

20 February 2025

Ms Carmel Donnelly PSM
Chair
IPART
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

Submitted online – Have Your Say

Dear Ms Donnelly PSM

Re: IPART – Review of our approach to assessing contributions plans – Discussion Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the IPART – Review of our approach to assessing contributions plans – Discussion Paper. This submission has been prepared with the input and support of our member councils but should be considered draft until it is formally endorsed by the NSROC Board.

Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) is a voluntary association of eight local councils who have come together to collaborate and promote a united voice on key issues in our region. Our member councils are Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Ryde and Willoughby. Collectively, the NSROC member councils service an area of 639km² with a population of 651,315. We work together on policy and operational matters to drive efficiency and to enhance our region.

In principle, NSROC supports actions that will reduce the time required for IPART to review Contribution Plans (CPs) and increase the consistency of outcomes. Care will be needed to ensure that any updates to existing guidance and the development of new tools does not have unintended consequences, introduce new uncertainties or additional red tape. NSROC would welcome the opportunity to participate in a true co-design approach which would reduce the risks of this occurring.

While not part of this Discussion Paper, the \$20,000 and \$30,000 caps on infrastructure charges should also be reviewed. The \$20,000 cap has not been revised or indexed to keep pace with inflation since being introduced in 2009. This directly impacts local government's ability to fund the infrastructure required to support additional housing and population.

NSROC is strongly of the view that the Essential Works List (EWL) should be removed. At a minimum it should be expanded to allow greater embellishment of open space and community facilities. The current EWL does not allow councils to build for climate change resilience or future proof for anticipated population growth. The focus on land acquisition and base embellishment does not meet community expectations and is ineffective in supporting infill population growth which requires the upgrade of existing facilities to increase capacity and diversify uses. Particularly given the lack of land for new playing fields.

While not providing detailed comment on the proposed benchmarks, NSROC is of the view that benchmarks should be adaptable to reflect the complexity of infrastructure typically delivered in more constrained brownfield and infill sites. Councils are best placed to estimate efficient project costs taking into account the local context.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the IPART – Review of our approach to assessing contributions plans – Discussion Paper. If you require further information, please don't hesitate to contact me by phone on 0401 640 823 or at mmontgomery@lanecove.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Montgomery', written in a cursive style.

Dr Meg Montgomery
Executive Director
Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils