

As a representative of residents within Hunter City's "Inner West District" (IWD) and some in the "Inner Newcastle District" (IND), the developments proposed in the Growing Hunter City (GHC) Draft bring equal parts optimism and scepticism. While in the capacity of this submission my voice is my own, the following appraisal came about in consultation with both constituents of the Wallsend Electorate, and I believe represents the interests of a number of key vested parties.

In regards to Direction 4.1 (Grow Inner West Centres) and Action 4.1.1 (Glendale Transport Interchange), there have been a number of questions asked and points made which require clarification.

Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange in Glendale has the unanimous support of eleven Hunter Mayors and remains at the top of my own and the Hunter Councils' list of priorities. The project was to be an incremental development: Stage One being the development of the integrated road transit hub, including Pennant St Bridge, followed by Stage Two then integrating both road and rail public transport infrastructure with the installation of a bus and train terminal which would drastically improve Hunter City accessibility. Unfortunately, while receiving tacit approval from Government and support from a number of ministers and LGAs, there was no official commitment made to the implementation of Stage 2, despite the clear benefits a better integrated transportation network would bring to the area.

The GHC is purportedly a 20 year plan which uses the term "transport interchange", yet makes no provisions for the actual interchange of road and rail services to the area. The GHC makes mention of "improved... bus facilities" (p. 34), but does not mention working with Government with a view to improving bus *services*. For the interchange to be effective, amendments to the bus

services which operate in the Western suburbs should be made, utilising the site of the interchange as a hub for improved bus routes between the IWD, the IND, and the rest of Newcastle/Hunter City.

Regarding Action 4.1.2 (Investigate opportunities for economic and housing growth within centres), the GHC states that "... NSW Government will investigate the capacity for increased growth in housing and commercial activity in the district's centres *that have good public transport access*," (p. 34, italics are my own). The concern here is that for growth in the district to be equitable and to yield positive sum returns to Hunter City, public transport services should be extended to those centres which do not currently have 'good public transport access' to establish new infrastructure and growth.

On Direction 4.2 (Deliver the Inner West District's supply of housing land), a number of issues have been raised based on the failings of similar developments in the region. Firstly, while the areas specified for development are holdings of a number of different bodies, it is imperative that these growth projects are conducted in close consultation with Government to ensure that suitable public transport services are implemented for residents. In the Wallsend Electorate, new developments in Minmi, Maryland and Fletcher, despite being flagged with ample time prior to construction, were built and continue to be built without any provision for public transport services to cater to the thousands of residents in those areas. The same mistake is being made at the Cameron Park residential development in the Lake Macquarie Council catchment. The lack of public transit in these new residential areas and concomitant increases in vehicle use by residents brings considerable road traffic congestion, and raises questions of how effectively the Department of Planning intends to implement to Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange.

The final point regarding the IWD concerns the area under investigation for urban release on the North-Western side of the Newcastle Link Road between Wallsend and Minmi. The area is largely wetland and swamp, and much like a considerable amount of Wallsend, is both low-lying and flood prone. Given this and the fact that the area is on known mine subsidence land, any developments pursued here must take heed of the cautionary tales from places like Gillieston Heights and the misfortune which affects residents and businesses there in times of inclement weather. It has even been expressed to me that some would rather see the land being investigated for urban release integrated into the Lower Hunter Green corridor.

While development and growth are undeniably in the best interests of the Hunter City, I am committed to working to ensure it will not be at the expense of the environment, infrastructure, or the quality of services the IWD receives, and appreciate the efforts of the Department of Planning to achieve the same.

Kindest regards,

Sonia Hornery MP