

# Media Release



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## Keep the North West On-Track

The Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW (UDIA NSW) today expressed concern regarding suggestions that the NW rail link is being re-examined.

Mr Scott Woodcock, Executive Director of UDIA NSW said that "The current approach to the planning of Sydney's suburbs is to focus on transit oriented development. Rail would be an essential component of a major release area.

"It has been argued that buses are more affordable and flexible. This flexibility allows for routes to be realigned to better match the emerging demand. Whilst rail has a high capital cost, it is a long term commitment and thereby offers certainty to the investment community, including developers.

"A railway station has a walkable neighbourhood of 800-1,000 metres, typically centred around community hubs that meet retail and daily consumer shopping needs. Bus stops have a walkable catchment of 400 metres. Combined with rail routes, they extend the reach of those retail and commercial opportunities."

Mr Ross Blancato, UDIA NSW President said, "The NSW Government is requiring developers to deliver a density of 15 dwellings per hectare. The necessary infrastructure to support these densities must be provided."

UDIA NSW acknowledges that the capital cost of the NW rail line is expensive. It comprises a large proportion of the State Infrastructure Levy (av. \$33,000 per lot). Asking one generation of homebuyers and landowners in Western Sydney to pay for this service that will endure for centuries is highly inequitable.

"Therefore, the UDIA NSW calls for both the Federal and State government to work together to make better use of the funds generated from development through the GST, to fund major investment like rail.

The GST sourced from the sale of land and house packages is a logical and necessary source of funds for this type of infrastructure. It should not be an additional cost on the development budget", said Mr Blancato.

UDIA NSW believes that there is a role for the Federal government to fund this project and associated urban infrastructure. Australia is the most urbanised country in the world. Yet the federal government declines to fund suburban passenger rail networks while continuing to fund roads.

Mr Blancato said, "The GST revenue from these houses alone would raise more money than the combined state infrastructure bill for Sydney's new suburbs. The forecast 160,000 dwellings built over 25 years in the Growth Centres would raise over \$8 billion. The infrastructure bill including the NW rail link is expected to cost \$7.8 billion."

**For Media Comment, please contact:**

Mr Ross Blancato  
UDIA NSW President  
0438 133 105

Mr Scott Woodcock  
UDIA NSW Executive Director  
(02) 9868 3677

**For Media Enquiries, please contact:**

Lisa Marshall  
UDIA NSW Communications Co-ordinator  
(02) 9868 3677  
0417 493 899

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Phone: 02 9868 3677

PO Box 912  
EPPING NSW 1710  
Fax: 02 9868 7117  
A.B.N. 43 001 172 363

e-mail: [udia@udia-nsw.com.au](mailto:udia@udia-nsw.com.au)

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Phone: 02 9868 3677

PO Box 912  
EPPING NSW 1710  
Fax: 02 9868 7117  
A.B.N. 43 001 172 363

e-mail: [udia@udia-nsw.com.au](mailto:udia@udia-nsw.com.au)