

Draft Western District Plan

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Submission content: Submission to the Greater Sydney Commission I am writing to express my dismay at recent developments in the organization of the Greater Sydney Commission. At the outset the design of the Commission seemed encouraging, and we were given assurances that the village of Camden would be protected against inappropriate changes or developments, in order to preserve its heritage, a heritage of not only local or State significance, but of national import. The amalgamation of South West and Western districts did not bode well. Such a large area encompasses a range of disparate communities, each with their valid concerns, but characterized more by difference than similarity. Whilst the presentation I attended (at Penrith) was well planned and catered for, with polite and helpful staff, the proceedings were troubling. A 'Grand Vision' was announced, but details were 'to be advised'. The workshops followed a now familiar pattern, where a shopping list of desired outcomes was duly noted on stick-it notes to be collated into a handsome package and showcased as 'consultation'. However, the real planning will plow on, elsewhere, remorselessly. We only need to observe the Menangle Development to understand what the current Government means by 'consultation'. Despite three local Councils opposing the project, it has been signed off with the full support of

none other than the GSC. Mysteriously, 'consult' becomes 'ignore'. It is in this context that I register my disappointment in what seemed a genuine desire to work with, rather than against, communities. Presentations like the one at Penrith become little more than window-dressing, all the more galling for the expense and time involved. When fine sounding words are undermined by insensitive actions there is a credibility gap, and there, for the present, is where the GSC resides.

David Nethercote