Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan

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Last name: Wun
Suburb:

Submission content: See Attached

Number of attachments: 1
Ms. Sarah Hill  
Chief Executive Officer  
Greater Sydney Commission  

Dear Ms. Hill,

Please find attached Western Sydney Community Forum’s submission to the Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan and Draft District Plans.

Western Sydney Community Forum has reviewed the draft documents and developed 13 recommendations for your consideration. These recommendations will support the continued growth of Greater Western Sydney, centralising around supporting new and existing communities.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to make a submission. We look forward to continuing to work with the Greater Sydney Commission to support thriving and inclusive communities.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact [redacted] on [redacted]

Yours sincerely,

Billie Sankovic  
Chief Executive
Introduction

Background

In October of 2017, the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) released the Draft Sydney Region Plan as well as the individual Revised Draft District plans. The Draft District Plans connect metropolitan planning with local planning, and comprise of aspirations and proposals that will inform planning across Greater Sydney towards a 2056 target year.

Ten directions and planning priorities guide planning towards 2056 with objectives and metrics to support these directions. These directions and priorities are consistent across the Greater Sydney Region Plan and the individual Districts. These ten Directions and Priorities have been grouped in to four theme areas, being:

- **Infrastructure and Collaboration**
  - A City Supported by Infrastructure
  - A Collaborative City

- **Liveability**
  - A City for People
  - Housing the City
  - A City of Great Places

- **Productivity**
  - A Well-Connected City
  - Jobs and Skills for the City

- **Sustainability**
  - A City in its Landscape
  - An Efficient City
  - A Resilient City

Western Sydney Community Forum

Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) have led and shaped social policy and service delivery across Greater Western Sydney (GWS) for over 30 years. We advocate for and champion solutions that sustain community resilience, health and wellbeing, and achieve this through working with community organisations, joining with businesses and partnering with government across all levels and services.

As a regional peak for GWS, WSCF represents over 150 non-government organisations in the community sector across the Central City, Western City and South Districts. This submission therefore responds to three of the six draft District Plans as well as the Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan released by the Commission and is informed by our ongoing work with our membership, the communities of Greater Western Sydney and collaboration with Local, State and Federal Governments.

The submission provides 13 recommendations that across the five areas of collaboration, transport, housing, community and innovation.
Recommendations

WSCF, through research and consultation with our wide member base, have developed a number of recommendations that could add value to the draft documents. WSCF has an active and broad member & subscriber base (2,500) that includes a mix of agencies who connect with and provide services to people across Greater Western Sydney. Members range from small community based agencies to large charitable groups.

Collaboration

1. Ensure collaboration occurs across the ten directions to further promote integration, efficiency and synergy to meet the objectives holistically.

2. Pro-actively engage partners to ensure collaboration occurs across Government, Community and Private Sector

Transport

3. Explore greater options for accessible public transport in communities experiencing transport disadvantage with clear targets to improve access

4. Undertake further investigation, studies and investment in alternate transport modes as a key action for increasing access to affordable transport

5. Investigate options for more efficient diversions in the current train system to mitigate major delays and outages should disruptions occur

Housing

6. Increase Affordable Housing targets across all districts over the current 5-10% and investigate options for providing incentives to increase take up

7. Encourage developers to invest in financially and environmentally sustainable materials and methods

8. Expand community empowerment initiatives to create a larger cohort of financially and environmentally sustainable aware individuals and communities

9. Support and advocate for the continued transfer of public and affordable housing stock to community housing providers
Community

10. Inclusion and recognition of community services and infrastructure as a vital aspect of liveability in the Greater Sydney Region and their importance in place based activity and planning

11. Encourage Developers and Councils to include the development of Community Hubs/Centres in new areas as a vital element of liveability, community resilience and quality of life

Innovation

12. Innovation to be continuously encouraged and emphasised in GWS to support the future prosperity of the Greater Sydney Region

13. That new and innovative models of adaptable and flexible social infrastructure and services be supported to improve equitable access across Greater Sydney and respond to community priorities, trends and changes over time
Rationale For Recommendations

WSCF, through research and consultation with our wide member base, have developed a number of recommendations that could add value to the draft documents. WSCF has an active and broad member & subscriber base (2,500) that includes a mix of agencies who connect with and provide services to people across Greater Western Sydney. Members range from small community based agencies to large charitable groups.

The Ten Directions

WSCF broadly supports the Commission’s ten directions and priorities towards supporting the development and growth of the Greater Sydney Region especially in the GSC’s plans towards the continued growth and development of GWS. It should be noted that when the directions and priorities are carried out, each direction and priority should not be addressed as mutually exclusive. Each direction impacts on one another and the communities living in the region. Therefore, an integrated approach and collaboration should be also exercised internally.

