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Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

## **SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND PROCUREMENT**

Thank you for the opportunity to lodge a submission to the Inquiry into Infrastructure Planning and Procurement

The National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA) comprises of 25 local governments on the outskirts of the capital cities nationally. These and other similar areas house over 4m people and are growing at double the national rate. The infrastructure pressures are immense. The planning and procurement of the infrastructure that will drive productivity, social inclusion and environmental sustainability is therefore of great interest to NGAA members.

We wish to comment on the following Terms of Reference:

**Are local, state and federal governments adequately considering the infrastructure challenges that they face and do they have long term plans in place to deal with those challenges ?**

NGAA submits that no level of government is keeping up with the infrastructure required to service growing populations. While State Governments include some of the required infrastructure in Metropolitan Strategies and Transport and Infrastructure Plans, the main issue is no direct link to how these will be funded. Growth Councils are at the pointy end of the problem, but with little of the revenue raising capacity. Outcomes indicators demonstrate that, compared to metropolitan averages, outer growth areas do worse on education, unemployment, jobs self sufficiency and access

to services. Lack of infrastructure, even including the basics such as schools, is a contributing factor.

For outer metropolitan growth areas, the recognition of the infrastructure task tends to get masked in data that covers entire metropolitan areas. Given population growth is a major driver of the need for infrastructure investment, a spatial focus on the areas experiencing growth is crucial. Yet decision making processes for where infrastructure investment does occur suffer from lack of spatial impact assessment and analysis of where investment is most needed.

NGAA's research (SGS, 2009) demonstrates that investment in infrastructure and services in these areas would generate jobs, increase tax revenues and permanently boost GDP.

**For governments that are engaging in long term planning for future infrastructure investment, are they taking steps to protect the land and corridors that are needed to deliver those infrastructure projects in future ?**

Protection of land and corridors is an important issue if infrastructure is to be provided in a cost effective manner, where it is most needed, where its use will be optimised and where surrounding land uses can add value. Local Governments play their part by ensuring land is identified and reserved. While State planning processes may be in place, the realisation of the plans is undermined when the delivery mechanisms don't measure up.

**How can Australia increase or deepen the competitive market for infrastructure provision and funding in Australia ?**

NGAA is a member of the Urban Coalition which produced *A New Deal for Urban Australia* and which is considering the applicability of the UK City Deals model for Australia. NGAA commends these approaches to the Committee.

We also refer the Committee to NGAA's submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Public Infrastructure, as it covers many pertinent issues. Relevant research commissioned by NGAA, including *A Cost Benefit Analysis of Investment in Growth Areas* (SGS, 2009), *Addressing Skills and Employment Gaps in Outer Metropolitan Growth Areas* (Essential Economics and Geografia, 2012) and *Tomorrow's Healthy and Productive Communities, the case for community infrastructure in outer metropolitan growth areas* (Elton Consulting, 2012) can be found on NGAA's website [www.ngaa.org.au](http://www.ngaa.org.au).

Yours sincerely

**RUTH SPIELMAN  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER**