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Penrith City Council – 2020-21 Pre-budget submission

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission ahead of the 2020-21 budget process.

In Penrith we are not just building a city of the future, we look to reap benefits for communities well beyond our boundaries. We play a strategic role in Sydney and Western Sydney's growth, supporting a strong economy for NSW and Australia.

Penrith City Council is proud of the role we played in the establishment and ongoing implementation of the Western Sydney City Deal. We have long advocated for a tri-partite approach to coordinating shared government investment in the nationally significant Western Sydney region. We already see the early benefits of this collaborative approach to planning and delivering a new City and are grateful for the Government's significant investment to date.

The Western Sydney City Deal is a 20-year commitment that will require ongoing Federal funding to realise the collective vision for Western Sydney. As such, there are significant opportunities to leverage existing infrastructure spending to reap further benefits for our community. These benefits are as follows:

- More jobs closer to home
- Planning for future growth and ensuring services and infrastructure keeps up
- Making sure we can move around the City and region through a range of transport modes
- Maximising the significant investment being made in the region

If you would like to discuss any aspects of this submission, please contact me or Council's Director City Futures Kylie Powell on (02) 4732 7580.

Yours sincerely

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Penrith City Council – Pre-Budget Submission 2020-21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Penrith is the lifestyle and economic heartland of Western Sydney. As the entry to the new Western Sydney Airport and connected by new and upgraded infrastructure, Penrith is perfectly positioned to capitalise on and support the growth of industry along the new North South corridor and well as the associated uplift to the established East West corridor.

Our City has experienced significant, sustained growth over many decades and will continue to grow, while also supporting a rapidly expanding catchment in one of Australia's fastest growing regions in the Western Parkland City.

We believe the Federal Government has a particularly significant role to play in the development of growth cities and regions. Your lead and role in the creation of the Western Sydney City Deal is indicative of the proactive approach being taken to strengthen and enable regions such as ours.

As you can appreciate, a focus on growth area infrastructure addresses the current infrastructure backlog in fast-growing outer suburbs like Penrith and will also future-proof them, as they continue to grow. We are also keen to maximise the benefits of the significant infrastructure being delivered in the region and advocate for this to continue in the longer term to ensure the multipliers of this investment are realised.

Our submission covers the following key points:

- The benefits and importance of the Western Sydney City Deal and the need for continued support for the projects identified in the Deal
- Future proofing the City Deal to ensure momentum is maintained throughout the 20 year Deal term and beyond
- The City-shaping potential of the Liveability Program and merits of future rounds including increased amenity for local communities
- The growth of populations and the need for servicing through infrastructure and services in the Western Sydney Region
- The importance of prioritising delivery of Stage 1 of Sydney Metro Greater West in Western Sydney to be operational by 2026
- Ongoing investigation and planning for the entire North South Rail Link across outer Western Sydney
- The importance of long term funding and investment in the Western Sydney Airport to maximise benefits to current residents and the Western Sydney economy.
- Cross regional connectivity and flood evacuation infrastructure to the North of Penrith via the Castlereagh Connection.

PENRITH CONTEXT

Penrith's population doubled between 1966 and 1976 and almost doubled again between 1981 and 2016 to reach its current population of just over 205,000¹. Penrith population is expected to reach over 369,000 by 2041². Its economic catchment now covers some 1.5 million people.

In the past, this growth largely occurred without concurrent investment in important infrastructure and key liveability measures including transport infrastructure, social and health services and employment self-sufficiency suffered as a result. As a result, our community has become increasingly sensitive to growth and keen to see continued investment in infrastructure and facilities appropriate to their needs.

Already, more than 300,000 people travel out of the Western Sydney region every day for work, including almost 60,000 Penrith residents. 61.4% of employed residents (58,183 people) travelled outside of the LGA each day for work³. Limited access to public transport; particularly to the north and south of Sydney means our community is highly car dependent. Deloitte (2016) found that 88% of Western Sydney workers use a car as their main mode of transport. We welcomed the commitment to Sydney Metro Greater West and funding (announced March 2019) and are keen to see these commitments embedded in subsequent Budgets.

Reducing the need to travel, particularly by car, is the key to enhancing:

- Liveability and quality of life
- energy and resource reduction through less time spent on roads
- less congestion, and
- improved health and social outcomes.

