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David Wilmoth

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A Comment

Dr. James R. Conner

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ABSTRACT

The NSW Government has prepared a metropolitan strategy for the Sydney region, in line with recent efforts by other states to update and upgrade their metropolitan strategies. This strategy includes the third metropolitan plan for Sydney. The 1951 County of Cumberland Plan was a detailed land use plan essentially for the local governments that comprised the Cumberland County Council (1949), and the 1980 Sydney Region Outline Plan was a State government plan dominated by the management of peripheral urban growth (State Planning Authority 1968). The present metropolitan strategy differs from these, reflecting different economic and social conditions, a different understanding of policy instruments and urban change, and a different legislative and political climate.

The purpose of this paper is to show how the objectives, policies and instruments of the metropolitan strategy reflect these changed conditions. It is not a full exposition of the strategy. Rather, the paper describes the approach taken in developing the strategy, examines planning objectives and policies, and reviews the various instruments available for implementation.

The overall strategy consists of a strategy plan for the metropolitan region, a series of policies to guide development in accordance with the plan, and a program of implementation. Unlike its predecessors, it will not be based on a particular population projection, but will aim to accommodate 4.5 million people - about a million more than the present population - by whatever year that threshold is reached. On current trends, this is expected in 2013, a timespan of 25 years.

In his comment on Wilmoth's paper, Conner focusses in turn on the six major pressures on the formulation of the strategy and asks a series of critical questions of each. These are: urban development commitments beyond the current Sydney Region Outline Plan; changed economic and social conditions; local government pressure for regional guidelines; industry concern at possible shortages of land for urban development; environmental issues needing long-term resolution; and the need for major public investment decisions to be guided by long-term strategy. He then asks: how and why is this strategy different from the last? His discussion ranges over the issues of government endorsement and successful implementation, statutory status, population targets, corridor plans, urban consolidation policies, infill programmes, and employment redistribution. He concludes that the new strategy is hopeful, but cautiously quotes the wisdom of Peter Harrison's adage that "the only thing you can be sure of when you've finished the plan is that the real world will not end up looking anything like it".

METROPOLITAN PLANNING IN AUSTRALIA

A URU Sponsored Seminar

David Wilmoth's paper is a contribution to a two-day seminar on *Metropolitan Planning in Australia* organised by the Urban Research Unit in February 1988, and the second of the papers from the seminar to appear in this series. The foci of the seminar were the metropolitan plans or strategies which have recently appeared for four of Australia's largest cities. On the first day, papers describing the evolution and present state of planning policies and machinery in Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth and Sydney were discussed. On the second, a variety of metropolitan planning themes were addressed. These included 'Planning Objectives' and the 'Instruments of Planning', with an international perspective provided by Peter Self. A full list of the papers delivered at the seminar can be found in the endpapers of this publication. Further papers from the seminar will appear as *URU Working Papers* in the coming months.

In the view of the Urban Research Unit, the seminar was timely. Sydney has a new metropolitan strategy covering urban growth and change for a population of up to four and a half million. Adelaide is the subject of a new 25-year metropolitan development strategy. Perth's corridor plan has been the subject of a recent major review. Melbourne has seen the transfer of metropolitan planning from the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works to the State Government, and the appearance of a 10-year urban strategy as part of a new integrated system of Cabinet policy-making. In the present unfavourable economic and political climate for strategic government planning, this revival of Australian metropolitan planning holds considerable interest. What can the big cities learn from each other's plans or from overseas experience? How useful are long-term land use plans and how do they relate to problems of urban management and service coordination? How much 'planning' is possible as opposed to incremental change and *ad hoc* decisions? What time horizons should be used? How far and how will metropolitan plans be actually implemented?

In the discussion, it emerged that all big cities (except Brisbane) wanted to reduce the extent and the cost of further peripheral growth, and to encourage urban consolidation and the promotion of stronger suburban centres. All of them wanted to retain the vitality of the capital city and its central area. The seminar revealed that these goals will not be easy to achieve, and that further study of the methods of implementation would be well worthwhile.

The second day produced intensive discussion of the respective virtues and vices of statutory land use plans *versus* coordinated but pragmatic urban management systems. The machinery of State Government was given attention, as was the

prospective role of local government, highlighted by the case of Brisbane. International experience suggested the key importance of land, housing and transportation policies for the achievement of metropolitan objectives, subjects which get too little attention in the Australian metropolitan plans. Some participants brought attention to the desirability of directing some growth to other centres in the same State. Others noted the weak understanding by planners of the property market and the need for more long-term evaluation of development costs and benefits.

The seminar achieved its aim of a useful review of the present state of metropolitan planning in Australia. In its wake, lies a formidable agenda for further research, comparison, evaluation and effective government action.

SYDNEY'S METROPOLITAN STRATEGY¹

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Introduction

The NSW Government has prepared a metropolitan strategy for the Sydney region, in line with recent efforts by other states to update and upgrade their metropolitan strategies. This strategy includes the third metropolitan plan for Sydney: the 1951 County of Cumberland Plan was a detailed land use plan essentially for the local governments that comprised the Cumberland County Council (1949), and the 1980 Sydney Region Outline Plan was a State government plan dominated by the management of peripheral urban growth (State Planning Authority 1968). The present metropolitan strategy is different again, reflecting different economic and social conditions, a different understanding of policy instruments and urban change, and a different legislative and political climate.

The purpose of this paper is to show how the objectives, policies and instruments of the metropolitan strategy reflect these changed conditions. It is not a full exposition of the strategy, which is presented elsewhere (DEP 1988). Rather the paper describes the approach taken in developing the strategy, examines planning objectives and policies, and reviews the various instruments available for implementation.

Approach

Unlike its predecessors, the strategy represents the views of the State government. It was prepared by the Department of Environment and Planning (DEP) through the Urban Development Committee, representing 22 State Government agencies and twelve Local Governments. It was triggered by the need to consider urban development commitments to areas beyond the scope of the Sydney Region Outline Plan, but demand for the strategy also arose from changed economic conditions, local government pressure for regional

¹ The views expressed in this paper are mine, and not necessarily those of the NSW Department of Environment and Planning or the NSW Government.

guidelines, industry concern at possible shortages of land for urban development, environmental issues needing long-term resolution and the need for particular major public investment decisions to be guided by a long-term strategy. Preparation has taken several years and many drafts, including three iterations of a detailed transport/land use model and its data base. While linkages with Wollongong and Newcastle are recognised as growing stronger, the Sydney strategy does absorb the Illawarra and Hunter regional environmental plans.

It is to be presented in four parts: a short statement of metropolitan strategy; a background report that describes the technical work and alternative plans evaluated; a series of issue papers on topics such as population, employment and state-wide context; and a popular book to be published as a bicentennial project. Though different agencies have strategies for particular elements of metropolitan development, such as *Roads 2000* (DMR 1987), and the *Tourism Development Strategy* (Tourism Commission 1987), the gestation period for the metropolitan strategy, the collaborative means of its preparation (e.g. shared data bases and forecasts) and government endorsement all give it pre-eminent status over public and private urban development decisions.

The overall strategy consists of a strategy plan for the metropolitan region, a series of policies to guide development in accordance with the plan, and a program of implementation. Unlike its predecessors, it will not be based on a particular population projection, but will aim to accommodate 4.5 million people – about a million more than now – by whatever year that threshold is reached (on current trends, 2013, a timespan of 25 years).

The policy objectives can be subsumed under the following broad themes:

- economic efficiency, especially cost-effective infrastructure provision and employment growth;
- social equity, especially access to jobs and services and improved social development in new areas;
- water quality, reservation of open space and conservation of heritage.

