

NSROC Metropolitan Strategy Submission



November 2004

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Executive Summary

1. The Northern Region Organisation of Councils strongly supports the preparation of a Metropolitan Strategy.
2. The success of the Strategy and its implementation depends on the State Government adopting a new partnership role with local Councils.
3. NSROC proposes 6 Priorities for action under the Metropolitan Strategy in so far as it will direct the future planning and growth of the Northern Region. The 6 Priorities recognise the interdependence of the regions within the Greater Metropolitan Area (GMA) and the Priorities necessarily include cross-regional initiatives.

The 6 Priorities are:

1) Reinforce the Primary Centres and Key Corridors– Centres Approach

The Metropolitan Strategy must support and recognise the following Centres:

- North Sydney
- St Leonards
- Chatswood
- North Ryde
- Hornsby
- Macquarie Park
- Brookvale/Dee Why

These Centres must incorporate integrated land use and transport, be multi-functional, complement each other and their role in the GMA and be sustainable for employment, liveability and economic growth as high quality urban centres.

The Centres linked by effective transport define the City Structure and operate within a Centres Hierarchy. A major Centre should be developed to serve the Warringah / Pittwater peninsula. This centre is essential for jobs growth and higher density housing linked to public transport that will reduce the volume of north-south private vehicle trips, complement the functions of other Centres in the Northern Region and provide new economic and lifestyle opportunities for the area.

The 7 centres need planning policies, especially transport and parking policies that support each other and other Centres in the Region. The Strategy must also acknowledge key corridors that link this region to others in the GMA.

(2) Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

While the Northern Region has established transport infrastructure there are projects that are necessary for the long term sustainability, economic competitiveness and job accessibility for the Northern Region. NSROC sees the following projects as requiring commitment under the Metropolitan Strategy:

- a) Completion of the Parramatta – Chatswood Rail Link;
- b) Completion of the M2 – F3 Orbital Link;
- c) Hornsby to Newcastle High Speed Rail Link;
- d) Bus-only Transit way between Chatswood and the Brookvale / Dee Why Centre;
- e) Integrated public transport to Macquarie Park;
- f) A second Harbour Bridge Rail Crossing;
- g) A pilot Project to introduce Demand Responsive Transport Public Transport Services that complement and meet service gap areas under the new Principal Bus Contractors arrangements;
- h) Creation of transport strategy for the Victoria Road corridor, to address private vehicle and public transport;
- i) Improvements to major intersections on state arterial roads (e.g. flyover at the intersection of Boundary Street & Pacific Highway and a flyover at the Archibald & Penshurst Street);
- j) Retention of existing ferry services in the region and exploration of possible extension of the ferry services;
- k) Creation of a Pacific Highway Corridor Strategy to relieve growing pressure on this major North-South artery; and
- l) A strong focus on, and commitment to, active transport (bicycle and pedestrian) programs and infrastructure.

These projects need a long term infrastructure development plan for 30 years, including corridor reservation, construction timing and funding that will continue over the normal Government budgetary cycle.

(3) Open Space, Agricultural Land and Services

NSROC supports the principle that growth in the Region should be constrained to occur within the existing urban “footprint”. There will be pressure for open space, agricultural land and land set aside for public purposes to be developed for commercial and/or other purposes to accommodate growth.

NSROC considers that the Metropolitan Strategy should adopt the following strategies:

- a) Existing land zoned for public open space should be retained for its recreational and environmental values;
- b) Agricultural land, particularly in the Hornsby area should be retained for its economic, food production and ecological value;
- c) NSROC will work directly with State agencies to research the capacity of existing social, open space, agricultural and public infrastructure to determine deficiencies, spare capacity, review Special Use zonings, and develop a staged program for delivery or upgrading.

NSROC will support such an infrastructure program by adopting a regional approach and innovative funding mechanisms as outlined in Priority 5 below:

(4) Employment and Housing Growth

NSROC is prepared to commit to delivering the planned outcomes under the Strategy for jobs and housing based on:

- a) research on capacity and trends not arbitrary targets; and
- b) NSROC involvement in determining the planned outcomes.

In relation to a), a Northern Region Economic Analysis has recently been commissioned to better understand the economic contribution the region makes to the GMR.

The NSROC commitment will identify specific outcomes that can be implemented through the Plan Reform process for:

- Housing affordability and aged persons housing;
- Protection of built and natural heritage in planned growth locations;
- Agreed indicators for sustainability, liveability, jobs, amenity and accessibility for the NSROC area.

(5) Funding

The infrastructure improvements and other actions under the Metropolitan Strategy will not be solely funded by State Government.

NSROC would support a funding plan as a priority for implementing the Strategy actions that involves:

- a) Use of cross-LGA and regional S.94 levies from new development.
- b) Alteration of the rate capping regime to enable levying of rates for properties in the NSROC area for targeted Metropolitan Strategy projects that are hypothecated to the projects in or assisting the NSROC area;
- c) Debt funding for Metro Strategy projects;
- d) Use of mechanisms involving the private sector, such as P.P.P.'s; and
- e) Seeking financial support from Federal funding programs.

(6) Governance

NSROC accepts the need for reform of relationship between Councils, ROCs and the State Government to ensure that a cohesive partnership can be achieved between the ROCs and with the State Government.

NSROC proposes a new governance model that supports the Metropolitan Strategy with the following components:

- a) Adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding between the ROCs to establish a protocol on how cross-ROC decisions necessary for the Metro Strategy can be made as a single body.
- b) Adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding between the joint ROCs and individual ROCs with the State Government to affirm the partnership.
- c) Agreement on shared funding arrangements between the ROCs / Councils and State Government to facilitate resourcing of the initial implementation steps and over the long term.
- d) State Government to establish a Metropolitan Strategy Commission comprising representatives of the key Government agencies, ROCs and other peak NGO bodies to:
 - a) oversee the implementation process;
 - b) monitor progress and problems;
 - c) report to Cabinet and the NSW community on the Strategy progress and recommendations for refinement or project delivery.
- e) Agreement on the governance structure of the Metropolitan Region having regard to the existing ROC arrangement.

