

BELLA VISTA STATION PRECINCT SUBMISSION

Prepared on behalf of:
Mulpha Australia Limited

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Executive Summary

Mulpha has a major stake in Bella Vista Station Precinct, with some 25 hectares of consolidated land holding within the Precinct, much of which is serviced vacant land ready for immediate development.

Circa Precinct, at the southern end of Bella Vista Station Precinct contains some 20.77 hectares of vacant allotments ready for development as well as additional lands which are partially developed and have additional development potential. This land can be developed immediately with commercial buildings and employment activities, thereby delivering commuter patronage to Bella Vista Station from its commencement of operation in 2019. Circa is a real opportunity to deliver 13,000 jobs for the future in an area where the built form has limited or no impact on surrounding neighbourhoods.

Mulpha also has significant interests outside of Bella Vista Station Precinct, in the adjacent Norwest Station Precinct, which are potentially impacted by policy decisions made in respect of Bella Vista Station Precinct. These interests include Marketown Shopping Centre and Norwest Town Centre Precinct known as The Lakes.

Mulpha supports the general intent of the Bella Vista Station Precinct DCP Amendment. However, it believes that Government can significantly increase its rail patronage dividend and employment generation arising from its investment in Sydney Metro North West and the Bella Vista Station by addressing Circa Precinct within this DCP.

Our key recommendations are as follows:

- Circa Precinct should be included in the Bella Vista Station Precinct DCP Amendment as a matter of top priority.
- FSR and building heights should be amended to encourage development within the Precinct. Amendments should be in accordance with Figures 4.2 and 4.3 within the body of this report.
- Views to and from Bella Vista Farm Park should be framed in accordance with Figures 4.1 and 4.2 within the body of this report.
- B2 Local Centre zoning should be introduced over the Circa Core, west of Norwest Hospital, in accord with Figure 4.4 within the body of this report.
- Minor adjustments to building heights should be introduced within the proposed R4 Zone adjacent to Jardine Terrace and Craighend Place to ensure solar access is maintained to existing residents.
- The proposed new car parking ratios should apply throughout the Bella Vista Station Precinct (and should be extended to the Norwest Station Precinct under the North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy S117 Direction).
- The role and hierarchy of the three existing and proposed centres (Norwest Marketown, Circa Shopping Centre and Bella Vista Station environs) should be clearly articulated in the DCP's Vision, principles and indicative structure.

- The proposed shareway and cycle link from Bella Vista Station and along Lexington Drive should be extended along Elizabeth Macarthur Drive to Norbrik Drive in the Recommended DCP Amendments Figure 10.
- Open space links within Circa Precinct to Bella Vista Farm Park should be identified in the Recommended DCP Amendments Figure 11.

1. Background and Purpose

1.1 Purpose

This document is a submission on behalf of Mulpha Australia Pty Ltd (Mulpha) in response to the invitation to comment on the Bella Vista Station Precinct proposal. It represents Mulpha's views on the document, its aspirations for the further evolution of the Norwest Business Park, particularly in relation to the Bella Vista Station environs and Circa Precinct, and seeks to provide constructive commentary on the proposal.

Overall, Mulpha commends the Government on this initiative and believes this will transform the area. Mulpha further believes that the proposal does not necessarily go far enough and that with some modest modification could achieve even greater value, returns and outputs for the Government's \$8.3B financial input. This is outlined in more detail in the following pages which include an assessment of prospective land uses, yields for the area and makes some recommendations regarding place making, activation and urban design.

Specifically, Mulpha is seeking the inclusion of Circa Precinct within the purview of this DCP Amendment as this area is intrinsic to the planning of the Bella Vista Station Precinct and to the delivery of employment outcomes sought for the North West Corridor.

1.2 Mulpha Interests

Mulpha purchased North Sydney Brick and Tile Company in 1997 and, in doing so, became the lead stakeholder along with the Council in the advancement of Norwest Business Park. Recent initiatives have included the repurchase of both Marketown Shopping Centre and the former Bunning's site on Norwest Boulevard, development of the low rise section and first apartment building within Norwest Town Centre Precinct on Solent Circuit, the development of Circa Shopping Centre and the sale of a site in Circa upon which a Quest Serviced Apartment is now under construction. Concepts for the further development of Circa Precinct, including the development of a multi-level retirement village, have been lodged with Council. Mulpha seeks to have these proposals considered expeditiously and believes that a clear and certain planning framework is fundamental to the progress of Circa.

Mulpha remains the major development interest in Norwest Business Park. Its ownership includes:

- The remaining parcels in Circa Precinct, Norbrik Drive (approximately 20 hectares);
- Norwest Marketown, that being the main shopping centre and associated car parking and pad sites on Norwest Boulevard (approximately 4.4 hectares);
- The remaining parcels in the Norwest Town Centre known as "The Lakes" and "The Green", Solent Circuit (approximately 5 hectares);
- The former Bunnings site at the corner of Norwest Boulevard and Lexington Drive (approximately 2.6 hectares); and
- Other residential land parcels within the Norwest Business Park and surrounds.

