

13 March 2013

The Project Manager
Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

Subject: Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy Submission

On 11 March 2013 Lake Macquarie City Council resolved to make a submission in response to the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy (NURS) .

Council is concerned that the NURS contains a number of provisions with the potential to negatively impact on the Lake Macquarie LGA and its residents, including impacts on the transport system, "siphoning" of grant and other financial resources (because of the significant resources required to implement NURS), and possible limitations on economic development outside the Newcastle City Centre.

The urban infill and "city living" orientation of the NURS is welcomed and is consistent with the philosophy of our Council's Lifestyle 2030 Strategy.

City Centre revitalisation is a worthy objective, and is consistent with our Council's policy framework for its centres. Managed appropriately, more active mixed-use centres offer considerable social benefits, particularly if combined with good public transport systems.

The Newcastle urban area has a strong dependence on the private motor vehicle. An essential element in reducing this dependence is an effective public transport system based on long-term planning and commitment. Accordingly, the absence of a comprehensive transport analysis of the proposed closure of the Newcastle railway line at Wickham is of concern.

It is also a concern that the accessibility study undertaken to underpin the NURS did not consider the closure of the railway line. Furthermore, the public transport initiatives in the accessibility study are conceptual in nature, and require considerable detail to determine their viability and impact.

The public transport actions proposed in the NURS in the absence of a comprehensive resourced public transport plan for the Lower Hunter are highly likely to have a negative impact on sustainability and further embed the motor vehicle orientation of the Lower Hunter, contrary to the objectives of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy.

Lake Macquarie City Council has been working for many years to increase local employment, to broaden the local employment base, and to reduce commuting.

Council is concerned that the proposed implementation strategy of NURS to "*limit the expansion of out of centre retail that will compete with the City Centre*" may mean the growth of centres and employment land in the Lake Macquarie LGA will be inhibited. This statement requires clarification, because of its potential impact on the growth of Lake Macquarie centres, particularly if "out of centre"

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means "out of City Centre". The hierarchy of centres and their role as expressed in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy should remain.

The financial requirement for the resources, works, and incentives needed to implement the NURS will be substantial.

A recent State Government announcement that allocated \$120 million from the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund and the Restart NSW fund to the Newcastle City Centre, and that it will seek \$100 million from the Federal Government, indicate that the impact on available grant funds is likely to be significant.

Accordingly, need for resources to implement the NURS may inequitably impact on Lake Macquarie Council's ability to obtain funds and resources for its priority projects.

In summary, Council:

- Seeks clarification of the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy's proposed implementation strategy to *"limit the expansion of out of centre retail that will compete with the City Centre"* because of the potential impact on the growth of Lake Macquarie centres, particularly if "out of centre" means "out of Newcastle City Centre";
- Makes strong representations to the State Government that no action is undertaken on the railway line until a comprehensive and resourced public transport plan is in place for the Lower Hunter; and
- Seeks assurances from the State and Federal Governments, that funding toward the implementation of Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012 will not affect the equitable availability of funds for worthy projects in the Hunter beyond the Newcastle City Centre.

Should you require further information, please contact me on 4921 0271.

Yours faithfully



Sharon Pope
Manager
Integrated Planning Department