4. NSROC commits to working in partnership with the State Government to pursue and deliver the 6 Priorities and to work on other Strategy actions that will achieve a sustainable, competitive and liveable Metropolitan Area.

1. Introduction

The Metropolitan Strategy has been described by the State Government as the most important planning exercise for Sydney in over a decade. The Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper states that it will be used to respond to the growth and change that will occur in the Greater Metropolitan Region (GMR) of Sydney over the next 30 years. The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) plans to release a draft of the Metropolitan Strategy for comment in early 2005.

The Metropolitan Strategy seeks to overlay a matrix over the existing urban infrastructure, which will identify where growth is most desirable and where urban renewal is most needed. These needs will be catered for by future large-scale infrastructure provision, the development of employment centres and the integration of sustainable natural resource principles (such as BASIX).

Four primary urban centres have been identified across the greater metropolitan region:

- Sydney CBD
- Parramatta
- Newcastle
- Wollongong

The Metropolitan Strategy has also identified a further 23 major urban centres with four located within the NSROC region (North Sydney, Hornsby, Chatswood and Macquarie Park).

The solutions identified in the various components of the Metropolitan Strategy will establish policy to inform the making of statutory planning instruments and provide priorities for investment by the State Government in transport infrastructure, capital works and service delivery in the Sydney region.

Importantly the May 2004 Ministerial Directions Paper states that the priorities set for the Metropolitan Strategy will inform the State Budget and form a component of the State Infrastructure Strategic Plan, which sets out the Government's priorities for major expenditure for the next 10 years.

The October 2004 Discussion Paper identifies 9 key Directions for the Strategy. This Submission addresses the 9 Directions.

2. Issues for NSROC regarding the Metropolitan Strategy

The NSROC councils understand the importance of the Strategy development process and understand it is also crucial for local government to clearly demonstrate to the Minister, the Department and other key decision makers that local government has an important contribution to make to the Strategy's development. NSROC also realises it is important for local government to clearly articulate how it wants to be engaged in the Strategy's development and implementation. NSROC believes that councils have a fundamental role to play in the development of the Strategy and its implementation.

While State Government provides overall strategic direction, resources and infrastructure, a partnership with local government enhances the capacity and the local understanding required for sound planning for Sydney. ROCs are local government entities specifically designed to fulfil this function, and it is NSROC's contention that greater stakeholder engagement can be achieved through a genuine equal working relationship. Comments that relate to the Discussion Paper are as follows:

- Depth of analysis

NSROC considers that a greater understanding of the analysis behind many of the Discussion Paper statements will enable a more robust debate. Local Government has a great deal of 'local knowledge' and data sets that can successfully contribute to a greater depth of analysis and better outcomes. It is important that "broad community discussion" does not neglect the need for well researched and well understood information. This information should be the starting point for the production of higher level policy.

- Established areas

NSROC believes that the future of Sydney requires an understanding of existing centres as well as new release areas and the growth areas in Western Sydney. The existing centres and their future viability cannot be taken for granted. Those centres require support and analysis to ensure their contribution to Sydney's economic prosperity is maintained and enhanced for the future. In particular the acknowledged importance of the 'Global Arc' and the crucial role that the Northern Region Centres play in the 'Arc'.

- Infrastructure and future planning

The Metropolitan Strategy provides an excellent opportunity to set the future programme of infrastructure funding and provision. Indeed the intention to use the Strategy to reform the State Budget and Infrastructure Strategic Plan is welcomed. This will provide a certainty and structure in Sydney's development. These infrastructure planning arrangements need to be clearly stated and well understood by Councils, State Agencies and other peak bodies.

- Governance and Partnership

Success of the Strategy requires a collective understanding and ownership both at the State level and local government. This is particularly important in terms of infrastructure provision. NSROC strongly believes that greater efforts need to be made to "integrate" local government into the process as equal partners with responsibilities and accountabilities. It will be critical for the State Government and Local Government to work together to produce a meaningful and workable strategy.

ROC's provide a ready made framework for the development of meaningful partnerships. There is a clear responsibility upon the ROC's to engage positively on 'greater than individual Council's' boundaries and work with the State Government.

3. NSROC Recommendations for the Metropolitan Strategy

The following commentary and recommendations are provided by NSROC directly in relation to the 9 Directions identified in the Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper, but also address issues raised in the earlier Ministerial Directions Paper.

Plan for Balanced Growth within Natural Resource Constraints

Housing Growth

The Metropolitan Strategy Directions Paper provides sound generic planning policies for housing growth in the Sydney Region, such as density increases along transport spines, urban renewal focused on growth corridors, housing linked to community development and others. Northern Region councils are already undertaking many of these measures. The Strategy's successful implementation will depend, however, on it developing more comprehensive and detailed actions, clarifying (i) the criteria for specifying how housing growth is to be balanced between individual council areas, (ii) a consistent Sydney-wide process for integrating data collection and monitoring growth against sustainable performance measures and (iii) likely infrastructure changes or upgrades to meet housing growth.

NSROC councils already provide a higher proportion of medium and high-density dwellings than does Sydney generally – some especially so: North Sydney (76% of dwellings are medium/high density), Lane Cove (47%) and Willoughby (41%). This is despite the fact that NSROC has a higher proportion of double person households (48.2% of households compared with the Sydney Regions 44.4%) and exactly the same proportion of dependent children as the Sydney region average (25.4%).

The growth in housing supply and increasing property prices has not assisted housing affordability in the Northern Region. This has impacted on the ability of many industries, businesses and service delivery organisations to attract workers who by necessity must commute from outside the region, including the Central Coast.