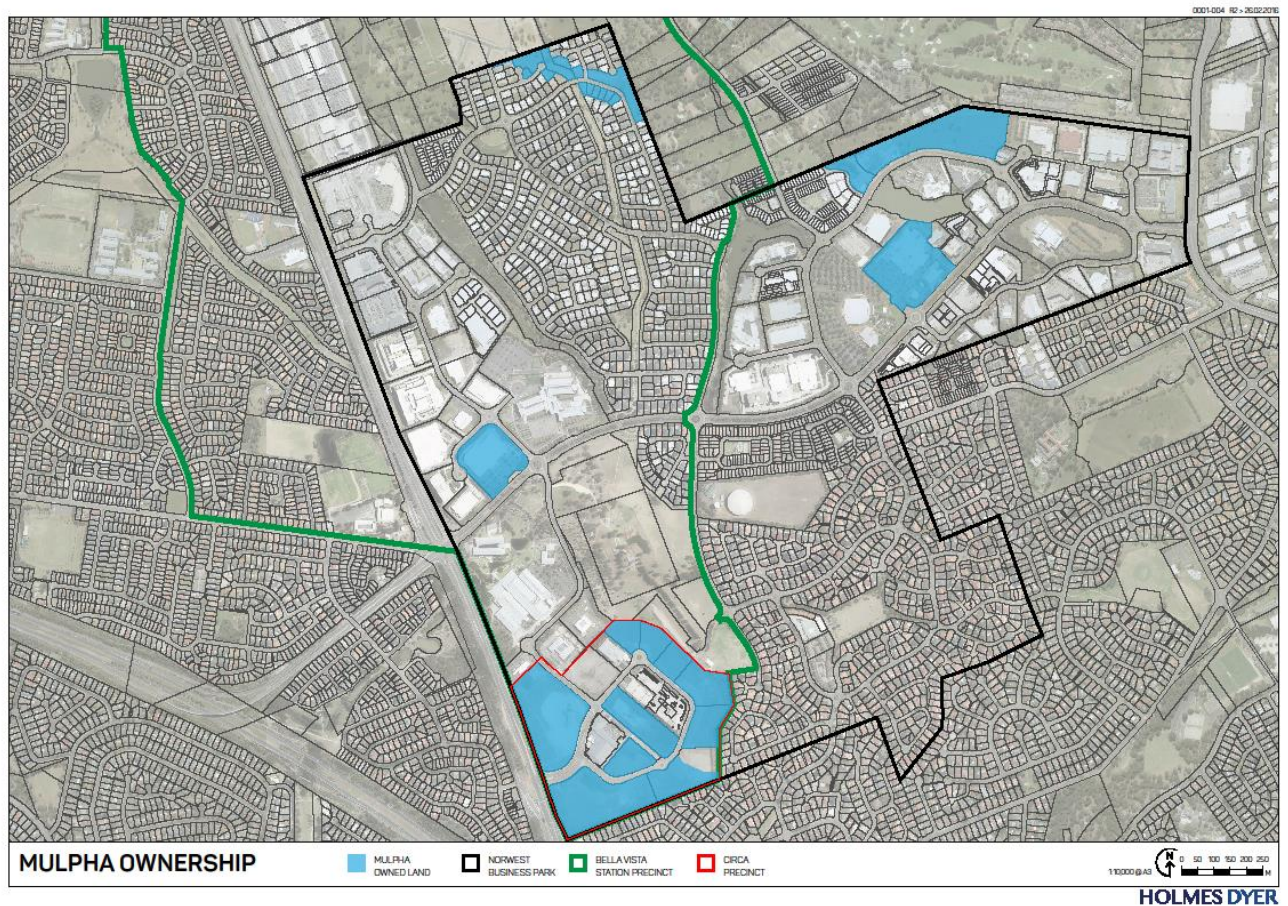
These parcels total more than 35 hectares and represent the most significant single ownership in Norwest Business Park. They also represent the most strategic sites by virtue of:

- Their location adjacent to, and integrating with, the Norwest Station itself;
- Their readiness for redevelopment (Norwest Markettown Site and former Bunnings site); and,
- The availability of serviced vacant land (remainder of Circa Precinct and The Lakes) which is ready for immediate development.

It should be noted that around 25 hectares of Mulpha's landholding is in the Bella Vista Station Precinct and the vast majority of the land is serviced vacant allotments in consolidated holdings.

The ownership of the land is shown in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1 *Mulpha Ownership, Norwest Business Park, Bella Vista Station Precinct and Circa Precinct*



1.3 Historical Context

The International Award winning Norwest Business Park is widely recognized as the most successful integrated campus-styled employment and residential park in Australia. Achievement of the outcomes now evident on the ground have been derived from visionary thinking, adaption to meet changing market demands and a continuing commitment to quality, amenity and delivery.

Since its inception in 1987, Norwest Business Park has been a landmark project for North West Sydney, providing a major employment node for the region, a town centre, with a range of retail, commercial, community, recreation, entertainment and spiritual services and facilities as well as a growing and diversifying residential base.

Development within the Business Park is controlled via the Norwest Master Scheme, which embodies the relevant DCP and LEP provisions and includes Estate Development Guidelines, which address such factors as landscaping, site standards, car parking, building design, signage and lighting. Norwest Association Limited is the management entity responsible for the maintaining of the highest standards of development within Norwest by its administration of those development guidelines and by physical maintenance of quality public environment established throughout the Park.

Norwest Business Park has evolved from a low scale, low density light industry and commercial genesis to the integrated medium scale office park, town centre and premium residential estate it is today. More recent developments have progressively increased the density of residential development, expanded the range of educational and community services and focused on multi-tenanted business centers and large footprint commercial premises.

Indeed, over the past 28 years, Norwest has evolved to its current position of Australia's pre-eminent Business Park housing over 800 businesses, 25,000 workers, 20,000 plus square metres of retail floor space and some of the most desirable and prestigious executive housing in Sydney's north west.

