

Friday, 29 January 2021

Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Transport Project Team  
Transport for NSW  
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via email: [isrtp@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:isrtp@transport.nsw.gov.au)

## **UDIA NSW Submission on the Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan**

Dear Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Transport Project Team,

The Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW (UDIA) is the leading industry body representing the interests of the urban development sector and has over 500 member companies in NSW. UDIA NSW advocates for the creation of liveable, affordable, and connected smart cities.

UDIA has a keen interest in the Illawarra Shoalhaven and runs two regional committees (Illawarra and Shoalhaven) which are attended by developers, council staff and consultants. We run these committees to support government in the preparation and application of planning and development policy affecting the broader region.

UDIA welcomes the review of transport and access in the Illawarra Shoalhaven undertaken by Transport for NSW (TfNSW) which is documented in the *Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan 2020* (the draft RTP). This plan provides an opportunity for industry, the community and government to further improve regional transport access. This will support the planning vision for the Illawarra Shoalhaven as a diverse, creative, and globally connected region with an enviable lifestyle for its residents.

UDIA commends TfNSW's vision to commence the initial steps to further enhance transport and access in the Illawarra Shoalhaven which will contain up to 45,000 jobs by 2041 and 30,000 dwellings in four diverse local government areas including Wollongong City, Kiama, Shellharbour City and Shoalhaven City.

UDIA is strongly committed to the future of the Illawarra Shoalhaven and in 2019. Our vision for the region is presented in "*Unlocking the Illawarra-Shoalhaven*" (Refer to Attachment No.1) which is based on the following key actions:

- Supporting the transformation of the region; and
- Ensuring infrastructure keeps up with demand in urban release areas.

UDIA views the delivery of these actions as being critical to further grow and plan for the Illawarra Shoalhaven beyond 2021. This can only be achieved if targeted road and transport infrastructure is essential to support growth areas and enhance the economic potential of the region.

The planned growth for the region needs to be supported by transport and access improvements both internally but also to surrounding regions including Greater Western Sydney (GWS). Importantly the success of the Draft RTP can only be achieved with the commitment from the development industry to ensure the right transport projects are prioritised and delivered.

The Draft RTP contains many good initiatives. However, there are several issues that need to be addressed.

## **1. Proposed SIC Items are not addressed as part of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan**

The Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan and accompanying Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC) Draft Determination were recently exhibited by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). The Draft SIC included 19 road upgrades covering the Nowra Bombaderry (7 road upgrades) and West Lake Illawarra (12 road upgrades), which are nominated as “regionally significant growth areas” in the Draft RTP.

UDIA is very concerned that there is a poor alignment between the proposed road upgrades in the SIC and the initiatives contained in the Draft RTP. There is not one SIC road upgrade nominated for delivery in the draft RTP and there is only a loose connection between RTP initiatives 20, 36 and 44 that could potentially enhance the planning of these regionally significant growth areas.

There appears to be no buy-in from TfNSW to the SIC road upgrade items, which does not provide confidence to the development industry that these will ever be delivered. This issue was also raised with DPIE during the public exhibition of the Draft Regional Plan and the SIC.

UDIA is very concerned about the flow-on impacts arising from the lack of commitment from TfNSW to the proposed SIC road projects. UDIA regards these as critical projects to support housing release in West Lake Illawarra and Nowra Bomaderry and to increase housing affordability and home ownership, especially for first home buyers. The delivery of the SIC projects will also lead to greater economic development and jobs growth in the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

UDIA requests that infrastructure must keep up with demand in urban release areas meaning that it is critical that the SIC road upgrades are incorporated into the Draft RTP. This will provide further justification of these projects to support these key regionally significant growth areas and provide industry confidence that these will be delivered. It will also lead to increased home ownership and economic development in the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

***Recommendation 1. TfNSW to include the SIC road upgrade items for the regionally significant growth areas to achieve better strategic alignment between the IS Regional Plan and Transport Plan and increase housing affordability and economic growth for the region.***

## **2. Connecting the Illawarra Shoalhaven to Greater Western Sydney**

UDIA supports improving links from the Illawarra Shoalhaven to GWS being delivered in the next 10 years. UDIA is concerned that the Draft RTP “Initiatives in delivery” for the next 10 years largely focus on intra-regional transport projects with no project commitments that will lead to better access to GWS. This is concerning especially since the region already has strong connections with people from GWS, (*City Deal Prospectus Illawarra – Shoalhaven (Regional Development Australia Illawarra, 2020)*), which is provided as Attachment No.2

To further support the economic prospects of the region, TfNSW should prioritise inter-regional transport projects that enable regional benefits from the proposed new Aerotropolis and Nancy Bird Wilton International Airport, which is due for completion in 2026.