Recommendations:

- 1. Housing growth:**
 - (i) Residential strategies: NSROC's current Residential Strategies are already projected to attain, or exceed, the housing growth projections in the Metro Strategy. Residential Strategies should be integrated into a transparent regional residential density strategy for a hierarchy of centres, based on a sequential assessment of their range of physical and social opportunities and constraints (transport, retail, medical, educational, environmental, recreational etc).**
 - (ii) Affordable housing: The Metropolitan Strategy should recognise this issue, monitor demand and facilitate the provision of affordable housing. This should be done through permitting inclusionary zoning (such as in place by Willoughby and North Sydney) and other council mechanisms or by providing for an Affordable Housing SEPP in support of the provisions of s.94F of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Such a SEPP or zoning changes should contain a balance of regulation and incentive for the property industry to engage in the process.**
 - (iii) Aged housing: The Strategy should examine state-federal cooperation to include planning and incentives for hostel and nursing home care, not just private housing, to meet the ageing population's needs. Councils should then incorporate in their residential strategies specific plans and incentives to support aged housing and services delivery.**
- 2. Infrastructure for housing: Residential projections should be interrelated with infrastructure projections - to provide for the additional vehicle numbers, water usage levels, public transport users, open space needs, affordable housing, retail catchments etc - to balance environmental, social and economic sustainability.**
- 3. Housing distribution criteria:**
 - (i) These must be developed with Councils and on a ROC basis in order to allocate growth according to the environmental and community capabilities of individual regions and localities but with an equitable distribution to balance housing choice.**
 - (ii) Built and Natural Heritage conservation should be valued for its important contribution to Sydney's character. Housing development strategies must respect these heritage values. It is problematic that many of the earliest developed locations with heritage value are situated around railway stations where**

sustainable transport solutions would suggest higher housing density.

Natural Resources Constraints

In the preparation of the Metropolitan Strategy, consideration should be given to the following recommendations concerning conserving our natural resources:

- 1. The Metropolitan Strategy should acknowledge that environmental noise issues are on the increase. This is primarily due to the rate of urban development and requires strategies to adopt accepted standards and measures to mitigate ambient noise “creep” that threatens the liveability of some areas.**
- 2. The Metropolitan Strategy should address the importance of a healthy soil landscape that is essential for supporting biodiversity, managing stormwater runoff and for environmental protection from land contamination, soil erosion and weed infestation.**
- 3. The Metropolitan Strategy should provide greater emphasis on mandatory targets for reducing energy and water consumption for existing developments and in particular the commercial and industrial sectors.**
- 4. The Northern Region considers that the Metropolitan Strategy must support the development of alternative waste technologies for the reuse and recycling of waste as a natural resource rather than disposal of that resource to land fill.**

Strengthen the Regions

The Metropolitan Strategy has adopted an approach that has encompassed hinterland regions – Illawarra and Central Coast/Hunter. This approach spreads guidance well beyond the specific challenges facing the immediate Sydney conurbation. To provide such a high level picture, a spatial planning strategy should be developed that places the GMR in the context of a State Planning Strategy.

In the longer term, there are two broad options for growth outside of Sydney: growth in the GMR regions (primarily the Lower Hunter), or growth outside of the GMR, particularly the Sydney to Canberra corridor. These two regions are closest to Sydney and have a relative comparative advantage with regard to expanding infrastructure and economic links with Sydney.

These broad conclusions are supported, however the strategy must make some clear decisions about, how, where and when growth will occur outside the metropolitan area. These decisions will have a significant effect upon urban growth within established urban areas.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Metropolitan Strategy should identify the important interdependence of the Illawarra and Central Coast / Hunter to the GMR.**
- 2. Whilst not undermining the paramount position of the GMR as a global city, strategies for the hinterland regions should identify their comparative advantages and build on their strengths to complement the functions of the GMR.**
- 3. “Strengthening the Regions” should promote centre’s development for job growth and housing that reduces cross-regional transport.**

Manage Growth and Value Non-Urban Areas

Growth in Non-Urban Areas

In the preparation of the Metropolitan Strategy, consideration should be given to the following recommendations concerning green landscapes and urban green space:

Recommendations:

- 1. Agricultural sustainability should be recognised as a key issue. In this regard, the rural areas should form a separate policy area under the Metropolitan Strategy, with linkages to other areas addressing urban growth, conservation of natural resources and the like. Specifically, in order to recognise the important role played by rural lands in the region, the Strategy should provide a clear vision for the role rural lands play in facilitating agriculture in the region. The vision should include the protection of productive, or potentially productive, agricultural lands, such as occur in the Hornsby LGA.**
- 2. The need to provide green space for a growing population within the region is supported. However, careful consideration should be given to providing an appropriate funding mechanism to support any Strategy for the provision of new open space in established areas. Specifically, consideration should be given to the following:**
 - 2.1 *Review of open space reservations:* The Strategy should acknowledge that each council should be given the opportunity to review the need for its open space reservations. This review**

could be a direction from the State Government, enabled by a State Planning Instrument, which requires such a review to be undertaken within a specified period. This would allow an objective consideration of the land and allow councils to rationally allocate their scarce resources to that land.

2.2 Rezoning to regional open space: Land which has regional significance, such as reserve land abutting Sydney Harbour and adjacent to National Parks should be rezoned Regional Open Space. The Directions Paper recognises the importance of this land.

2.3 Councils through the ROCs should develop plans to manage active open space areas that address recreational sporting demands on a regional and even metropolitan basis.

Build Liveable New Communities

NSROC supports the emphasis on creating new suburbs and rethinking existing suburbs with a more holistic approach to providing the social and physical infrastructure to make them more desirable places to live.

The urban characteristics of the NSROC Region mean that there is little opportunity for greenfield development. However the choices that are made about when, where, and how much greenfield development takes place has a significant impact on the NSROC Region. The Metropolitan Strategy Ministerial Directions Paper concluded:

“An approach to managing growth with limited greenfield development would require a significant shift from single houses towards villas, townhouses and apartments in established urban areas. A limited greenfield land supply could add to price pressures on existing housing in Sydney and regional areas. If this was to occur, it is likely that the greenfield land supplies in the Illawarra and Central Coast would be developed at a much faster rate than currently planned. Without significant economic development opportunities in these regions, people would commute from even further away.”

