



13 December 2017

Greater Sydney Commission  
Attn: Mrs Lucy Hughes Turnbull AO  
Chief Commissioner  
PO Box 257  
Parramatta NSW 2124

Sydney Business Chamber  
Street address  
Level 23, 45 Clarence Street,  
Sydney, 2000  
Postal address  
GPO Box 4280 Sydney NSW  
2001  
DX 10109  
t (02) 9350 8119  
f (02) 9350 8199  
e enquiries@  
thechamber.com.au

Via email: [submissions@gsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:submissions@gsc.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mrs Turnbull,

**RE: A metropolis of three cities – Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan**

The Sydney Business Chamber (The Chamber) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Greater Sydney Commission's *Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan* ("the Plan").

As you are aware, 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 business by representation and collaboration with governments at the local, state and federal level.

For far too long the sustainable growth of Sydney, Australia's only global city, has been held back as a result of a fractured land use and infrastructure planning approach. Without well planned and timely infrastructure investments, new housing development on the city fringes has separated communities from employment, cultural and social opportunities.

While there have been attempts in the past to better align and time infrastructure investment to support new development, the establishment of the Commission has provided an independent governance structure to help frame and coordinate a whole of government vision across the Sydney metropolis.

The Chamber reiterates its strong public support of the three cities vision under the Plan, as well its support for the development of cascading District Plans to provide strategic direction to Sydney's six districts.

## **Infrastructure**

The Chamber welcomes the focus of the Plan on infrastructure being the key enabler for the three cities. With a population projected to grow to 8 million over the next 40 years, delivering not only the right infrastructure but at the right time will be critical.

The Plan, and the Commission's focus in coordinating infrastructure delivery through partnership with Future Transport 2056 and the State Infrastructure Strategy, is the right approach.

The development of the Growth Infrastructure Compact model (under objective 2) provides a key mechanism for the sequencing of both new infrastructure and new development based on the growth potential of new areas. The Chamber notes and supports this initiative being initially trialled in the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) and would encourage it being utilised more widely – even by sharing a modified version of the approach to councils to assist in their assessments of local development and infrastructure.

Considering the timeframe of the Plan, its recognition of the emergence and potential impact of electric and autonomous vehicles (Objective 3) is appropriate. While the Chamber supports the initiatives identified in the Plan to respond to these issues including the need to accommodate vehicle recharging and to allow for greater adaption of car parks and logistics hubs, further consideration might be given to the role of electric vehicles in terms of facilitating changes in transport mode. Electric bicycles, for example, may play a significant role in the future in terms of encouraging more people out of cars and onto bikes and public transport. How these are housed close to public transport nodes should be considered in more detail.

The Chamber also welcomes suggestions (Objective 4) that road user pricing be utilised as a means to encourage a greater number of people in Sydney to utilise public transport.

Since 2010, the Chamber has advocated for the NSW Government to develop a Demand Management Strategy for Sydney to combat congestion and get more efficient use out of our infrastructure networks. We support the proposed changes in the Plan as a means to achieve this but emphasise that such a change needs to be co-ordinated effectively across Government and its agencies.

## **Collaboration**

Recognition that the benefits of growth can only be achieved by collaboration and coordination between governments, community and business (Objective 5) is strongly supported.

The Western Sydney City Deal, which focusses on developing the Western Parkland City through the development of the Western Sydney Airport, remains the most poignant city shaping collaboration. With the complex governance of an airport, cutting across all three tiers, it will require strong levels of co-ordination and co-operation both across governments and the private sector.

While the Chamber supports the Commission playing an active and direct role in the facilitation of the Western Sydney Airport and its surrounds, we continue to call for an independent authority to directly co-ordinate the Airport's development to ensure its land use, infrastructure investment and employment opportunities are maximised.

We welcome the identification of the collaboration areas of St Leonards and Macquarie Park – areas which we believe through additional alignment with governments, agencies and business could be significantly enhanced.

### ***Liveability***

With the population of greater Sydney expected to increase by 1.7 million people by 2036, the provision of quality, affordable housing, with access to economic, social and cultural opportunities needs to be a key outcome of the Plan.

The Plan's focus on place-based planning, whereby planning provides a spatial framework for community interaction, is supported. The creation and renewal of great places supported by quality services such as schools, hospitals and recreational facilities will improve liveability.

While the Commission is correct in asserting that it is planning for communities and not just housing, delays in housing approvals remains a significant issue compounding attempts to substantially address the challenge of housing affordability.

The Chamber supports the identification of housing targets suggested by the Commission and the requirements placed on local councils to work with the Commission on developing 6-10 year targets for their area. Similarly, the Commission's Infrastructure Delivery Committee which looks to co-ordinate the identification and delivery of key infrastructure for housing through co-ordination with Treasury, transport and planning and health and education agencies is supported.