## **The proposed future Maldon-Dombarton Line (South West Illawarra Rail Line)**

The proposed Future Maldon-Dombarton Line / South West Illawarra Rail Line (SWIRL) is a primary inter-regional transport initiative that should be fast tracked to improve regional links. The proposed SWIRL will support the further growth of Port Kembla, which is a major NSW gateway and regional transport asset. As identified in the City Deal Prospectus (RDA), the port is under-utilised and needs better connection to respond to a predicted doubling in container growth over the next 40 years.

Whilst the Draft Illawarra RTP recognises the “...need to improve rail connectivity between the region and Western Sydney to accommodate this growing freight task”, UDIA is concerned that the proposed medium-long term completion of the rail line (Initiative 54 - “For investigation 10–20 years”) further undermines the region’s economic development potential.

This rail project has strong support from RDA, who identified that for every \$1.00 invested there would be a return of \$1.84. RDA also consider that the line could include an option to transport commuters from Wollongong to link with the Main Southern Railway near Picton and that there is potential for Federal Government funding for the project, which could be completed by 2032.

### **Other Key Inter-Regional Transport Initiatives**

UDIA supports the following transport projects presented should be fast-tracked to better link the Illawarra Shoalhaven to GWS.

Projects to be fast-tracked to “Initiatives in Delivery (0-10 years)” include:

- 10. Mt Ousley Interchange; and
- 12. Picton Road upgrade.

Note: RDA also supports these as key regional shaping transport projects in the City Deal Prospectus, which adds further support to including these as “Initiatives in delivery”.

Projects to be fast-tracked to “Initiatives in Planning (0-10 years)” include:

- 21. Appin Road Safety and Reliability Improvements; and
- 32. Investigate improved bus services between Campbelltown, Appin, and Wollongong and Picton, Wilton and Wollongong.

Projects to be fast-tracked to “Initiatives in Investigation (0-10 years)” include:

- 57. Outer Sydney Orbital 2 (OSO2) Project

***Recommendation 2. TfNSW to prioritise the Maldon-Dumbarton Line (South West Illawarra Rail Line) for delivery by 2032.***

***Recommendation 3. TfNSW to fast-track initiatives 10, 12, 21, 32 and 57 to improve links between the Illawarra Shoalhaven region and GWS.***

### 3. Need to include transport infrastructure to support development

In early 2019, UDIA nominated several projects to support the development of the West Lake Illawarra and Nowra Bomaderry release precincts, which are summarised in *Building Blocks 2.0 Illawarra Shoalhaven* (Refer to Table 1) and provided as Attachment No.3.

**Table 1 – UDIA Supported Transport Initiatives (Illawarra Shoalhaven Buildings Blocks 2.0)**

Precinct	Proposed Road Upgrades
West Dapto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hayes Lane Marshall Mount Road / Escarpment Drive / Calderwood Road</li><li>• Yallah Road</li></ul>
Nowra Bomaderry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Upgrade to Moss Vale Road and intersections</li></ul>
Mundamia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Upgrade Yalwal Road and intersection between Yalwal Road and Albatross Road</li></ul>

Except for Mundamia, the Draft SIC includes road upgrades to Moss Vale Road, Yallah Road and Calderwood Road but again these have not been included in the Draft RTP.

TfNSW must support the development for new housing estates with integrated transport solutions that will lead to population growth and further economic development of the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

***Recommendation 4. TfNSW to include the above key road infrastructure items identified in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Building Blocks 2.0 in the Draft RTP as “Initiatives in Planning”.***

### 4. Fast-track the delivery of the Sydney to Nowra fast rail corridor

The NSW Government has a vision for vibrant and growing regional economies and providing NSW residents with more jobs, greater opportunities, and a better quality of life. This is addressed in the “*Fast Rail Network Strategy*”, being overseen by Professor Andrew McNaughton, to advise Government on regional fast rail delivery options. The Sydney – Nowra route has been identified a potential route for investigation.

UDIA supports this key transport initiative which has long been proposed and originally appeared in *Action for Transport 1998* as a fast rail connection between Sydney and Wollongong. The Grattan Institute also “.....identified Wollongong-Sydney as the one rail corridor in NSW that would lead to the “most feasible commutes” if it had a major upgrade” (*Sydney Morning Herald, May 2020*).

There is also evidence that predicted commuter growth will continue to occur, especially due to people moving from Greater Sydney in search of an affordable lifestyle option with good regional access. This was further evidenced by the local real estate market rising by 10% in 2020 (*Core Logic 2020*).

This major transport project only receives cursory commentary in the Draft RTP and has a long-term delivery timeframe (“Initiatives for Investigation 20+ years”). It shows very little commitment on behalf of TfNSW and does not give industry or community confidence that this project will ever be delivered.

UDIA requests that design and assessment work should commence on the fast-rail project, which is a region-shaping transport initiative that will lead to the following outcomes:

- decreased congestion and faster travel times between destinations (estimated 40-minute time saving from the region to Sydney);
- increased tourism and trade; and
- greater connections with key business centres and transport nodes in surrounding regions.