“Additional land for greenfield development is therefore required”

“Previous approaches to greenfield development relied on minor extensions to the urban area with limited infrastructure and poor urban design.”

The Paper concluded that any new greenfield development should be based on creating new communities, where there is a mix of housing types, employment, recreation, shopping and community facilities, not just additional subdivisions. NSROC views with concern the prospect of greenfield development occurring in the north-west sector or indeed greater development intensity in the Macquarie

Park area, in the absence of a comprehensive plan for public transport access and social services provision. Without this occurring unsustainable pressure will be exerted on surrounding urban areas in terms of private vehicle commuter traffic and failure of social services to meet demand.

Renew Existing Areas

This strategic direction talks about two issues, the first being urban renewal and the second being urban consolidation. On the issue of urban renewal, NSROC supports the notion that certain areas in Sydney require intervention to improve infrastructure, facilities and housing stock. Urban Renewal is not solely an issue for Western Sydney. Existing areas similarly face infrastructural pressure. Established areas with high levels of infrastructure investment must be maintained.

Many areas of the region are under considerable pressure from development, in an environment of inadequate or aging infrastructure. For the NSROC local government areas to continue to contribute to meeting the demand of increasing population and contributing to the wealth of Sydney, the Metropolitan Strategy must recognise this issue. NSROC would like to see a more analytical approach taken to urban renewal, based on set criteria and which acknowledges the need for urban renewal programs in regions outside of the ones presently identified.

For some years the State Government has promoted and implemented a policy of urban consolidation. The residential development strategies, while allowing local government to determine local strategies, were not a targeted or a co-ordinated metropolitan strategy. The success of urban consolidation is reflected in the dwelling creation statistics that show that 75% of new dwellings are created in established areas. However this intensification does have limits.

Just as an aim is that future Greenfield development should have a structured planning approach, urban renewal should meet the same rigid planning requirement. We should be creating communities that satisfy the criteria of an urban village and include: the provision of local employment opportunities, water sensitive urban design and energy efficiency across all aspects of the built environment, a range of housing types, affordable housing opportunities, accessibility to public transport, the provision of a range of open space, and new approaches to conservation management.

A particular area for consideration is the Victoria Road corridor. This corridor in the southern part of the region links the west the city. The amenity of local retail centres and residential area has been gravely affected by increasing traffic through this area. These needs to be policies and programs to supported targeted urban renewal and provided for a long term sustainable transport system (private and public) through the corridor.

Recommendations:

- 1. Identify centres, corridors and locations for targeted urban renewal, rather than merely promote urban consolidation. This includes areas throughout the GMR not just the areas already identified in the Discussion Paper.**
- 2. *Extend the Metropolitan Development Program to identify new opportunities for redevelopment:* The Metropolitan Strategy should require coordination and revision of the MDP and local Residential Strategies to meet contemporary sustainability principles.**
- 3. *Urban renewal to focus on growth corridors:* This principle is supported, as it will reduce the relative number of vehicles generated by housing as long as associated parking demand management controls and public transport is provided.**

Strengthen Employment Centres and Precincts

NSROC supports the direction of managing growth and valuing non-urban areas, and believes the Metropolitan Strategy should adopt a robust position regarding city sprawl. The Metro strategy needs to clearly state that achievement of a concentrated, rather than a dispersed pattern of future development is highly desirable for Sydney. A designated hierarchy of centres should be determined so that they conform to the Metropolitan Strategy.

The key aim of the Metropolitan Strategy should be to focus future development and re-development of sites for industry and commerce in identified locations, particularly the existing commercial centres that are well served by public transport. The extent to which this can happen at the local level will depend upon specific capacity/quality of life issues in these centres. The strategic intention of the “Centres Approach” should be a dominant and well understood theme.

Recommendations:

- 1. New development areas, particularly in north-western Sydney and areas such as Macquarie Park should be predicated on sustainable infrastructure being put in place to keep pace with demand and limit reliance upon private vehicle journey to work trips.**
- 2. The Metro strategy should reinforce the existing large centres as the primary foci for new commercial development and regeneration. This should guide the desired identification of additional capacity through ‘brownfield’ regeneration opportunities, adaptive reuse of land and appropriate intensification within existing large centres.**
- 3. The Metro Strategy should actively discourage opportunistic and ad hoc commercial developments away from established public infrastructure nodes and the identified main centres. Peripheral**

- development should be subjected to a sequential test to examine fit with the Metropolitan Strategy key aims.
4. The Strategy should explicitly seek to link the re-generation of existing office/ commercial stock, intensification of use (where appropriate and sustainable) and the enhanced capacity of existing public infrastructure investments, especially public transportation.
 5. The Strategy should provide guidance for the larger urban centres to ensure a range of appropriate commercial, retail, community, and leisure facilities are available over time with the associated appropriate public transport.
 6. Metropolitan Strategy should identify the importance of the “Global Arc” and should identify and support development of Urban Centres at:
 - North Sydney
 - St Leonards
 - Chatswood
 - North Ryde
 - Hornsby
 - Macquarie Park
 - Brookvale/Dee Why

Connect Centres with the Transport Network

NSROC supports the notion of connecting centres with the Transport Network but notes that this is an existing initiative that commenced independent of the Metropolitan Strategy process. NSROC would look to the Metropolitan Strategy to identify commitments for public transport infrastructure over the next 30 years.

While the Northern Region has substantial infrastructure for road, rail and some other transport services, that infrastructure will not be able to serve the Region’s increased demands due to urban consolidation, sustained competitive economic growth and cross regional transport (particular Western and Central Coast through traffic) without a long term plan for maintenance and upgrades to keep pace with demand. New transport infrastructure proposals should proceed on the basis of a close, consultative partnership with ROC’S within whose LGA a project is proposed.

