

10 Key Issues

FOR A METROPOLITAN STRATEGY FOR SYDNEY

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10 Key Issues for a Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney

1 PRESUMPTION FOR GROWTH

Why is this an issue?

Sydney is falling behind other capitals in terms of construction which is dragging NSW down. NSW has only half the construction of Victoria on a per capita basis and three quarters of Queensland's construction. Since 2003 NSW and Sydney have been going backwards. 64% of Sydneysiders (according to the 2011 Productivity Commission report) are against growth while Melbourne has 52% and Hobart 36% against. With population growth inevitable from immigration and birth rate the Sydney community must plan for growth in a positive manner. Local NIMBY groups need to understand that we all have an obligation to manage Sydney's growth.

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- Growth targets as a formal part of the strategy.
- Strategy to be a statutory document with legal weight.
- Assessment bodies must take growth targets into account.
- Councils must achieve growth targets or exceed them.

2 STATE LEADERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL

Why is this an issue?

With 64% of the community against change we need the state to communicate the importance of planning for growth. It is important that this generation plans for opportunities for future generations in terms of affordable housing. The state government has stated that it is returning planning powers to the community but this is unlikely to lead to more

development thus leaving Sydney behind other capital cities in terms of construction activity. The government's business plan for the state is titled 'A plan to make NSW number one' but in the area of planning and building construction this is being delegated to communities and councils.

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- More State Significant Projects must be determined by the state.
- The State must co-ordinate infrastructure providers for roads, electricity, water, sewer etc.
- Urbangrowth NSW must have consent and acquisition powers.
- Community awareness programs about the states prosperity are needed
- The State Opposition must not side with NIMBY groups but support growth.

3 COUNCILS MUST SUPPORT CHANGE

Why is this an issue?

With the NSW Government returning planning powers to councils and the community, their role becomes critical. Councillors are generally very swayed by popularist anti-development groups. They need to do this if they want to be re-elected. As the community is generally anti-change and anti-development most councils will generally support this position except for rare cases.

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- Growth targets as minimums must be locked in to council planning documents.
- Achievement of growth targets should lead to access to infrastructure funding.
- Under achievement of growth targets should lead to state intervention.
- Urban Activity Precinct funds should go only to pro-growth councils.

- More flexible mixed use zoning is needed to encourage local development.

4 INFILL DEVELOPMENT IN CORRIDORS AND CENTRES

Why is this an issue?

To protect vast areas of detached housing it is best to locate higher density housing and commercial buildings in centres, near transport nodes or along corridors. Run down corridors like Parramatta Road will get community support for renewal. The Metropolitan Strategy began with a focus on corridors but has moved away from this.

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- Urbangrowth NSW to lead with infill development.
- Identify key corridors as important precincts for development.
- Urban Activation Precinct Program to include corridors.
- Strategy to be flexible on what goes in centres.
- Out of centre development can be approved.

5 GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT MUST BE AFFORDABLE

Why is this an issue?

While the government has encouraged the rezoning of large areas of greenfield land a lot of this has not flowed through to being affordable housing lots. A raft of levies have been applied to this land by the State and by Councils to cover infrastructure costs. Unfortunately these extra costs have made the development of new housing unviable in many instances, added to this has been excessive land taxes applied to greenfield land.

“Currently many organisations that can provide new jobs are finding the planning system is stopping innovative projects.”

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- Broad base levies over whole LGA or bigger areas can contribute to infrastructure costs.
- State Infrastructure Contributions must be kept at economically sustainable levels.
- Land Tax should not be applied to land rezoned for master planned estates.

6 MORE FLEXIBLE JOB PROVISION

Why is this an issue?

The current zoning laws are overly prescriptive on the types of jobs that are allowed. The world is changing fast on how jobs are defined and the internet is changing how consumers and purchasers relate to business. Currently many organisations that can provide new jobs are finding the planning system is stopping innovative projects.

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- Mixed use precincts must be encouraged.
- Reduce the number of industrial zones.
- Allow the market to provide jobs.
- Do not have commercial only precincts.

7 DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES

Why is this an issue?

Sydney still seems to be clinging to the quarter acre block as the ideal housing type yet the city has moved dramatically into a diversity of housing types. Apartments now represent 27.6% of housing and terraces and townhouses represent 12.8%. Apartments take 15 times less land than detached houses and therefore have far less impact on the existing suburban areas.

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- Promote the need for many housing types and densities.
- Define locations for high density living along corridors or around transport nodes.
- Ensure a balance between inner and outer city housing based on market preferences.
- Focus on achieving highest densities to conserve land.

8 PUBLIC TRANSPORT WORKS BETTER WITH DENSITY

Why is this an issue?

Many Sydneysiders complain about the effectiveness of public transport but it is very difficult to make this work efficiently in a low density city. Around the world it is evident that public transport works best with higher urban densities that lead to a reduction in car usage and therefore CO2 pollution levels.

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- Increase density around existing transport nodes.
- New transport infrastructure must have significant densities.
- Corridor urban development can reinforce public transport.

9 MEASURABLE DELIVERY TARGETS

Why is this an issue?

The states overarching business plan, NSW 2021 - A plan to make NSW number one, has specific targets and these need to be passed down to other levels of the city's planning system including JRPPs, PACs and councils. Without targets there is no accountability of each level within government.

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- Annual monitoring of planning approvals.
- Annual monitoring of building starts by building type.
- Growth targets to be minimums with incentives to exceed these.
- 5 year review of targets
- Align all reporting from planning, transport, jobs, construction to give a holistic picture.

10 CREATING NEW CENTRES

Why is this an issue?

Sydney's previous metropolitan plans have been very focussed on controlling what goes into various centres and what is allowed outside centres. This misunderstands the dynamics of the market place where new initiatives may occur outside the governments fixed plan. To maximise jobs, planning must not try to overly control market forces.

What is needed in the Metropolitan Strategy?

- Ensure no restrictions to uses outside formal centres.
- Allow mixed uses particularly around transport nodes and along corridors.
- Support greater heights and FSRs in larger centres.
- Encourage new centres to emerge around regional jobs and new technologies.

The previous submission in June 2010 by the Urban taskforce on the Metropolitan Strategy is still relevant and can be accessed here: http://www.urbantaskforce.com.au/images/stories/pdf_downloads/Advocacy/PolicyAgenda/Urban_Taskforce_Submission_to_the_Metropolitan_Strategy_Review.pdf

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