To achieve this associated infrastructure investment is required to support jobs and services closer to where people live with:

- better public transport connectivity
- improved road networks and technology
- Education, health, recreation and cultural facilities and services to enable people and places to realise their potential.

This vision is clearly enunciated in the Federal Government's Plan for Population and the NSW government's 30-minute City model and is something our community aspires to, as outlined in the Penrith Community Plan. Developed through significant community consultation, our community told us more jobs close to home, planning for growth and being able to get around our city are three of the most important issues for Council to address in conjunction with State and Federal Government. The key tenets of the City Deal also support these principles and will go a long way to ensuring a more liveable, efficient and productive region.

¹ <https://profile.id.com.au/penrith>

² <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Factsheets-and-faqs/Research-and-demography/Population-projections/2019-Penrith.pdf>

³ 2016 Census

WESTERN SYDNEY CITY DEAL

The work being done by Federal, State and Local governments together to plan and deliver the future Western Parkland City must continue to build on the momentum already being achieved. Already, Penrith is seeing the very tangible benefits of the collaboration with the Federal Government that is already being enabled by the City Deal. We believe the success of the Deal relies upon its certainty and longevity and this requires in principle support as well as significant resourcing now and into the longer term to ensure the momentum is maintained.

The City Deal provides a framework to create a smart city that is more liveable, more productive, more skilled and more innovative. Penrith Council has and will continue to work hard on delivering; new local jobs, better connectivity to job centres, and greater housing and lifestyle options. The City Deal offers exceptional opportunities for Penrith, it is the start of something big for our region.

As such, we encourage the Federal government, through its budget and forward estimates, to continue to plan for and fund the 38 commitments under the Western Sydney City Deal for the current 20 year period and plan for beyond.

We would also request consideration for a future round of the transformative Liveability Fund, which will enable councils to deliver tangible, on the ground benefits to local communities. Support for the projects under the Liveability model allow Councils to deliver on the projects closest to the community that would otherwise not be possible or significantly delayed, and demonstrates true government collaboration.

ACHIEVING THE 30 MINUTE CITY THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Council is committed to maximising the benefits and minimising the impacts of the airport for Penrith residents and recognises it is a truly significant investment in the region. In addition to critical road and rail connectivity, Council supports a world class airport that will be a catalyst for new industry and employment, both within the airport precinct and beyond.

To achieve this, a long-term commitment to a North-South Rail Link (Sydney Metro Greater West) is essential, connecting to the Macarthur region in the South and joining the North West metro at Tallawong. This would connect the rapidly growing populations of the north-west corridor and those locations within the global arc (Norwest, Macquarie Park) with employment at the airport. A future corridor to the south-west should also be progressed.

We welcomed funding allocated through the Urban Congestion Fund for our City and look to ensure this investment achieves the desired objectives for all parties. We support the ongoing funding of the Urban Congestion Fund model by Federal Government, particularly its ability to support and accelerate projects traditionally funded by State Government, with a particular focus on outer growth areas.

NORTH SOUTH RAIL (SYDNEY METRO GREATER WEST)

The planned Sydney Metro Greater West will reshape the region and stimulate jobs and innovation by ensuring the airport is embedded in Western Sydney. This North-South rail link will enable more efficient movement across the region, supporting the 30-minute City and reducing vehicle congestion and in the longer term, connect the Parkland City region most effectively within itself.

The new Metro line represents a unique opportunity to create a network of strategic employment centres, and vibrant local centres. Residents will have access to diverse housing, employment, education, services and green open spaces within just 30 minutes by public transport.

Council welcomed the Federal Government's \$50m commitment to a business case for this critical infrastructure and is working closely with the Sydney Metro team undertaking this work.

We also undertook a structure planning exercise to inform our understanding and advocacy for the opportunities of this nationally significant economic corridor. This structure plan (attached) was prepared with a view to ensuring we leverage opportunities from the airport and investment in the new rail link.

The Structure Plan reflects our in-depth knowledge of the local area and incorporates and supports our vision of the ideal locations for establishing key centres including stations at Sydney Science Park, Orchard Hills and in Penrith's Health and Education precinct (known as The Quarter). Acknowledging that preliminary planning for the rail corridor included tunnelling between Werrington and St Marys, Council strongly supports delivery of this option which would include delivery of a new station at The Quarter. A station at this location would strengthen the work of Council and its partners to date in delivering jobs and education and improve access to health, education and other critical services, realising significant socio-economic benefits.