With the construction of the Sydney Metro Northwest Link and two stations at Bella Vista and Norwest, both within the boundaries of Norwest Business Park, the next phase in the evolution of the Park is now underway. This phase can be expected to include increased apartment development activity and increased retail, medical, commercial, recreation and community support services and facilities to serve an increasing residential and employment population. The unparalleled opportunity for Norwest Business Park is its actual ability to deliver its next evolution primarily on vacant land, thus not being hindered by fragmented land ownership and/or complex legal ownership structures that typically severely delay or compromise the delivery of the planning vision for the locality.

This means that Circa Precinct, in particular, is in a position to respond to any immediate needs to deliver land, buildings and associated employment to the market and is not delayed by the process of design, approval and construction of roads and infrastructure that will be necessary around Bella Vista Station.

2. State Objectives

2.1 State Position

2.1.1 NSW 2021 State Plan

This is the key Strategic document guiding decisions to influence the future of New South Wales.

This is a 10 Year Plan that in conjunction with the Budget guides NSW Government decisions to deliver community priorities.

The NSW Government's number one priority is to restore economic growth and establish NSW as the first place in Australia to do business¹. Economic goals of NSW 2021, to be targeted through a range of actions, include:

- *Improving the performance of the NSW economy*
- *Rebuilding State finances*
- *Driving economic growth in Regional NSW*
- *Increasing the competitiveness of doing business in NSW; and*
- *Strengthening the NSW skill base.*

The Plan specifically aims to increase public transport patronage that in turn will improve connectivity, new development and urban centres and foster liveability. It will also help to improve productivity and deliver efficiency dividends through reductions in workplace commuter travel times.

The success of the Norwest Business Park demonstrates its desirability and liveability. The success of this Park could be significantly augmented by improved connectivity to the Sydney CBD and the removal of the artificial constraint imposed by current planning policies.

This supports the Bella Vista Station Precinct (and Norwest Station Precinct) and supports and optimises the potential success of the Park that, in turn, will lead to the attainment of the State's Goals of improved lifestyles, improved economic performance and competitiveness, and increased employment generation.

2.1.2 "A Plan for Growing Sydney"

A Plan for Growing Sydney provides a very current (December 2014) synopsis of the State's Government's views on the growth directions for Sydney and for the North West.

The Government's vision for Sydney is: "a strong global city, a great place to live".

To achieve this vision, the Government has set down goals that Sydney will be:

- *"A competitive **economy** with world-class services and transport;*
- *A city of **housing choice** with homes that meet our needs and lifestyles:*
- *A **great place to live** with communities that are strong, healthy and well connected: and*

¹ <http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au>

- *A sustainable and resilient city that protects the **natural environment** and has a balanced approach to use of land and resources.”*

This Plan sets out directions and actions that will deliver these goals for Sydney. Key directions and actions of relevance to Bella Vista Rail Station and environs include:

- *“Accelerating urban renewal across Sydney at train stations, providing homes closer to jobs;*
- *Grow high-skilled jobs in the Global Economic Corridor by expanding employment opportunities and mixed-use activities; and*
- *Invest in strategic centres across Sydney to grow jobs and housing and create vibrant hubs of activity.”*

Key principles that will guide how Sydney grows include the following:

- *Principle 1: Increasing housing choice around all centres through urban renewal in established areas*
- *Principle 2: Stronger economic development in strategic centres and transport gateways*
- *Principle 3: Connecting centres with a networked transport system*

The accompanying extract from “A Vision For Sydney” (refer to figure 2.1 below) provides some very significant direction of direct relevance to not only the Bella Vista Station Precinct but also the Norwest Rail Station environs and the wider Norwest Business Park, while the key plans for Sydney, notably the document’s “Figure 2: A Plan For Growing Sydney” is specific in identifying Norwest as one of the key Strategic Centres recognised as a location for accelerated urban renewal, growth in highly skilled jobs, increased housing provision and more variety in housing choice.

Norwest is recognised as a location for significant investment and Bella Vista Rail Station environs is recognised as part of the Priority Precinct for major urban renewal and increased housing delivery. None of this detracts from the significance of Bella Vista as an important and growing hub for business and employment. The diversity of activities and their transport connectivity, combined with housing delivery, drives the productivity benefits sought for these Strategic Centres and can deliver the economic, environmental and social benefits targeted for these locations.

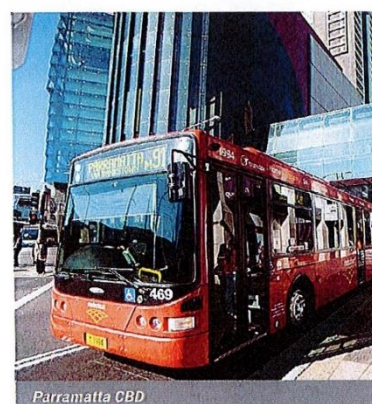
Not only does “A vision for Sydney” continually emphasise the importance of Norwest (and, hence, Bella Vista) as a key Strategic Centre, the Government is committed to working in partnership with Councils to:

- *“devise commercial core zonings in targeted locations and update planning controls to increase density, including changing floor space ratios allowances and building height controls to facilitate the expansion of these markets; and*
- *help remove barriers to growth and promote more efficient land use outcomes, firstly, in Parramatta, Macquarie Park and Norwest.”*

Clearly the opportunity exists to create a winning outcome for Government, for Council and, most importantly, for the community they serve.

