



Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Planning
Minister for Infrastructure
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Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
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MEDIA RELEASE

12 February 2011

Plan to boost employment lands and create more jobs closer to home

Sydney's western suburbs have experienced a boom in employment lands growth, particularly to accommodate warehouse and distribution centres on large sites, a new report has found.

Planning Minister Tony Kelly said the finding was contained in a new *Employment Lands Development Program (ELDP) 2010 Overview Report*, which is the first comprehensive government analysis of employment lands across Sydney for more than a decade.

The release of the report coincides with the announcement today of a new Employment Lands Task Force, which is one of the key actions in the *Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036*.

The task force will comprise representatives from government, industry and other experts, and will provide advice to the NSW Government to assist in implementing the ELDP, ensure adequate land is zoned and serviced for employment, and co-ordinate delivery and servicing of employment lands.

The findings of the *ELDP Overview Report* will be used by the NSW Government to implement the Metropolitan Plan, which was released in December 2010 and includes a key target for 50 per cent of Sydney's new jobs to be in western Sydney.

"It's vitally important that the NSW Government is aware of the state of the employment lands market to help encourage planning policies and infrastructure investment, which support jobs closer to where people live," Mr Kelly said.

"Overall, Western Sydney was responsible for 79 per cent of the employment lands developed in 2009 for business and industry.

"However, the report shows that while large sites are increasingly being taken up in Western Sydney employment lands, the average density of employment on these lands is as much as five times lower than the inner Sydney area.

"A key challenge for government will be to encourage more intensive land-uses – such as high technology and research facilities – in these areas.

"Employment lands support a diverse range of jobs and industries such as manufacturing, warehousing, research, service and repair trades, or integrated enterprises with a mix of the above activities plus administration," he said.

Mr Kelly said the report found that:

- 205 hectares of employment land was developed for industry in the year to January 2010, primarily in the North West subregion;
- This was down from 264 hectares the previous year, reflecting the impact of the global financial crisis;
- 200 to 250 hectares of vacant employment land was developed each year from 2004 to 2008, typically to create extensive new warehouse and distribution centres;
- The recent take-up rate is much higher than the annual average take-up rate of 140 hectares from 1987 to 1997;
- There is 15,370 hectares of existing zoned employment lands across Sydney and the Central Coast, with 71 per cent already developed;



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- Of the 4,480 hectares of undeveloped land, 900 hectares is already serviced and ready for development;
- Sydney has a further 3,540 hectares of land that has been identified, but not yet zoned, for use as employment land.

“900 hectares of serviced land would give Sydney around three years supply if the take-up rate climbed to 300 hectares per year,” Mr Kelly said.

“However, the NSW Government is aiming for a 5-7 year supply of serviced ready-to-develop employment land, which highlights the critical need for the ELDP and task force to identify ways to increase the available employment lands.”

The ELDP was a key action from the *Employment Lands for Sydney Action Plan* and that plan also resulted in the NSW Government’s push to release 1,060 hectares of new employment land from 2008 to 2010, particularly in Western Sydney.

“New employment lands have been zoned in the Western Sydney Employment Area, at Hoxton Park and Turner Road, Currans Hill in south-west Sydney, Riverstone West and Marsden Park in the North West Growth Centre, and the Wyong Employment Zone,” Mr Kelly said.

In addition, the Metropolitan Plan has an action to prepare a structure plan for the broader Western Sydney Employment Area.

Mr Kelly said the ELDP report had highlighted some key differences in employment lands in different parts of Sydney, including:

- More than two-thirds of all employment lands (68 per cent) are located in Sydney’s western subregions, with a further 13 per cent on the Central Coast;
- While the inner-Sydney areas generally have fewer employment lands, they have high employment densities of up to 146 jobs per hectare, with a strong focus on high-tech industry, research and development, and sales and administration;
- This compares to employment land densities of 28 jobs per hectare in Sydney’s South West and 23 jobs per hectare on the Central Coast, where there are larger manufacturing and warehousing facilities;
- The Inner North and Sydney City areas were the only two Sydney subregions that experienced a net reduction in jobs growth in employment lands between 2001 and 2006, potentially due to redevelopment and changing industries.

“All these sites have an important role to play in creating jobs closer to where people live, and that is why the *Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036* includes a strong focus on employment lands,” Mr Kelly said.

Employment Lands Task Force

Purpose

- To advise on strategies, policies and implementation actions to secure orderly development of employment lands in NSW.

Specific tasks

Provide advice to the Government to assist in the operation of the Employment Lands Development Program, including on:

- Ensuring an ongoing, up to date Employment Land Development Program (ELDP) statewide, and its implementation;
- Ensuring adequate land is zoned and serviced for employment;



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- Developing policies and strategies that ensure ongoing improvements to the coordination, delivery, servicing and accessibility of employment lands; and
- Any associated actions to ensure the facilitation of employment and economic development.

The Task Force's work will be guided by the relevant strategies for Metropolitan Sydney and for the Regions. The Taskforce will also ensure appropriate liaison and consultation with stakeholders, including input from an Employment Lands Task Force Working Group.

The Task Force will be serviced by the Department of Planning and will publish a report on its activities on an annual basis.

Employment Lands Task Force Membership

Government:

- Director General - Department of Planning (Chair) – Sam Haddad
- Director General - Industry and Investment NSW – Richard Sheldrake
- Director General – Transport NSW – Les Wielinga

Industry:

- Executive Director - Property Council of Australia (NSW) – Glenn Byers
- Chief Executive - Urban Development Institute of Australia (NSW) – Stephen Albin
- Executive Director - Sydney Business Chamber – Patricia Forsythe

Experts:

- Local Government – Alan Stoneham, GM Penrith City Council.
 - Economist – Grahame Larcombe, Director, Strategic Economics
 - Independent planner – John Wynne, Managing Director, URBIS
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