Recommendations:

1. The Metropolitan Strategy should adopt the principle that major changes in land use, including land releases, higher densities and higher traffic generating activity, are only to occur if provision is made for non-private car based transport prior to or coincidental with the change. In particular:

Hornsby, Hunter’s Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove
North Sydney, Ryde and Willoughby

- **draft SEPP No 66 – Integrating Land Use and Transport should be adopted;**
 - **commercial centres’ development and higher residential densities on the Northern Region should be planned to only occur in conjunction with travel demand management such as Transport Action Guides, Access and Mobility Plans, Green Travel Plans and good access to mass transit (bus and rail) services.**
3. **The Metropolitan Strategy should adopt the principle that the primary functions of the arterial road network are for commercial transport that supports the economic growth of the region and for road-based public transport but not for general commuter traffic.**
 4. **Expenditure on new road infrastructure in the Region should give primacy to:**
 - **new mass transit services such as the Warringah Bus Priority Route;**
 - **a comprehensive road freight transport plan integrated with rail freight services;**
 - **cross regional routes that match the region’s changing travel patterns and are linked to public transport nodes;**
 - **improving access to the designated commercial centres.**
 5. **The Metropolitan Strategy should adopt a demand management approach for all parking in the vicinity of public transport services to support public transport instead of private vehicle use.**

Target Infrastructure

NSROC supports the direction that infrastructure be targeted by the Strategy. NSROC contends that the Strategy should identify new infrastructure commitments across the city. It is also important that the Strategy provides evidence regarding the capacity of infrastructure before further housing growth is imposed. For the Strategy to be workable, it must be supported by analysis of this capacity and a matching commitment to upgrade infrastructure prior to density increases in infrastructure-stressed areas. Open space, libraries and other facilities will need to expand and are in many cases used on a regional basis.

This approach is now taken in new release areas, but is rarely evidenced by NSW authorities in established areas to support urban consolidation. An exception is the agreement between NSW and local government to upgrade North Sydney station. This example of the extension of Section 94 principles to State infrastructure should be expanded to address the full range of planning needs.

The Strategy must specifically identify the priorities for upgrading infrastructure in existing areas such as those in the Northern Sydney Region to meet the projected increased demand.

NSROC is willing to work with DIPNR to undertake the research necessary to identify infrastructure deficiencies (social and physical), corridor or site reservation, construction timing and funding plans to assist with the delivery of projects.

Recommendation:

In relation to transport infrastructure, NSROC sees the following projects as requiring commitment under the Strategy:

- 1. Completion of the Parramatta – Chatswood Rail Link;**
- 2. Completion of the M2 – F3 Orbital Link;**
- 3. Hornsby to Newcastle High Speed Rail Link;**
- 4. Bus-only Transit way between Chatswood and the Brookvale / Dee Why Centre;**
- 5. Integrated public transport to Macquarie Park;**
- 6. A second Harbour Bridge Rail Crossing;**
- 7. A pilot Project to introduce Demand Responsive Transport Public Transport Services that complement and meet service gap areas under the new Principal Bus Contractors arrangements;**
- 8. Creation of transport strategy for the Victoria Road corridor, to address private vehicle and public transport;**
- 9. Improvements to major intersections on state arterial roads (e.g. flyover at the intersection of Boundary Street & Pacific Highway and a flyover at the Archibald & Penshurst Street);**
- 10. Retention of existing ferry services in the region and exploration of possible extension of the ferry services;**
- 11. Creation of a Pacific Highway Corridor Strategy to relieve growing pressure on this major North-South artery; and**
- 12. A strong focus on, and commitment to, active transport (bicycle and pedestrian) programs and infrastructure.**

Use Appropriate Funding and Governance Arrangements

NSROC considers that this Direction is a component of all of the other Directions and believes a firm and productive partnership should be established with the State Government. This partnership will require clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the parties and requires a clear Memoranda of Understanding to be adopted. Furthermore, this will require the ROC's peak body, the Local Government Association to accept responsibility, as a coordinator at the various ROC groupings, so that a consistent and cohesive

dialogue with State agencies can be achieved. NSROC suggests a Commission is established to monitor progress of the strategy and report to both Cabinet and the NSW community on project delivery.

The Metropolitan Strategy requires a clear view on funding. NSROC supports a funding plan being agreed that enables the timely and efficient commencement of necessary infrastructure in Sydney.

Recommendations:

NSROC proposes a new governance model that supports the Metropolitan Strategy with the following components:

- 1. Adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding between the ROCs to establish a protocol on how cross-ROC decisions necessary for the Metro Strategy can be made as a single body'**
- 2. Adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding between the joint ROCs and individual ROCs with the State Government to affirm the partnership.**
- 3. Agreement on shared funding arrangements between the ROCs / Councils and State Government to facilitate resourcing of the initial implementation steps and over the long term.**
- 4. State Government to establish a Metropolitan Strategy Commission comprising representatives of the key Government agencies, ROCs and other peak NGO bodies to:**
 - oversee the implementation process;**
 - monitor progress and problems;**
 - report to Cabinet and the NSW community on the Strategy progress and recommendations for refinement or project delivery.**
- 5. Agreement on the governance structure of the Metropolitan Region having regard to the existing ROC arrangement.**

4. Conclusion

NSROC welcomes the development of a Metropolitan Strategy and is willing to work in partnership with the government to not only develop the strategy, but to ensure its effective implementation at local government level. The Councils also have available, or are willing to jointly undertake, appropriate research to determine the timing and location of growth as well as development capacity

While the NSROC area is an established area, it accepts its share of meeting the future housing and employment needs for the future growth for Sydney, provided clear outcomes and expectations are established and agreed. However this growth should best be accommodated within the existing developed footprint of the urban areas. Development should not result in reduction of existing bushland area (and consequent loss of biodiversity), loss of lands for public purposes (through reduction of Special Uses Land) and by ad hoc intrusion into identified agricultural land (resulting from conflicting planning policy).

