



21 September 2016

Ms Lucy Turnbull AO
Chief Commissioner
Greater Sydney Commission
PO Box 257
PARRAMATTA 2124

Dear Ms Turnbull

Liveability in Sydney's Central and South Districts

The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) is an association of eleven 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.

SSROC welcomes the opportunity to provide a perspective, an approach to understanding and enhancing the liveability of the Central and South Districts. We would like to emphasise the link between access to adequate social infrastructure and the capacity of our communities to accommodate growth in a way that satisfies a 'liveability contract' between government and our future and current residents.

Liveability Benchmarks in Central and Southern Sydney

SSROC have investigated what represents acceptable benchmarks for living, recreating and working in the Central and South Districts. We engaged SGS Economics and Planning to undertake analysis of liveability benchmarks and benchmarks and opportunities to incorporate these into the Sydney's planning process. This is to ensure that we understand the performance expected of land use and investment decisions to deliver measurable benefits to local communities experiencing intensification.

SSROC believe that systems for identifying and investing in growth related infrastructure are not adequate in major renewal areas. The SSROC member councils are seeking to make state agencies more accountable for the funding and delivery of new infrastructure needed to improve areas undergoing rapid change. SSROC also recognises the importance of council provided infrastructure and the need to support local infrastructure to keep pace with urban intensification.

The study identified dimensions of liveability in the Central and South Districts and benchmarks. The dimensions include district open space and recreation, community, cultural facilities and childcare, housing affordability, local employment and economic development. Others include access to centres and employment, precinct sustainability, schools and other education facilities, active transport and healthy environment, and hospitals and other health facilities. These are detailed in the attached *Liveability benchmarks for central and southern Sydney* report.

Liveability Indicators and Mapping project

A second stage of SSROC member councils' work on liveability is the Liveability Indicators and Mapping project. The project will provide evidence base, options and strategies that could sharpen and broaden SSROC member council's analysis of liveability deficits and gaps at present and also

for time bound growth scenarios for urban renewal precincts. The evidence and findings could inform State infrastructure priorities for the Central and South Districts.

The study is building a geographical information system (GIS) platform to model access to facilities of different utility and quality, including features such as open space, shopping centres, health facilities/hospitals and rail stations. This will enable representation of the results via maps and an interactive dashboard that responds to the specific interests of each council.

The mapping tool will illustrate the SSROC areas' accessibility to social infrastructure and show differences in liveability across the area. It will enable 'pressure testing' of urban growth scenarios, renewal corridors and precincts and highlight potential liveability performance against benchmarks.

The Liveability Indicators and Mapping project is expected to be completed by end of October to early November 2016. The details of GIS platform for liveability in the Central and South Districts and liveability gaps will be submitted and demonstrated to the Greater Sydney Commission.

Urban Intensification, District Plan and Liveability

SSROC member councils believe that any intensification should result in a measurable improvement of the amenity or liveability of the district and the particular renewal precinct. Adequate infrastructure capacity should be in place to support urban intensification. 'Capacity' includes physical infrastructure (and related services) such as for transport - as well as community infrastructure such as open space, playing fields and the availability of affordable housing.

There is an expectation that the State Government would collaborate through the district planning process in the early identification, asset planning, funding prioritisation, funding and delivery of adequate infrastructure capacity. It is also expected that precinct scale planning would respond to the more immediate needs of new and existing residents in local areas undergoing intensification. The quality of public spaces, walkability, access to transit and a functioning retail, entertainment and community services centre are very important at the precinct scale.

Urban densification should be linked to infrastructure capacity for improved amenity. The process for identifying and delivering urban renewal precincts should be transparent and enable proactive council and community involvement. It would involve the application of agreed Council-State best practice methodology for assessing capacity and for identifying precincts for urban intensification. Early council involvement in the planning process is essential for a long term successful outcome.

Memorandum of Understanding for Urban Intensification and District Plans

SSROC member councils prepared a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for urban intensification and district planning. A copy of the MOU adopted by the SSROC Delegates in November 2015 is attached. It details the process for NSW Government agencies to work collaboratively with councils within the district plan framework to achieve liveability outcomes.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission on liveability in central and south Sydney. If you have any queries please contact Vincent Ogu, Strategic Planning Manager on 8396 3800.

Yours sincerely



Namoi Dougall

GENERAL MANAGER

Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

Cc: Ms Sarah Hill, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Sydney Commission