Collaboration

WSCF broadly supports the Commission’s plans towards supporting a city that is collaborative. Furthermore, by leveraging the process of the Western Sydney City Deals, the commitment towards collaboration can be further reinforced between the three levels of government. A point to note is that within the City Deals Strategy, there is emphasis on the three levels of government working in collaboration with Community and the Private Sector (Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, 2016). WSCF would like to encourage the Commission to ensure Community and the Private Sector is maintained within the collaboration loop, especially within district planning as these groups are able to provide the perspectives of people who live, work and support these districts now.
Transit/Transportation

The Commission has presented plans which work in collaboration with Transport NSW. WSCF supports this priority to increase public transport accessibility especially for the local communities of GWS. Furthermore, the concept behind 30-minute cities provide an opportunity to create a more cohesive Sydney. The evidence is clear that GWS is home to a number of locations which are some of the most disadvantaged areas in Greater Sydney. A contributing factor to this is the result of transport disadvantage and the systemic and increasing reliance on personal transportation as the city grows to the west and southwest. This disadvantage leads to increasing social isolation, ultimately further reinforcing generational disadvantage (Rosier & McDonald 2011). WSCF recommends the GSC investigate more accessible and convenient options for our existing isolated communities in Greater Sydney.

As of December 2017, Sydney’s train network has been stated to be operating at “track capacity” (O’Sullivan, 2017). This position puts increased stress on the system which does not enable diversions or alternatives to be made in response to incidences in a timely manner. Therefore, the future of transport in Greater Sydney must be well positioned to handle disruption.
WSCF appreciates that the GSC has heard from a number of groups that the Affordable Rental Housing targets of 5-10% is not adequate to address the housing affordability pressures. We are also aware that there is a general sentiment from some industries, such as the construction industry, that any increase to the percentage target would impact on their viability. However, WSCF emphasises that the global evidence does not confirm this. For example, the City of London, which has an inclusionary zoning target between 40-50%, has not seen any adverse impacts on the housing market (Carmon & Marom 2015). Furthermore, with the ever-increasing advances in technology, materials such as the walling utilised in the Environa Studio Apartments in Annandale (Dincel, n.d.) and advancements in 3D printed houses in Moscow (Apis-Cor, 2017) the cost of projects in Affordable Housing is likely to create a balance.

Other forms of housing options should also be explored to generate affordability within the ownership markets. One such example is Nightingale in Melbourne which connects architects, developers and tenants prior to the development process. The core concepts of Nightingale are around affordability, transparency, sustainability, deliberative design and community contribution, which all come together to create a cohesive unit designed for all the stakeholders involved (Nightingale Housing, 2017).

With regard to sustainability, as noted by the GSC, the Central River and Western Parklands Cities experience higher temperatures than coastal areas. This is further reinforced by the research conducted by Western Sydney University in 2016 which found that on particularly hot days “land surface temperatures often exceeded 45 degrees Celsius in summer months”. Furthermore, many of these locations were found in areas with higher low-income households (Lopes et al. 2016). WSCF acknowledges that the Plans reflect the need for natural cooling options. Within housing and social infrastructure, more options should be explored.

The Illabunda Eco-Village located in Winston Hills has been developed to provide an eco-friendly approach to modern housing especially within the aspects of energy and water usage and natural vegetation regeneration (Illabunda Village, 2015). However, it should be noted that Illabunda caters more towards medium to high income households. In contrast is the K2 Apartments which have been listed as the most “environmentally sustainable public housing development in Australia”. The most important aspect of K2 is that tenants are supported with education programs to increase awareness of efficient resource utilisation. This form of empowerment enables public housing tenants to reduce their energy usage and results in a reduction of their costs of living creating a more environmentally and financially strong cohort of people (Kestermann, 2010).
Community Space

During the GSC’s Ask Me Anything on Reddit initiative on the 28 November 2017, the GSC noted the significance of accessibility to community facilities and social infrastructure as well as the importance of co-locating facilities as a centre or hub. Within the GSC’s Plan itself, schools and health services have been highlighted as key components to increase liveability of an area. WSCF would like to emphasise that community services, groups and agencies play an important role in not only supporting hard to reach communities but also in activating community spaces and building community resilience and capacity. Furthermore, community services act as a conduit towards generating community pride and ownership which has been shown to improve social cohesion and reduce the occurrences of disruptive behaviour (Renzaho, Richardson & Strugnell, 2012).

In the current sphere of community services in NSW, the importance of place-based responses to strengthening communities to build resilience has continually been in development. Within Australia, the National Community Hubs Program has effectively utilised schools as a community space to connect with local communities, especially those who have recently entered the country. The National Community Hubs model effectively embeds itself into the school planning and the school into hub planning, creating a unified support model for the local community of families (Community Hubs, 2015). WSCF would like to encourage the continued investment of place-based approaches that are well embedded within the community to support the future of communities across Greater Sydney, particularly in growth centres and disadvantaged communities in GWS.

Innovation in GWS

In collaboration with the Sydney Business Chamber and the University of Technology Business School, Deloitte has developed the ImagineSydney Series which explores the nature of innovation and empowerment to stimulate prosperity. It was found that apart from the Ermington/Rydalmere and Homebush Bay/Silverwater regions, the rest of GWS ranks low in innovation across Greater Sydney (Deloitte, 2017). Over the past few years and in the coming years, Western Sydney University has increased investment in GWS by creating the Innovation Corridor which takes a collaborative approach to increasing innovation across the region. WSCF would like to encourage the GSC to continue to support GWS as a region of new ideas.