While the NSROC area has existing transport services and other infrastructure, the expected population and employment growth require that the infrastructure needs of the area be identified and addressed if liveability and efficiency objectives are to be realised in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Achieving the policy objectives of the Metropolitan Strategy will require a collaborative effort between sectors of government including the Federal Government. NSROC Councils look forward to working with each other and with all agencies of State government to create a more prosperous, liveable and sustainable Sydney.

NSROC has identified 6 priorities for the Metropolitan Strategy in the Executive Strategy of this submission that are commended for your consideration.

We welcome the opportunity to expand on the terms of the Submission and participate in the development of the Strategy.

The NSROC Region Profile

Introduction

The NSROC region is an area of approximately 680 square kilometres located in the northern are of metropolitan Sydney. The area extends from Hornsby in the North to North Sydney at its southern-most boundary and includes 7 local government areas (Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, North Sydney, Ryde and Willoughby). The area encompasses a mix of urban and semi-rural communities, ranging from the highly urbanised region to the south with extremely high population densities, to a predominately bushland environment in the northern section.

Local Government Area	Residents	Households	Persons per Household
Hornsby	145,968	52,252	2.79
Hunters Hill	12,692	4,681	2.71
Ku Ring Gai	101,348	35,537	2.85
Lane Cove	30,757	12,865	2.39
North Sydney	56,549	32,278	1.75
Ryde	95,743	38,833	2.47
Willoughby	59,354	24,593	2.41
Total	502,411	201,039	
Average			2.48

Table 1.1 Population and Households in the NSROC Region, NSROC Profile 2002

The population of the NSROC region is approximately half a million people divided into 200,000 households. The population of NSROC is growing, although this pattern is variable across the region. The population growth is highest in Hornsby with an anticipated rise to 170,000 people by 2016 (ABS 2001). The NSROC regional is experiencing population growth, and will increase to 545,000 by 2016. The population of the region has increased by 17,000 in the 10 years from 1991 to 2001. The population in the region represents one eighth of the population of the GMR and outside the CBD it is the most important employment area in the metropolitan region.

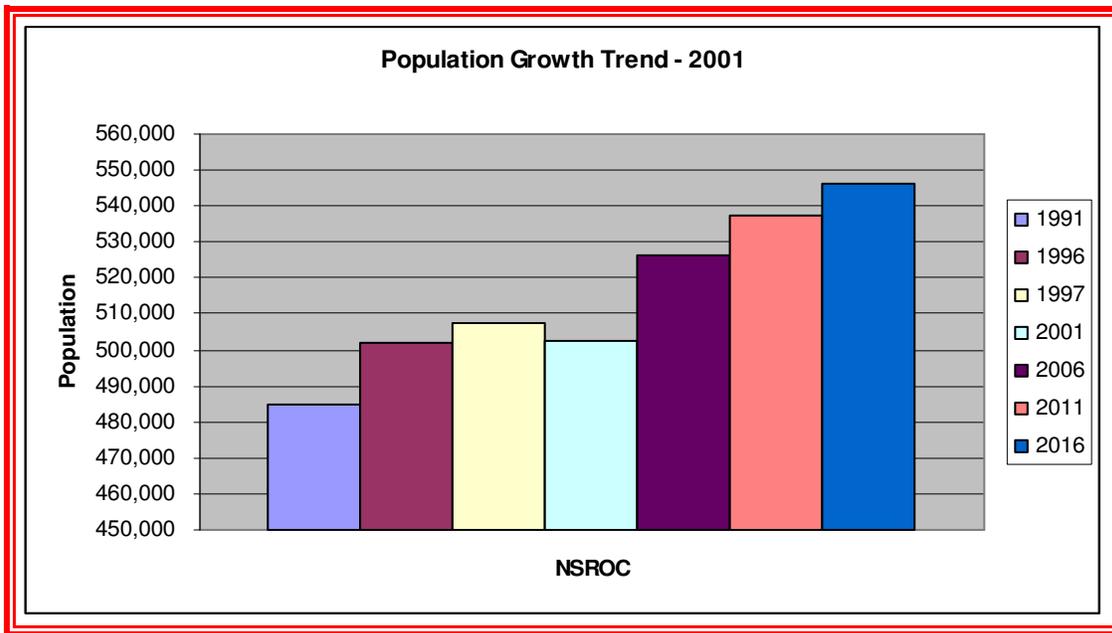


Table 2.1 Population Growth in the NSROC Region, NSROC Profile 2002

NSROC Economy

The NSROC region is an acknowledged wealth generating region which includes a population with incomes well above the state average. Recent trends indicate that the average income in the NSROC region is rising faster than the national average, indicating that the region is a net attractor of wealth. The region is also a substantial employment generator, with a large proportion of the 'Global Arc' being located in the NSROC region.

The NSROC region has five major employment centres (North Sydney, St Leonards, Chatswood, Macquarie Park and Hornsby). The business sector is of direct importance to the northern Sydney region, as a provider of employment and a key generator of economic activity for Sydney as a whole. Alongside the main Sydney CBD area, the NSROC area is an important component of the economic vigour of the greater Sydney region.

Between 1994 and 2001, the number of businesses in NSROC nearly doubled to more than 50,000. This has been attributed to the Olympic boom and the consequential economic activity in the Sydney area. The service sector orientation of the large NSR workforce has as a key prerequisite appropriate office based accommodation. This is accompanied by the need for excellent infrastructure for long term viability.

NSROC Priorities

- A. Continued regeneration and vitality of existing commercial zones in the face of competitive rent levels and new office stock in outer areas.
- B. Maintaining and further developing the amenity and public space of existing employment and commercial zones as to be attractive for further investment and take up.
- C. Maintaining the diversity of commercial space occupants across the North Shore area with a very strong emphasis on the existing commercial zones.
- D. Enabling the clustering of similarly themed commercial activities.

