

Proposed Warehouse & Distribution Centre, North West Transport Hub, Riverstone West

Background Report and Preliminary Environmental Assessment

1 Introduction

Planning for the development of a new employment area at the Riverstone West Precinct has been underway for more than a year. The impetus for this has been founded on a solid strategic planning context and the opportunity to expedite delivery of employment lands in the broader North West Growth Centre. In this regard the proposed site sits within perhaps one of the largest tracts of land in single ownership in the Growth Centre.

North West Transport Hub (NWTB), as the owner of the land and project proponent is the entity created to develop the proposed Riverstone West Precinct. This summary report provides a background and overview of a proposed warehouse and distribution facility within the NWTB and thus represents the first employment generating activity proposed for the planned Riverstone West Precinct.

2 Site Context

2.1 Site Details and Context

Key features of the site are as follows:

- The proposed warehouse and distribution centre facility is to be constructed on land currently known as Lot 211 DP 830505, 81 Riverstone Parade, Riverstone. The land comprises one lot in single ownership, having a total area of 235 hectares. The facility will occupy approximately 19ha with Lot 211.
- Lot 211 is bounded to the south by Garfield Road West and to the north by Bandon Road.
- The eastern boundary of Lot 211 is formed by the north-west rail line, having an approximate 3.5 kilometre frontage to this rail line.
- The western boundary of Lot 211 is formed by the alignment of Eastern Creek.
- The site was formerly part of the Riverstone Meatworks. Presently, part of the former meatworks plant is being used for transport and distribution purposes.
- The proposed siting of the facility is within the North western portion of Lot 211.
- Under existing conditions, it is estimated that 80% of Lot 211 is prone to flooding. Separate application is being made to Blacktown Council for the regrading of the NWTB lands. In this regard, a detailed flood analysis has been approved by Blacktown Council which shows that the regrading improves the flooding outcome outside of the precinct.
- An indicative layout for the entire NWTB site, showing location of the proposed warehouse and distribution centre facility is shown below.
- Other pertinent site context details, as partly shown on the indicative layout are:
 - Lot 211 is within the 'North West Growth Centre' and is identified as a "First Release Precinct" under the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy.
 - Lot 211 is within the Blacktown Council Area.
 - Lot 211 is partly opposite Riverstone Town Centre.
 - The Riverstone Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) and a Transgrid Sub-Station adjoins Lot 211 to the north between the proposed site and Bandon Road. Both the STP and the Transgrid site form part of the Riverstone West Precinct.
 - The site is approximately 10 kilometres north of the 'Major Centre' (under the Metro Strategy) of Blacktown and 5 kilometres from the 'Major Centre' of Rouse Hill, (presently under construction).
- Consistent with the site's high transit orientation qualities, the site is ideally located with respect to the local and regional road network as follows:

- Key local access roads that provide direct links to the regional network include, Riverstone Parade, Schofields Road, and Garfield Road;
- Significant regional roads within convenient proximity to the site include; Richmond Road is 3km to the west; Windsor Road 3km to the east, and the Westlink M7 is 7km to the south;
- The Sydney Orbital Motorway network is also conveniently accessed via both Garfield Road West and Richmond Road at Colebee.

