



18 September 2014

Office of the General Manager

Reference File: F00678, 14/179737

Planning Strategies, Housing and Infrastructure  
Department of Planning and Environment  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Western Sydney Employment Area Amendment**

I am responding to the current exhibition of the Western Sydney Employment Area (WSEA) Amendment and provide the following comments on behalf of Blue Mountains City Council (Council).

It is understood that the Department of Planning is amending the plans for the WSEA in light of the Commonwealth Government's recent confirmation that Sydney's second airport will be built at Badgerys Creek. The current public exhibition seeks to extend the existing WSEA boundary by 4,537 hectares to ensure sufficient land is reserved for the combined needs of the WSEA and new airport. This will require an amendment to State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Employment Area) 2009 and the Land Application Map.

The Broader Western Sydney Employment Area is identified in the draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney as one of nine key 'city shaping projects' critical to Sydney's growth. As the single largest new employment space in New South Wales, it is critical that the area is planned to best practice sustainability principles, particularly with regard to transport and infrastructure.

### **Future employment needs and role of existing centres**

The Council supports the intention of allocating future employment lands to meet the anticipated 57,000 new job target for western Sydney over the coming 30 years. With up to 60 percent of the Blue Mountains workforce travelling outside the LGA to work, the WSEA could play an important role in helping to meet the employment needs of our residents.

Whilst the location of warehousing, transport and logistics is appropriate for a bespoke employment area, the proposed location of office development in the WSEA is likely to detract from economic development in existing centres, especially Penrith. This is contrary to the Key Directions outlined in the North West Subregion Draft Subregional Strategy, which include '*Develop Penrith as a regional city*' and '*Strengthen the role of centres*'. It also counter to policies that encourage vibrant communities and activities near existing public transport and services. We request that further information is provided regarding the proportion of office development envisaged for the area and an analysis of the economic and social impacts on existing centres, including Penrith regional centre.

It is vital that both the State and Federal Government also invest in support for existing and new businesses in areas outside the immediate Sydney region, including the Blue Mountains. This would reduce commuting journeys for residents and impact on transport infrastructure by creating jobs closer to home and supports more sustainable local economies.

### **Public transport**

The establishment of a South West rail link connecting the proposed Badgery's Creek airport and WSEA to the main western rail line will be critical in attracting workers to the WSEA and in reducing commuting times, including Blue Mountains residents. The Council urges the Department to proceed with investment and development of the rail line prior to the establishment of the airport and employment area. Current plans include the safeguarding of a rail corridor, but with no funding commitments for construction. Without a commitment to high quality public transport early in the development, car use will become entrenched for workers in the WSEA.

### **Freight movement**

The WSEA and the new airport at Badgery's Creek will lead to further increases in road freight across the Blue Mountains, which provides the only direct vehicular connection between Sydney and the Central West and beyond.

Australia's freight is expected to double between now and 2030, and treble its current size by 2050. With the Great Western Highway, Bells Line of Road and the Western Railway Line being three of the key freight routes servicing the Sydney basin, all of which are already severely congested, managing this growth is a high priority of the Council and its community.

The WSEA and new airport will contribute significantly to existing pressures and impacts on the Blue Mountains community and the World Heritage National Park. A strategy to increase rail freight on the western rail line, with a connection at the future Eastern Creek intermodal terminal is required in the short to medium term, with measures to minimise impacts on communities also needed in the shorter term. The Council is working with Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) to develop a 'good neighbour' strategy for trucks in the Blue Mountains and similar initiatives will be required in the future.

I trust this submission will assist in ongoing planning of the Western Sydney Employment Area, particularly with regard to impacts on surrounding communities and centres. Should you wish to discuss the comments further please contact Andy Turner, Manager - City Planning on 4780 5513 or [aturner@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:aturner@bmcc.nsw.gov.au).

Yours faithfully



STUART LIDDELL  
Acting General Manager