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Dear Ms Chan

The Sydney Business Chamber (“the Chamber”) welcomes the opportunity to comment on *The Cultural Ribbon Draft Strategy* (“the Strategy”).

The Chamber is a division of the NSW Business Chamber and represents Sydney’s leading corporations as well as organisations from the government and not-for-profit sectors. On behalf of members, the Chamber advocates for Sydney to be a competitive and sustainable global city. The Chamber strives to identify, develop and promote the major issues that contribute to economic activity and growth in Australia’s global city, Sydney. This is achieved on behalf of members by representation and collaboration with governments at the local, state and federal level.

Economic importance of Sydney’s Cultural Ribbon

The Chamber supports the development of the Strategy. The area defined by the Strategy is a leading contributor to NSW’s arts and cultural sector, which is the largest in Australia and employs more than 176,000 people (about 5.6 per cent of total NSW employment).¹

NSW’s arts and cultural sector is a key driver of tourism to Sydney. In 2013, NSW attracted approximately 11.4 million cultural visitors – including 2.2 million international visitors – who contributed an estimated \$11.2 billion to the NSW economy. Cultural and heritage visitors represented almost 65 per cent of all international visitors to NSW.² Cultural and heritage visitors are found to spend almost twice as much as other international visitors – \$6,280 per trip compared to \$3,832 per trip.³

¹ Infrastructure NSW (2014)

http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/42966/inf_j14_871_sis_report_ch09_web.pdf

² Destination NSW (2016) <http://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Cultural-and-heritage-tourism-YE-Dec-15.pdf>

³ Infrastructure NSW (2014)

http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/42966/inf_j14_871_sis_report_ch09_web.pdf

Sydney's Cultural Ribbon has the capacity to deliver 'agglomeration' benefits such as enabling collaboration and promoting higher rates of visitation. The articulation of a strategy to enhance the Cultural Ribbon will ensure Sydney maximises the opportunities that exist with having a strong cultural precinct alongside one of the world's greatest natural assets being Sydney Harbour.

The development of this Strategy is also timely given the significant developments taking place or in planning along the Cultural Ribbon. Capital works being undertaken to upgrade or expand the Art Gallery of NSW, the Sydney Opera House and facilities at Walsh Bay, as well as the addition of cultural and heritage assets at Barangaroo Headland Park, will increase the attractions along the Cultural Ribbon. In addition, planning is underway for the future development of the Royal Botanic Gardens which includes upgrading the waterfront promenade between Mrs Macquarie's Chair and the Sydney Opera House, which forms a key part of the Cultural Ribbon. The redevelopment of significant parts of Darling Harbour and the planned urban renewal at Circular Quay will also provide visitors with an enhanced and quality urban experience.

Accessibility

There remains scope to improve the accessibility of the Cultural Ribbon, therefore the Chamber supports the identification of opportunities and actions in the Strategy to achieve this. Improving accessibility includes improving pedestrian and cycling access along the complete length of the Cultural Ribbon as well as improving public transport connections to key access points along the Ribbon.

While most parts of the Ribbon are located within close proximity to public transport, improvements could be made to enhance the legibility of accessing the Ribbon from train stations, bus stops and light rail stops. The Chamber recommends that the City of Sydney collaborates with Transport for NSW to improve wayfinding information at train stations, major bus stops and on buses and trains. For example, train carriages and buses could provide information about what stops to alight to access key attractions, including those along the Cultural Ribbon.

In addition, the Strategy must include actions to ensure universal access for all users including those who may be less mobile such as elderly and disabled visitors or those with small children.

Improving accessibility along and to the Cultural Ribbon would not only assist visitors who are planning on visiting parts of the Cultural Ribbon, it would also help promote the array of cultural institutions within walking and cycling distance.

The Strategy should also consider opportunities to use digital forums to market the Cultural Ribbon and provide information to visitors, as well support the collaboration of ideas. For example, the Strategy should include actions to develop or use existing apps that enable visitors to access information about attractions, events, food and drink venues, and transport information all within in a single source.

While outside the scope of this Strategy, the Chamber has been advocating for free public Wi-Fi to be provided within the Sydney CBD to offer a premium visitor experience, encourage innovation and enhance liveability. Having free public Wi-Fi along the Cultural Ribbon should be identified as an important future action.

Activation within the Cultural Ribbon

The Cultural Ribbon has the potential to make a significant contribution to the growth and diversification of Sydney's night-time economy. Already, many of the cultural institutions along the Ribbon are open at night, so efforts to improve the night-time experience along the Ribbon would complement and support these institutions. The City of Sydney's proposal to work with other agencies to improve night-time access and update lighting along the Cultural Ribbon is sensible.

The Chamber supports the Strategy's identification of the role that businesses can play in further activating the Cultural Ribbon. Allowing businesses to innovate will attract new visitors and improve the visitor experience. The Strategy should include actions to work with the business sector to examine and address regulatory and other barriers to attracting business activity such as small bars and eateries (both permanent and pop-up) along the Cultural Ribbon.

The Strategy's proposal to find additional open air performance spaces will contribute to the vibrancy of the Cultural Ribbon while also providing accessible performance spaces for amateur and emerging artists and performers. The Chamber supports the proposal to also consider how the public domain can better accommodate festivals and events along the Cultural Ribbon.

Governance

The draft Strategy identifies the mix of ownership along the Cultural Ribbon which contributes to the complexity of developing a comprehensive and meaningful strategy. The Chamber supports the role of the City of Sydney on this issue as one of overview, advocacy and facilitation. The Chamber emphasises the need for the City of Sydney to work with all stakeholders, especially from the cultural institutions and businesses located along the Ribbon, to ensure a collaborative approach to developing Sydney's cultural precinct which is located alongside one of the best natural assets in the world.



Thank you for the opportunity to comment on *The Draft Cultural Ribbon Strategy*. Please contact Larissa Cassidy on 02 9458 7359 or Larissa.Cassidy@nswbc.com.au if you would like to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Forsythe".

The Hon. Patricia Forsythe
Executive Director
Sydney Business Chamber