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PRESS RELEASE

The Australian Institute of Urban Studies, NSW Division, welcomes the Prime Minister's assumption of Federal responsibility for the planning of Australia's cities. Comments made by Mr Rudd about the lack of strategic planning for land use and transport infrastructure are especially applicable to Sydney. The Institute calls on the NSW Government to establish immediately a Metropolitan Planning Authority, responsible for the coordination of planning for the whole metropolitan region.

Institute President, Dr Robert Solomon, said, "Forty years ago, the Institute was successful in urging upon the Federal Government of the time the creation of a Commonwealth body to manage the growth of Australia's cities. The newly formed Institute played a major role in bringing together the development industry and government in a partnership for the benefit of the cities. The work started under a Liberal/Country Party government was taken up by the incoming Labor administration of 1972."

"Over the years, interest in the cities of Australia has been eroded by successive administrations who have failed to see the importance of the health of our cities to the economic and social health of the population."

"It is now time to refocus federal efforts on our cities, especially Sydney where a failure to plan has left the transport system facing chaos at vast expense to NSW taxpayers" said Dr Solomon as he called for a new effort on the part of the State Government to plan Sydney. "So many decisions made by the current administration lack strategic purpose, a fact evidenced by the lack of Commonwealth infrastructure allocation to NSW. However, we have a competent state planning bureaucracy and, with Government determination and support, we can create the necessary authority to tackle planning Sydney for a population of 7 million expected for 2049."

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