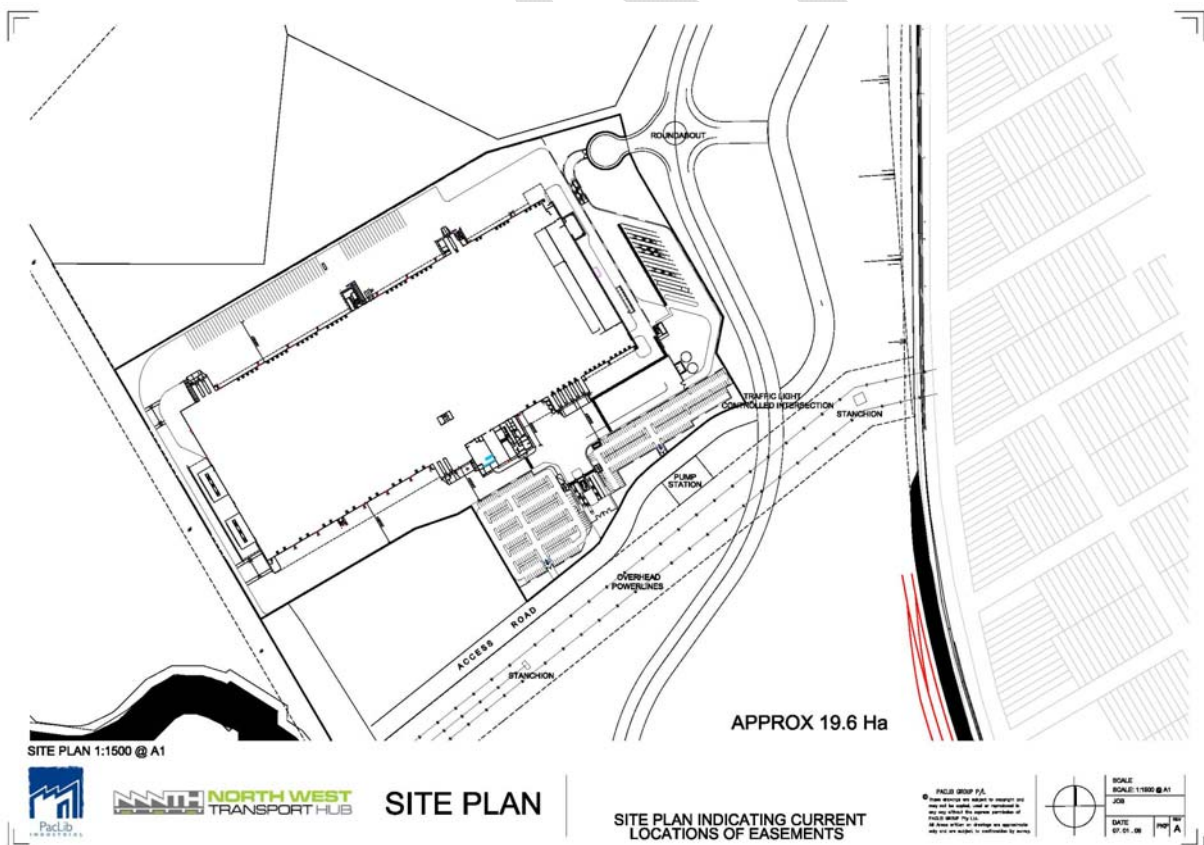
3 Description of the Proposal

It is intended to seek Concept Plan/Project Approval for a proposed warehouse and distribution facility. The estimated Capital Investment Value of the project is approximately \$70,000,000.00 and will employ approximately 806 persons.

In broad terms, the NWTB will be seeking Part 3A approval for:

- Construction and fitout of warehouse facility of approximate GFA of 85,000m² comprising storage, despatching and loading areas.
- Ancillary office, amenities and support space of approximate GFA of 3,800m².
- External car park areas for employees, visitors.
- External parking and manoeuvring areas for associated trucks.
- Potential for on site fuelling and truck washing facilities.
- Associated landscaping.
- Potential for 24 hour / 7 day week operation.

An indicative siting / layout plan for the proposed warehouse and distribution facility is shown below.



As mentioned previously, as the site of the proposed warehouse and distribution facility forms part of a much larger employment precinct, a separate local development application is intended to be submitted to Blacktown Council for site regrading and estate major works, including lead in infrastructure, road network and connectivity to the surrounding road network. These works have been negotiated with Blacktown Council and up until recently the Growth Centres Commission. These works are based on a new “Spine Road” that will extend through the entire NWTH site and connect to a new developer funded Bandon Road underpass and signalised intersection with Garfield Road.