The various demands for an agreed metropolitan strategy led to the consideration of a wider range of policy instruments than the Sydney Region Outline Plan, and as a result this metropolitan strategy will enable more sophisticated management of Sydney's growth and change. The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* 1979 institutionalised public participation in State and Local planning processes and offered a variety of regulatory and other means for implementing policy. The growing realisation among governments, Commonwealth, State and Local, that their own activities have effects on urban development and the environment – e.g. government employment location, facility construction, disposal of surplus sites – led to a search for a corporate planning strategy by agencies who might not otherwise have participated, and to the inclusion of new policy instruments. Competition among states and localities for property investment led to a heightened awareness of the importance of expeditious planning approvals, and of the management and promotional benefits of a widely-understood strategy. A whole range of new statutory instruments – e.g. transferable development rights – became available. The mixed experience of attempts to coordinate the urban development process following the Sydney Region Outline Plan, and the recent success of the Urban Development Program, forged new monitoring and co-ordination instruments that existed before only in theory. New public-private development combinations and a wide array of development finance instruments have also become available to those implementing the metropolitan strategy. Some of these instruments are highly indirect (e.g. the effects on urban consolidation of promoting demand for multi-unit dwellings), while others are quite direct (e.g. the release of new suburban land). As it was prepared, the strategy adapted itself to experience with this range of regulatory and non-regulatory instruments, excluding those shown to be ineffective and including those shown to be successful. Because of this matching, the following discussion of planning objectives is integrated with discussion of policies and particular instruments.

Planning Objectives

1. Urban Form

City Size

The advantages and disadvantages of urban size in general, and of Sydney's growth in particular, are not clear enough or strong enough to set a population

size limit to Sydney, nor to cause the strategy to take a position for or against metropolitan growth as such. The statewide and national context of Sydney's growth is obviously important, but there is no statewide or national settlement strategy within which the metropolitan strategy fits. The constancy and predictability of population growth are important to the strategy's implementation, so that the supply of land, housing, infrastructure, services and finance can be planned to meet anticipated changes in demand.

Urban Capability

More than other metropolitan areas in Australia, physical geography determines Sydney's urban form. Once primary constraints are taken into account – bushland, floodplains, steep terrain, soil hazards, wetlands, national parks, prime agricultural lands, reservoirs, liquid waste sites and other constraints – there is relatively little land left suitable for urban development (*see* Figure 1). Where urban development can occur, it will be in areas more difficult and expensive to service than those included in the Sydney Region Outline Plan. On present density and population growth trends, by the time Sydney's population reaches 4.5 million, all potential urban release areas will have commenced development. Of course, urban regions do not run out of land as a finite entity: growth pressures would rise beyond the present Sydney region, particularly to the south-west, and within the Sydney region where technologically or politically possible – e.g. to drain flood-labile land or convert prime agricultural land. However, to meet the strategy's environmental and equity objectives in particular, urban development is to be confined to nominated areas (*see* Figure 2). A combination of management, investment and regulatory instruments is to be used to accomplish this, and not market preferences alone.

Corridors

Within these constraints and policies Sydney's metropolitan strategy will seek to continue the corridor form of the Sydney Region Outline Plan. Some corridors will appear as secondary growths off other corridors, in a branched pattern, and not all corridors will be served by full rail services. The reasons for the corridor form of development still apply: efficiency of service provision, flexibility in rates of development, and good accessibility.

Staging

The sequence of developing the corridors should be flexible provided that adequate lead times – up to seven years – are observed. For this purpose, the Urban Development Program annually revises a ten year queue of possible release areas, and once decisions on these medium-term options are made, government agencies are bound to the development of the areas and their timing. Such decisions therefore trigger financial commitments, both loans and claims on future budgets. They also trigger the preparation of regional environmental plans (REPs) which provide the framework for detailed local planning.

As land release decisions firm up through inclusion in the five-year Urban Development Program, these commitments, including those of relevant local governments and some federal agencies, are measured in the Urban Development Financial Program and presented annually to State and Local Governments and taken into account in budget and loan decisions. The next major area to open up will be the north-west sector, with land releases scheduled for the early 1990's. This decision brings major commitments to water and sewerage headworks and other services. Other sectors identified in the structure plan for urban release are Bringelly, Macarthur South and Wyong-Tuggerah (*see* Figure 2).

The Urban Development Program will also control the rate of development within the major sectors in its annual reviews, bringing forward areas where strong demand is anticipated, and deferring areas where demand is weakening. The strategy opts for a policy of simultaneously developing the major sectors in overlapping stages, so as to serve a variety of housing submarkets and to reduce the rate of development of any one sector to below 3500 lots per annum. This is necessary to avoid the service backlogs and social stresses that can accompany very fast growth. The policy entails a tradeoff with the major 'lumpy' infrastructure providers, particularly the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board, who face up-front capital expenditure in each of several sectors and who seek to separate such investments by at least three years for reasons of cost-effectiveness. Otherwise financing peaks would double up and headwork capacities (e.g. sewerage treatment plants, water mains, freeways) would be underutilized.

