

Make Western Sydney jobs precinct the First City Deal- From a 120 minute city to a 30 minute city

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The Prime Minister's announcement about a Smart Cities Plan based around City Deals should have its first deal in the Western Sydney Priority Growth Area, says the Urban Taskforce.

"It is good news that the Federal Government has developed a Smart City Plan and that they will sponsor City Deals to drive development," says Urban Taskforce CEO, Chris Johnson. "The Western Sydney Priority Growth Area meets all the fundamental elements outlined in the Smart Cities Plan."

"The Western Sydney Priority Growth Area is a defined geographic area that includes Liverpool and Penrith local government areas. The clear outcomes will be around reversing the jobs drain to the East, capital investments will focus around infrastructure and governance would include the two councils, the state and federal governments."

"A recent report from the Western Sydney University highlighted the jobs slide that has doubled the jobs deficit over the last decade. Urgent changes to land use plans in this area are needed to draw jobs back into Western Sydney. The new Western Sydney Airport presents a great opportunity and can be a catalyst for jobs and infrastructure but clearly the three levels of government must work together."

"Currently around 200,000 workers head East in the morning and West in the evening as they travel to and from work. They have been called the 'squinters' as they are always travelling into a low sun. These trips to work are taking up to 2 hours each way. The Prime Minister's call for '30 minute cities' should become the performance indicator to be used for the City Deal for the Western Sydney Priority Growth Area."

"The Federal Government has announced that \$3.6m worth of road infrastructure will be rolled out to support Western Sydney over the next 10 years. The area has been declared by the NSW Planning Minister Rob Stokes as a Priority Growth Area and both Liverpool and Penrith Councils are keen to see future employment opportunities and growth. The State Government introduced a value capture tax on land owners called the State Infrastructure Contribution Levy in 2007. Under the proposed City Deals criteria the Western Sydney Priority Growth Area ticks off all the conditions and is ready to go."

"The Urban Taskforce is keen to work with all levels of government within a City Deals framework to drive improved amenity in urban growth areas. We are however concerned at the growing trend towards 'Value Capture' as the way to fund infrastructure. If not handled carefully value capture could become yet another tax on new housing, driving up housing costs and impacting upon housing affordability and having a reverse effect on future growth"

*The **Urban Taskforce** is a property development industry group, representing Australia's most prominent property developers and equity financiers.*

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