

SUBJECT: LMM 27/03/2018 - STATUS OF THE CITY OF NEWCASTLE

MOTION

That Newcastle City Council:

1. Notes the continued uncertainty surrounding the status of the City of Newcastle, where the City is classified as either as a 'regional' or 'metropolitan';
2. Writes to the New South Wales Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP, seeking clarification about regional and metropolitan boundaries in New South Wales, emphasising Newcastle's status as an emerging global City;
3. Calls on the New South Wales Government to provide certainty to the City of Newcastle regarding eligibility for grant funding opportunities by acknowledging Newcastle's role as the State's second City.

Background:

There remains an ongoing discrepancy between the Federal and State Government's approach to the classification of the City of Newcastle as either 'regional' or 'metropolitan'.

For example, a major city or metropolitan location is defined by the Federal Government's Department of Health which uses the Modified Monash Model to determine the classification of a location eligible for funding. Under the Modified Monash Model, a provider of funding, the Regional Arts Fund, cannot principally benefit a location classified as MMM Classification 1. The City of Newcastle falls within this classification.¹

Recently, the Deputy Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. John Barilaro MP, advised the Parliament of New South Wales that Newcastle would be ineligible to receive funding from the \$4.15 billion earned from the sell-off of the New South Wales Government's share of the Snowy Hydro Scheme.

The Deputy Premier said it was clear that Newcastle is not 'regional', and declared the City of Newcastle as 'metropolitan'.

This declaration is at odds with several key policy and strategy documents produced by the New South Wales Government, where the City of Newcastle remains 'regional'.

On the one hand, the Government will declare Newcastle 'Regional', with significant documents such as the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 having Newcastle as the urban heart of the 'regional Hunter'.

The Government's own Department of Planning office is signposted as the 'Newcastle Regional Office'.

Similarly, the 'Invest in New South Wales' website administered by the Department of Premier and Cabinet encourages investment into the Hunter Region declaring that "the Hunter Region is the largest regional economy in Australia and NSW, and home to Greater Newcastle, the seventh largest urban area in Australia."

Despite this, Newcastle is ineligible to apply for funding from the *Regional Growth Fund* and the *Stronger Communities Fund*.

Critically, Newcastle City Council was ineligible to apply for funding for the upgrade of Newcastle Art Gallery from the \$100 million Regional Cultural Fund for Cultural Infrastructure.

This is despite the NSW Government's Infrastructure NSW supporting 'investment in arts and cultural facilities in Regional NSW ... including Newcastle and Wollongong.'

On the other hand, the NSW Government failed to provide any funding for Newcastle Art Gallery, or other cultural infrastructure in Newcastle, under the \$600 million Cultural Infrastructure Program, raised from the privatisation of the state's electricity network.

Interestingly, the Art Gallery of NSW received almost \$250 million to expand, modernise and attract more tourism dollars.

The Federal Government's Building Better Region Fund describes "regional Australia" as being 'all areas outside the major capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Canberra.'

Independent experts such as the Regional Australia Institute have supported this definition.

According to the State Government, Lake Macquarie is considered definitively 'regional' despite some suburbs in that Local Government Area being only minutes from the Newcastle CBD.

This could mean that suburbs such as Adamstown Heights are to be considered 'regional', with Adamstown and Broadmeadow being 'metropolitan'.

The City of Newcastle points to the New South Wales Government's Future Transport 2056 strategy, which defines Greater Newcastle as 'a key Global Gateway City' with a catchment of over 1 million people,' as an example of the State Government recognising the City of Newcastle as an emerging global City and our status as a metropolitan City.

Ultimately, the City of Newcastle believes that Newcastle should be classified as a metropolitan area.

But what this requires is consistency from the New South Wales Government and investment to the scale befitting a metropolitan City which is the economic powerhouse of New South Wales and the State's second City.

Attachments: Nil

ⁱ This model is currently available at http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/MMM_locator