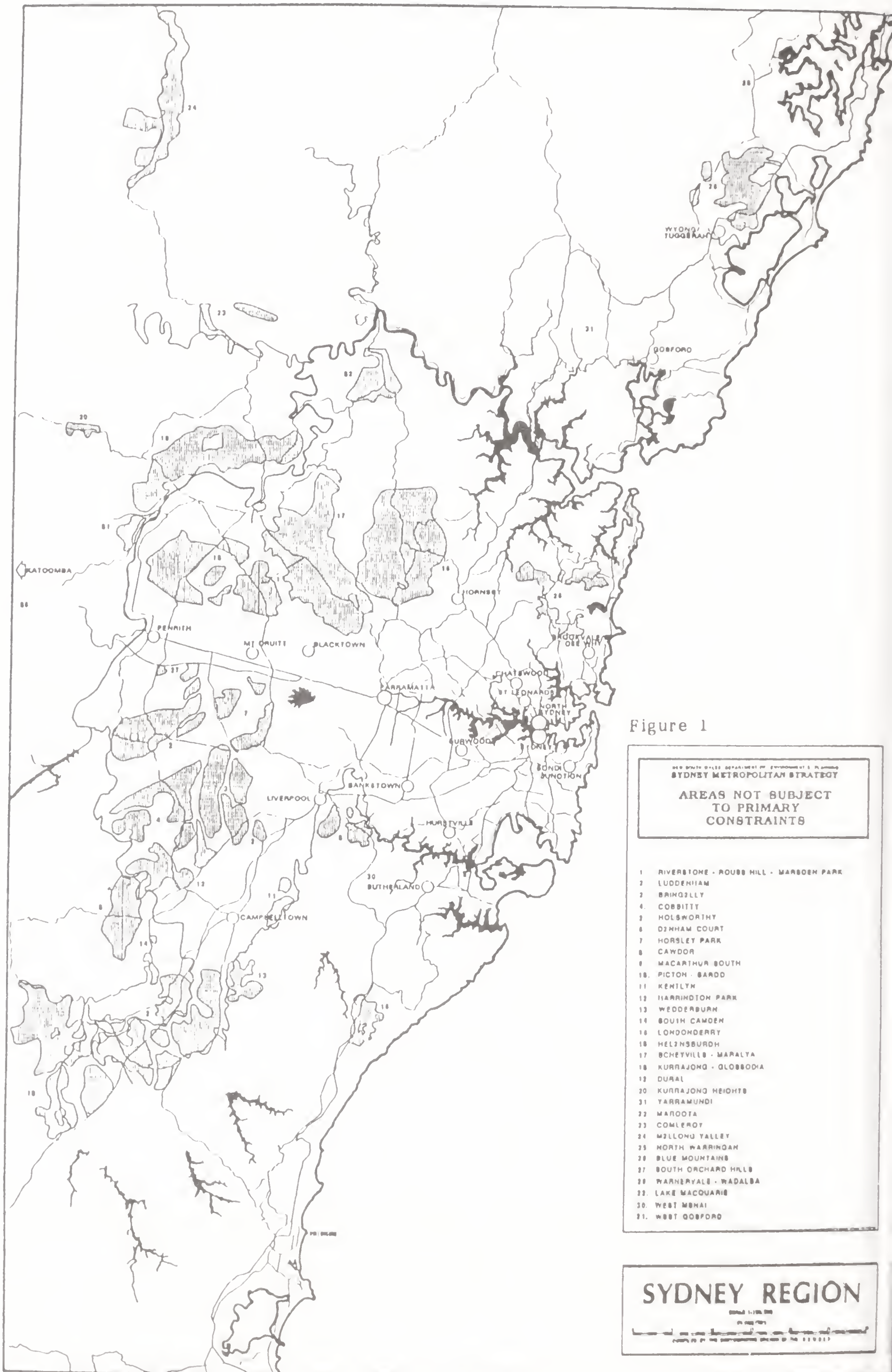


Figure 1

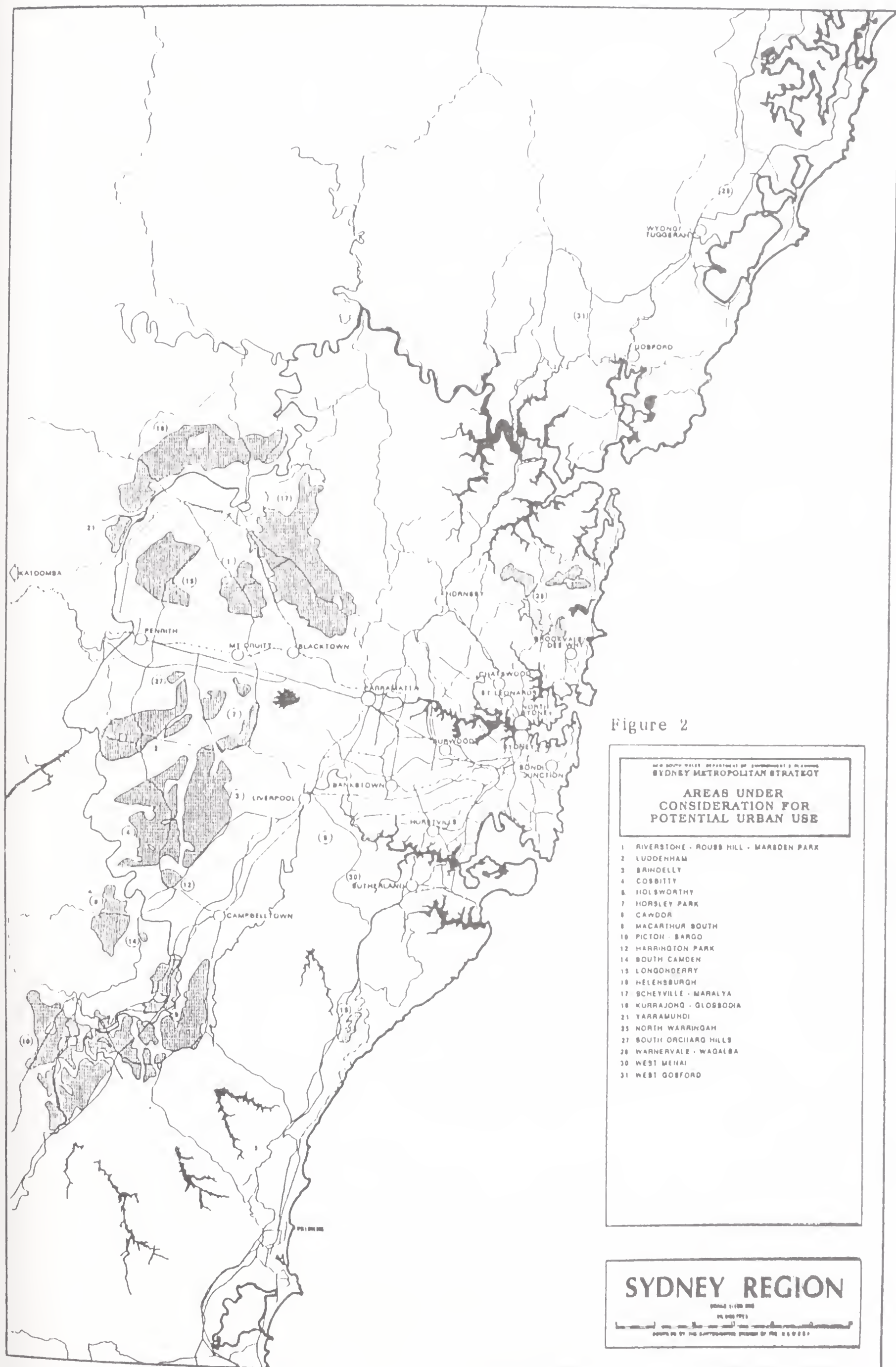
NEW SOUTH WALES DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING
SYDNEY METROPOLITAN STRATEGY

**AREAS NOT SUBJECT
 TO PRIMARY
 CONSTRAINTS**

1 RIVERSTONE - ROUSS HILL - MARBOEN PARK
 2 LUDDENHAM
 3 BRINDLELY
 4 COBBITTY
 5 HOLSWORTHY
 6 DINHAM COURT
 7 HORSLEY PARK
 8 CAWDOR
 9 MACARTHUR SOUTH
 10 PICTON - BARDOL
 11 KENTLYN
 12 HARRINGTON PARK
 13 WEDDERBURN
 14 SOUTH CAMDEN
 15 LONDONDERRY
 16 HELLSBURGH
 17 BRETHERTON - MARALTA
 18 KURRAJONG - GLOBBOOIA
 19 DURAL
 20 KURRAJONG HEIGHTS
 21 YARRAMUNDI
 22 MAROOTA
 23 COMLESTON
 24 MULLONG VALLEY
 25 NORTH WARRINGAH
 26 BLUE MOUNTAINS
 27 SOUTH ORCHARD HILLS
 28 WARRERVILLE - WADALBA
 29 LAKE MACQUARIE
 30 WEST MURRAY
 31 WEST GOSFORD

SYDNEY REGION

Scale 1:100,000
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2. Urban Consolidation

The policies above apply to urban form more than the density of urban development, which is the focus of urban consolidation policy. Urban consolidation is defined as an increase in the density of population or housing or both. Note that this includes new urban areas – where most new housing is built – as well as established areas, which dominate popular conceptions of urban consolidation. The objectives of the metropolitan strategy include the provision of affordable housing in a variety of types and tenures for all income groups in all parts of the region, and an increase in the supply and variety of multi-unit housing.

Reasons for pursuing urban consolidation policies do not need elaboration here: the lack of housing variety in most areas, the costs of low-density expansion, better access and public transport efficiencies and, as prices come to reflect costs, the affordability of housing. Overall, the 'concentrated' option, which assumes successful urban consolidation policies and an average of 12,000 multi-unit housing commencements a year, would require another 323,000 lots up to the time when Sydney houses 4.5 million people, as compared with 358,000 for the dispersed option. While 35,000 lots may not appear to make a big difference, it would defer commencement of a major new sector by up to three years, with the deferral of hundreds of millions of dollars of capital works. There are several aspects to urban consolidation policies.

Density in New Urban Areas

Past urban development has generally been at eight residential lots per hectare gross density. The preferred new density in new areas is ten lots per hectare, which so far has only been achieved in areas where medium density public housing is dominant. To achieve this target, about 20 per cent of new commencements would need to be multi-unit dwellings. This is achievable through local environmental plans, other local planning conditions in release negotiations, smaller lots for detached dwellings (already local councils cannot refuse consent to subdivisions larger than 450m² on the grounds of size), flexible planning and development standards in new areas, and campaigns aimed at changing housing preferences towards higher densities.

Density in Established Areas

Population density has been declining in established urban areas, though this has been reversed in some areas over the 1981-86 intercensal period. Long-term decline is to be further reversed by an active dual occupancy policy (recently greatly strengthened), the development of surplus government sites for multi-unit housing (helped by fast-tracked rezonings by the state if necessary), a range of measures to slow the loss of low-rental inner city housing stock by demolition and strata-title subdivision (statutory restraints and specific housing programs already apply), and an active program of spot public housing development throughout the established area including the wealthy east and north. These policies are counterbalanced by others designed to protect and enhance inner city open space and to create opportunities for new tourist accommodation.