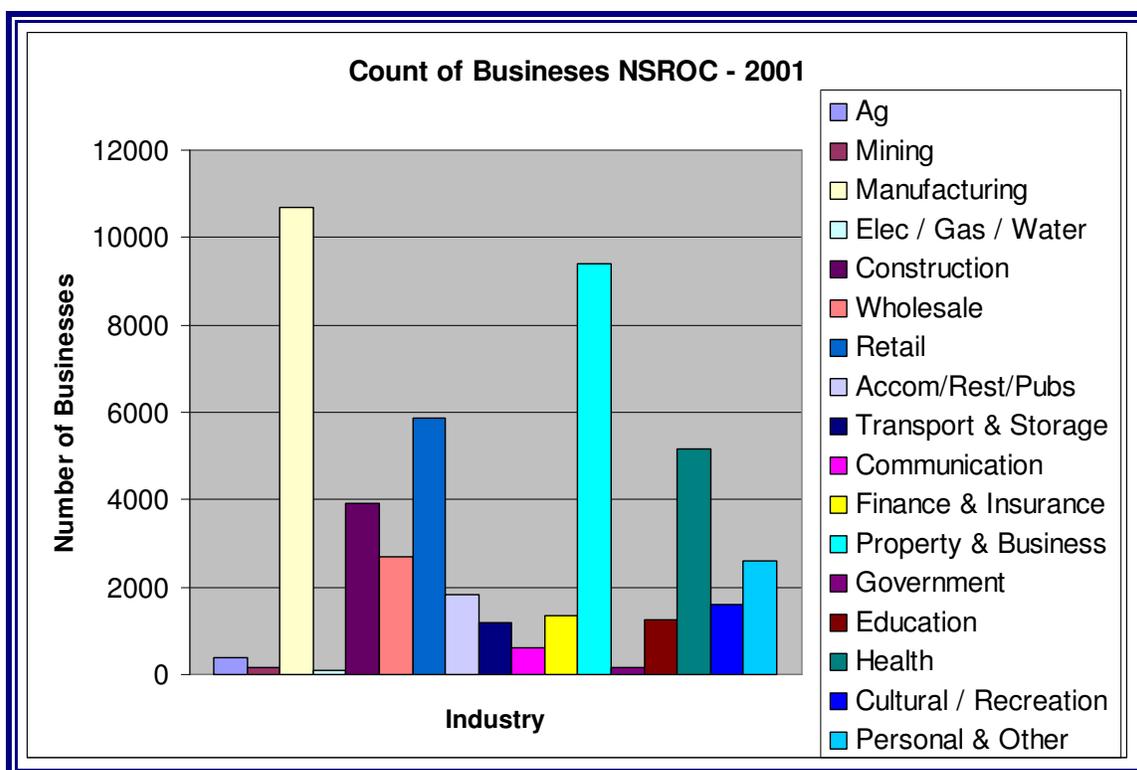


Table 1.3 Number of Businesses by Sector in NSROC, NSROC Profile 2002

Population Growth and Household Change

The statistics provided in the Ministerial Directions paper in regard to decreasing household size hold true for the NSROC region. Table 2.1 illustrates that household size increases with distance from the CBD. North Sydney has the smallest household size (1.75 persons per household), while Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby have the largest (2.89 and 2.75 respectively). The range of housing across the region also varies from high concentrations of units in Willoughby, Lane Cove and North Sydney, to a predomination of single free standing houses

in Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby. Increased property prices, population pressures and the development of the mid-north coast region are likely to put further pressure on Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby to accommodate more growth, and this may result in more apartment style housing being built, with particular concentrations around rail nodes.

The current state government policy on urban consolidation in NSROC programs has led to Councils developing their residential strategies. The effects of the consolidation policies and increased density levels are yet to be experienced. This consolidation in addition to northward pressure from the Gosford/Wyong area is anticipated to have a significant effect on traffic flows and place additional pressure on the NSROC in terms of infrastructure and social services delivery.

Governance

The NSROC region is comprised of 7 councils which work together to tackle regional issues, lobby state and federal government and provide local and regional services to their communities. The principle steering body for NSROC is the NSROC Board, comprised of designated elected representatives from the 7 NSROC councils and chaired by the NSROC President, Councillor Pat Reilly, the Mayor of Willoughby Council. This group meets quarterly to discuss regional matters and provide direction and leadership for the activities and policy creation of the NSROC group. The General Managers of the 7 NSROC councils meet frequently to oversee implementation of the Boards decisions, and are assisted in this capacity by the NSROC staff.

Planning for the Future

The NSROC councils welcome the state government's initiative to provide a holistic planning document and process for Sydney's future. NSROC sees this as a natural and on-going activity to ensure the natural, social and economic advantages Sydney enjoys both domestically and internationally are sustained.

Sustainability and Liveability Issues for NSROC

A primary concern for the NSROC councils is the need for the region to remain a sustainable and enjoyable place to live. Recent urban consolidation has seen pressures and change in the urban landscape. The region is committed to managing urban growth and consolidation in such a way as to limit negative impacts and retain the heritage, aesthetic and environmental attributes the area.

Urban consolidation brings with it significant environmental challenges. NSROC believes these challenges are best met in a proactive way bringing together the tiers of Government.

Transport within the NSROC Region

Transport, traffic and access are key issues for the NSROC area. The NSROC northern region of the Metropolitan Area accommodates a major component of the crescent known as the “global arc” stretching from the Airport Corridor through Sydney, North Sydney, Chatswood and Macquarie Park. It has a high level of connectedness with other parts of the Metropolitan Area along its main road and rail corridors, particularly to growth areas in the Central Coast and Lower Hunter. The northern region is therefore well placed to support employment generating activity and residential development.

This attraction, however, has led to serious shortcomings in the supply of transport infrastructure to best realise the opportunities offered in the region. These shortcomings have resulted in a series of problems that affect the liveability, environmental sustainability and business potential of the region. The Metropolitan Strategy provides the mechanism to set a clear direction for resolving these problems in a partnership between State Agencies, the NSROC Councils and our local communities.

