



22 October 2015

The Hon Rob Stokes, MP  
Minister for Planning  
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Dear Minister

### **Greater Sydney Commission: Local Advisory Committees**

The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) is an association of sixteen municipal and city councils. SSROC provides a forum for the exchange of ideas between our member councils, and an interface between governments, other councils and key bodies on issues of common interest. Together, our member Councils cover a population of over 1.6 million, or one third of the population of Sydney.

On 9 September 2015, you announced the proposed governance structure for the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC). The GSC will have thirteen members, including six District Commissioners. The enabling bill, the *Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015*, was introduced to Parliament today, however, the Bill does not provide any framework for the District Commissioner to engage or work with the councils in a district.

There is a need to provide an overarching approach to and framework for engagement and cooperation between the District Commissioners and the Councils in a district. This will ensure that the District Commissioner is able to effectively represent the interests of the district. The suggested framework is outlined below.

#### **Local Advisory Committees**

As SSROC suggested in its submission of 14 April 2015 to the Premier and the Minister of Planning on the proposed GSC, there is need for Local Advisory Committees (LAC).

Each District should have a LAC. The membership of the LAC should comprise the Mayors (or their delegates) of each of the councils in a district. The LAC structure is supported by a submission dated March 2015 on the GSC by the Shore Regional Organisation of Councils (SHOROC) and the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) (the northern submission).

The District Commissioner should meet monthly or bi-monthly with the LAC. This will provide the opportunity for councils to regularly discuss local and district level issues, challenges, opportunities and priorities with the District Commissioner. It would also enable the District Commissioner to inform, manage expectations, make a case and win support for local, district or metropolitan wide urban or infrastructure strategies and initiatives.

As the SSROC covers all of the South District and all but one, out of the eleven councils in the Central District (Strathfield), the two LACs for the two districts could be subcommittees of SSROC.

SSROC can provide Secretariat support to the Central and the South District LACs. The secretariat support by SSROC will enhance the effectiveness of the LAC as a platform to engage with the District Commissioner and to support the work of the GSC.

### **Technical Working Group**

The SSROC is of the view that LACs should be supported in their roles by a Technical Working Group (TWG) which would have an advisory role. The TWG would consist of the General Managers or nominated delegates, preferably the Director of Planning for each council in the District. Similarly the northern submission suggested a role by councils' professional officers in the structure for district planning and implementation.

SSROC agrees with the northern submission that senior officers from the Department of Planning & Environment and other relevant agencies should be on the TWG for each district, even if that is on an as needs basis. Also similar to the northern submission, the General Manager of SSROC or relevant Project Manager should be a member of the TWG, to help keep district perspectives.

Technical, secretariat and logistics support by the TWG to the LAC is feasible and will be helpful to the LAC structure and to the District Commissioner. SSROC already has strong relevant technical expertise in its working groups such as planning, environment and transport, which have SSROC secretariat support.

The proposed approach would provide the GSC with reliable insights into district perspectives, as well as establishing a channel for two-way communication between the district's councils and the GSC.

Please note that, due to the timing of this submission, it has not been reviewed or formally approved by SSROC. If it is necessary to amend any positions stated above, we will be in touch.

Yours sincerely,



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