Affordability of Housing

As well as through the above mentioned land supply and housing programs, overall housing affordability is to be pursued through greater efficiency in the planning and development approval system (accomplished by legislative and management means), more flexible development controls and standards, and restraints on developer contributions (particularly section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, the levels of which can now be regulated by the Minister rather than set solely by a nexus between demand and supply). However, the expected trend to charge users – that is, developers and to a large extent households – the real cost of urban expansion could be a countervailing force on housing affordability.

3. Economic Development

Unlike previous metropolitan plans, the Sydney metropolitan strategy identifies ways to promote economic development actively, rather than solely by such essentially passive means as ensuring adequate provision of industrial land. This element came into the strategy not only as a result of stronger concern for employment growth, but as a result of a swing in planning theory and practice towards economic development. The State's economic development strategy (Treasury 1987a) sets a context for the Sydney metropolitan strategy. This section addresses the urban economy of Sydney as a whole, while the next deals with employment distribution.

Sydney faces enormous changes to its occupational and industrial structure. The nature and scale of these changes have implications for physical planning as well as social and economic planning: a decline in the manufacturing workforce; growth in finance and business services, recreation and tourism; the internationalisation of capital flows; the deregulation of financial markets and restructuring of the property industry.

The objectives of the strategy are to:

- augment Sydney's role as a major international commercial, financial, technological, tourist and industrial centre
- encourage the formation of new industries that incorporate advanced technology, are likely to lead to export growth, provide new employment and provide increased skills
- ensure that economic development is compatible with the protection and enhancement of urban amenity and the environment.

Policies to pursue these objectives (leaving aside employment distribution) include:

- industry assistance programs, development of new products, small business extension programs and expansion of present industrial supplies office programs
- community development assistance to meet employment goals
- human resource development through better vocational education, innovation and skill centres oriented to industrial development and training, and an increase in the range of educational resources in outer areas, including new TAFE Colleges, CAEs and University
- subregional development organisations to co-ordinate and tailor government programs and develop local initiatives
- local council economic development plans.

Policy instruments range from government business assistance programs (more flexible and appropriately targeted than in the past) through support for new local and community economic development plans, to the planned development of new institutions. Many of the policies are to be grafted onto private, community or government initiatives already under way. The strategy assumes Commonwealth-led economic restructuring policies will continue and develop, especially for manufacturing industries, but it does not rely on them alone. State/Local Government co-operation, especially at the subregional scale, will be important, and with recent Local Government dynamism in economic development planning there are good grounds for optimism here.

Sydney's economic development policies may be similar to strategies elsewhere but its employment distribution policies may be of particular interest.

4. Employment Distribution

The main objective for employment distribution is to ensure that adequate employment opportunities are well distributed in relation to the workforce. Overall, objectives and policies support the central business district (CBD), the emergence of a second regional centre at Parramatta, a set of subregional centres elsewhere (with emphasis on the west and south-west), protection of sites for special uses, encouragement of more flexible employment zones, recognition of market trends towards employment dispersal and freestanding retail and office centres, and promotion of business parks and technology parks in areas not served by subregional centres. More detailed objectives and policies may be classified according to the type of area where people will work: the two regional centres, subregional centres, industrial areas, special use areas and local employment areas.

Regional Centres

Unlike strategies promoted during the 1970's when it was thought that central business districts were overdeveloped, Sydney's metropolitan strategy recognises the importance of CBD-located activities, the international corporate and financial role of Sydney CBD, its highly accessible position in the public transport system (notwithstanding its eccentricity on the map), and its continuing attraction for employers, workers, shoppers and tourists. In 1986 Sydney CBD employed about 190,000 people. By the time Sydney houses 4.5 million people,

employment in the CBD should grow to 220,000 and North Sydney from 30,000 to 40,000.

Already a statement of strategy and an urban design plan are being prepared for central Sydney by a joint DEP-City of Sydney team, and traffic management and transport strategies are being prepared integrally with the central Sydney plan. The latter will most likely result in a new local environmental plan (LEP) and a consolidated set of standards, codes and development controls to replace the present fragmentation of statutory instruments. Recent major investment decisions are shaping the development of the CBD – e.g. Darling Harbour TNT monorail, the Harbour Tunnel, World Square – and a large single projects will continue to be potential instruments for implementing the metropolitan strategy. The city's environment, including its immense heritage value, puts limits on the development of most precincts: conservation and development pressures are to be reconciled in the central Sydney plan. However, much depends on what management arrangements are established for the planning and development of central Sydney in the wake of the Goran Inquiry (Goran 1987).

Parramatta is to be the second regional centre, much closer to the present workforce of Sydney and to the future areas of urban expansion. Unlike, say, Chatswood, the public sector has led in the planning and development of Parramatta. From an estimate of 25,000 employees in 1986, Parramatta could grow to 60,000 employees over the period of the strategy, while a dispersed employment scenario for the region would take it to 35,000.

Policies to promote Parramatta's growth include very substantial improvements to transport infrastructure (a ring road system, freeway development, improved rail and bus facilities and parking stations), a new inter-centre bus service, expansion of cultural development opportunities and the detailed implementation of a centre development plan which includes Parramatta's urban design opportunities and historic sites. An effective instrument has been the State government's office relocation program, which will relocate more than 5,000 State employees to Parramatta over a decade from Sydney CBD and dispersed suburban locations. The Commonwealth's commitment to offices and other facilities also explicitly supports the centres policy. Parramatta will become a major retailing, cultural and recreation centre. From a slow start, Parramatta's private sector employment growth is now more self-propelled. The challenge is

TABLE 1

Preferred Employment Distribution in Major Centres

Centres	Employment at 3.45 million (1986, est)	Employment at 4.5 million (2013, est.)
Regional Centres		
Sydney	190,000	220,000
North Sydney	30,000	40,000
Parramatta	25,000	60,000
Subregional Centres		
Bankstown	10,000	15,000
Blacktown	12,000	18,000
Bondi Junction	7,000	10,000
Burwood	8,000	10,000
Brookvale-Dee Why	6,000	10,000
Campbelltown	6,000	30,000
Chatswood	12,000	20,000
Gosford	6,000	10,000
Hornsby	10,000	15,000
Hurstville	7,000	10,000
Liverpool	12,000	20,000
Mt Druitt	2,000	5,000
Penrith	5,000	20,000
St Leonards	24,000	20,000
Sutherland	6,000	10,000
Wyong-Tuggerah	1,000	5,000
New sectors		
North West	-	8,000
Bringelly	-	12,000
Total	379,000	568,000
Share of Total		
Regional Employment	25%	30%

Source: DEP. Metropolitan Strategy, 1988.

to ensure services and facilities keep pace with property development and employment growth.

Subregional centres

A limited number of other centres – including centres for new sectors – are being promoted as the focus for commercial, business, recreation and community uses, as well as higher-density housing and public transport (*see* Table 1). Altogether, 30 per cent of the region's employment will be located in regional and subregional centres, as distinct from 21 per cent in the dispersed option. Among reasons for pursuing a concentrated employment distribution are the greater efficiency of public transport, greater equity of job access, shorter journeys-to-work, consequential marginally lower air pollution, more effective delivery of services and other economies of agglomeration.

The main objective for subregional centres, as for the two regional centres, is to encourage office, retail and other jobs to relocate or remain in them. Not all such centres can accommodate retail expansion, so that suitably zoned land is to be made available in or adjacent to them. Moreover, general employment zones – within which there is little or no statutory difference between offices, shops, warehouses or even factories – are to be established adjacent to the new subregional centres serving new growth sectors. Centres policy is thus a strong element of the structure plan and the metropolitan strategy as a whole. While regulatory instruments are important to its implementation, urban management, promotion and investment instruments are primary.

