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Metrohubs bringing connectivity and local opportunity

WA Minister for Housing Peter Tinley spoke at a UDIA luncheon on Wednesday, outlining the potential opportunities that will arise out of the McGowan government's roll out of Metronet.

Metronet is an important aspect of improving Perth's connectivity and encouraging more people out of private vehicles and into public transport.

It is also important to view Metronet beyond just a rail network and consider the broader economic and community benefits that can be gained, particularly in terms of development around the proposed stations.

The government has earmarked the development of 'Metronet Hubs', or 'Metrohubs', which will incorporate higher density, mixed-use developments around key stations.

With a growing population in Perth, shrinking household sizes and changing demographics, a diverse mix of housing, including medium and high density around the proposed stations, is critical to sustainably and affordably housing more people.

The success of these hubs will rely on the existing community's support for quality design outcomes that will bring added vibrancy and amenity to many of these areas.

Some of the locations where Metrohubs are proposed are already earmarked as major activity centres, such as Murdoch and Midland, where hospitals and universities are in place and improvements around the rail stations will further enhance these areas. Other locations for proposed Metrohubs may be lacking in regard to access to services, a diversity of housing choices and employment opportunities.

These areas will benefit from the urban regeneration around stations that can include new and improved public spaces, quality housing options, walkable retail and commercial areas along with local job opportunities. These types of spaces can also encourage more local community focus.

While the government's Metronet vision promises to improve Perth's connectivity and assist with enhancing the diversity of our urban landscape, it will be critical the integration of forward planning and funding is undertaken successfully.

While recent Federal Government funding allocations will assist with the initial roll out of aspects of Metronet, a longer term plan that is part of a larger infrastructure funding program needs to be initiated as a matter of priority in order to provide certainty for developers and the community.

Long-term government planning and funding commitments allow developers to plan far enough in advance so local communities are involved early in the process and provided with a clear picture of what to expect in their area.

Community understanding and support for how projects can improve and benefit an area is critical to the overall success of Metrohubs and providing a diversity of housing across Perth more broadly.