

23 March 2016

Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001



Attention: Ms Carolyn McNally, Secretary – Department of Planning and Environment

Draft Hunter Regional Plan and Draft Hunter City Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Draft Hunter Regional Plan* and the *Draft Hunter City Plan*. Please find our comments below for your consideration.

Both Plans must contain measurable targets with deadlines for delivery

Both draft Plans set out a series of directions and actions that aim to deliver the goals identified for the Hunter Region and Hunter City.

However, these directions and actions contained in the draft Plan do not have measurable targets or timeframes / deadlines attached to them. Without these clearly defined deliverables, it is difficult for these directions and actions to have much weight or meaning. Clearly defined, measurable actions, to be delivered within set timeframes, will ensure transparency and accountability to the community and other key stakeholders.

Recommendation: Rewrite actions and directions to be clearly defined, measurable and accompanied by a timeframe or deadline for delivery, including housing and employment targets.

The property industry must be involved in the development of any proposed changes to infrastructure contributions policy

Both the Draft Hunter City Plan and the Draft Hunter Regional Plan propose to undertake a range of 'operational' improvements to the infrastructure contributions system, focusing upon clarifying the contributions needed to support state infrastructure and servicing requirements for development. We note that the Draft Hunter City Plan (Action 1.6.3.) proposes replace the use of voluntary planning agreements in certain areas such as the Lower Hunter with a Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC) levy.

The Urban Taskforce would like to be involved in the development of any proposed changes to infrastructure contributions, particularly if this is part of a broader strategic review of infrastructure contributions policy. The financial feasibility of proposed development is affected greatly by changes to infrastructure contributions, and any ill-considered changes can result in significant financial loss and downturn in development.

Recommendation: Undertake stakeholder engagement and consultation with relevant organisations, including the property industry, with regards to any proposed changes to infrastructure contributions, including changes specific to the Hunter Region or any broader strategic changes to infrastructure contributions the government may be considering.

The Urban Taskforce is always willing to work closely with the Government to provide a development industry perspective on these Plans. Please feel free to contact me on telephone number 9238 3955 to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Urban Taskforce Australia

Chris Johnson AM
Chief Executive Officer