Policies and instruments to promote these centres vary from centre to centre, but include priority for transport and other infrastructure, the NSW and Commonwealth office relocation programs, the provision of suitably zoned land in or adjacent to the centres, generous development standards in local and state planning instruments, incentives for higher-density housing nearby, constraints on free-standing offices and shopping centres, priority for human service and recreation provision, special centre development plans and the expansion of cultural development opportunities. Centres should be chosen to be compatible with the objectives above, and to ensure that all parts of the region have reasonable access to a subregional centre.

At the same time, the strategy recognises the need to make non-centre zoning more flexible, and to encourage the development of business parks, technology zones and other such areas in appropriate locations.

Industrial Areas

The structure of employment will change greatly over the period of the strategy's implementation, with major changes to the distribution of employment. Heavy industry will decline – though there is a need to retain opportunities for noxious and hazardous industries – and general manufacturing areas will decline or convert to new uses. The boundaries between factories and other buildings will become more blurred and, provided performance criteria are met, less necessary to differentiate. Technology will introduce new locational requirements for manufacturing employment.

A conventional objective for industrial areas is to provide industry with adequate services, land and infrastructure in appropriate locations. This should be supported by policy objectives and instruments that could include the following:

- Newly developing areas, where employment growth may lag behind workforce growth, will have adequate industrial land with broad zoning and development standards.
- Advanced technology industries will be promoted in each urban sector, including planning for specialised development areas. A special action plan will be developed for the central industrial area, and Kingsford-Smith Airport.
- Employment zones are to be created in association with tertiary education institutions where practicable, including on land near Nepean CAE, Chifley University and the Macarthur Institute of Higher Education.
- While industrial land will still be primarily for manufacturing and warehousing, ancillary offices and bulky goods retailing will be allowed.

- Detailed planning studies are to be carried out for hazardous and noxious industries and those requiring large sites.
- A limited number of large business parks will be permitted where there is no rail transport and a major bus route opportunity, no major centres and a likelihood of employment being drawn locally. Possible areas include Baulkham Hills, Menai and Warringah.

Special Use Areas

The approach taken to the distribution of special uses in the metropolitan strategy is not fundamentally different from other metropolitan strategies, but there is a focus on emerging uses and new technologies as well as traditional special uses such as hospitals, universities and military establishments. Major location decisions can be directly influenced, if not always determined by the strategy plan. For example, Sydney's second airport at Badgery's Creek and the new Chifley University at Werrington took account of the draft metropolitan strategy. New priorities for tourist and recreation-based economic development also require appropriate areas to be set aside, especially in the more attractive outer areas with untapped tourist potential and employment needs. Examples include Penrith Lakes and Mulgoa, enabled by REPs that open up development opportunities and conserve heritage landscapes, respectively.

Local Employment Areas

More than half Sydney's jobs are located outside special use areas, industrial areas and major commercial areas, in schools, local centres and small industrial sites. Preference for a concentrated pattern of employment distribution leads to the discouragement of job dispersal where there are economies of agglomeration in subregional centres and practical property opportunities there. The share of employment in local employment areas could drop from 55 per cent to below 50 per cent. However, the necessity to encourage jobs to follow the workforce, growing car ownership and the technological possibility of greater home-based employment all lead to recognition that the proportion of locally-dispersed jobs will remain high. The task then becomes one of encouraging such employment in likely future areas of high unemployment, particularly the outer west and south-west, for which a special strategy has been formulated. Instruments for encouraging this shift include reform of home industry codes, monitoring of small-scale industrial building space, the promotion of

subregional plans, business development funding, small business extension services and a range of community employment initiatives. Retailing, a range of community facilities and employment in new urban areas should be integrated as far as possible.

5. Transport

The strategy should seek to maximise accessibility to employment, recreation, shopping and services by all modes. Long-term strategies for arterial roads, the rail system and the second Sydney airport were developed simultaneously with the metropolitan strategy, sharing a detailed data base, models and policy assumptions. This gives a central role to transport elements and results in a strategy that is integrated with transport strategies, as well as practically tested against them.

The transport objectives of the strategy are to:

- provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods;
- improve access to employment, commerce, health, education, recreation and culture; and
- improve the cost-effectiveness of the region's transport system.

The strategy plan identifies a network of arterial roads, extensions and improvements to the rail system, and changes to bus and ferry services. Transport policies include the following:

- Co-ordination of land use planning and public transport planning in each growth area, including the early provision of basic transport services to new growth areas. This is to be achieved through a combination of statutory arrangements (e.g. local plans and provisions for consultation, concurrence or approval of transport developments), management arrangements (e.g. formal inter-agency procedures as through the Ministerial Transport Advisory Committee) and direct investment (e.g. advance land acquisition by

DEP and acquisition and construction by the Department of Main Roads).

- Reservation of public transport corridors to major centres. Here the statutory protection in local planning instruments and the advance acquisition of land are the main instruments, the latter funded jointly by State and Local Government through such programs as the Sydney Development Fund. Future transport modes along the corridors are not yet determined.
- A comprehensive regional road network to be constructed in phase with the Urban Development Program. This network, jointly formulated by DEP and DMR but discussed widely with human services and other agencies, is the first systematic reclassification of roads since the 1950's. The DMR's horizon of commitment is year 2000, and this network is part of its statewide Roads 2000 Strategy. Though facilitated by REPs the program is implemented directly through the DMR's construction program and various state and federal funding programs. Local government is mainly concerned with subarterial roads, which are too fine-grained to be identified in the metropolitan strategy and still, in some areas, the subject of unresolved division of financial responsibilities between State and Local Government.
- Traffic management measures focussed on established centres, freight terminals and particular problem areas. A centres-based traffic management program is part of the implementation of this policy. It consists of financial assistance for studies and follow-up traffic management measures. Traffic capacity is one criterion selecting subregional centres.
- Expansion of the regional rail network: completion of the East Hills-Glenfield line, duplication of Blacktown-Riverstone, construction of Merrylands-Harris Park and consideration of the Sydney-Melbourne very fast train. With the exception of the latter, these improvements are already committed. While the very

fast train proposal is generally compatible with the metropolitan strategy proposed, there are major environmental issues associated with particular parts of it.

- Adjustment of bus, ferry and rail services to meet changing population and employment distributions, including a new cross-regional inter-centre bus service and integrated public-private transport fare structures. Even the structure of rail timetables can be important to the viability of some centres, given the heavy use of many routes and the gains in accessibility with express services.
- Efficient and attractive transport interchanges at regional and subregional centres. Some of these are to be associated with public-private property developments, surplus government property disposal and the sale of air space development rights.

6. Social Development

A feature of Sydney's metropolitan strategy, by comparison with earlier metropolitan plans, is its attention to social development issues and human service provision. Because social needs are not always apparent in advance.—lead times for services are not so long as for some physical infrastructure, and capital spending is not seen as so expensive.—human services have not always been provided in pace with overall urban development. Moreover, as communities develop and different groups articulate their needs, the processes and patterns of urban development have not always changed accordingly.

The objectives for social development include:

- provision of services and facilities in phase with population growth in new areas;
- adaptation of services and facilities to changing population;
- joint use of facilities;

- redressing of current backlogs in services and facilities in outer areas;
- acknowledgement and enhancement of the multi-cultural nature of Sydney's population and ensuring services and facilities are accessible to different ethnic communities;
- encouragement of public participation in their provision;
- improved higher education to outer area residents;
- adequate capital and recurrent funding.

Essentially, these objectives are designed to redress inequities in Sydney's urban structure and process of development. Among the policies for meeting the objectives are arrangements for consultation with user groups and disadvantaged groups (e.g. Aborigines, unemployed) in service and facility planning (essentially through release area management committees formed to prepare local land use and service plans once release decisions are taken); incremental and contiguous urban development in new areas; control of the rate of development in each sector (principally through the Urban Development Program though subject to the housing market) so that community services and government financing can keep up; adequate reservation of land in major centres (including DEP acquisition of land and management of centre development); the staging of new estates for a minimum baseline of specific services to be provided (much work has been done on this, prompted by development contribution opportunities); the establishment of local release area management committees and their service co-ordination arrangements; and improved planning, programming and monitoring of local, district and regional services and facilities by providers, including private enterprise and the voluntary sector.