Figure 2.1 below is an excerpt from “A Plan for Growing Sydney” that outlines the three key principles pertaining to Goal 4 of that Plan “A sustainable and resilient city that protect the natural environment and had a balanced approach to the use of land and resources.” as are discussed above.

Figure 2.1 A vision for Sydney – taken from NSW Government – Planning and Environment “A Plan for Growing Sydney – A Strong Global City A Great Place to Live.”



THE PLANNING PRINCIPLES THAT WILL GUIDE HOW SYDNEY GROWS

PRINCIPLE 1: INCREASING HOUSING CHOICE AROUND ALL CENTRES THROUGH URBAN RENEWAL IN ESTABLISHED AREAS

Increasing housing close to centres and stations makes it easier to walk or cycle to shops or services; travel to work or other centres; reduces traffic congestion; and makes our neighbourhoods more community oriented.

Increasing the variety of housing available makes it easier for people to find a home that suits their lifestyle, household size and their budget.

Locating new housing in centres delivers a range of economic, environmental and social benefits to the community. Research by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has similarly found that productivity benefits arise from a more compact city.

PRINCIPLE 2: STRONGER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN STRATEGIC CENTRES AND TRANSPORT GATEWAYS

Locating jobs in around 30 to 40 large centres across Sydney provides the greatest benefits to the city's overall productivity.

Sydney's largest and most important hubs for business and employment are 'strategic centres' and Sydney's 'transport gateways'. Together, these locations account for 43 per cent of all jobs across Sydney.

These locations will be an important focus for future growth because of their size, diversity of activities, their connections (mainly to the rail network), and the presence of major institutional activities such as health and education facilities or Sydney's major airports and port.

PRINCIPLE 3: CONNECTING CENTRES WITH A NETWORKED TRANSPORT SYSTEM

The public transport network connects people to centres. In doing this, it connects people to jobs, education facilities, health centres and hospitals, and sporting, cultural and entertainment facilities.

Centres rely on efficient transport to serve their customers, support their growing business and freight functions, and to connect to the global economy.

Efficient links within centres improves convenience for customers, and efficient links into centres and between centres helps people to get to jobs, schools, universities, shops and leisure activities.

Making it easy to get to centres and offering a range of services at centres makes them a focal point for the community and increases prospects for economic growth and job creation.

2.1.3 New South Wales Long Term Transport Master Plan

The New South Wales Long Term Master Plan (2013) as its name suggests sets out a long term plan for transport within the State.

Similar to the State Plan and the Plan for Growing Sydney this plan too focusses on objectives to improve liveability and support economic growth and productivity. The attainment of these objectives will be facilitated by the provision of public transport that reduces journey times, improves connectivity, increases efficiency and provide services that support job growth in centres close to where people live with an emphasis on transit oriented development in terms of both urban renewal and new development.

This will also support business to business transactions.

Developing the train link to Bella Vista will enhance the area and provides the opportunity to maximise the benefits that the Norwest Business Park provides in terms of employment, lifestyle and the prospect of intensification of this successful Park.

2.1.4 New South Wales State Infrastructure Strategy

This strategy aims to grow the New South Wales economy by \$50 billion and add over 100,000 jobs. This strategy focusses on the need for infill development within strategic centres to mitigate and manage the cost of infrastructure associated with Greenfields developments.

The Norwest Business Park in its entirety is a key precinct in this respect.

2.2 Potential to Achieve Increased Yields

The delivery of rail to the NorthWest is a paradigm shift in the region's connectability and desirability as a place to live, work and play. As demonstrated in major cities around the world where transit has been introduced and matched with a liberal planning policy regime, levels of investment and growth can be very significant.

A number of opportunities exist to increase employment, residents, services and facilities within Bella Vista Precinct. These localities include Bella Vista Station environs and the undeveloped land to the north, further intensification of development within the existing Norwest Business Park and the serviced but largely vacant land within Circa Precinct.

The Bella Vista Station Precinct Proposal, Planning Report and DCP Amendment deal appropriately with the opportunities around the station and within the existing Business Park, however Circa Precinct is ignored by these documents.

2.2.1 Circa Precinct

We believe that the largely serviced vacant lots in Circa Precinct provide an opportunity to create an additional focus for employment and mixed use development, which can be served by the existing T-Way link to Bella Vista Station and the Old Windsor Road / Norbrik Drive intersection upgrade which provides superior vehicular access to the area and lesser traffic impacts on more congested roads elsewhere in Bella Vista Station Precinct. It can build upon the existing shopping centre, serviced apartments and hospital and proposed retirement village to deliver an intensively developed urban environment and employment precinct. The expansion of Norwest Private Hospital makes it the largest and most significant medical facility in north western Sydney. We believe this represents a significant attraction for the further development of complimentary health services.

The Circa Precinct concept envisages a mixed use environment of increased height and density that generates a diversity of users, an extension of the day/night economy and delivers the spaces, built form and landscaped environment required to attract businesses and users to the precinct to create a diverse, vibrant and connected community. The intent is to create the third hub of the Business Park (Norwest, Bella Vista and Circa) as an employment precinct which is attractive to larger and smaller employers and their staff. Evidence from around the world demonstrates that a successful employment precinct is one that is transport connected, provides for a wide range of services and facilities, from cafés, bars and entertainment facilities to shops, banks, medical services, child care support, gymnasiums and recreation facilities, and is supported by a residential population which helps to underpin the viability of the services sought by the employed population.

