



Planning

NEW CRITERIA FOR LAND RELEASE IN THE SYDNEY REGION



Purpose

One of the actions in the *Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036* is to prepare new criteria to assess residential land release outside the Growth Centres. This brochure provides information about land release and seeks suggestions for new criteria.

Residential land release

Residential land release is a strategic decision of State Government to convert greenfield land for new residential communities. The location of new residential communities, sequencing of housing supply, infrastructure coordination and implications for future government expenditure are critical and need to be addressed at an early stage.

Land release is the first step in the land supply process and is integral to implementing the Metropolitan Plan and related strategies.

Once land is released in the Sydney Region it is placed onto the Metropolitan Development Program (MDP) for ongoing monitoring and to assist State Government service agencies with their infrastructure planning. A decision to release land triggers plans to rezone the land for urban purposes and to provide the necessary infrastructure and services.

The Sustainability Criteria

The new criteria will replace the Sustainability Criteria introduced in the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy. They were intended to provide a clear and measurable set of criteria for evaluating land release outside the Growth Centres focusing on exceptional environmental performance and not requiring major infrastructure.

Similar Sustainability Criteria are contained in the Central Coast Regional Strategy, 2008, and apply to proposed land release in Gosford and Woyong.

The Sustainability Criteria were based on similar criteria used to assess the Growth Centres in their investigation and initial planning phase. They replaced the MDP Assessment Criteria which had operated since 1997.

What's changed in the last five years

There are now record levels of land released and all land supply benchmarks have been met primarily due to the rapid release and rezoning of precincts in the Growth Centres. The supply varies between subregions with the North West and South West subregions having more years of supply than the Central Coast region.

Legislative changes since 2005 led to the development of multiple paths to land release, and as a result the Sustainability Criteria were not used in all cases.

In 2010 the Department of Planning commissioned the Centre for International Economics to report into alternative growth paths for Sydney. The report found growth paths accommodating more than 70 per cent of the new dwellings in existing urban areas had the greatest net benefits to society. As a result the Metropolitan Plan focuses on urban renewal and there is less reliance on greenfield areas to meet housing requirements.

Operation of the Sustainability Criteria

A review of the application of the Sustainability Criteria in the Sydney Region, including the Central Coast, found they could be improved to make them more transparent and clear. They

- o are too focused on individual merit and site capability at the expense of strategic location, supply context and suitable alternatives
- o potentially undermine containment of Sydney's urban footprint, a key vision under the Metropolitan Strategy and integral to the new Metropolitan Plan
- o created unrealistic landowner expectations which were often not realised
- o in relation to infrastructure, differ from criteria to accelerate precincts in the Growth Centres
- o have not been effective in bringing forward new housing as most of those approved have yet to produce dwellings
- o are difficult to use to evaluate land release requests in the case of some criteria.

The Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036

The Metropolitan Plan aims to contain Sydney's urban footprint by focusing land release in the North West and South West Growth Centres and simplifying the land release process. Central to simplifying the process is the introduction of an annual land supply assessment to improve the timeliness and consistency of land release decisions.

If the annual land supply assessment identifies the need for more land release, precincts within the Growth Centres will be considered as well as sites outside the Growth Centres which are:

1. identified for future housing under a draft or adopted subregional strategy or
2. identified for future housing under a local strategy endorsed by the Department of Planning or
3. located within the urban footprint or adjoining the urban footprint and which meet state government targets relating to jobs closer to home.

The State Government aims to increase the number of jobs closer to home by increasing the percentage of the population living within 30 minutes by public transport of a regional city or major centre under the Metropolitan Plan.

New criteria to replace the Sustainability Criteria will be used to assess land release options outside the Growth Centres during the annual land supply assessment. As a guide, the Metropolitan Plan indicates the new criteria will aim to:

- maintain the integrity of urban containment
- achieve efficient use of land and cost effective development
- ensure the continuity of significant rural and resource activities
- avoid use of biodiversity-rich land and high risk areas
- provide certainty about the delivery of dwellings in the short term





Invitation to comment

You are invited to make suggestions on new criteria for land release in the Sydney Region and consider the following questions:

1. What should Government consider in deciding to release land outside the Growth Centres?

How might the five aims at the bottom of page 3 be measured?

2. What funding arrangements should be in place?

Generally, infrastructure and services for new urban areas outside the Growth Centres have not been included in Government plans.

