

10 BIG IDEAS TO GROW PENRITH



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- 1 Create Additional Parking and Implement Transport Solutions for Penrith CBD
- 2 Relocate the Department of Transport to Penrith
- 3 Strengthen North-South Traffic and Transport Infrastructure
- 4 Encourage a Major Business Headquarters to Move to Penrith
- 5 Create a Health Technology Precinct
- 6 Create New Jobs in Penrith
- 7 Upgrade Penrith Lakes Facility
- 8 Develop a Penrith Business Park
- 9 Redevelop Penrith CBD
- 10 Collaborate on a Positive Marketing Plan for Penrith

Foreword

Over the coming month, the eyes of NSW will be on Penrith.

We believe that Penrith is a region of immense economic potential.

For far too long, politicians of all political persuasions have seen Penrith as a commuter region, rather than as a hub for community, commerce and opportunity.

The 10 Big Ideas for Penrith is the Penrith Business Community's contribution to a debate about how we create jobs, encourage economic opportunity and improve the liveability of Penrith.

These 10 Big Ideas for Penrith, build on the 10 Big Ideas to Grow NSW which was launched by NSW Business Chamber in March.

Like the 10 Big Ideas to Grow NSW, these Big Ideas for Penrith are not political. There is no copyright on these ideas – we hope all the candidates seeking election will support and embrace these ideas.

For far too long, business groups, commentators and politicians have spent too much time talking about the problems and challenges facing Penrith. The 10 Big Ideas for Penrith is intended to redirect this debate to focus on opportunities and solutions to local business problems.

The Penrith by-election provides a unique opportunity to promote ideas and solutions to improve business solutions in Penrith. Our aim is to give the Penrith business community's Big Ideas a voice and provide the Government and Opposition with every opportunity to support local solutions to local problems and challenges.

These ideas focus on the fundamentals of planning, transport, infrastructure and jobs.

We believe we can create conditions to improve the liveability of Penrith by making it a hub for commerce and community. Such an approach will improve traffic, create jobs and improve the living standards of all within Penrith.

This is the commitment of our combined groups – not just for the coming four weeks, but for the years ahead. We will work with anyone who is willing to work with us.

We encourage all those who care about Penrith to participate in the conversation.

Get involved! www.10bigideas.com.au . Follow us on Twitter. Become a fan on Facebook.

Yours sincerely



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Chairman
Penrith Business Alliance



Peter McGhee
President
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1. Create Additional Parking and Implement Transport Solutions for Penrith CBD

Recommendations:

- > Construct Government funded commuter car parking
- > Provide Shuttle Bus Services for workers & shoppers
- > Provide satellite car parking linked to Shuttle Bus routes

The NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy identifies Penrith as a Regional City, with an expectation that Penrith will be able to accommodate an additional 25,000 new dwellings within the next 25 years as well as provide some 40,000 new jobs and envisages that the Penrith CBD will accommodate 10,000 new residents.

The Penrith CBD retains the skeleton of the small rural town it used to be. It has now been overlaid by contemporary developments to accommodate the explosive growth that Penrith has experienced over the last 30 years. Investment in support traffic and transport infrastructure has not maintained pace with this growth. Today many businesses are experiencing trading difficulties because of the problems caused by the lack of car parking within the CBD. While there are significant spaces within the CBD, a large proportion of those spaces are used by commuters and employees. These problems will be greatly exacerbated by the future planned growth.

An integrated parking and transport plan for the CBD is required now. Key elements of that plan would include:

Government Funded Commuter Car Parking

The approved commuter car park planned for the north side of the railway line is supported, however, this will not provide any relief to car parking within the CBD. An additional facility is required to accommodate commuter car parking on the south side. This will provide more spaces for people wanting to do business within the Penrith CBD.

Shuttle Bus Services

Based on successful shuttle bus services operating in Sydney's CBD, Wollongong and between Parramatta CBD and Westmead, there should be a similar service provided for the Penrith CBD. Reliable, on-time, safe shuttle services help alleviate traffic congestion and remove irregular traffic users from the city centre and contribute to reliable public transport infrastructure.

Satellite Parking

There needs to be a series of satellite parking areas that are linked by the shuttle bus. These parking areas would be for employees within the CBD, freeing up available parking within it for use by shoppers and people doing business alike.

2. Relocate the Department of Transport to Penrith

Recommendation:

- > Department of Transport be relocated to Penrith

The presence of major businesses and government institutions in regional areas can provide significant long term social and economic benefit to local economies. To date, no major government agency has moved its headquarters to Penrith, despite the fact that peak-hour travel to Penrith is relatively easy because it is counter to morning and afternoon peak flows.

Other areas of Sydney and NSW have discovered that the presence of institutions such as a university campus, government department or agency can provide a regional economy with business and economic diversification to bolster communities in times of economic uncertainty.