Specifically, the Circa Precinct concept proposes delivery of the following:

- a central plaza for public gatherings, interaction and performances;
- a commercial core of office buildings and business activities;
- ground floor activation of the commercial core with small scale retailing, cafes, restaurants, bars and entertainment venues;
- additional activation through cinemas, clubs, function centre/conference centre and supported by a community centre, recreation facilities, gymnasium, child care centre, medical facilities etc;
- high quality landscaped settings with an emphasis on pedestrian movement, comfort and spaces;
- a surrounding commercial precinct comprising low/medium/high rise office buildings, high technology and research centres and industries, clinics, consulting rooms, health facilities, and/or education establishments;
- commercial development and medical services to build upon the strong existing health focus (Norwest Private Hospital and Q Central), providing a centre of health excellence for the North West;
- an emphasis on connectivity and landscape quality throughout the commercial precinct;
- a retirement village comprising independent living units and supported age care, with a comprehensive range of services and providing a residential interface to the existing community to the south;

- possible inclusion of residential apartment living in a mixed use environment, taking maximum advantage of proximity to retailing, services and transport facilities;
- provision of alternative movement system options, including bus bays for a shuttle service between the train stations and the Circa Commercial Core and extensive cycle and pedestrian networks that link to the adjacent T way stop, to surrounding suburbs and to key recreation and transport infrastructure; and
- a sensitive and suitable interface to Bella Vista Farm Park.

Circa is fundamental to the achievement (and potential exceeding) of employment targets in Bella Vista Station Precinct.

A comprehensive summary of the Circa Precinct concept is contained in “Circa Precinct Preliminary Concept”, February 2015. The following image Figure 2.2 highlights the quality of development and emphasis on the public realm proposed for Circa. The Circa Concept and the specific proposals for the next stage of development (the Retirement Village and Nursing Home) are appended to this document.

Figure 2.2 *Circa Commercial Core indicative image.*



3. Review of Precinct Proposal and Planning Report

3.1 Overview of Documents

The Bella Vista Station Precinct Proposal (hereafter the 'Proposal' document) and the Bella Vista Station Precinct Planning Report (hereafter the 'Planning Report') provide an evolution and refinement of the ideas originally outlined in the North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy of September 2013 and provide the platform for their transformation into the Recommended DCP Amendments currently on exhibition and which are intended to provide the design framework for future development in Bella Vista.

The two documents provide a strong overlap of information and accordingly are discussed together.

3.2 Selected Findings

3.2.1 *Priority Precincts*

The Government and Council determined that Bella Vista, Kellyville and Showgrounds would be nominated as Priority Precincts. This was endorsed by Government in August 2014 and, as a consequence, detailed investigation of these areas and the current amendment proposals have been fast tracked under the Government's Priority Precincts program.

Whilst this is positive for these areas, the consequence is that a differential rate of change and development can be expected to occur between the priority precincts and non-priority precincts. Whilst Bella Vista may have significant development potential, so too does Norwest and the redevelopment of sites around the Norwest Station should have the same opportunities for development as those around Bella Vista Station. Most importantly, they should not be disadvantaged by operating under less favourable policy frameworks.

3.2.2 *Development Yield*

The Proposal and Planning Report both "downgrade" dwelling and employment yields from the targets identified in the original 2013 North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy (from 4,400 to 4,200 dwellings and from 10,500 to 9,400 jobs by 2036). This is largely as a result of the current and continuing development of the Balmoral Road Release Area at densities below that modelled for the 2013 Corridor Strategy.

Whilst this loss of yield in close proximity to the Bella Vista Station is lamentable, the Circa Precinct provides an alternative development capacity uplift subject to an appropriate uplift in FSR and building heights over the current standards.

We have calculated a theoretical floorspace capacity of around 470,000m² for Circa and a potential to deliver up to 25,000 jobs and 1,000 dwellings. This represents a net addition of around 230,000m² of floorspace, an extra 13,000 jobs and 1,000 additional dwellings over estimates based upon current FSR and building heights.

Given immediate proximity to a T-Way stop, the possible introduction of a private shuttle bus and pedestrian/cycle connections along Elizabeth Macarthur Creek, Circa represents a far more connected option than the northern and north eastern sections of the Balmoral Road Release Area.

3.2.3 Growth Timeframes

The two reports do not address development needs beyond 2036. While 20 years represents an appropriate timeframe for detailed planning, it must be recognised that 2036 does not represent an end state. Sydney is predicted to grow to 8.0 – 8.5 – 8.9 M by 2061 (ABS medium series A, B & C, Cat. No. 3222.0) and will only be around 6.5M by 2036. Bella Vista, Norwest and other Station precincts have significant capacity to grow and evolve beyond 2036 and that capacity must not be truncated by inadequate FSR and height limits leading to underdevelopment of localities with greater development potential than current planning controls permit (as has occurred in recent development in the Balmoral Road area).

Circa is the most obvious opportunity to address the long term capacity shortfall by ensuring that development in the short-medium term is not undersized and thus failing to meet longer term yield objectives.

3.2.4 Bus Services and Cycle Links

The proposed refocussing of bus services on rail stations and the prioritization of bus services as suggested on page 30 of the Planning Report provides the opportunity to deliver additional links from Circa to Bella Vista Station. The existing T-Way bus system provides for direct access with stops on Old Windsor Road at Norbrik Drive and at Bella Vista Station.

Continuation of the proposed cycle link along Lexington Drive to Elizabeth Macarthur Drive would deliver another key transport link between Bella Vista Station and Circa, while the development of the Elizabeth Macarthur Creek and Bella Vista Farm Park pedestrian/cycle link will be completed with the connections through to Norbrik Drive, as proposed by the Circa Precinct concept.

