

8 March 2010

Michael Bushby
Chief Executive, RTA
PO Box 609
PYRMONT NSW 2009

By email: m5expansion@rta.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Bushby,

Re: Proposed expansion of the M5 Corridor

The Urban Taskforce represents Australia's most prominent property developers and equity financiers. We provide a forum for people involved in the development and planning of the urban environment to engage in constructive dialogue with both government and the community.

Investment into major transport infrastructure, including motorways and other associated road upgrades, must proceed if the Sydney metropolitan region is to properly accommodate expected population growth. Significant investment into major transport infrastructure will address many of the social and environmental challenges faced by the communities of Sydney and will also inspire confidence and further encourage private sector investment in urban development projects.

We are pleased that the NSW Government is committed to the expansion of the M5 corridor. We are encouraged by Government's acceptance that integrated transport solutions are essential if we are to remain a competitive global city. The M5 corridor expansion is important to meeting our transport demands, particularly for South Western Sydney. Transport solutions for Sydney must include a significantly upgraded roads network. Even with the provision of a fast and reliable mass transit services, roads will continue to be a vital component of the transport system.

1. Support for the upgrading of the M5

Transport solutions for Sydney must include significant upgrades to roads such as the M5. The M5 corridor is highly congested in peak periods and the existing M5 East is already operating at capacity throughout the day. The Urban Taskforce supports the duplication and enhancement of the M5. For instance, the M5 East project is an obvious priority for the Sydney network given it feeds the Sydney Airport and Port Botany areas and is also the key connection from Sydney's growing South Western regions.

Sydney Airport and Port Botany are key entry points for trade. To remain competitive we must ensure that transport infrastructure serving these points of entry is efficient. We must not permit road capacity to limit commerce. If we do not invest and expand transport infrastructure, we will not be able to meet future business and tourism demand.

This investment into the M5 upgrades is crucial to making the South West an integrated part of the metropolitan area.

2. Continued role for roads

The development of residential areas and centres that are dense, compact, with a mix of uses, supported by high quality public transport will encourage some to travel less by the private motor car. In fact, some may even choose to do without a car altogether. However, it can't be assumed that building better neighbourhoods with a railway station at the core will encourage all people out of their cars.

Public transport is suitable for moving large numbers of people into particular hubs, but lacks the flexibility to deal with a whole range of journeys whose start and end points are not within an area of high residential or employment density. For example weekend trips to: parks; homes of friends; and workplaces in decentralised locations, are more likely to require high quality road transport than public transport. For this reason, it is encouraging to see the Government pursuing road transport solutions along with public transport improvements. An effective transport solution for Sydney will be one that examines and integrates all forms of transport, including road, rail, cycling and walking.

New or upgraded roads can also deliver environmental benefits associated with reduced congestion and the potential to provide improved, rapid bus services. Roads are not just for the private motorcar. To enable the expansion of the bus services, as suggested in the Metropolitan Transport Strategy, improvements to roads are essential. Good quality motorways provide fast, efficient and flexible transport options for public and private transport.

Private motorcars continue to be a necessity in Australia and transport solutions for Sydney must consider the car, roads and all other forms of transport, particularly the means to improve their integration. Sensible land use and transport planning allows for all modes of transport (cars, transit, walking and cycling) and plans must consider and integrate these.¹

Roads provide flexible public and private transport options. The benefits of continuing to provide road infrastructure include the ability to spread the transport load across a rail and road system. It is also widely accepted that road based public transport is a lower cost with effective technology that can provide greater service coverage for all residents.

The Urban Taskforce is committed to an integration of land use and transport planning and supports the Government's proposal to expand and upgrade the M5.

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to offer our comments and should you require any further clarification of the content of this correspondence, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Urban Taskforce Australia



Aaron Gadiel
Chief Executive Officer

¹ Mackay, M., 2005, Don't think Transit-oriented development, think transport-oriented development. Paper presented at the Transit Oriented Development Conference. Fremantle, Western Australia 5-8 July 2005.
[<http://www.patrec.org/conferences/TODJuly2005/papers/Mackay.M.pdf>, accessed 7 April, 2008]