This is not a new concept, the headquarters of other State Government agencies are located outside of the Sydney CBD. The WorkCover Authority is based in Gosford, the Department of Primary Industries is in Orange, the NSW Police Force College is in Goulburn, the NSW Police Force Headquarters is in Parramatta, the Department of Community Services is in Ashfield and the Health Department is in North Sydney.

The presence of a Departmental head office can encourage the expansion of existing business and the location of new businesses in the area. In other cases, such an institution or new business can complement a local economic cluster or create needed diversification within a region.

Regional centres also provide cost advantages for Government and business over operations that are located within the Sydney CBD. Regional centres can also provide a lifestyle advantage for their employees which are not found elsewhere.

In 10 Big Ideas to Grow NSW, NSW Business Chamber recommends the appointment of a Transport Tsar to take control over the co-ordination, planning and delivery of traffic services.

The Penrith Business Community recommends that the Transport Tsar and the Department of Transport be relocated in Penrith. The Department should be located in a developed Penrith Business Park which has the potential to further attract related and subsidiary industries (see below, Big Idea to Grow Penrith 8).

3. Strengthen North-South Traffic and Transport Infrastructure

Recommendations:

- > Lenore Lane extension – Erskine Park
- > Jane Street extension & upgrade intersections
- > The Northern Road/Parker Street upgrade intersections
- > Bus Lane Underpass
- > Upgrade Mulgoa & Castlereagh Roads
- > Werrington Arterial
- > Castlereagh Freeway extension to M7

In general, Penrith's road network works well in an east-west direction. However, the road networks that traverse the north south sector are poorly developed and create access problems throughout the area. These traffic impediments will be exacerbated as the North West and South West Growth Centres are developed and generate additional north-south traffic. Further business development north of the Penrith CBD is becoming a less attractive investment as access to the M4 becomes increasingly more difficult.

Basic works required in priority are:

Lenore Lane Extension – Erskine Park

The connection between Erskine Park Employment Area and the M7 has been promised for a long time, but not delivered. The NSW Government announced its planning and construction when they announced the creation of the Western Sydney Employment Area in August 2009. Timing for completion of the road was scheduled for the end of 2010. This has now been delayed. This road is critical to the further development of the Erskine Park Employment Area.

Jane Street Extension and Upgrade of Intersections

The Mulgoa Road/Castlereagh Road and Great Western Highway intersection is in urgent need of upgrading, but the solution to traffic connection in this vicinity needs to include the extension of Jane Street as well and its intersection with Castlereagh Road. This is part of the major north south road network that is underperforming and is impacting on business investment.

The Northern Road/Parker Street upgrade intersections

The intersection of The Northern Road/Parker Street with the Great Western Highway is in urgent need of upgrading. This is part of the major north-south road network that is underperforming and is impacting on business investment.

Bus Lane Underpass

The connection between the Penrith CBD and the former North Penrith defence land is critical to unlock its potential. This connection would be best suited to public transport linkages through a connected bus network linked with the Shuttle Bus services. Connection would be best provided by the construction of a Bus Lane underpass under the main western rail line from Belmore Street through to the North Penrith defence land.

Upgrade Mulgoa & Castlereagh Roads

Currently Mulgoa and Castlereagh Roads are 2 lanes each way from the M4 through to Andrews Road. This part of the road network is expected to receive additional traffic as Penrith develops. The section of road needs to be upgraded to 3 lanes each way.

Werrington Arterial

Construction of the Werrington Arterial will promote employment growth in the St Marys Dunheved area and provide improved north-south connection within the Penrith area.

Castlereagh Freeway extension to M7

In the longer term, consideration should be given to the construction of the Castlereagh Freeway which would connect the M7 to The Northern Road. Provision of such a road would reduce reliance on the M4 and improve access through Penrith.

4. Encourage a Major Business Headquarters to Move to Penrith

Recommendations:

- > Improved business planning for Penrith
- > Revitalisation of Dunheved Business Park

Improved Business Planning for Penrith

The paucity of appropriate levels of planning and land release in Penrith has stifled development in a number of key areas, including the 50 hectares former defence site adjacent to Penrith CBD (Station); affordable housing; transport planning and infrastructure; CBD redevelopment and the development of a Penrith Business Park.

In 10 Big Ideas to Grow NSW, NSWBC recommends the establishment of a Department of Business Growth, to solve structural inefficiencies which stagnate economic growth. These 10 Big Ideas to Grow Penrith supports the recommendation to establish the Department of Business Growth and believes that the new department would be ideally placed to identify the right type and mix of new businesses to be located within the newly developed site.

Decisions relating to the development of the 50 hectares site, known as the North Penrith Army Lands, will have a dramatic impact on the way Penrith develops.