3.2.5 Car Parking Ratios

The Planning Report provides strong evidence for a reduction in car parking ratios wherever fixed transit options can be provided. This is echoed in studies of transit orientated development around the world.

Monitoring of public transit use and car ownership over time is warranted to, firstly, confirm that the rail investment has delivered the desired mode shift and, secondly to investigate whether further reductions in parking ratios may be warranted, particularly in respect of particular dwelling typologies such as student housing, affordable housing and studio apartments.

3.2.6 Land ownership

Outside of public authorities, Mulpha is probably the largest land owner in the area, with some 35 hectares of land held in a number of properties within Norwest Business Park and some 25 hectares within the Bella Vista Station environs. Mulpha is a significant player in the delivery of the State's development targets and, hence, addressing land use, FSR and building heights across Mulpha's holdings is critical to the delivery of these targets.

Furthermore, as the owner of large unfragmented, serviced development sites, Mulpha has the propensity to deliver greater yields than would otherwise be achievable on a series of isolated individual properties. Most importantly, Circa Precinct is ready for immediate development and can deliver commuter patronage to Bella Vista Station from its commencement of operation in 2019.

4. Review of Recommended Amendments

4.1 Application of Amendments

The following section seeks to provide useful commentary in respect to the proposed amendments. The proposal outlines a range of planning policy changes including:

- *zoning for a mixed use centre around the station to facilitate a compact, walkable centre providing a variety of shops, services and apartments;*
- *areas designated as parks and open space, as well as heritage;*
- *business zones around the station and in the southern part of the precinct, enhancing the role of the Norwest Business Park;*
- *building heights to transition down from the station area to stand-alone housing areas beyond, providing for a range of housing types to meet demand for greater housing choice;*
- *recommended precinct specific controls for The Hills Shire Council to adopt into its Development Control Plan.*

Included in the documentation are recommended Development Control Plan Amendments. The amendments to the DCP appear to be the inclusion of a specific section directed to this Precinct. The consultation documents also variously speak of changes to the Council's Local Environmental Plan and a SEPP. The changes foreshadowed in this Plan are outlined in general terms however are not specifically indicated making it difficult to comment with any certainty in respect to the effect of these amendments.

4.2 Vision, Principles, Structure

The vision focusses on the Bella Vista Station Precinct. It "breaks" the area into essentially three character areas:

Local Centre

The new local centre surrounding the station with its broad range of land uses and provision for the tallest buildings and most generous FSR.

The existing B7 Business Park

This area is to comprise employment generating land uses and large floorplates combined with an improved public domain.

Residential areas

This is in the form of two key zoning changes one to allow broad ranging residential development in a variety of types forms and densities and a medium density area.

The structure of the area is foreshadowed by the Bella Vista Station Precinct Plan. This has objectives to ensure that the station and its immediate surrounds are the premier area enabled not only through the most generous FSR and heights but also through opportunities for call in as State Significant areas and the application of additional land uses.

It is considered that this vision and focus is unduly narrow as it excludes Circa and Norwest Station. A similar exercise for the Norwest Station and Environs is recommended as a separate exercise. Had this all been included in the one amendment, policy could have more holistically addressed the relationships between the various precincts, including Marketown, within the locality and how the two rail stations can be leveraged for maximum benefits.

Notwithstanding, on the assumption that the scope is accepted, the vision is still considered unduly narrow for the area of the land contained within the draft DCP area.

Specifically, the vision focusses on the station area and immediate vicinity and thus does not identify the opportunities to be provided through the inter-relationship between the station and Circa. Circa is a largely undeveloped section of the Norwest Business Park. Keeping its development potential low ie an FSR of 1.0 to 1.49, in combination with a lower building heights and a fewer number of land use options (compared to the new B7 Business Park area) will see this site under-developed long term thus losing the opportunities currently provided and, as a consequence, fail to maximise the value of the State's rail investment.

One of the key learnings of the Norwest Business Park is the need for a mix of land uses to support one another including residential development in close proximity to employment nodes.

Whilst the argument of this policy amendment appears to be that the rail station environs works with the support of the business park, this does not take account of the fact that if the whole area was to be up zoned the Government would achieve improved outcomes for its \$8.3B rail investment, through increased commuter volumes.

Furthermore Circa is in relatively close proximity to the station at approximately 1200 metres. For many this is an acceptable walk particularly with an increasing focus on health and movement, but in any event the T-Way, cycleways and a privately funded shuttle bus could further optimise the rail connection to this area.

4.3 Key Maps

The State has prepared a number of draft maps to support the proposed amendment to The Hills LEP. Those of particular significance are:

- Rezoning;
- Building Height; and
- Floor Space Ratio.

These maps effectively define the development potential of every site in the Bella Vista Precinct by their restriction or permission of specific land uses, building heights and allowable floor areas. Accordingly, they are singularly most responsible for the achievement or otherwise of Government's long-term development objectives for the Sydney Metro Norwest Corridor generally and for the Bella Vista Precinct environs in particular.

Our comments on these draft maps are as follows.

4.3.1 Rezoning Map

The opportunity exists to expand the mix of land uses within the Circa Precinct to include residential apartment development, especially as part of a mixed use core precinct, and thereby provide for increase vibrancy and improved underpinning of workforce services and facilities in this part of Norwest Business Park.

