Introduction

The Planning Institute of Australia (NSW Division) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Destination 2036 Action Plan. The Institute is supportive of the objective of the Action Plan to develop a clear, achievable path to a strong and resilient Local Government sector, responsive to the current and future needs of our communities. The Planning Institute also commends the Division of Local Government for the initiative.

This submission has been prepared by members of the Planning Institute of Australia, including those members in the ‘Local Government Planners Network’ special interest group. The Institute’s comments relate to the sections of the Draft Action Plan that are relevant to the Planning profession, as set out below.

Strategic Direction – Strong Relationships Initiative 14
Align State and Local Government Planning Frameworks

The Institute is very supportive of the recommendation for submissions to be made to the NSW Planning System Review to ensure greater integration of the planning process and greater involvement with Local Government in the development of Strategic Land Use Plans. The Institute is currently finalising its response to the Planning System Review and is submitting that proper strategic planning is fundamental to a successful planning system. A link to the Planning Institute’s November 2011 submission to the Planning System Review ‘The NSW Planning System: A Way Forward’ is provided for reference purposes.

Our submission recommends that Strategic Plans must rely on evidence based research and must be vertically and horizontally consistent with other Strategic Plans in a hierarchy. The new Act should also provide for a hierarchy of statutory binding plans including a State Strategic Plan, Regional Plans and Local Plans and that all levels of Government should work together to ensure that these plans are linked and consistent.
with one another. This process should also recognise that strategic and local land use planning objectives integrate with the Community Strategic Plans prepared by Local Government.

The Institute agrees that it is important to strengthen the relationship between individual councils and their Regional Organisation of Councils and that Regional Ministers and Coordinators could assist local councils to establish broader State Government relationships. The Institute recommends that there is an opportunity for better resourcing of the Regional State Government offices to assist Local Government in their plan preparation.

The Institute is very supportive of the commitment of the Department of Local Government to develop tools and provide information, including data sources to assist councils in preparing their Integrated Planning and Reporting plans. The Planning Institute recommends within the submission to the Planning System Review that all property information, planning related data and planning controls should be accessible from a central/State Government maintained data management system, freely accessible to all agencies and the public.

In addition, the Planning Institute submits that there should be greater emphasis on community participation at the strategic, regional and local policy and plan preparation stages, rather than at the stage of assessment of development applications and special projects.

**Strategic Direction – Efficient and Effective Service Delivery Initiative 2**

**Establish Local Government as an Employer of Choice**

A discussion paper on ‘Cultural Shifts in Planning’ has been prepared by the NSW Division of the Planning Institute as a complementary discussion paper to the Institute’s NSW Planning System Review submission. The discussion paper focuses on the key issues influencing and affecting the culture of planning in NSW today. The paper seeks to identify practical and realistic mechanisms to improve the culture of planning from the perspective of the planner, developer and broader community. The paper recognises that effective changes to the culture of planning are a longer term prospect. This paper is the first stage in a process which will seek to identify actions to address this important issue for the future of planning in NSW. The role of local government and planners working within local government are an integral part of the process in changing culture.

**Appendix B Suggested Actions from Destination 2036 Outcomes Report**

The Planning Institute is very supportive of many of the suggested actions from the Destination 2036 Outcomes Report, as outlined in Appendix B of the Destination 2036 Action Plan. In particular the Institute is fully supportive of the following suggested actions:

- Align and integrate strategic planning between State and Local Government, including improving the interrelationship between State, Regional and Local plans.

- Develop greater community awareness and ownership of the Metropolitan Strategy and other city-wide land use planning policies and strategies.
• Align state, regional and local planning for transport. (PIA would add that this action should be strengthened to include the alignment of transport and land use planning)

• Develop and formulise processes for State and Local Government, including State Government agencies and Regional Organisations of Councils, to work together on integrating strategic planning at a state, regional and local level.

• Improve sharing of, access to and monitoring of data between State and Local Government.

The Planning Institute thanks the Division of Local Government for the opportunity to comment on the Destination 2036 Draft Action Plan and would be pleased to contribute at future stages if we can assist.