The Penrith Business Community believes the right plan for the site will include a major business headquarters. All levels of government and the broader business community need to work together to find the best businesses for this site.

The location of the right businesses on the site will accelerate Penrith's development as an economic hub. An inappropriate development of the site, particularly through the wrong mix of business and residential development, will condemn Penrith's long term economic and social future. We believe Penrith can be developed into a significant economic hub with successful businesses accessing a rich breadth of local skills. Current plans for this site need to be re-visited and re-drafted to better suit the redeveloped Penrith CBD and other changes recommended in these Big Ideas.

Revitalisation of Dunheved Business Park

The Dunheved area was selected as a "brownfield" employment development site under the NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy. Indeed, in that document, the Government indicated a priority for the "brownfield" development to reinforce the State Plan priority of providing local jobs. That document also places an obligation on Penrith City Council to facilitate the provision of some 40,000 additional jobs within the city over the next 25 years.

The Dunheved Industrial Area was developed after WWII utilising much of the former munitions factory area and adjoining lands. It now covers more than 380 hectares, has more than 1,000 businesses and 7,000 workers. The area is a very significant contributor to the Penrith economy. Compared to more recent developments, the Dunheved area suffers from narrow streets, poor access, lack of amenity, insufficient power supply and poor services infrastructure.

The area does have the advantage of a 4(a) industrial zoning making it very attractive for a range of industrial developments not permitted elsewhere within the Penrith CBD. There is no Contributions Plan covering the area. There is no public transport in the area despite the fact that it contains a major bus depot within its bounds.

Future investment in the area is impeded by both the lack of certainty and the poor supporting infrastructure.

The Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce has consistently called for the NSW Government to provide funding for the preparation of a Master Plan for the site. It sees the preparation of such a plan as the first step in the revitalisation of the area and as a prelude for the long term plan to manage the infrastructure upgrade necessary for the future development of the area.

5. Creation of a Health Technology Hub

Recommendation:

- > Penrith to be the location for the development of a Health Technology Hub

A significant proportion of Penrith's employment targets will be achieved through the growth and development of small and medium enterprises. Penrith's development will rely upon the small business sector, centred around clusters and corridors of specialised economic activity. Over the last 10 years the largest number of jobs created in Penrith occurred in the health industry, followed by transport and Government administration and this is expected to continue.

With Nepean Hospital already well served by the Universities of Sydney and Western Sydney, Penrith is ideally placed to develop a cluster around the development of health technology. However, significant Government support is required for Penrith to realise this objective. This could include:

- > Development of an industry investment program including start-up funding for a feasibility study to identify, attract and grow high value small to medium enterprises (SMEs) in this sector
- > NSW Government support through the NSW Department of Industry & Investment and collaboration with organisations such as the Centre for Health Innovation & Partnership (CHIP) (based at Westmead Hospital) to work with Penrith's emerging health industry by helping to establish networks and program delivery and to identify investment prospects in this high growth sector

- > Financial assistance to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) program to revitalise existing industrial estates in Penrith
- > Seed funding to explore the feasibility of a Sydney Institute for Information Technology & Health Solutions in partnership with Sydney University & Nepean Hospital.

6. Create New Jobs in Penrith

Recommendation:

- > In accordance with recommendations to improve infrastructure, job opportunities should be directed to local industry and employees

As a Regional City, located close to the M7 and the M4, Penrith is a significant economic catchment.

Penrith has diverse industry and a labour force which is highly skilled. Penrith requires a range of business services, high quality retail outlets, recreation and cultural activities, high quality events and government services to further develop Penrith as a Regional City and provide greater local job choices for local residents.

With population growth in Western Sydney expected to grow to 3 million in the next 25 years, it will become the third largest metropolitan area in Australia. Employment in the region will need to grow to match this population growth, with 250,000 new jobs needed by 2031. Over the last 5 years 20% of all jobs created in Sydney were created in the North West of Sydney with Penrith as its Regional City. This trend is expected to increase over the next 10 years. The Regional Cities of Parramatta, Penrith and Liverpool, will be the focus of this growth supported by a hierarchy of major and specialised centres and employment lands that are well connected by transport. Much of the proposed employment that will support Regional Cities will occur through delivery of employment lands for manufacturing, industrial and warehousing enterprises in Western Sydney.

Importantly, the development and implementation of a policy that centralises NSW Government Departments/offices in the Penrith CBD is a critical component of job creation.

7. Upgrade Penrith Lakes Facility

Recommendations:

- > Upgrade Penrith Lakes Facility
- > Establish a single authority to administer the facility

During planning for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, the Penrith Lakes Scheme oversaw the development of the Sydney International Regatta Centre for rowing and canoe sprint competition, as well as the Penrith Whitewater Stadium. Both provided venues for specific events during the Games, and have since been used for public recreation and tourist related activities. The Penrith Lakes Scheme was a visionary program to rehabilitate the Nepean River floodplain after many decades of sand and gravel mining.