In order to maintain a focus upon commercial and employment outcomes within Circa, it may be appropriate to link any residential apartment development to the continuing delivery of commercial floorspace. For example, DCP Controls could always ensure that any development:

- delivered commercial/non-residential floorspace to the primary road and pedestrian frontage of any site; and
- maintains not less than 50% of the net floorspace on any development site as non-residential floorspace, while recognising that individual buildings within a development site may exceed 50% of net residential floorspace.

Alternatively, the introduction of a B2 Local Centre Zone over the Circa Core, west of the Norwest Private Hospital site would create the required land use flexibility within a small portion of the Circa Precinct, and restrict residential development beyond that 4.22 ha area.

The introduction of new uses to activate Circa Precinct is entirely consistent with the Vision and Development Principles a, d, e, f and g for the current proposed DCP amendment.

4.3.2 Building Heights

Building heights should be considered for adjustment in the following localities:

- The southern and western boundaries of the R4 Zone, adjacent to Jardine Terrace and Craigend Place; and
- The whole of Circa Precinct.

R4 Zone Interfaces

The southern and western boundaries of the R4 Zone directly abut existing two storey residences which front Jardine Terrace and Craigend Place. Given the scale of this existing development and its continued expectation of solar access, we suggest that building heights in the R4 Zone should step down to a 12m height limit commencing 12m from the zone boundary and only be permitted to achieve the nominated 21m height limit beyond 20m from the southern and western zone boundaries. While this will not deliver full sunshine in mid-winter to the existing residences, it does provide a reasonable compromise in terms of solar access for the majority of the year.

Ideally, this gradation of height would be highlighted through a combination of introducing an M1 height limit (12m) on the “Proposed Height of Buildings” map for a distance of 20m from the southern and western zone boundaries, in combination with an adjustment to “6.1.3 Setbacks and Public Domain Interface” by the inclusion of a Control 8 which states:

“8. Where an apartment building adjoins land in the R2 Zone and would otherwise significantly impact on the solar access of existing residences in the R2 Zone, the minimum setback to the boundary between the properties, whether a side or rear boundary, is increased by an additional 6m.”

Circa Precinct

The height limits applying across Circa Precinct reflect a position taken many years ago in response to a desire to maintain views to and from the Bella Vista Farm Park.

Circumstances have changed in the wider locality since the designation of these view corridors and it is now timely to consider how they will be amended to enhance the heritage integrity of the Bella Vista Farm site. In particular, a strategy is required for the definition and framing of those views in the context of the development that has occurred in Circa Precinct and the changes to the vertical alignment of Old Windsor Road.

In summary, our position is to maintain views from the following vantage points:

- Norwest Boulevard;
- Ridgemark Place;
- Westwood Way;
- Elizabeth Macarthur Drive;
- Old Windsor Road along DCP Corridor A;
- Bingara Crescent to the tops of the pines;
- Norbrik Drive roundabout to the homestead;
- Norbrik Drive / Elizabeth Macarthur Drive intersection to a section of pines; and
- Bella Vista Homestead to the Pearce Family Cemetery.

Additionally, it is suggested that the view between the Pearce Family Cemetery and the Bella Vista Farm be framed by new building heights and massing which actually directs the viewer to the heritage item at the end of the view shed. This will be a particular advantage when viewing the cemetery from the homestead, which is currently very difficult to locate.

Furthermore, short distance views, such as from Norbrik Drive to the Homestead, can be framed and improved by the definition of a no development view corridor, which doubles as a pedestrian/cycleway, and is framed by built form. In doing so, future development within the Precinct will maintain these significant views to and from Bella Vista Farm. These views are shown in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Views to and from Bella Vista Farm Park.



The upshot of this analysis is that the viewsheds sought by the current DCP do not coincide with the real opportunities for views to and from the homestead and wider park and, accordingly, the height limits in the proposed DCP Amendment should be altered to, firstly, reflect the real view corridors and, secondly, to facilitate increased heights elsewhere across the Circa Precinct, other than along the southern residential interface.

Our recommendations are:

- that Circa Precinct height limit be increased to the heights identified in Figure 4.2 below;
- that the areas identified in the view corridors 1 and 2 are kept free of building forms and in view corridor 3, development is limited to 6 storeys, as identified in Figure 4.2 below; and
- that the areas along the site's southern and eastern interfaces are restricted to a height of nil to 4 storeys, as identified in Figure 4.2 below

Figure 4.2 Recommended height limits for Circa Precinct.



In combination with suggested amendments to the FSR applicable across Circa, these height increases provide the propensity to deliver 470,000m² of floorspace, 25,000 jobs and 1,000 additional residents from Circa alone, further improving development outcomes derived from the Sydney Metro Norwest investment.

4.3.3 Floor Space Ratio

The Bella Vista Station Precinct proposed DCP shows the introduction of Floor Space Ratios (FSRs) of up to 4.0 around Bella Vista Station with FSR's generally declining with distance from the station to an FSR of only 1.0 at the extremities of the Precinct.

We note that the vast majority of Norwest Business Park is proposed to have an FSR of 2.0 – 4.0, with only Circa Precinct exhibiting an FSR of 1.0 – 1.49. We believe this is a suboptimal outcome. While the built up areas of Norwest Business Park is now to have an FSR of 2.0 in a location where extensive built form investment is unlikely to deliver new development sites, the largely undeveloped Circa Precinct has the lowest FSR of 1.0 (and a small area at 1.49). The Circa Precinct is available for immediate development and can deliver substantial employment floorspace over the short, medium and long term and, accordingly, should exhibit increased FSR's to accommodate that growth. Figure 4.3 below identifies our suggested FSR's for Circa Precinct, including an FSR of 1.2:1 being appropriate for the retirement precinct in the Planning Proposal.

