

18 November 2015

Director – Policies & System Implementation
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Ms Helen Barrie, A/Team Leader

Proposed Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Amendment Order 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed *Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Amendment Order 2015*. Our comments are provided below.

The Urban Taskforce supports the proposed amendments, in particular the addition of *garden centres and hardware and building supplies* as mandatory permissible uses in IN1 General Industrial, IN2 Light Industrial and B7 Business Park zones. This amendment will go some way in assisting the Taskforce's retail members, such as Woolworths and Masters, who have indicated to us that the time taken from when a site is initially purchased to when the store is open for trade is significantly longer in NSW than in any other state in Australia largely due to the complexity of the NSW planning system.

Studies have demonstrated that the Sydney Metropolitan Region lacks sufficient retail floor space to meet demand in the market. Frequently, retailers are forced to purchase land zoned for industrial uses and seek a rezoning from the local council for their store. This greatly impacts upon the feasibility of such development. The rezoning process within the NSW planning system is both lengthy, complex and costly, with the result uncertain and inconsistent. Woolworths has noted that the average holding and interest costs for their properties from the development application to approval phase is around 16 percent – double that of other states in Australia.

This amendment is a good start to reforming the planning system to support competition, innovation and efficiency in the retail sector. Consistent reform is required to ensure that planning regulation remains contemporaneous and does not unnecessarily restrict the development of new businesses and industries. We encourage the Department to continue reform of the planning system in this regard.

The Urban Taskforce is always willing to work closely with the Government to provide a development industry perspective on this issue. Please feel free to contact me on telephone number 9238 3927 to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Urban Taskforce Australia

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Johnson AM

Chief Executive Officer