



5 August 2020

Commissioner for Productivity
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Att: Mr. P. Achterstraat

Dear Mr. Achterstraat,

Re: Comments on the Discussion Paper *Review of Infrastructure Contributions in New South Wales*

Council thanks the Commissioner of Productivity for the opportunity to comment on the above discussion paper. Generally, Council supports the submission by the Western Sydney Planning Partnership, of which Camden is a member. However, we would like the opportunity to build on that submission with some additional comments that reflect some challenges Camden is, or soon will be, experiencing.

Recouping Financing Costs

The biggest issue faced over the next couple of years for Camden is acquiring land to provide the enabling infrastructure. In areas such as Leppington this will ensure development can proceed, without Council providing this enabling infrastructure future development will be sterilised.

To proceed Council will have to borrow significantly to forward fund the land acquisition and construction of the infrastructure required by development. Council needs to be able to levy for the financing cost, through the contribution plan. To date the only mechanism, approved by IPART, to levy for financing costs, has been Net Present Value. This system is resource hungry, complex and requires a specific skill set to establish and manage. Council requires a system that is easy to administer, is transparent and fair.

The inability to recoup this cost efficiently through the plan will result in a reduction in other services Council provides to its community, which are Councils core role, not facilitating development.

Review of the Essential Works List

Another improvement that will significantly help Council to support their community would be changes to the Essential Works List. The works list constrains Council's IPART approved Contribution Plans by limiting what they can levy for. The two changes Council believes will improve the infrastructure Council delivers would be changes to the list to include all social infrastructure, like community centres and libraries and the opportunity to levy for a higher-level embellishment of sporting fields.

The provision of a range of social infrastructure is critical to the development of

connected and activated communities. Social spaces are especially important in new communities where the creation of the shared history, imbedded in established communities, needs to be supported. Without these indoor social spaces, it is difficult for new residents to connect and contribute to building sustainable communities.

Currently, IPART will only support a contribution plan that collects for a basic embellishment of sporting fields, which is a turfed surface. Sporting fields with a natural grass surface can only be used for around 25 hours per week before the quality of the surface declines. A synthetic surface can be used for 45 hours per week. If Council could levy for fields that have a synthetic surface they would not need as many sporting fields, which reduces the amount of land needed to be acquired, embellished and maintained. In addition, time lost due to inclement weather is reduced which provides a better service level to the community.

Should you require any further information regarding this matter, please don't hesitate to contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

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