

Media Release

Western Sydney Business Chamber

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WESTERN SYDNEY

Western Sydney's blueprint to kickstart COVID-19 economic recovery

The Western Sydney Business Chamber has released its first economic recovery blueprint detailing five key recommendations for government to implement to help kickstart Western Sydney after COVID-19.

The paper, [*Shovels Ready! Stimulating the Western Sydney economic recovery*](#), has been submitted to key portfolio Ministers in the NSW Government and contains targeted short and longer term priorities to ensure Western Sydney is best placed to lead Australia's economic recovery after the end of COVID-19.

With an initial focus on activating the infrastructure pipeline of Western Sydney's 13 local councils as the fastest way to kickstart activity and get money back into the region's economy, the paper also details the need for the government to grow its public housing stock and reignite residential construction, prioritise major freight infrastructure in the region, and consider longer term land tax reforms and local government rate pegging.

"The members of the Western Sydney Business Chamber have come together to develop a blueprint for economic recovery that not only gets us back on our feet but will set the region up for decades to come," said David Borger, Executive Director of the Western Sydney Business Chamber.

"The sad reality is that we are in a recession, jobs are being lost and there aren't going to be any quick fixes to get us back to economic growth except for smart local investments in infrastructure and reforms to our planning and tax systems."

Mr Borger said with the door closed to immigration, tourism and international education for the foreseeable future, the easy way to get the economy moving again was unavailable and political leaders would finally have to look at the 'too hard' basket for long overdue reforms to get the economy moving again.

"It's the people of Western Sydney that are going to be hurt most by the recession and it is the responsibility of our political leaders to craft an economic narrative of why we need to make some tough decisions on our tax and planning systems to ensure that we get as many of them back to work as soon as we can," said Mr Borger.

Five key recommendations for government action include:

1. That State and Federal governments develop an economic stimulus package for local councils including:
 - direct grants or loans to bring forward local capital works and civic infrastructure.
 - removing rate pegging or allowing it to be raised to respond to the economic crisis.
 - short term financial support to local councils to get them through the liquidity crunch caused by the pandemic.

2. That all tiers of government work together to stimulate construction by:
 - bringing forward public sector, shovel ready, projects.
 - providing necessary capital and investment to ensure private sector construction continues.
 - increasing expenditure on maintenance and infrastructure upgrades.
3. That government work with local industry to develop a Western Sydney Manufacturing Plan.
4. That each tier of government considers investing in removing those bottle necks in Western Sydney's logistics and freight network, including:
 - duplication of the Port Botany freight line.
 - finishing the Maldon to Dombarton Freight line.
 - inter-Modal freight facility at the Western Sydney Airport.
 - Western Highway to connect country NSW directly to Western Sydney Airport.
5. That a root and branch reform of government taxation and regulation be undertaken looking at:
 - how land and developer charges are imposed.
 - consideration of a broad-based land tax.
 - removal of the cap on local government rates.
 - streamlining land use planning.

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