7. Environment

This element of the strategy is of vital importance, partly because social equity and economic efficiency goals do not, on first inspection, accord with environmental protection goals. Air and water quality prospects would be better with a coastal development option, but, as Figure 1 shows, within foreseeable

financial, technological and political constraints there is no such option. For example, it must be assumed that national parks will never be developed. Moreover, equity is served by ensuring that those settling in new areas are able to enjoy high environmental standards. Overall, air and water quality in Sydney region could suffer from greater air, water and noise pollution as it grows.

The configuration of the Sydney air basin – surrounded by steep terrain and dissected by river basins – when combined with the climate and prevailing air flows, can allow unacceptable levels of pollutants to accumulate and recirculate during stable weather conditions. Sydney is perhaps more vulnerable than any other Australian capital city; certainly its expansion is physically constrained. Photochemical smog episodes during summer, brown haze during winter and carbon monoxide levels in congested areas could all worsen without strong control programs.

Water quality faces similar trends, with recent improvements coming under longer-term risks of deterioration without adequate policies. With urban growth of the scale forecast, current strategies will need full implementation to keep water quality from deteriorating. Dry weather water quality is likely to improve in most instances, with some risks to the Hawkesbury-Nepean River which will drain most new urban areas of Sydney and which will come under stress without implementation of the policies below. Wet weather water quality could deteriorate without stringent run-off and erosion control programs. Land-based irrigation of effluent may prove to be a viable alternative to the installation of some nutrient removal facilities but it will require suitable vacant land areas to be set aside. The soils in the upper reaches of Sydney's major inland waters are particularly erosion-prone. A more compact form of expansion would avoid or substantially defer these risks.

The major source of noise problems in Sydney, as elsewhere, is road traffic. Other noise sources, in order of perceived importance, are domestic appliances, aircraft, public transport, air conditioners, rail traffic, maintenance activities and industry. The impact of road traffic noise could become more widespread, even with new noise reduction technology and various policy measures for noise control. This is one criterion on which a dispersed pattern of development would be better. Aircraft noise is expected to continue to grow near Kingsford-Smith Airport until it reaches full operational capacity some time during the

metropolitan strategy's planning period. Noise problems from rail are not expected to grow as the system is unlikely to expand significantly. Manufacturing districts will become quieter as fabrication technology changes and as service activities penetrate industrial zones. Recreation activities – sportsfields, stadia, raceways, powerboats and their like – could become a growing noise problem, with increases in leisure activity, unless adequate controls are observed.

Environmental objectives in the Metropolitan Strategy are to:

- improve the environmental quality of the region's water and air;
- lower the incidence of noise generated by traffic, aircraft and industry;
- conserve representative evidence and examples of the overall historical development pattern;
- employ cost-effective energy distribution systems both in land use and transport.

Policies to meet these objectives include the following:

- Major sewage treatment facilities will be built and upgraded. Further growth in sewerage discharge will be accommodated by sewerage outfalls and tighter controls along the two major rivers currently use for sewage disposal – Georges and Hawkesbury-Nepean Rivers. Treatment works (including tertiary treatment), diversions, augmentation of existing works and submarine outfalls should all be planned to cope with expected increases in point source sewerage loads.
- Urban runoff will be controlled through an integrated stormwater management scheme which will include detention basins, innovative shared drainage/recreation areas, and more flexible statutory development controls in flood-prone areas outside floodways.

- Waste disposal facilities will be provided, along with encouragement of waste reduction and recycling.
- A long-term strategy for the treatment of intractable wastes will be formulated, including, if necessary, facilities outside the region.
- Alternatives to private cars will be encouraged by the provision of walkways and cycleways, and by limiting car parking in centres. Hydrocarbon emissions and ozone levels will improve with new emission standards but could be overtaken by growth in vehicle trips. Acid gases, dust, and suspended matter could remain around present levels though controls on backyard burning will reduce the latter. Lead levels will gradually improve with the introduction of unleaded petrol.
- The early development of a second airport is supported as this will reduce the incidence of aircraft noise at Kingsford-Smith Airport and meet other objectives. Though this is a Commonwealth responsibility, State planning instruments are being put into place to protect airport development options.
- The natural and cultural environment of the region is to be further safeguarded and enhanced. The various provisions of the Heritage Act such as conservation orders are important instruments, but direct funding to acquire, restore or document items is also important, as well as protective measures in local and state planning instruments.
- Important and representative samples of Aboriginal sites and artifacts are also to be protected through appropriate land use planning, heritage and land rights measures.
- The quality of urban design in new and established areas is to be improved. This is a task to be accomplished as much by persuasion and example as by regulatory compulsion in statutory instruments. Published guidelines are one link between the two types.

- The impact of traffic noise should be minimised where new roads or new residential areas are developed and will be reduced where traffic noise already exceeds standards. The former is possible through buffer zones, bunds and other physical means; the latter is a more gradual task associated with redevelopment, double-glazing and rehabilitation measures.

8. *Recreation*

Recreation has been an element of previous metropolitan plans, such that 13 per cent of land in metropolitan Sydney is zoned for open space, for example. But with economic restructuring, the growth of tourism and the need to plan future leisure facilities in a more equitable way than in the past, this element becomes more important.

Objectives for recreation aim to:

- provide sufficient, well-located regional open space throughout the region;
- improve access to the region's recreation resources and facilities;
- improve public access to the region's waterways and foreshores;
- provide recreational facilities and services to meet the diverse and changing needs of the population, including the needs of specific population groups, such as the elderly, ethnic communities and the disabled.

Recreational policies generally reinforce other objectives as well, such as those of centres policy and social development. They include the following:

- Additional regional open space areas is to be focused on the Hawkesbury/Nepean River system, the Central Coast waterways and other areas subject to urban development pressures. The inner city Greenspace Program should be continued. A long-term regional open space plan should be prepared and implemented by

land purchases and open space development of areas highly accessible to the public.

- Land needed to establish linkages between existing open space areas is to be identified and, where possible, acquired.
- The Sydney CBD is to remain the principal location for entertainment, culture, exhibitions and some international sporting events. The Parramatta centre will provide the other focus for the development of metropolitan culture, tourism, and entertainment facilities. International facilities for indoor sports, hockey, athletics and swimming are to be developed in accessible locations as near to the Parramatta Centre as practical, for example at Homebush Bay.
- Local level recreation facilities are to be developed concurrent with population growth in urban release areas.
- Sports that have adverse impacts on residential environments, including motor sports and rifle ranges, will have suitable land identified for their relocation.
- Regional environmental plans will be prepared to provide a framework for the planning and management of the Sydney region's waterways.
- A framework for the planning and management of the Sydney region's beaches will be developed.
- Land that will increase public access to the Sydney region's waterways is to be identified and, where possible, acquired. Where private or public development occurs on foreshore land, public access will be safeguarded and facilitated.
- Land of high scenic value will be acquired in the Blue Mountains.

9. *Public Finance*

Financial objectives and policies are a central part of the strategy. The pattern of urban public finance needs full review (e.g. *see* Wilmoth 1986). Objectives for this part of the strategy are simple to state but difficult to meet:

- To provide adequate finances for Sydney's future development;
- To make the development of urban infrastructure and the provision of services as cost-effective as possible.

Policies include:

- Major government land acquisition programs before new growth sectors are rezoned for urban use, particularly for major centre sites;
- Recognition of the financial implications of local population growth when recurrent funding for community services is determined.
- Improvement to the standard of cost-effectiveness evaluation for major urban investment decisions, particularly so that all costs for major land releases are taken into account.
- Closer monitoring of the capital costs of urban development, taking into account the different revenue-raising capacities of authorities, the intergovernmental structure of finance, and the particular problems faced by non-recoupable services.
- Review of the overall pattern of responsibility for financing different aspects of urban development with the intention of changing present policies, especially for joint public-private arrangements.