3. What, if any, thresholds should apply to landowner requests to release land?

Should landowner requests be a minimum size? What other requirements might apply?

4. Should new criteria apply to the Central Coast?

The Central Coast is part of the Sydney Region and has its own strategy which is not due for review until 2013.

Submissions should be made in writing to: mdp@planning.nsw.gov.au

or

Metropolitan Development Program
Department of Planning
23-33 Bridge Street
Sydney NSW 2000

by 28 February 2011



2005 Sustainability Criteria for new land release

Threshold Sustainability Criteria for listing of site on MDP	Measurable Explanation of Criteria
1 Infrastructure Provision Mechanisms in place to ensure utilities, transport, open space and communication and provided in a timely and efficient way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Development is consistent with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -any relevant residential development strategy, subregional strategy, regional infrastructure plan and Metropolitan Strategy (Sydney Region). -Central Coast Regional Strategy, the relevant Residential Strategy, North Wyong Structure Plan, applicable regional infrastructure plan, Metropolitan Strategy and relevant section 117 direction (Central Coast Region). -the regional strategy, any subregional strategy, the State Infrastructure Strategy and relevant section 117 directions (other coastal regions). •The provision of infrastructure (utilities, transport, open space, and communications) is costed and economically feasible based on Government methodology for determining infrastructure contribution. •Preparedness to enter into development agreement.
2 Access Accessible transport options for efficient and sustainable travel between homes, jobs, services and recreation to be existing or provide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accessibility of the area by public transport and appropriate road access in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Location/land use; to existing networks and related activity centres -Network: the areas potential to be serviced by economically efficient public transport services. -Catchment: the area's ability to contain, or form part of the larger urban area which contains adequate transport services. Capacity for land use/transport patterns to make a positive contribution to achievement of travel and vehicle use goals. •No net negative impact on performance of existing subregional road, bus, rail, ferry and freight network.
3 Housing Diversity Provide a range of housing choices to ensure a broad population can be housed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Contributes to the geographic market spread of housing supply, including any government targets established for aged, disabled or affordable housing.
4 Employment Lands Provide regional/local employment opportunities to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sydney's role in the global economy - the Central Coast's expanding role in the wider regional and NSW economies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Maintain or improve the existing level of subregional employment self containment. •Meets subregional employment capacity targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Employment related land is provided in appropriately zoned areas.
5 Avoidance of Risk Land use conflicts, and risk to human health and life, avoided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Available safe evacuation route (flood and bushfire). •No residential development within 1:100 floodplain. •Avoidance of physically constrained land: high slope: highly erodible. •Avoidance of land use conflicts with adjacent, existing or future land uses and rural activities as planned under regional strategy.

2005 Sustainability Criteria for new land release

Threshold Sustainability Criteria for listing of site on MDP	Measurable Explanation of Criteria
<p>6 Natural Resources Natural resource limits not exceeded/environmental footprint minimised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Demand for water does not place unacceptable pressure on infrastructure capacity to supply water and on environmental flows. •Demonstrates most efficient/suitable use of land. -Avoids identified significant agricultural land. -Avoids impacts on productive resource lands; extractive industries, coal, gas and other mining, and quarrying. •Demand for energy does not place unacceptable pressure on infrastructure capacity to supply energy; requires demonstration of efficient and sustainability supply solution.
<p>7 Environmental Protection Protect and enhance biodiversity, air quality, heritage, and waterway health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consistent with Government-approved Regional Conservation Plan (if available). •Maintains or improves areas of regionally significant terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity (as mapped and agreed by DEC and DPI). This includes regionally significant vegetation communities; critical habitat; threatened species; populations; ecological communities and their habitats. •Maintain or improve existing environmental condition for air quality. •Maintain or improve existing environmental condition for water quality and quantity -Consistent with community water quality objectives for recreational water use and river health (DEC and CMA). -Consistent with catchment and stormwater management planning (CMA and local council). •Protects areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage valued (as agreed by DEC).
<p>8 Quality and Equity in Services Quality health, education, legal, recreational, cultural and community development and other government services are accessible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Available and accessible services. -Do adequate services exist? -Are they at capacity or is some available? -Has Government planned and budgeted to further serviced provision? •Developer funding for required service upgrade/access is available.