4 Planning Context

4.1 Current Zoning

- Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 1988 provides the local statutory planning framework of the site.
- Lot 211 is predominantly zoned 1(a) General Rural Zone, of which some 80% of the site is affected by this zone, which prohibits employment and industrial development.
- The remainder of Lot 211, some 20% of the land, is zoned 4(a) General Industrial which permits a range of industrial land uses but prohibits commercial premises. The extent of 4(a) zoned land is situated in the central portion of the site generally correlating with the former meatworks plant as illustrated in the zoning map below.
- The proposed warehouse and distribution facility is to be situated to the northern portion of the site, on land currently zoned 1(a) General Rural.
- The current zoning of the site of the proposed warehouse and distribution facility renders the proposal wholly prohibited.

4.2 State and Regional Planning Context

4.2.1 The Metropolitan Strategy

The Sydney Metropolitan Strategy was released in 2005 and provides a framework to manage Sydney’s growth over the next 25 years. The Metropolitan Strategy identifies the following:

- The importance of providing employment generating development that is close to growing residential communities and highlights that an additional 99,000 jobs in the North West subregion over the next 25 years will be required to accommodate population growth.
- An additional 60,000 dwellings in existing areas and 20,000 in Greenfield areas are targeted to be provided. A further 60,000 dwellings are targeted within the North West Growth Centre (includes dwellings that will be built after 2031).

4.2.2 Employment Lands for Sydney Action Plan

The Employment Lands For Sydney Action Plan was released in March 2007 and details a range of initiatives by the NSW Government in order to advance the planning of employment lands including a need to greatly increase the supply of land for employment purposes

4.2.3 The Draft North West Subregional Strategy

The Draft North West Subregional Strategy progresses the directions of the Metropolitan Strategy to provide a broad framework for the long term development of the North West region. Key aspects of this strategy are identified below:

- The SRS identifies an increased employment target 130,000 beyond the initial target set in the Metropolitan Strategy.
- The SRS provides distribution of housing and employment capacity for each local government area (LGA) in the North West subregion. The largest proportion of housing and employment growth within the subregion is planned to occur within Blacktown LGA.
- The existing General Industrial zoned lands within Lot 211 are recognised with the SRS.

