

## Comments on *the Sydney Clearways Strategy*

28 February 2014

Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

Sydney Clearways Strategy  
Transport for NSW  
GPO Box K659  
Haymarket NSW 1240  
Via email: <mailto:sydneyclearways@transport.nsw.gov.au>

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Sydney Clearways Strategy.

Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) is an association of sixteen local government Councils formed for mutual benefit through collaboration and cooperation. Member Councils deliver and maintain in excess of \$20 billion in local infrastructure and other assets across an area covering more than 600 square kilometres, with a population approximately one quarter of the population of Greater Metropolitan Sydney.

Our region is perhaps the most densely developed in Sydney and with forecast population growth and planned urban consolidation will become increasingly more congested over time. Our roads are particularly symptomatic of urban congestion and the entire road network is particularly vulnerable to gridlock when there is an accident or breakdown. This has wide-ranging impacts on the environment (pollution), the economy (reduced productivity) and the wider community (reduced social health outcomes).

SSROC therefore appreciates the intent of the Sydney Clearways Strategy, which is to improve traffic flow by increasing the number and duration of clearways across Sydney. We support the hierarchy outlined in the Strategy that clearways prioritise public transport over private vehicles. That is, passenger volume over vehicle volume.

The Sydney Clearways Strategy will also have an unintended positive outcome for cyclists with improved road safety as a result of cyclists not having to navigate around parked cars on clearways. This may lead to a welcome increase in recreational and commuter cycling.

While extended clearways might provide road users with more room to move, we are concerned that these gains are unsustainable and at the cost of local economic outcomes. This is because the Strategy emphasises bypassing communities rather than investing in them. Furthermore, SSROC contends that:

- Increasing the appeal of the road network will encourage more private vehicle use, thus negating any capacity gains on the road network;
- Extended clearways will almost certainly have a detrimental impact on local economies as businesses become inaccessible to the vast majority of vehicles passing by;
- Loss of local businesses will result in vast stretches of unused, run-down and derelict buildings similar to what Parramatta Road has become;

- People with disabilities will be particularly disadvantaged because of reduced accessibility to local businesses;
- Reduction in the social health of communities, as local business hubs are integral to community cohesion and well-being;
- Alternative parking provided elsewhere is unlikely to be utilised, as people will simply drive to the nearest shopping centre. Underutilised carparks are a waste of money and space and result in reduced neighbourhood amenity and security;
- Residential value loss as a result of lost local economic and social outcomes.

SSROC believes that the only way to reduce congestion on our road network is to make public transport a preferred method of travel on both weekdays and weekends. In order to achieve this a carrot and stick approach must be used. Increasing and improving public transport and extending the use of transit lanes and preferential traffic signalling will enable public transport to have the priority it deserves on the road network.

It is also essential that the State Government consult with Councils and Chambers of Commerce to understand the likely economic and social consequences of the Sydney Clearways Strategy and work on effective solutions that enable communities to thrive *while* the traffic flows.

We thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Sydney Clearways Strategy and hope you find these comments useful.

Yours sincerely



Alan Northey  
General Manager  
Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils