

APRIL 2010



NSW METROPOLITAN STRATEGY REVIEW

SYDNEY TOWARDS 2036

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Introduction

About Consult Australia

Consult Australia (formerly the Association of Consulting Engineers Australia) is the peak industry body representing consulting companies that provide professional services to the built and natural environment. These services include design, technology and management solutions for individual consumers through to major companies in the private and public sector including local, state and federal governments. Consult Australia represents over 270 companies, from large multidisciplinary corporations to small niche practices, collectively employing over 50,000 staff.

Consult Australia's vision is to drive business success for consulting companies in the built and natural environment through collaboration, education, support and advocacy. We are dedicated to providing support and advocacy to our members with integrity, commitment, evidence based positioning, responsible actions and respect.

Consult Australia achieves these goals through a range of top down (improving regulation and creating opportunities) and bottom up (building capacity and community to reduce risk) support and services to members.

Consult Australia Position

Consult Australia believes that far reaching reform is urgently required in NSW to build a framework capable of managing Sydney's growth and development to 2036. The Sydney metropolitan region is experiencing a severe lack of infrastructure services brought about by continued population growth, poor planning, insufficient investment in key projects, and inadequate funding sources. Consult Australia supports this review of the Metropolitan Strategy to the extent that it contributes to a broader discussion about opportunities for change in NSW. However, we do not believe that the current approach—including the Metropolitan Strategy and the recently announced Metropolitan Transport Plan—is sufficient to meet the significant challenges faced by the greater Sydney region, including those challenges identified in the Metropolitan Strategy Review Discussion Paper.

Sydney Towards Tomorrow

In October 2009 Consult Australia's Infrastructure Roundtable launched *Sydney Towards Tomorrow*.

Sydney Towards Tomorrow was written by Consult Australia's Infrastructure Roundtable following discussions with Infrastructure Australia's Infrastructure Coordinator, Michael Deegan. The report identifies and recommends the policy, planning and regulatory reforms required to help protect Sydney's future

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growth and prosperity. Its strategic focus is on urban planning integration and transport infrastructure rather than providing a list of infrastructure priorities for Sydney.

Sydney Towards Tomorrow is intended to complement other plans such as the Metropolitan Strategy, City of Sydney's Sustainable 2030 Plan (2008), Metropolitan Water Plan (2005), and a number of local government plans. Crucially *Sydney Towards Tomorrow* takes a wide view of Sydney including the Central Coast and Blue Mountains in an integrated approach.

Sydney Towards Tomorrow identifies six key areas of priority that will help to address Sydney's future infrastructure requirements. It advises and recommends the policy, planning and regulatory reforms required to help protect Sydney's future growth and prosperity. Its strategic focus is on urban planning integration and transport infrastructure rather than providing a list of infrastructure priorities for Sydney.

The themes considered in *Sydney Towards Tomorrow* reflect those areas of interest in the review of the Metropolitan Strategy, these include:

- Sustainability;
- Planning;
- Attractive densities and land use mixes;
- Funding;
- Social issues; and
- Governance.

These themes are highly interrelated and should be approached in an integrated matter. The key recommendations for reform advocated through *Sydney Towards Tomorrow* are:

- 1) One Plan for Sydney - Focus on quality medium density urban design within the existing urban footprint and high density around existing transport corridors and nodes. This means a higher focus on urban consolidation and a lower focus on fringe development. Live, work, play communities delivered by a structure planning process that brings together all elements of infrastructure in a single spatial strategy.
- 2) Infrastructure that delivers carbon neutrality to Sydney via both short term sustainability based procurement and longer term sustainable planning;
- 3) Abolish the transport tax base and introduce a user pays system;
- 4) Consolidate local urban councils from 42 to 11 (in the Sydney Basin) and one regional council for each of the Newcastle, Illawarra and the Central Coast; and,
- 5) Reform governance structures so that there is one body responsible for the policy, planning, safety and funding of transport infrastructure management, development, maintenance and operation across all modes.

In responding to the directions and questions posed for consideration in the Metropolitan Strategy Review Discussion Paper, *Sydney Towards Tomorrow* is an invaluable reference. A full copy of the report is attached, and can also be found [here](#).

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Next Steps

Consult Australia is committed to securing the reform necessary to help ensure the future growth and prosperity of NSW. In March this year, we convened a Community Consultation Forum on the Central Coast to debate the recommendations put forward in *Sydney Towards Tomorrow*. The Forum was a great success and saw widespread local support for a single regional government for the central coast, combined with additional funding by state and federal governments for infrastructure projects critical to the region. A copy of the report and recommendations from the Forum is attached, and can also be found [here](#).

Consult Australia will continue to engage both the community and government to discuss the issues raised in *Sydney Towards Tomorrow*, and to help realise the vision for Sydney towards 2036. We welcome the opportunity to discuss our recommendations in more detail as part of the review of the Metropolitan Strategy.