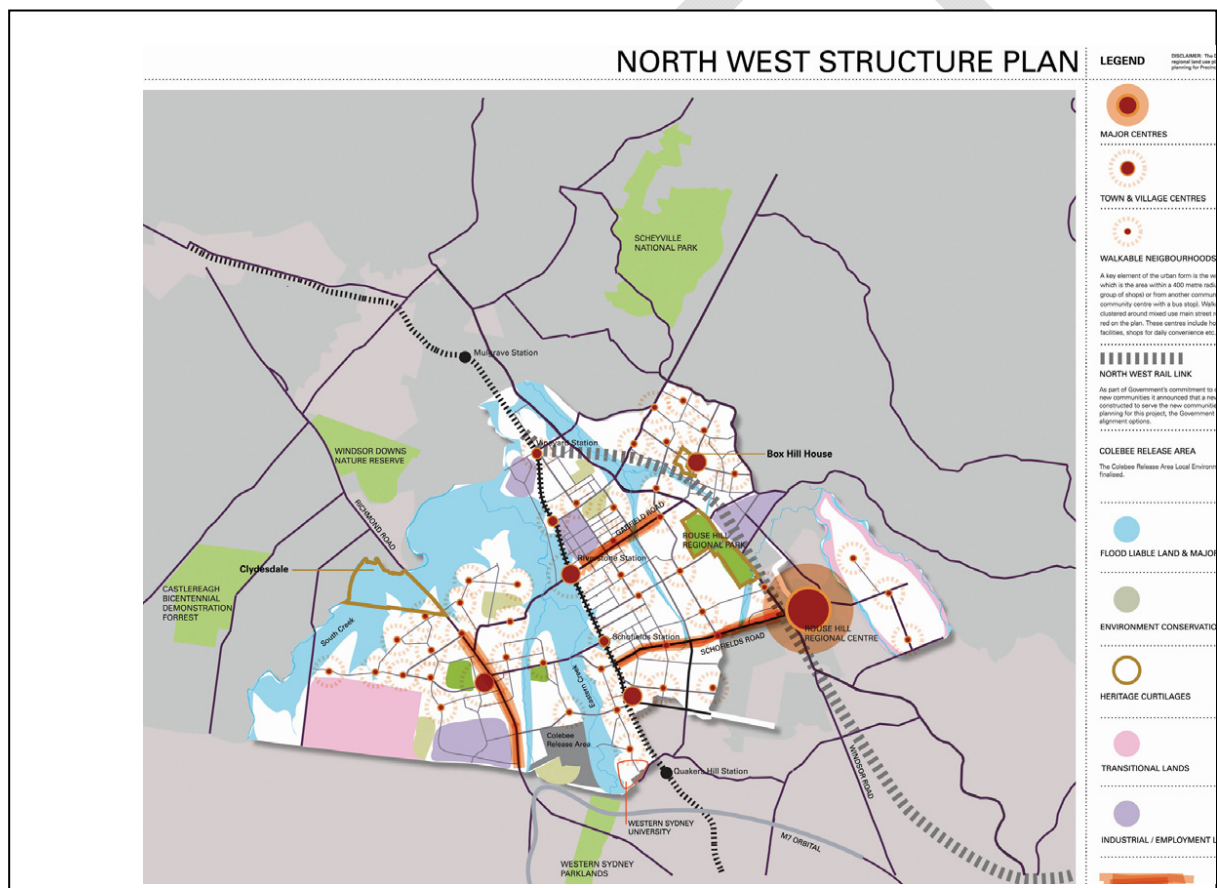
4.3 The North West Growth Centre

Sydney Region Growth Centres State Environmental Planning Policy 2006 applies to Lot 211. The SEPP identifies the following considerations to Lot 211:

- Lot 211 is identified within the Riverstone West precinct;
- A significant portion of the site is classified as being “Flood Prone Major Creeks Land”, however this plan is indicative and the classification will be amended once the Precinct is regraded.

During the initial structure planning for the Growth Centres and prior to gazettal of the Growth Centres SEPP, the draft North West Structure Plan identified the Riverstone West Precinct as land for residential development in a variety of housing forms including detached housing, townhouses and apartments. It anticipated a relatively small residential yield of 500 lots and a future population of 1,600 people.

Subsequently, the adopted North West “Structure plan” identified the northern end of the precinct for industrial /employment lands with the remainder of the site as flood liable land and major creeks, as depicted in figure below:



5 Growth Centres Planning

Lot 211's strategic location, the fact that part of it was already (and remains) zoned for employment purposes and its single ownership provided the opportunity to develop the site as a significant holding of employment lands comprising predominantly industrial land uses complemented with business park precincts.

In 2007, the owners of Lot 211 embarked on a strategic planning investigation and engagement process with the then GCC to assess the broad suitability of the Riverstone West Precinct for employment purposes. A number of preliminary planning documents were prepared by Urbis and submitted to the GCC including:

- *Planning Review Riverstone Meatworks land February 2007.*

This report provides an initial broad level assessment of the town planning issues impacting on the potential development of the site. This report was prepared for the joint venture partners as an initial scoping exercise.

- *Development Release Plan Sydney Industrial Trading Zone May 2007*

This report follows on from the Planning Review Report of February 2007 and provides an initial assessment of the town planning issues impacting on the potential development of the site. The report provides an overview of the history and physical features of the site; review of the attributes of the site and strategic position; and a review of existing and proposed planning policies. The report further discusses the site development approval strategy and key development considerations.

- *Forward Positioning Paper Sydney Industrial Trading Zone, Former Riverstone Meatworks Site May 2007.*

This report was prepared for the GCC to seek endorsement from GCC for the proponent to prepare a draft Precinct Plan. This report demonstrates the suitability of the site for such endorsement and presents the means by which the SITZ, may be developed for industrial and employment purposes, to an extent greater than that envisaged under the North-West Growth Centres Structure Plan.

