

Australian Infrastructure Audit

Infrastructure Australia

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Australian Infrastructure Audit – Our Infrastructure Challenges

The Urban Taskforce has reviewed the Australian Infrastructure Audit Report. We have provided a number of comments for your consideration.

1. The Urban Taskforce supports the proposed Australian Infrastructure Audit

According to the 17th Annual Global CEO Survey conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers, 83% of Australian CEO's believe that the government should make infrastructure improvement its number one priority¹. The Urban Taskforce is generally supportive of the Australia Infrastructure Audit. The audit recognises the need to adopt a strategic approach to assessing Australia's infrastructure needs and the key role infrastructure planning provides in supporting land use planning, urban density and economic growth throughout the country. We represent many of the developers who are produce residential, commercial, industrial and other types of property development which are heavily dependent upon the timely and efficient delivery of infrastructure to support their projects. Our comments are outlined below.

2. State government should have responsibility for key state and regional infrastructure

The three tiers of government in Australia (Federal, State and Local) each have a role to play in the delivery of infrastructure, appropriate to their functions, resources and responsibilities. These roles must be clearly defined and sufficient funding allocated to the relevant government authority to deliver the infrastructure they are responsible for. It is crucial that responsibility for state and regional level infrastructure, and where relevant, the land use planning around this infrastructure, is left to the state government. For example, the provision of key road and rail lines and land use planning around these transport corridors, should be undertaken by the state government with minimal interference from local government and appropriate financial support from the federal government.

3. There should be a stronger link between infrastructure and urban planning

Integrated infrastructure and land use planning is essential to ensure that the positive social and economic outcomes from investment in infrastructure can be realised. For example, traffic congestion is one of the most dominant challenges in capital cities around Australia, particularly the Sydney metropolitan area. In order to ensure that public transport is fully utilised, land use planning around rail stations must include high density residential development. Maximising the number of dwellings within the 'walking catchment' (generally an 800 metre) radius of a station encourages

¹ Price Waterhouse Coopers website, www.pwc.com.au, accessed August 2015

residents to use public transportation for short trips and to commute to and from work, decreasing the number of cars on the road and the level of traffic congestion. Higher density urban living also ensures that other infrastructure, for example, water supply, roads and schools are used to their greatest potential. It is crucial that urban planning and infrastructure delivery are coordinated to ensure that land use plans, development controls and funding are timed to coincide with the delivery of infrastructure needed to support higher density residential development.

Federal government funding of infrastructure should be based on the extent of new development stimulated by the new infrastructure and not only on the cost of the infrastructure itself.

4. ***Private sector involvement in infrastructure provision***

There is a global trend for governments to seek private sector involvement in projects. It is essential that an appropriate regulatory framework is established to maximise the involvement of the private sector in the provision of infrastructure.

In summary, the Urban Taskforce is supportive of the audit and is happy to continue working closely with the Government to provide a development industry perspective on this issue. Please feel free to contact me on telephone number 9238 3927 to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Urban Taskforce Australia



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