No one transport mode will meet the needs of all transport users in the northern region. All transport modes will need to be accommodated; however the negative impacts of long term reliance on private vehicle trip use as the primary transport mode are unsustainable. The historical constraints of our existing transport system, the cost and topographical constraints of large scale mass transit infrastructure development and entrenched behaviours governing car use should not be relied on as justification for denying bold initiatives under the Metropolitan Strategy.

Road Infrastructure

Throughout the region many of the key arterial roads perform at an unsatisfactory level of service. Whilst major road infrastructure projects such as the Lane Cove Tunnel and the F3 extension may provide capacity and some amenity benefits, other projects such as the M7 are likely to have mixed impacts. That project is likely to provide enhanced freight services, but is also likely to induce further private vehicle trips onto an already congested network. Further congestion will impact on economic performance, local accessibility and amenity.

The focus of road planning should be on enhancing cross regional routes and integrating road infrastructure with road based public transport. The likely additional traffic generation between Sydney and Central coast / Lower Hunter will soon exceed current road capacity through the North Shore “funnel”. This must be addressed by supporting employment centres in those northern areas and developing a better, integrated mass transit service such as the proposed high speed rail link between Hornsby and Newcastle.

Transport to/from Warringah/Pittwater remains a significant NSROC issue. Further growth on the peninsula, without development of the necessary employment and service capacity will exacerbate traffic congestion on the 3 key traffic corridors through the northern region. An integrated approach is required to manage growth, with staging of investment in infrastructure to provide immediate support to bus priority routes, land use and development policies that constrain future transport demand and, in particular, private vehicle growth and long term development of a mass transit system.

Rail Network

The construction of the Epping to Chatswood Rail link has the capacity to alter medium to long term transport and employment patterns. Additional services will be routed from Hornsby/Central Coast via Epping to Chatswood. The role of the stations from Chatswood to North Sydney is likely to change with the increased train frequency providing a “metro” style inter-station service. Infrastructure must be in place to deal with this scenario.

Fundamental to the operation of the passenger rail network is the ability to deliver passengers to the stations. Planning should occur to ensure that bus services from both local and regional routes are integrated with the rail network to capitalise on the increased attractiveness of the rail service. Also in this regard a comprehensive regionally based plan should be developed for commuter parking. Too often the solution of providing commuter car parks, or worse utilising on-street parking, is adopted in lieu of providing public transport connections.

Given the development patterns and geography of the NSROC region, the continuing use of buses is seen as a fundamental element of transport provision. NSROC supports in principle the directions of the NSW Governments public transport bus service reforms. The reform of the bus contracts provides an immediate opportunity to re-examine the current service levels which have developed as a response to regulation, rather than as a “better business” opportunity. The consolidation of contract regions, the move to transparency in subsidies and the development of key bus corridors must be supplemented with financial and regulatory changes to support the broader metropolitan strategy.

Key Challenges

- 1. Growth in private car ownership in conjunction with high level of residential and commercial growth in the northern region.**
- 2. Inability of public transport services to offer a viable, efficient and effective alternative to private vehicle use in the northern region.**
- 3. Ageing population expected to have greater reliance on public transport services.**

4. **Development that is occurring as a result of urban consolidation or expansion of employment in commercial centres is not being matched by increases in alternative transport networks, including pedestrian, bicycle and non-private vehicle modes (buses, trains, taxi, etc).**
5. **The North Shore Rail service is not well integrated with bus services for cross – regional trips.**
6. **Increasing number of commuter trips between the Central Coast and Sydney / Southern region destinations will not be catered for in the medium to long term without significant expansion of services and infrastructure.**
7. **Volume of private vehicle trips from the Warringah peninsula is strangling the north-south arterial road network and is constraining the development potential for the northern beaches area without an adequate high volume public transport system.**
8. **The region is characterised by a series of ridgelines which have historically established the main transport links along a number of spines but with relatively poor cross regional connections.**

Natural Resources

The natural environment is a dominant feature of the region and is well preserved through the reservation of National Parks, bushland and foreshore reserves and other undisturbed areas. The conservation of the natural environment is a key element in promoting Ecologically Sustainable Development. Local planning controls have been introduced to protect and conserve the natural environment, including the rezoning of environmentally sensitive areas to preclude inappropriate development and the introduction of development controls and guidelines for development in less sensitive areas.

Rural Lands

Rural lands within the NSROC region are located within the Shire of Hornsby. The value of agriculture production within the region has been reviewed by considering data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1993), Hornsby Council's Farm Land Rating Returns (1994) and an Agricultural Production Survey undertaken by officers of New South Wales Agriculture (1995). The Agricultural Production Survey estimated the gross farm gate value of production within the region to be \$98.3 million, with nurseries (\$50 million), flower growing (\$25 million) and fruit growing (\$10 million) being the main contributors. The 2001 Census data indicates that the region consists of 170 holdings covering an area of 1324 ha and employs 527 people in agriculturally related businesses. The trend appears to be more holdings in a smaller area employing less people.

The value of agriculture in the region is a small component of the value of agricultural production for Sydney (10%) and even smaller for New South Wales. Nevertheless, the region is an important contributor. Hornsby is the leading local government area in the Sydney region for stone fruit, strawberries, cut flowers, nursery production. The major threat to the continuation of agriculture in the region derives from the pressure created by the growth of urban and rural residential development. This pressure leads to more specific threats to agriculture including:

- 1. Fragmentation of agricultural land and changing land use patterns as a result of the trend towards rural residential living;**
- 2. Uncertainty about the future use of the land for agriculture; and**
- 3. The relatively high value placed on the land.**

In recognition of the benefits of agriculture, and to minimise the pressures on agricultural land uses, the Metropolitan Strategy should acknowledge agriculture as a legitimate constraint to urban and rural residential development. The Ministerial Directions Paper and Discussion Paper do not satisfactorily identify the value and role played by rural lands and refer commonly to such, as simply “non-urban land”, implying the land is ‘in waiting’ for urban development. While there continues to be uncertainty about the future of rural lands, the market will continue to speculate, ensuring that land prices remain above agricultural land values making it difficult for new agricultural investment.