Sydney Industrial Trade Zone – Precursor to Precinct Planning: The Imperative for Employment Lands

Following these submissions, the former GCC in early 2008, agreed to commence the Precinct Planning process for Riverstone West. Part of that process was to investigate the suitability of the precinct for employment generating uses. The former GCC established a Precinct Working Group comprising Blacktown City Council, GCC and landowner. The PWG commissioned in the order of 20 specialist reports that investigated the most appropriate land use for the precinct. The reports supported the Precinct being rezoned to a mix of Business Park, Light Industrial and General Industrial and recreation. The PWG recently completed the investigation process and a "Precinct Planning Package" is soon to commence public exhibition and will incorporate:

- Precinct Planning Report.
- Draft Amendment to the Growth Centres SEPP.
- Draft Indicative Layout Plan.
- Draft DCP.
- Draft VPA.

These documents are all focussed on the development of the Riverstone West Precinct for employment purposes with some key feature of the proposed Riverstone West Precinct Plan being:

- Maximising the development potential of the site whilst having regard to its environmental constraints, and to provide an important location for employment and business activities in the rapidly growing north west sector with the provision of approximately 105 ha of employment generating land comprising some 70 ha of industrial land and 30 ha of business park.
- Provision of open space and recreational purposes for sporting playing fields for the NSW Soccer Federation, clubhouse and associated facilities over the balance of the site. The open space land uses represent a significant public benefit opportunity to utilise flood prone land whilst maintaining associations with NSW Soccer Federation and its origins in Western Sydney.
- Enhancement of riparian corridors to manage and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the site.

- Construction of a 'spine road' that will provide the basis for efficient vehicle movement to and from Lot 211 and to divert existing traffic from Riverstone Parade through the proposed spine road.
- To capitalise on the extensive frontage the site enjoys to the North West rail line and the accessibility of the site to two railway stations. The business park precinct is proposed to be clustered close to Riverstone railway station, whilst it is proposed to augment existing railway spur lines into the site to encourage business to take advantage of potential future inter-modal facilities.
- The site will be fully master planned to provide a high quality built form with an efficient road pattern and land use configuration.

6 Likely Issues and Preliminary Environmental Assessment

6.1 Key Planning Documents

The key planning instruments and policies that currently apply to the project are:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005.
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.
- Sydney Region Growth Centres State Environmental Planning Policy 2006
- State Environmental Planning Policy 55 – Remediation of Land.
- Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 1988.
- Sydney Metropolitan Strategy.
- Draft North West Subregional Strategy.
- Employment Lands for Sydney Action Plan

Upon exhibition of the Draft precinct planning package, design and assessment of the proposal will be informed by relevant documents including the Draft DCP.

6.1.1 SEPP – Major Projects

Approval for the proposed development is sought under the NSW Environmental Planning legislation under the Major Projects SEPP. In accordance with Clause 6 of the Major Projects SEPP, development that (in the opinion of the Minister) is of a kind that is described in Schedule 1 is declared to be a project to which Part 3A of the Act applies.

Schedule 1 of the Major Projects SEPP describes the following development:

12 Distribution and storage facilities

Development for the purpose of container storage facilities, or storage or distribution centres, with a capital investment value of more than \$30 million.

The proposal has a Capital Investment Value of approximately \$70 million.

6.1.2 State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007

The proposal will require referral to the Roads and Traffic Authority under the provisions of Division 17 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.

6.1.3 Sydney Region Growth Centres State Environmental Planning Policy 2006

Upon gazettal of the Amendment to the Growth Centres SEPP, the proposal will become permissible with consent.

6.1.4 State Environmental Planning Policy 55 – Remediation of Land.

Investigations associated with the precinct planning identifies that the site is generally suitable for development for commercial / industrial purposes but that there is potential for isolated areas of contaminant material to be present. This particularly occurs in the northern parts of the site that may have been associated with the former meat works factory site and disposal of wastes.

The applications will be accompanied by Contamination report that addresses potential contamination and remediation requirements.

6.1.5 Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 1988

Blacktown Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1988 is the principal statutory planning instrument applying to the site. Under the provisions of LEP 1988, the site comprises two zones:

- 1(a) General Rural Zone, of which some 80% of the site is affected by this zone, which prohibits employment and industrial development.
- The remainder of the site, some 20% of the land is zoned 4(a) General Industrial which permits a range of industrial land uses but prohibits commercial premises.
- The proposed warehouse and distribution facility is to be situated to the northern portion of the site, on land currently zoned 1(a) General Rural.

The Minister for Planning may consider the proposed use under the Concept Plan provisions of Part 3A, despite the LEP prohibition of the warehouse and distribution facility.

Further relevant provisions of the LEP 1988 will be reviewed and assessed in the Environmental Assessment Report.

6.1.6 The Metropolitan Strategy, Employment Lands Action Plan and the Draft North West Subregional Strategy

The NWTW site and the proposed warehouse and distribution facility will significantly contribute to the achievement of employment creating objectives of these planning policies. The site is well located and within single ownership which enables the comprehensive planning of land parcels that can accommodate a range of industrial and business park uses without the complexities associated with smaller, fragmented land holdings.

6.1.7 Relationship and consistency with the pending Precinct Plan

As mentioned previously, the site has been subject to the Riverstone West precinct planning process. The Environmental Assessment of the proposed facility will be aligned with the outcomes of the draft Precinct Plan, the exhibition of which we understand is imminent.

6.2 Site Suitability

Approximately 20 environmental studies have been undertaken over the past 12 months to demonstrate the suitability of the Riverstone West precinct for employment purposes. These studies have informed the Government's Precinct Planning process and will be relied upon to inform the Environmental Assessment of the proposed facility. Studies undertaken to date include:

- Flooding and Stormwater Management;
- Ecological investigations;
- Contamination investigations;
- Geotechnical investigations;
- European and Cultural Heritage Studies;
- Acoustic and Vibrations Study;
- Traffic and Transport Management;

- Odour Assessment;
- Economic Benefits Study; and
- Community Needs Study.

6.3 Architectural design quality and visual impact

The site will be visible from the public domain, particularly from future open space areas identified within the Precinct Plan. The built form will be required to be designed to an appropriate architectural standard that will reflect the general design guidelines of Blacktown Council for industrial development and as will be reflected in the pending draft Precinct Plan.

6.4 Construction management including noise and vibration management, soil and sediment control

Construction impacts will be minimised to ensure existing environmental amenity is not compromised during the construction phase. A Construction Environmental Management will be prepared to establish the procedures for environmental management including (but not limited to):

- noise and vibration management; and
- soil and sediment control.

6.5 Bulk earthworks and geotechnical suitability

As discussed, a separate Development Application will be lodged with Blacktown Council for bulk earthworks over the NWTH site. This will enable site preparation works to commence for the NWTH site whilst progressive development approvals are sought for specific land uses on individual lots.

The proposed warehouse and distribution facility will be limited to the northern portion of the site, which will be subject to earthworks. The Environmental Assessment will demonstrate how the proposal will be consistent with the earthworks DA to be assessed by Council.

6.6 Stormwater management and flooding

The western boundary of the NWTH adjoins Eastern Creek and as part of the Precinct Planning process, stormwater management strategies have been prepared for the NWTH which focuses on minimising the impacts of the development on the total water cycle and maximising the environmental, social and economic benefits achievable by utilising responsible and sustainable stormwater management practices.

The Environmental Assessment will be accompanied by stormwater management strategy for the proposed development, including water control devices and WSUD practices suitable to the proposed development.

The NWTH site is currently flood affected and detailed flood analysis have been undertaken to determine the potential for site regrading without impacting on adjoining properties. The analysis demonstrates that the planned cut and fill within the precinct will improve the flood outcome off site. We understand that Blacktown Council has viewed this report and accepts its findings. The Environmental Assessment will further discuss the proposed facility relative to the separately proposed earthwork DA and associated flooding assessments.

