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The Secretary
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
Housing Land Release
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community@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms McNally

SUBMISSION TO THE GREATER MACARTHUR PRIORITY GROWTH CORRIDOR PLAN

Walker Corporation owns 1,400 hectares of land at Appin and 400 hectares at Wilton. These lands are a key strategic holding within Macarthur and provide government and the community with a unique opportunity for an innovative and sustainable response to the challenges of delivering infrastructure, employment and housing choice in South West Sydney.

The Walker land at Wilton was identified as suitable for urban development in the 2015 Greater Macarthur Land Release Investigation (GMLRI) and was included within the new Wilton Growth Centre via amendment to the Sydney Region Growth Centres SEPP on 29 July 2016.

The Walker land at Appin was also identified as suitable for urban development but was proposed to be deferred due to concerns about infrastructure costs and housing demand.

Walker made a submission to the GMLRI in 2015 addressing these concerns and presenting the case for Appin to be included in the proposed plan.

A subsequent draft plan - "the Greater Macarthur Priority Growth Corridor" (the Macarthur Plan) has now recognised Appin's long term capacity for urban development. The draft plan suggests Appin be included in land identified as a priority growth area via a further amendment to the Sydney Region Growth Centres SEPP, along with more advanced land releases such as Menangle Park and Mount Gilead.

Walker has written the submission below in support of the draft plan.

The overarching reason for supporting the Macarthur Plan is that it endorses the inclusion of all land at Appin within the future Macarthur Growth Centre. This means Macarthur can finally be planned in the same comprehensive way that the government planned for the North West and South West Growth Centres ensuring infrastructure, jobs and housing are delivered over the long term.

There are also specific reasons for supporting the draft Plan and these are detailed below.

1. The Macarthur Plan will allow the government to adopt a “District Planning” approach incorporating all land holdings within the corridor rather than separate release areas. This will encourage better alignment with the District Plan being prepared by the Greater Sydney Commission.
2. The Macarthur Plan will underpin the expansion of the Macarthur /Campbelltown CBD as a Regional City as identified in the Plan for Growing Sydney.

Regional Cities need large populations (at least 500,000) to create economies not dependent upon just serving the needs of the local population.

This will be achieved by the proposed plan because it will position the Macarthur/Campbelltown CBD at the centre of growth (planned since the 1973 Macarthur Growth Centre Plan), rather than at the southern edge of its catchment where it currently sits.

The economic benefit of placing Macarthur/Campbelltown CBD at the centre of a City that extends to West Appin is considered in detail in the attached report prepared by MacroPlan Dimasi (**Appendix 1**).

3. The Macarthur Plan provides an opportunity to link the Macarthur/Campbelltown CBD via a Bus Rapid Transit/Light Rail corridor through Mount Gilead, West Appin and ultimately Wilton. This Transit corridor could be developed as growth occurs and would not be possible unless Appin was included.

The Transit corridor could link to an eventual electrified Metro rail line ending at Wilton (using the existing Maldon-Dombarton corridor) to create a public transport “loop” that would allow the Wilton and Macarthur Growth Centres to have a major public transport spine within 2,000 metres of homes (with the exception of small areas in west Wilton and west Appin).

This public transport “loop” would create an opportunity for a “30 minute city” focused on the Macarthur/Campbelltown CBD and would significantly expand the ability of the CBD to become a Regional City as identified in the Plan for Growing Sydney.

4. With the inclusion of Appin, the Macarthur Plan could link existing bio-diversity rich areas along the Georges and Nepean Rivers, the Nepean Conservation Area and Dharawal National Park, by the creation of conservation corridors following creek systems such as Ousedale Creek, Allens Creek, Cataract River, Mallaty Creek and Nepean Creek and by including existing protected areas at Beulah and Noorumba reserve. This would maximise opportunities for achieving the Cumberland Plain Woodland recovery plan as well as expanding connected habitat for the Koala populations at Wedderburn.
5. The previous 1973 Macarthur Plan identified Appin as a growth area but it was deferred to allow for underground coal mining which has now been largely completed.

As a result, the Macarthur Plan is consistent with the 1973 Plan and again accepts that it is appropriate to include Appin as a legitimate area for Sydney’s expansion. This consistency reinforces confidence in the planning system providing certainty to landowners who have to plan their future around the government’s plans.

6. Creating a new “Growth Centre” stretching from Glenfield to West Appin will facilitate the planning and delivery of State significant infrastructure. For example, new development at Appin could result in the dedication of key corridors such as the Appin-Hume Highway-M9 Outer Orbital and the north-south Transit way to Macarthur/Campbelltown CBD, at no cost to government.
7. The expanded scale of land release from Glenfield to West Appin will improve the viability of an eventual Special Infrastructure Contribution scheme because it will spread the costs of growth across a wider area. This will mean greater opportunities for funding key infrastructure items such as the duplication of Appin Road and the building of the Spring Farm Connector.

The expanded scale can also deliver the population needed to support the extension of the Metro Rail line south to Wilton and the link between Macarthur via the South West Rail to the future Western Sydney Airport. This new infrastructure will improve connections between Macarthur/Campbelltown CBD and adjoining markets in the Illawarra and Western Sydney reinforcing its long term role as a Regional City.

8. The Macarthur Plan will help deliver the Plan for Growing Sydney’s policy of “jobs closer to home” by expanding population within 30 minutes of the Macarthur/Campbelltown CBD.

This will better leverage existing health, education and retail jobs (Western Sydney University, Campbelltown Hospital, Campbelltown TAFE, Macarthur Square regional shopping centre) as well as encouraging the expansion of these proven employment generators.

9. The Macarthur Plan will allow more land to be developed increasing housing supply and competition, relieving pressure on housing affordability and potentially increasing diversity. The identification of large consolidated holdings could also provide opportunities for innovative affordable housing schemes to be incorporated into future master plans and implemented through Voluntary Planning Agreements.
10. The inclusion of Appin into the Macarthur Plan provides greater certainty for existing rural land owners. Some of these landowners have lived through the fear of compulsory acquisition by the Macarthur Development Board, declining viability of farm production caused by the removal of the dairy quota system, the rising value of the land and the uncertainty associated with being in a deferred growth area.
11. The inclusion of Appin will allow a bypass road around Appin village to be planned and built as part of a future urban release. As a result this key piece of infrastructure – needed to avoid mounting traffic congestion and safety problems in the village, may be delivered sooner than would be the case if it were funded solely by government.
12. The inclusion of Appin can also facilitate planning for a “green belt” around the village to better protect its rural and heritage character from impacts caused by future growth over the next 40 years.

Walker submits the Greater Macarthur Priority Growth Corridor Plan will maximise opportunities to leverage the delivery of infrastructure, economic growth and housing diversity using the large consolidated land holdings that make up Mount Gilead, Menangle Park and West Appin.

Plans are delivered not by government but by landowners and businesses prepared to invest. By including large land holdings at Appin (as well as Mount Gilead and Menangle Park) and by building on the existing rail corridor and specifically the Macarthur/Campbelltown CBD, the plan becomes considerably more feasible than the previous proposal to develop release areas in relative isolation.

In conclusion Walker commends the plan to government because it provides a long term co-ordinated approach for land release that creates opportunities for finding solutions to the key challenges of growth – early provision of transport infrastructure, creating jobs, and addressing declining affordability.

Yours sincerely



LANG WALKER AO
Executive Chairman