

Media Release

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IPART's Final Report on Contribution Plan No. 24 for Schofields

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is recommending Blacktown City Council review the infrastructure planned for the Schofields Precinct in Sydney's North West Growth Area and reduce costs.

The recommendations, contained in IPART's report to the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, would reduce the total cost of land, works and administration in the plan from \$262.6 million to \$241.2 million. This is a reduction of \$21.4 million (8.2%).

Chair of IPART's Local Government Committee, Deborah Cope, said that while most of the land and works in the plan are essential to meet the local infrastructure needs generated by new development in the Schofields Precinct in the short term, the council should complete a comprehensive review of the costs and timing of infrastructure delivery in the plan within 18 months.

"This comprehensive review should update the forecast infrastructure needs and costs for the precinct to take into account the impact of major planning proposals, the revised stormwater strategy and the higher forecast development yield and population," Ms Cope said.

"Regular reviews of the plan would help to ensure it includes the essential local infrastructure required for the new development, and that the contributions collected under the plan match as closely as possible the reasonable cost to the council of providing essential local infrastructure."

This is the second time IPART has reviewed CP24, with the first review finalised in 2014. Now, at least 50% of the originally anticipated development has been approved by the council.

"After reviewing the submissions and additional information provided by the council, we maintain our view that the expected population in the precinct is higher than the council has assumed when drafting the revised plan," Ms Cope said.

"As a result, we recommend the council re-apportion the cost of providing infrastructure across the larger population. This means the cost for each residential lot or dwelling would be lower than otherwise."

IPART has also recommended removing the cost of some additional land and works for stormwater management due to rezoning and to reflect the *North West Growth Centre Stormwater Management Strategy Review*.

The Minister will consider IPART's recommendations and publish his advice to the council on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's website.

If adopted in full, IPART's recommendations would reduce residential contributions for a low density dwelling from \$131,464 to \$106,338 and for a high density dwelling from \$63,813 to \$48,096.

If the council adopts this revised plan for Schofields, addressing any changes requested by the Minister, it will be able to charge developers up to \$45,000 per dwelling until 30 June 2020 and apply for funding under the Local Infrastructure Growth Scheme (LIGS) for any additional amounts. From 1 July 2020, it will be able to charge the full contribution amount in accordance with the plan.

A full copy of IPART's assessment is available on IPART's website:
<http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au>.