6.7 Landscaping

The majority of the site is substantially cleared. Some isolated remnant vegetation may be present towards the northern boundary of the future Lot 4, in which the proposed development is to be situated in. The Environmental Assessment will be accompanied by an assessment on the integrity of any existing significant vegetation on Lot 4 and associated impacts if they are to be removed.

A landscape plan will accompany the Environmental Assessment.

6.8 Ecological Sustainable Design

ESD principles will be key considerations to the design and construction of the facility. These principles will be reflected through energy efficiency aspects of building design, roof water harvesting and stormwater/greywater reuse. The Riverstone West DCP developed as part of the Precinct Planning process will incorporate ESD provisions which must be taken into consideration when developing within the Precinct

An energy efficiency performance report will need to be included as part of the Environmental Assessment.

6.9 Traffic, access and parking management

Vehicular access to the site will be obtained via a road network that was developed through the Precinct planning process for Riverstone West. The future road network will focus upon a centrally located, north-south orientated "Spine Road" through the NWTH.

Traffic studies undertaken as part of the precinct planning process indicate Spine Road to be required to be designed with four lanes to accommodate heavy vehicle traffic movement away from the Riverstone Town Centre. The RTA and Blacktown Council have both reviewed and we understand support the proposed traffic management arrangements for the Precinct.

A traffic impact assessment report will accompany the Environmental Assessment and include details on car parking, access and circulation.

6.10 Infrastructure

Engineering studies have been undertaken to identify the primary utility services that will be required for the delivery of the NWTH as part of the precinct planning process. These utilities will entail the provision of water (both potable and recycled water), sewer, electricity, gas and telecommunication services.

The proposed warehouse and distribution facility will be provided access to these infrastructure services. Further details will be provided in the Environmental Assessment.

6.11 Building Code of Australia and Disability Discrimination Act Compliance

The building will be designed to meet the provisions of the BCA to ensure that the facility will be appropriately designed and constructed.

Consideration to disabled access will also be key design considerations to ensure that all visitors and employees will be able to access and utilise the site and the facility. Disabled access within and around the site will be addressed as part of the Environmental Assessment process in accordance with relevant provisions on the BCA and other applicable standards.

6.12 Operational management

Details relating to the operational management of the proposed facility will be provided with the Environmental Assessment. These details will include:

- Hours of operation;
- Quantum of heavy vehicle movements;
- Storage and handling of hazardous materials (if any); and
- Waste management, including ancillary items such as truck wash/ refuelling bays.

6.13 Bushfire Risk

Bushfire protection assessment has been undertaken as part of the precinct planning process to identify bushfire protection measures required to address the bushfire risk to future industrial development.

The study identifies consideration in the design of the industrial and commercial estate and the construction of future buildings, as well as strategies for access and water supply. These considerations will be adopted as part of development of the proposed facility.

7 Consultation

To date a preliminary briefing has been held with Department of Planning officers concerning the proposal.

Extensive consultation with other agencies has occurred as part of the precinct planning process for the Riverstone West Precinct. Key agencies involved in the precinct planning process include:

- Blacktown City Council;
- Growth Centres Commission;
- Roads and Traffic Authority;
- Department of Water & Energy;
- Sydney Water;
- Integral Energy;
- Telstra; and
- Alinta

It anticipated that each of these agencies will be consulted as part of the Environmental Assessment process.

8 Summary

In our view, the proposal comprises development that is described in Schedule 1 of the Major Projects SEPP and is required to be assessed under Part 3A of the Act. Accordingly, this submission forms the request for confirmation from the Director-General that the proposed development is indeed a major project to which Part 3A of the Act applies and the Ministers authorisation to prepare a concept plan.

We trust this information provides appropriate detail to enable the preparation of Draft Director – General Environmental Assessment Requirements which would allow the timely progression of the Environmental Assessment package.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me on 8233 9925.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hoy".

David Hoy
Director