These targets and timeframes will ensure there are metrics to assess delivery. The Chamber remains concerned that despite recent changes to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* there are still not sufficient mechanisms in place to see councils pushed forward in unlocking new housing. These metrics need to be monitored closely and if not achieved steps taken to ensure they are.

## **Productivity**

The Chamber welcomes the aspiration of a metropolis of three cities connected through transport and planning to deliver walkable and 30 minute cities (Objective 14).

While there will be a range of transport investments and land use planning initiatives made to help achieve this objective, the proposed Sydney Metro West is the most critical.

With the Government having already recognised that the T1 Western line will reach capacity by 2030<sup>i</sup>, the case for developing Sydney Metro West to help meet transport capacity demands between Parramatta and Sydney is easily made. Indeed, Infrastructure Australia has designated this project as a High Priority Initiative<sup>ii</sup>.

Beyond addressing these capacity demands however, the Sydney Metro West project has the potential to effectively re-shape Sydney by truly enabling the Commission's Western, Central and Eastern cities concept.

Into the future, it should be seen as an avenue to provide critical transport linkages to the proposed aerotropolis, centred at the new Western Sydney Airport (WSA) in Badgerys Creek.

As the Commission recognises, despite actual and projected jobs growth in Western Sydney, a substantial jobs deficit for the region remains; providing a fast link between the Parramatta and Sydney CBDs would allow for the agglomeration of the two economies, and further elevate the status of Parramatta as complementary to the Sydney CBD.

In 2016, the Chamber commissioned research with Parramatta City Council that identified potential route alignments for a fast rail service from Parramatta to the Sydney CBD that would deliver a journey time of 15 minutes.

The Chamber believes that delivering a project that achieves similar journey times between the two CBDs would provide significant agglomeration effects that could not be achieved if a longer journey time was pursued.

While we recognise that Sydney Metro West should be seen in the context of urban renewal and the densification of housing along the corridor, additional housing delivered through more stations needs to be balanced against the loss of speed and the positive economic effects of agglomerating the two CBDs.

The Chamber has put forward a suggestion that formal consideration be given to the feasibility of delivering a hybrid approach to Sydney Metro West (where, for example, an express and rapid connection could be delivered

through tunnel duplication). We believe such an approach should be considered as it would simultaneously maximise both the agglomeration opportunities of connecting the CBD's, while providing significant urban renewal and value uplift along the route through the development of new stations and associated property development

In addition, we welcome the vision identified for increasing the connectedness of the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) and Western Economic Corridors (Objective 15) and the potential growth opportunities in specific precincts – notably Westmead.

Despite poor levels of transport connectivity, Westmead has grown from a former dusty showground to supporting the largest concentration of health, education and research facilities in Australia. The Chamber believes a very strong case exists to build on the opportunities such a significant agglomeration of talent and investment provides by extending Sydney Metro West past Parramatta to Westmead.

The Westmead Alliance (of which SBC is a member) commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to examine the economic contribution made by the Westmead precinct and recommend actions to further grow this contribution.

The report found that Westmead currently provides over 18,000 specialised high value jobs and holds the opportunity to become Western Sydney's true economic and innovation powerhouse by potentially delivering 50,000 knowledge jobs by 2036.

In order to realise this opportunity, the report acknowledged that *"a range of barriers to investment must be removed. Most notably, transport access, parking and urban amenity must be addressed to make Westmead an easier place to get to, along with a highly attractive place to live, study and work."*<sup>iii</sup>

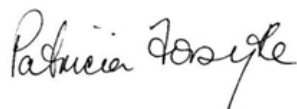
Sydney Metro West could help address these barriers, and provide the important link between Westmead and both the Sydney and Parramatta CBDs.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to comment on the Greater Sydney Region Plan.

As we remarked at the outset, this Plan has the potential to truly reshape Sydney into a more productive, liveable and globally competitive city. We look forward to working with the Commission as the Plan further evolves and develops.

Please contact Luke Aitken, Senior Manager Policy NSW Business Chamber on 02 9458 7582 or [luke.Aitken@nswbc.com.au](mailto:luke.Aitken@nswbc.com.au) if you would like to discuss this submission further.

Yours sincerely

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

**The Hon. Patricia Forsythe**

Executive Director

Sydney Business Chamber

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydneys-western-rail-line-packed-to-full-capacitywithin-15-years-20160907-gras2o.html>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/policypublications/publications/files/Australian-Infrastructure-Plan-2017.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Deloitte Access Economics (2016) [Westmead Innovation District: Building Western Sydney's Jobs Engine - Strategic Visions 2016-36](#)