Implementation

1. Means and Ends

The approach taken to formulating the metropolitan strategy for Sydney – matching objectives to management instruments – means that there is no sharp distinction between the stage of preparing the strategy plan and policies, and the stage of implementing it. The strategy includes many current objectives or policies, brought into a corporate government approach to metropolitan development for the first time but remaining essentially unchanged. Some objectives and policies have been adopted during the course of formulating the strategy. Importantly, other objectives will be new, and will have the effect of changing government policy: roads and subregional centres are two such areas. Other government objectives and policies that do not support the strategy have been or will be discontinued. Undoubtedly, supporting objectives and policies will be changed in the future, and reviews of the strategy plan itself are envisaged at about five-yearly intervals.

Given the mutual matching of ends and means in the design of Sydney's metropolitan strategy, it is useful to classify the instruments of implementation even though many of them are used as examples above.

2. Statutory Instruments

The distinction between statutory and non-statutory means of implementation is often exaggerated. Co-ordination mechanisms like the Urban Development Program include major statutory elements like LEPs, which in turn are means of committing local services and capital financing. It is a matter of some discretion as to whether a policy is expressed in statutory form. The metropolitan strategy plan itself will not be expressed that way but many of its parts will be.

Regional environmental plans are being prepared for major new urban sectors such as Rouse Hill, Macarthur South and Warnervale. Still in outline plan form, these REPs will define release areas in sufficient detail for the Urban Development Program to evaluate their release and timing. (Later, after inclusion in the Program, various LEPs will be prepared). The Program's ten-year outlook influences the timing of the REPs. REPs are also being prepared

for important parts of Sydney's established areas, such as Botany Bay, Sydney Harbour and the eastern beaches.

Other REPs address particular issues across the region to implement the strategy. Examples include extractive industries, dual occupancy housing and arterial roads. In some cases, urban issues apply statewide, so that State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) are the appropriate instruments. For example, SEPP 5 on aged housing is an effective instrument for promoting urban consolidation.

Local environmental plans can also take many forms, from outline plans for large municipalities to spot rezonings to permit particular developments. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act requires them to be consistent with REPs and SEPPs, and therefore in turn with the metropolitan strategy. A set of section 117 directions adds state policies with which LEP preparation must be consistent. Local governments in the Sydney region have been at the forefront of arguing for an overall metropolitan strategy, and the local planning process will be an essential part of implementing the strategy. This process is closely tied to local service provision and financing through local corporate plans and other mechanisms.

Many other statutory instruments are available under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (e.g. conditions of development approval, environmental impact assessments, developer contributions), the Heritage Act, the Local Government Act, the various pollution control Acts, and other legislation. Council ordinances, development codes and standards and development control plans all play their part.

3. Public Programs and Projects

Because the metropolitan strategy is being prepared with many government agencies and, through government endorsement, they will be bound to follow it, a wide range of public sector programs becomes a means of implementing it. Many of these are mentioned as examples above, and a look through NSW's program budget documents (Treasury 1987b) shows how many programs influence the development of Sydney. The capital works program is central – including the land acquisition programs like the Sydney Development Fund – but recurrent programs as well, often neglected because of their shorter financing

horizon, are important to the strategy's implementation, especially in the area of human services.

In lean economic times, when special urban improvement programs are difficult to fund, government administration itself has become an instrument of metropolitan policy, particularly through the office relocation program and the disposal of surplus government properties. The relative strengths of government programs will change in the future, with different degrees of privatisation for example. If that happens in a major way, the metropolitan strategy should be reviewed and changed too. For example, if major retreats from public transport and urban consolidation were to occur, a dispersed strategy plan might reflect reality more than the concentrated strategy plan. However, the forthcoming metropolitan strategy makes a strong case for the latter.

Commonwealth and Local Government programs are somewhat less under the control of the metropolitan strategy, but can also support, and in turn be guided by the strategy. For example, programs of both levels of government support the centres policy, even if, in the case of Local Government, councils with designated subregional centres have more obvious reasons for doing so than other councils.

4. Co-ordination

Sydney's metropolitan strategy grew out of a need to co-ordinate urban development beyond the five-year horizon, and, without making a 'cult of co-ordination' (Paterson 1986), this element of urban management is essential to successful implementation of the strategy. Within the State, the Urban Development Program ties agencies into a common development program for new areas, and it is essential that this programming continue and widen, adapting to changes in established areas, if the strategy's cost-effectiveness and other objectives are to be met. There are many other mechanisms used for

co-ordinating urban development, including ad hoc means which need not be reviewed here.

The intergovernmental dimension of co-ordination is particularly difficult. In the case of the Commonwealth, there is no agency responsible for urban policy able to represent consolidated Commonwealth views. This does not prevent those agencies with sophisticated planning – e.g. Telecom and Defence – from tying in with State strategies. In Local Government's case, co-ordination tends to be more a problem of numbers, with 44 localities in the Sydney region alone. The formation and recent reformation of regional organisations of councils, and the fact that only twelve councils are involved in major urban expansion, reduce that complexity. With the private sector, co-ordination is most effective with peak organisations on policy and with individual firms on particular projects.

4. Development Projects

The metropolitan strategy has been prepared mostly by the public sector and its implementation measures concentrate on that sector, but it cannot succeed without the co-operation of the private sector, particularly the property and finance industries. The place and type of urban development is largely determined by private investment decisions, with public infrastructure and services tailored to them.

Many development projects are straightforward, filling in the pieces of the metropolitan strategy, which, if not a speculator's guide (Daly 1984), will even by its publication shape market trends. Other projects, however, are so large as to be key components of the strategy or its undoing. The second Sydney airport, the very fast train proposal, the Sydney harbour tunnel, the speculative Japanese 'multifunction polis', the Penrith Lakes Scheme, the Darling Harbour development and Chifley University are only a few such developments. Notably, most large projects are, broadly speaking, joint public-private ventures. Even if privately financed in full, government may retain a land-owning interest or contribute special legislative or regulatory conditions to enable the developments to occur.

5. Finance

The same pattern is likely to mark the financing of urban development in the future. The strategy does not pretend to present a total 'price tag' for implementation, because that can give a false impression of costs that would be incurred anyway, without the strategy, and because implementation is ongoing, not a set of programs that come into being as a result of the strategy. Rather, it is necessary to demonstrate that a co-ordinated strategy will permit very substantial savings to be made, standards to be realised, or goals to be met.

The strategy's objectives include providing adequate finances for Sydney's future development, and making the development of urban infrastructure and the provision of services as cost-effective as possible. Local Government finance in new release areas is a particular problem, especially in areas of unclear financial responsibility (*see* N.S.W. Local Government Finance Working Party 1984). Reliance on developer contributions (e.g. section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act) and the movement towards 'user pays' both could contradict equity objectives if not handled well. Financing future capital works programs – of which part is identified by the Urban Development Financial Program – will demand new financial instruments, new public/private mixes and the continued involvement of government in land development, including for major new centres. The national debt burden and the expensive thresholds that Sydney's expansion faces will not make this task any easier.

Private finance will also be essential to realising the strategy, including the financing of sectors and areas to which the recently-deregulated financial markets have been averse: rental housing, cheap multi-unit housing, office development at centres with low status and high unemployment, and not least, new manufacturing plant. Seeing the successful implementation of a new metropolitan plan for Sydney in a deregulated and internationalised financial environment may well be the central challenge of the strategy. The careful matching of ends and means should give the strategy a good start.

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SYDNEY'S METROPOLITAN STRATEGY: A Comment¹

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In reviewing this paper it seems relevant to pose two specific questions. First, what is the purpose of the strategy? Second, how and on what basis is this strategy different from the last one?

The paper identifies six purposes:

- 1) the need to consider urban development commitments beyond the current Sydney Region Outline Plan (SROP);
- 2) changed economic and social conditions;
- 3) local government pressure for regional guidelines;
- 4) industry concern at possible shortages of land for urban development;
- 5) environmental issues needing long-term resolution; and
- 6) the need for major public investment decisions to be guided by long-term strategy.

