

# BUSINESS HUNTER

Newcastle Future Transit Corridor  
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## SUBMISSION

### **Newcastle Future Transit Corridor and Newcastle Future Infrastructure Corridor**

Business Hunter welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Newcastle Future Transit Corridor and the Newcastle Future Infrastructure Corridor.

Business Hunter is the peak business group in the Hunter region. We serve more than 4,400 member and affiliate businesses operating across the region, representative of industries spanning all sectors and all sizes of business, from start-ups through to leading national organisations.

Effective public transport is important to business growth and investment, providing our community with cost-effective connections to jobs, products and services. It will become increasingly critical as the urban landscape of inner-city Newcastle continues to change and densify.

Our comments on the Newcastle Future Transit Corridor and Newcastle Future Infrastructure Corridor follow in the body of this submission.

### **Newcastle Future Transit Corridor**

Business Hunter has long called for the preservation of a corridor to support future extension of the Newcastle light rail, so we welcome the proposed declaration of the Newcastle Future Transit Corridor between Newcastle Interchange and the Broadmeadow Precinct.

We support the extension of light rail to the Broadmeadow Precinct and argue this has become more important with the release of the Broadmeadow Place Strategy, which earmarks this significant 313-hectare site on the fringe of the Newcastle CBD as a future residential, commercial, sports and entertainment precinct with potential to support up to 15,000 new jobs, 20,000 homes and 40,000 residents. The Broadmeadow Place Strategy describes a mass-transit corridor and future light rail extension as a 'game changer' for the precinct and city.

We acknowledge that the 2020 Newcastle Light Rail Strategic Business Case did not support an immediate extension of light rail but that was premised on the Broadmeadow precinct supporting much more modest targets of '1,500 new dwellings and 550 new jobs over the next 20 years'. The updated forecasts in the Broadmeadow Place Strategy significantly surpass these targets and suggest that a light rail extension to Broadmeadow will take on greater urgency in coming years.

# BUSINESS HUNTER

The increasing use of the Broadmeadow precinct for major sports and entertainment events – such as the hosting in April of both a Matildas match and a performance by international artist Cyndi Lauper at adjacent venues on the same night – also supports a more immediate need for an improved public transport connection between the precinct and the Newcastle CBD.

Additionally, the introduction of NSW Government planning policies encouraging infill development around town centres and transport hubs, including Broadmeadow, Hamilton and Adamstown, will likely result in densification and population increase in selected areas along the corridor.

While light rail extension remains Business Hunter's preferred option for the transit corridor, we support the dedication of the corridor for other potential public transport options as well, recognising that alternative solutions such as rapid buses may be more achievable in the short term.

The Newcastle Light Rail Strategic Business Case also assessed options to extend light rail to the John Hunter Health Precinct and a potential future connection from Mayfield to the University of Newcastle's Callaghan campus. While these remain longer term objectives, we acknowledge that extension to Broadmeadow is the most pressing priority and welcome the declaration of the Newcastle Future Transit Corridor as a significant first step.

## **Newcastle Future Infrastructure Corridor**

Business Hunter commends the move to give legislative weight to the protection of part of the corridor via an amendment to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021.

While the application of the SEPP amendment will still allow for appropriate development to proceed, it facilitates land-use planning that protects the corridor from development that could become a barrier to future transport options. The provisions of the SEPP clearly set out the distinct approval processes that will be required for development along the corridor, including the concurrence of Transport for NSW, and the compensatory arrangements if land acquisition is required.

We note from the Explanation of Intended Effect that the SP2 Infrastructure zoning will only apply to the section of the Future Transit Corridor between the Newcastle Interchange and Hunter Street. Business Hunter has in the past [publicly supported the formal preservation of this part of the corridor](#), recognising that development in the Newcastle West area could otherwise become a constraint to the extension of light rail.

However, it is unclear from the maps provided whether there are other potential areas of development conflict along the route for which similar SEPP protection should also be considered. We appreciate that changing land-use zoning and adding additional levels of planning approval where they are not necessary would potentially stifle development, and acknowledge that most of the route does not require this level of protection. We question,

# BUSINESS HUNTER

however, whether the potential for development conflict has been properly considered in specific areas along the corridor where future development could encroach.

For example, the map and information provided do not make clear where the corridor will connect with the Broadmeadow Precinct from Tudor Street, yet this area falls within the NSW Government's Transport Oriented Development program, which allows for buildings of up to 24 metres within a 400-metre radius of Broadmeadow Station.

It is important that city planners and the community are assured that potential development conflict has been fully considered in the context of what parts of the corridor should be protected under the SEPP amendment.

## Summation

- Business Hunter welcomes the proposed declaration of the Newcastle Future Transit Corridor between Newcastle Interchange and the Broadmeadow Precinct.
- Business Hunter supports extension of the Newcastle Light Rail to the Broadmeadow Precinct as the preferred mode of public transport but acknowledges that alternative solutions such as rapid buses may be more achievable in the short term.
- Business Hunter supports the rezoning of land for the Newcastle Future Infrastructure Corridor to SP2 Infrastructure but notes that it is unclear from the maps and information provided whether there are other potential areas of development conflict along the route for which similar SEPP protection should also be considered.
- Business Hunter does not recommend that SEPP protection apply to the entire route but suggests that Transport for NSW clarify whether all potential areas of development conflict along the corridor have been identified and considered for inclusion under the provisions of the Newcastle Future Infrastructure Corridor.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. We welcome further engagement on any of the matters raised in this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Bob Hawes  
CEO, Business Hunter