

**Submission**

**No 31**

**INQUIRY INTO THE UTILISATION OF RAIL CORRIDORS**

**Organisation:** Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter

**Name:** Mr Matthew Pullinger

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**Australian Institute of Architects**

Mr Charles Casuscelli MP

Chair

Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport & Infrastructure

Parliament House

Macquarie Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Casuscelli

#### **INQUIRY INTO THE UTILISATION OF RAIL CORRIDORS**

Thank you for your letter of 30 November 2011 inviting the Institute to make a submission to the inquiry.

We note that, parallel with this inquiry, the NSW Government is also undertaking a planning system review. In our submissions to that review the Institute is advocating the integration of land use, transport and infrastructure strategic planning in a set of plans from state to precinct level. These plans need to incorporate projections and strategic thinking from all key state agencies, including Treasury, if they are to have any beneficial effect on the future development of NSW.

The Institute advocates the adoption of a design-led approach to the creation of greater density within the existing Sydney metropolitan area, without increasing our planned urban footprint for low density urban sprawl. This strategy needs to be adopted in a flexible manner that builds on existing urban consolidation opportunities and focuses the greatest density on key transport nodes.

In view of these recommendations, therefore, we consider that the key focus of this inquiry should be to develop principles for the assessment of the development potential of rail corridors that will assist the strategic planning process described above.

We note that the utilisation of rail corridors has been debated at length over the past two decades. The Department of Planning produced an interim guideline as recently as 2008.

While the Institute supports greater density around transport nodes, this increased scale of development must be accompanied by improved access to stations, encouraging maximum use of public transport by the increased numbers of residents and workers in the precinct.

Although we accept the logic of increased development near transport nodes the Institute notes that difficulties can arise with intensive development along the length of the rail corridor. The proximity of residential development to the corridor can create noise issues; gentrification and rising real estate prices can also generate conflict between residents and rail operators.

In urban design terms, the construction of high density developments along the length of the corridor can create alienating vertical corridors in low-rise neighbourhoods. This can be improved by the varied spacing of buildings, adherence to SEPP 65 design principles and a general increase in the scale of new building in the area.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew" followed by a stylized flourish.

Matthew Pullinger  
**NSW President**