The Penrith Lakes Scheme will eventually provide Penrith with a 2000 hectare public area featuring seven lakes offering recreation opportunities and environmental protection and enhancement. Together, the Lakes will equal the size of Sydney Harbour from the Bridge to the Heads. Additional and immediate expansion of this scheme will bring welcome tourist dollars and contribute to important infrastructure development for Penrith and the surrounding region.

However, the ongoing administration of the facility requires immediate resolution. An appropriate management structure which has responsibility for the commercial and environmental components of the site is required. The Minister for Western Sydney should be appointed the relevant Minister, with a new Act created to administer the facility. Based on the successful Authorities governing Darling Harbour and the Homebush Olympic site, the Penrith Lakes Development Authority should be established to oversee the development of the Lakes. This will ensure that the Penrith community and its visitors have a state of the art Lakes facility.

8. Develop a Penrith Business Park

Recommendation:

- > Develop a Penrith Business Park

Macquarie Park and Norwest Business Park demonstrate that a successful business park can generate significant economic opportunities for local communities. They have also highlighted the importance of integrating such Parks with transport and infrastructure. While the Chatswood to Epping rail link has provided Macquarie Park with access for workers. Norwest, which does not have a dedicated transport link, suffers from significant traffic congestion.

The transport linkages to Penrith are strong – the Blue Mountains rail line, the M7 and M4 provide easy access to the district. As such, there are real opportunities to establish a Penrith Business Park to create economic opportunities within Penrith.

Major attractions of the proposed development include:

- > well located with other Western Sydney areas, notably Parramatta
- > access (M4 and M7)
- > University of Western Sydney
- > an environment to develop substantial relationships with other businesses in the area.

The impact could be the transformation of the area as a significant employment and business location, developed with sustainability principles and state-of-the-art facilities and services.

A Penrith Business Park would deliver:

- > a premium location for globally competitive businesses with strong links to the University of Western Sydney and the University of Sydney
- > a high quality, well designed, safe and liveable environment that reflects the natural setting
- > better integrated residential and business areas
- > an enhanced sense of identity for the area
- > better lifestyles for all those who live, work and study in the area.

It could be expected that the Business Park would provide the right location for major tenants and that the Park should include the location of a major NSW Government Department or Agency, and as recommended in these 10 Big Ideas; the Department of Transport.

9. Redevelop Penrith CBD

Recommendation:

- > The Penrith CBD be redeveloped to improve amenity and commercial activity

For too long, Penrith has been neglected as a priority area requiring redevelopment and improvement in amenity, infrastructure planning and implementation and transport improvements.

With current economic and populations growth trends, Penrith will be a key regional centre in coming years and immediate planning is required for Penrith to be expanded and development-ready. An initial priority however, is the redevelopment of Penrith CBD, which is required to attract and retain vibrant new business and visitors to the region.

Plans are required to redevelop Penrith through a government and private sector partnership, with the involvement of community and local business and industry.

Redevelopment of Penrith will deliver a CBD which is more attractive, dynamic and creative; a place in which to live and work. The redevelopment should include a heritage museum and exhibition centre, and a transport interchange. Open public spaces could welcome residents and visitors to businesses and a retail centre, cinemas, restaurants and entertainment. Operating night and day, the redevelopment will bring a much needed and revitalised social and business environment.

10. Collaborate on a Positive Marketing Plan for Penrith

Recommendations:

- > Develop and implement a marketing package to “sell” Penrith
- > Develop and implement a themed event for Penrith

Develop and Implement a Marketing Package to “Sell” Penrith

- > to a ‘global’ audience
- > to serious investors
- > to Penrith LGA residents and businesses

It is a fact that investment in Penrith is impeded by inaccurate perceptions. A radical approach will be required and a commitment by the whole community to ensure a sustainable future which will meet the demands of governments, Penrith’s economic growth, and changing social and environmental factors.

Penrith must have a serious commercial prospectus that highlights the economic advantages of locating in Penrith.

Penrith must sell its strengths – a magnificent natural environment, a diverse and skilled labour pool, access to rail and major roads, a location that provides ease of access due to its “counter-peak” location.

Business is the natural partner to work with Government to strengthen perceptions about Penrith as a strong economic hub.

Develop and Implement a Themed Event for Penrith

Penrith should host a significant annual celebration or an arts and culture festival. This event should have the potential to grow over the years attracting dedicated national or even international visitors every year.

Tamworth and Parkes have demonstrated how this can be done. Funding should be made available for the conduct of a feasibility and scoping study.

Notes



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