As well as supporting and enabling significantly higher employment outcomes, improving access to education and health are central to improved liveability and redressing some of the region's major challenges which include poorer than average health outcomes and educational attainment levels below the Sydney average.

With the business case soon to be completed and the need to have the rail line operating in 2026 when the airport opens, allocation of funding in 2020-21 budget and forward estimates is essential.

CASTLEREAGH CONNECTION

The "Castlereagh Connection" is a potential road project in Western Sydney that would connect significant populations in the region, intersect with existing and planned major infrastructure and provide a critical flood evacuation route to one of the highest risk communities in Australia.⁴

⁴ http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/1534/insw_hnvfloodstrategy__1_v2.pdf

Past and current population growth in Western Sydney and investment in the Western Sydney Airport and surrounding Aerotropolis will increase demand for easier movement North South and East West. This has been acknowledged in some ways by the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan, however there is more to be done.

A corridor for the Castlereagh Connection has been identified since the 1950s with around 80% of this land already under government ownership and the remaining portions subject to acquisition clauses. This runs through Llandilo, Londonderry and Castlereagh. It will connect to the M7 Motorway and the broader Motorway network. The project is currently unfunded.

Work by Infrastructure NSW to understand and plan for the flood risk in the Hawkesbury-Nepean has identified significant challenges in evacuating the current 64,000 residents who would need to get out in the event in a 1 in 100-year flood event. Castlereagh Connection follows a route identified by Transport for NSW in its 2018 Western Sydney Corridors planning and also includes a possible extension as part of the Bells Line of Road project to the freight and residential communities in regional NSW. The Castlereagh Connection being proposed by Council to proceed to business case as a priority extends approximately 21kms between the (M7 Motorway and Castlereagh Road) entirely within the Penrith and Blacktown Local Government Areas.

In the longer term, there may be opportunities to extend the Castlereagh Connection across the Blue Mountains, providing swift, safe access to Sydney for residents of the Central West of NSW and increased freight movement from the region.

Penrith as a major centre is experiencing significant investment and becoming an increasingly desirable location to live, particularly in our City Centre. To enable Penrith to fulfil its role as a Metropolitan centre development in the City Centre where it most ably uses existing transport and other resources and supports a diverse and vibrant economy makes sense. Development in the City Centre is currently constrained by flood evacuation capacity and the demands on existing evacuation routes from communities to the north of our CBD.

It is imperative that the Federal Government consider a funding contribution towards delivery of a flood evacuation grade Castlereagh Connection to assist current and future residents as well as future regional connectivity. In the first instance we are seeking the prioritised funding and delivery of Stage 1 of the Castlereagh Connection – M7 to The Northern Road as per the 1951 gazetted corridor. We are seeking funding for a business case in the 2020-21 budget.

CONCLUSION

We acknowledge the significant work and initiatives that have been implemented and planned to support Western Sydney's rapidly growing population, changing economic environment and the region's infrastructure needs. However, there is great opportunity for it to be realised by further expediting infrastructure investment that will connect the region to itself, Sydney and the rest of the state, as well as the rest of the world. This includes new infrastructure and ensuring the best outcomes from planned investment.

Sydney is one of the top cities of the world. To all levels of government, this status matters and we should collectively strive for it. Infrastructure that supports and accelerates Western Sydney's potential will go a long way towards achieving such an outcome.

Via this submission we ask that the Federal government:

- a) Through its budget and forward estimates continue to plan for and fund the existing commitments under the Western Sydney City Deal and plan for the longer term including a further round of the Liveability Program.
- b) Allocate funding in 2020-21 and forward estimates to ensure Stage 1 of Sydney Metro Greater West will be delivered by 2026 and that investigations into a full North South corridor are progressed.
- c) Funding a business case for a flood evacuation grade Castlereagh Connection to assist current and future residents as well as future regional connectivity and provide critical evacuation infrastructure.

We thank the Federal Government for its interest and support of our City, particularly under the City Deal, and look forward to this significant collaboration continuing to deliver real benefits for our City and the region.