We will have to wait and see to what extent the new strategy responds to those purposes. This will depend not just on the strategy itself, but also on how both the public and private sectors respond to it. I will make brief comments about each of those points.

¹ These comments relate only to David Wilmoth's paper given at the Urban Research Unit sponsored Metropolitan Planning Conference on the 2nd of February, 1988. The DEP publication was released the following day. I have since looked over the publication, but it has not caused me to alter any of my views or comments.

The Strategy's Purpose

Commitments beyond SROP

It is interesting that while the paper suggests that the new 1988 strategy plan will accommodate a population up to 4.5 million in the Sydney region (no fixed time horizon but maybe by the year 2013), the earlier 1968 SROP targeted for 4.5 million by the year 2000. This was on the basis of decanting an additional 1/2 million to "new centres in other areas of the State" (NSWSPA 1968: p.19). The new 1988 strategy therefore seems to make provision for a slower rate of metropolitan growth. This in itself is not surprising except that most recent moves seem to suggest that national immigration policy could shortly put us back into a high national growth rate scenario, which as we learned from past experience will have a heavy impact on the major State capital cities. What is of interest, of course, is that the new strategy needs to draw on urban areas not identified in SROP. One might infer that:

- i) the SROP population densities are not being achieved and/or
- ii) some SROP land have not been able to be brought onto the market.

Certainly, the SROP assumed that the Inner Suburbs would hold their own in population terms – the loss of inner city population had not really made itself apparent in 1968 as the on-going problem that it is recognized as today. The question of on-going population decline, decreasing household size, et cetera, are issues which, no doubt, have led to increasing land takes.

Changed Economic and Social Conditions

Presumably, details of these will be given in the 'issue' papers which support the new strategy. Economic and social conditions will always be changing; at what stage do changes, either collectively or singly, warrant a change in basic strategy? Are the changes temporary, cyclical or permanent. Why was the earlier strategy not robust enough to cope with some social and economic change? To what extent is the new strategy 'robust' enough to cope with change?

Local Government's Needs

Some might suggest that despite all the bell ringing that surrounded the introduction of the new planning legislation in NSW in 1979, we still do not have the perfect planning system. The legislation enshrines the primacy of the State's interests over that of local government (nothing new there) with adequate scope for conflict – and its resolution. The output, since its introduction, has now reached something like 4-5,000 Local Environmental Plans (LEP), 22 Regional Environmental Plans (REP) and 20 State Environmental Plans (SEP). The 1985 amendments to the Act give the Minister the right to amend any LEP in relation to any matter of state or regional significance (s.117). Planning powers were taken away from Willoughby Council (SEP No. 5) to enable the State to achieve its state planning objectives for the Chatswood subregional centre. When conflict arose with the Sydney City Council (SCC) over the planning and development of Darling Harbour, a separate management authority was established. We, of course, await with interest the definitive account of the recent sacking of the SCC so that the wonders of Japanese financed wizardry such as Monorails, under-harbour tunnels and major city-block redevelopment schemes can be decided upon quickly and jobs created. Yet I have no doubt that local government really does require adequate and new metropolitan (regional) planning guidelines. Do not misinterpret my thrust here. I am not against the State's interest prevailing over that of local government. What I am suggesting is that the State needs to develop some diplomacy and subtlety in handling local government interests rather than the bulldozer approach which it currently uses.

Industry Concerns

If, as the paper suggests, the Urban Development Committee and the Urban Development Program are working well, why is it that industry has concerns about the availability of land for urban development? Perhaps that need a little more explanation!

Long-Term Resolution of Environmental Issues

The issues identified require no further comment. However, I find it interesting in this day and age that 'energy' utilization still does not rate a specific mention.

Major Public Investment Decisions

These decisions need to be guided by long-term strategy plans and this approach can yield increasing economies. The real point at issue here, however, is whether the Department of Environment and Planning can give any guarantees about implementation of the strategy?

The Current and Previous Strategies: A Comparision

My second question is: How and why is this strategy different from the last? The paper tells us that the new strategy "represents the views of the government", that is, the Urban Development committee, made up of 22 government departments and 12 local governments, has vetted it. Who knows, maybe even the appropriate State Cabinet sub-committee has endorsed it. What are we to infer from this comment? Does it mean the strategy will not change? I do not think so! Does it mean that it has more chance of being successfully implemented? I doubt it!

It is suggested that it is not going to be a statutory plan, in which case it is like its predecessor 'SROP' with implementation dependent on the SEP, REP and LEP process, the Urban Development Committee, release programs and a wider variety of implementation techniques. It is more sophisticated, in fact. Fine, I am all for sophistication. Let me make the comment, however, that it has been my experience in government that the availability or absence of legislative mechanisms has been neither here nor there when it comes to getting something done. What is of paramount importance has been 'political will' and, as we all know, dear old 'political will' has been little exercised on urban affairs since the economic down-turn.

There is no 'population target' and that is fine, but major front-end-loaded public investments will still need early decisions to be made. What we are being told here is that constant 'fine tuning' is the order of the day. Good, it is not seen as an end-state plan. (Incidentally, there is no hint of what happens after 4.5 million is reached.)

It may still be a 'corridor plan', but some of the corridors may have branches. It is difficult to discern in the information provided the clean lines of the earlier corridor structure plan of SROP. Are there organising principles to this strategy

plan or does it represent a land grab and infill program? It is difficult to decide, but it appears to be the latter.

I suspect that this additional land take is required because the earlier proposed densities have not been achieved and, as is suggested, the target densities now have to be stepped up from 8 to 10 lots per hectare. What is proposed is a 'concentrated' development plan option and it seems to be based on the assumption that the urban consolidation policy will work or be effective. The DEP's own report on urban consolidation (NSWDEP 1986) showed that targets were not being met in unit commencements and that of paramount concern were larger 'economic and financial' considerations such as the Federal Government's crackdown on tax laws, negative gearing and capital gains. There has been some recent easing on the negative gearing front. Despite this, my personal prognosis is that current measures in place will not hold the inner metro-suburban populations steady. The rate of decline has eased during the 1981-86 Census period, but there is no way the decline will be held to the targets for local government areas set out in the 1987 LGA population projections (*see* NSWDEP 1987).

Finally, let me draw your attention to the workforce population targets set out for the regional and subregional centres shown in the paper. A substantial change in workforce distribution is being proposed. Even allowing for the added 30,000 to be added to the CBD, its percentage share of regional and subregional centre employment at the 4.5 million population level will drop from its current level of 50 per cent to 39 per cent. The regional and subregional centres at present capture only 25 per cent of the region's employment (the remaining 75 per cent is distributed elsewhere in the suburbs). The proposal to increase this to 30 per cent at the 4.5 million population level, means that 50 per cent of all new jobs will go to these centres. This is a reasonably substantive proposed change. No doubt this redistribution of employment is aimed at reducing overall journey-to-work travel times. The question is, does the Department of Environment and Planning really have the means of redirecting jobs on this scale and keeping the lid tight on CBD employment growth? With seemingly more control at its disposal, this is not an area in which the National Capital Development Commission has been spectacularly successful in Canberra's recent development. Can the statutory planning process really be more effective than the leasehold process of controlling land use?

To sum up, this paper, like the Governor-General's Australia Day message to us espouses 'hope' rather than 'cynicism'. To some extent I agree with and support the hopeful tidings, but it would be well for us to retain a healthy dose of cynicism in our ability as planners to control the urban development process. As Peter Harrison pointed out to me years ago, "the only thing you can be sure of when you've finished the plan is that the real world will not end up looking anything like it".

In fact, much of Sydney's development on the ground does look remarkably like the old State Planning Authority's Sydney Region Outline Plan, even if employment location and some other major objectives have not quite been achieved. Perhaps the real question that this new strategy plan fails to address is the 64,000 dollar one: Is a city of 4.5 million going to be the continuing choice of the majority of New South Welshmen and women or, as seem to be the case, will they depart the metropolis in increasing numbers seeking alternate life styles? (Conner 1986).

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