UDIA recommends a shorter delivery timeframe of 10 years rather than what TfNSW is proposing. This should involve the assessment of route options followed by a preferred option with a robust business case and design.

***Recommendation 5. TfNSW to fast track the Sydney to Nowra Rail Link within the next 10 years to achieve:***

- ***decreased congestion and faster travel times;***
- ***increased tourism and trade; and***
- ***greater connections with key business centres and transport nodes in Sydney and GWS.***

## **5. Include transport infrastructure supported by Regional Development Australia**

UDIA notes that the Draft RTP does not address key transport infrastructure items identified in the *City Deal Prospectus*. Whilst the Draft RTP supports the upgrade to Picton Road and Mount Ousley Interchange which are both categorised as “Initiatives in Planning”, the Draft RTP does not support the access to the M1 Extension at Tripoli Way, Albion Park.

This project involves a central interchange connected to the Albion Park bypass that will reduce congestion, travel times and traffic delays on the Illawarra Highway from the Southern Highlands and through urban growth areas to the east and north of the Illawarra. RDA has identified that the project has a Benefit Cost Ratio of 7.36 (7% discount rate). The project also a relatively minor construction time frame of approximately 2 years from commencement.

UDIA views this as a key road connection that can support the further growth of the West Lake Illawarra regionally significant growth area.

***Recommendation 6. TfNSW to include the M1 Extension at Tripoli Way as an identified transport project to further support the Illawarra Shoalhaven region and in particular West Lake Illawarra.***

## **6. Conclusion**

The Illawarra Shoalhaven is quickly transforming into one of the most attractive lifestyle and employment destinations in NSW. This can only occur provided the region has excellent road and transport access that not only services the region internally but also links to key regions such as Greater Western Sydney.

UDIA is concerned that the Draft RTP initiatives will not support housing growth and economic development to support the lifestyle offered in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. Both the Sydney – Nowra fast rail and proposed SWIRL are key transport initiatives which need to be delivered in the short term to harness the economic benefits offered by the new airport and aerotropolis and Greater Sydney.

Further the Strategy fails to provide integrated support to the SIC transport projects needed for the West Lake Illawarra and Nowra Bomaderry regionally significant growth areas. Clearly this does not give the community and industry any confidence that the SIC transport projects will ever be delivered.

Strategic alignment between TfNSW and DPIE is critical to ensure the planning and infrastructure vision for the Illawarra Shoalhaven achieves an integrated delivery of housing growth supported by key road and transport infrastructure identified by RDA, DPIE and by UDIA. This will allow a roll-out of the next wave of projects from those current projects being delivered that will lead to increased housing affordability, especially for first home buyers, and ongoing economic development for the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

To address this, UDIA supports the following recommendations are acted upon and responded to;

- 1) TfNSW to include the SIC road upgrade items for the regionally significant growth areas to achieve better strategic alignment between the IS Regional Plan and Transport Plan and increase housing affordability and economic growth in the region.
- 2) TfNSW to prioritise the Maldon-Dumbarton Line (South West Illawarra Rail Line) for delivery by 2032.
- 3) TfNSW to fast-track initiatives 10, 12, 21, 32 and 57 to improve links between the Illawarra Shoalhaven region and GWS.
- 4) TfNSW to include the above key road infrastructure items identified in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Building Blocks 2.0 in the Draft RTP as "Initiatives in Planning".
- 5) TfNSW to fast track the Sydney to Nowra Rail Link within the next 10 years to achieve:
  - decreased congestion and faster travel times;
  - increased tourism and trade; and
  - greater connections with key business centres and transport nodes in Sydney and GWS.
- 6) TfNSW to include the M1 Extension at Tripoli Way as an identified transport project to further support the Illawarra Shoalhaven region and in particular West Lake Illawarra.

UDIA is keen to work with the TfNSW to ensure the Illawarra Shoalhaven reaches its full potential. We are confident that TfNSW will work closely with local councils, DPIE, the community, and the development industry to achieve the access vision contained in the Regional Transport Plan.

UDIA would like to work further with TfNSW in response to the recommendations contained in this submission to track the progress of the key initiatives and actions. We also seek a future meeting to discuss how the recommendations have been addressed. This will ensure developer confidence and delivery towards achieving the planning and transport vision for the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

Please contact Mr Kit Hale on 02 9262 1214 or [khale@udiansw.com.au](mailto:khale@udiansw.com.au) to arrange a meeting to discuss any further matter related to the TfNSW Draft Regional Transport Plan for the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Mann  
**Chief Executive**  
**UDIA NSW**

Attachment No.1 – Unlocking the Illawarra-Shoalhaven – UDIA Illawarra-Shoalhaven Strategy 2019-20  
Attachment No.2 – City Deal Prospectus (Regional Development Australia)  
Attachment No.3 – Building Blocks 2.0 Illawarra Shoalhaven