorities including the costs of implementation by local government/other agencies.

The WPCA could also consider the challenges for local government in the relation to delivering local infrastructure works, investment requirements, the capacity of potential funding sources, including Council contributions and recent reductions in planning activity by key State agencies.

### DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

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The Economic Development Roadmap identifies eight **priority industry sectors**: freight and logistics, agribusiness, visitor economy, advanced manufacturing, aerospace and defence, construction, circular economy and health and education. It also identifies three **economic directions** to:

- foster innovation and build global competitiveness,
- leverage city strengths, and
- develop 22nd century workforce skills.

Reference to the drivers of opportunity or jobs growth in each the priority industry sectors would strengthen the evidence to justify the key sectors included. The Roadmap should refer to the Defence industries (page 20 and 24), specifically the Defence Establishment Orchard Hills in Penrith LGA, home to the Defence Explosive Ordnance Training School. Penrith also has a number of manufacturers that supply Defence industries.

There appears to be omissions of some other key industries including professional and technical services, all manufacturing, public administration, retail and wholesale trade. The Roadmap should also include some small and emerging industries related to creative production, digital technologies, automation and renewable energy.

It would be helpful for the Roadmap to explain in more detail:

- How have the priority industries been selected? What evidence is there that the Parkland City enjoys sustainable economic advantages in these fields in particular?
- What needs or opportunities are the strategies responding to? What factors make the strategies specific or especially relevant to the Parkland ahead of other regions?
- Does the strategy provide sufficient nuance in identifying key localised opportunities within the Parkland's vast economic structure?
- Are key economic risks accounted for and addressed by the strategies?
- How are the priorities in the Roadmap are related to those in the Blueprint?

We recommend developing a co-sponsored (Council and State Agency) Regional Economic Development Strategy, accounting for both region-wide and locality-specific advantages:

- Analysing past, present and future drivers of growth and demand,
- Fully cataloguing data to derive industry specialisations - taking a locality (place-based) approach, not just a whole-of-region lens,
- Using industry consultation as central to the strategy development,
- Analysing the City's economy by locality for sources of demand, sources of labour, industry structure and supply chain implications, and
- Identifying key opportunities and risks, and their implications.

Two of the Western Parkland City's greatest economic opportunities are directly linked to its geographic location in relation to the State freight network and its young, diverse and growing population.

The first opportunity related to its locational advantage is the opportunity to consolidate regional NSW's and the east coast's supply chains in Western Sydney, utilising the logistical agglomerations surrounding the Western Sydney International Airport and rail connectivity.

The second opportunity lies in the size and growth of its increasingly educated population. The Western Parkland City's population is a major source of labour for the southern hemisphere's richest labour market, Greater Sydney.

A third opportunity relates to the natural and built assets of the Western Parkland City, which are primarily known to, and enjoyed by, local residents. With the opening of Western Sydney

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Airport, the Western Parkland City will become a first port of call for many overseas visitors and there will be value in preserving and enhancing the scenic natural environments and culturally significant places for all to experience.

It is recommended that the Roadmap:

- Develop, with Councils and State agencies, a co-sponsored Regional Economic Development Strategy, accounting for both region-wide and locality-specific advantages, including consideration of geographic, demographic, natural and cultural attributes, and
- Re-evaluate other sectors in light of deeper analysis of data, governance and specialisations and private sector consultations.