Figure 4.3 Recommended FSR's for Circa Precinct.



To leave FSR's at the currently proposed levels would jeopardise around 250,000m² of future floorspace delivery, and would limit the intensity of activity able to be generated around the existing shopping centre, thus risking the delivery of critical workforce support facilities which are proposed to activate the Circa core (eg café's, bars, shops, child care, gymnasium) and deliver an after-hours economy.

4.4 Public Domain

The Objectives and Controls pertaining to the pedestrian and cycle network are generally supported. However, we believe that the proposed shareway and cycle link from Bella Vista Station along Lexington Drive (in Figure 10) should be extended along Elizabeth Macarthur Drive to Norbrik Drive. This will become an important commuter cycle link between Circa and the Station. While Figure 10 does indicate a new link to Bella Vista Farm Park and thence along Elizabeth Macarthur Creek Reserve to the Station, this link can be expected to operate more as a recreational link because of the steep slopes in Bella Vista Farm Park and the less direct nature of this link.

The Precinct Plan should contain a key performance indicator with the goal of achieving improved connectivity between employment areas, recreation and transit by providing pedestrian, cycle and open space links with reference to Bella Vista Farm Park and Circa Precinct.

We generally support the Objectives and Controls pertaining to the open space network. However, Figure 11 should identify the open space links within Circa Precinct, including the open space/pedestrian-cycle link/view corridor from the Norbrik Drive roundabout to Bella Vista Farm Park and the proposed pedestrian plaza area intended to be developed in the Circa Commercial Core.

Mulpha has identified 25,000m² of open space within its Circa Precinct Concept Plan which is intended to become publicly accessible open space. This area will not only improve visual and movement linkages to Bella Vista Farm Park but will add to the critical mass of the Park and contribute to improved utilisation levels by, firstly, increasing activity around the Park and, secondly, providing origins and destinations that encourage movement through the Park.

This is a most significant contribution by Mulpha to the public realm of the Bella Vista Station Environs and will provide the occupants of Circa Precinct with access to attractive passive and active recreation spaces and quality links to Bella Vista Station. Moreover, it will contribute to the further expansion of a grand open space that serves the business and residential communities of the wider Bella Vista/Baulkham Hills area.

4.5 Centre and Business Development

We recognise and support the establishment of a B2 Local Centre in association with the Bella Vista Station. However, there is no clarity in respect of its size and status relative to the existing B2 Local Centre at Norwest and the Circa Shopping Centre at Norbrik Drive. Norwest Marketown and the adjacent quasi-retail development currently represent the primary retail offer in Norwest Business Park and sit at the focal point of the suburbs of Bella Vista and Baulkham Hills, while the Circa Shopping Centre is expected to evolve as a strong business service centre. We strongly believe that the primacy of Norwest should be maintained over Bella Vista Station,

just as Castle Hill as a regional centre has primacy over Norwest, and that Bella Vista Station should be recognised for its neighbourhood convenience and commuter service functions.

We note that at the highest strategic level, Castle Hill, Norwest and Rouse Hill are all afforded “Strategic Centre” status in the document “A Plan for Growing Sydney”, while Cherrybrook, Showground, Bella Vista, and Kellyville are not recognised as strategic centres. We also note that the report titled Bella Vista Station Precinct: Commercial Markets Strategy by AEC Group (for DPE) identified the likely needs for a retail floorspace precinct of 5,000m² – 10,000m² at Bella Vista Station. We would argue that a figure toward the low end of this range maintains a suitable hierarchy differentiation between Bella Vista and Norwest while facilitating the delivery of a supermarket, speciality shops, cafes and services to meet the daily and emergency purchase needs of local residents and commuters. (We note that page 3 of the Planning Report mentions a figure of 5,000m² of retail floorspace to be delivered as part of the ‘Vision’ for Bella Vista Station Precinct.)

Accordingly, in order that Norwest achieve its identified status as the focal point of activity in this section of the Sydney Metro Norwest rail corridor and continue to provide and build upon its services to the wider community it is imperative that Norwest Station Environs be recognised as the dominant activity centre, employment hub and residential precinct. This can be through the application of a wider land use development mix, greater densities (FSRs) and increased building heights at Norwest relative to its neighbours. Given that only the proposed DCP amendment for Bella Vista Station Precinct has been released at this stage, the mechanism to achieve this differentiation is via the Vision, Development Principles and Precinct Plan objectives within this document

Specifically we would propose the following amendments:

- Addition of the following to the end of 2.1 Vision:
 - » “...while acknowledging that Norwest will be the primary activity centre in the surrounding district”
- Addition of the following words “serving commuters and the immediate station environs” immediately after “a new local centre....” under the heading “local centre” in section 2.3 Character Areas.

Outside the scope of the Bella Vista Station Precinct proposed DCP Amendments, amendments to Part 7 Additional Local Provisions, or to Schedule 1 Additional Permitted Uses in the Hills LEP 2012 could be used to encourage or discourage particular forms or amounts of development within alternative B2 Local Centre Zones.

4.6 Residential Development

The objectives and controls in the proposed DCP Amendment are generally supported. While we note that much of the Control detail is lifted directly from the Government’s Apartments Design Guide, we suggest removal of Controls 3, 6, and 7 under “6.1.2 Building height and form” and Control 1 under “6.1.3 Setbacks and public domain”. We believe these controls are unnecessarily restrictive and are better dealt with via the Objectives or by refinement to the details within the specified controls.

For example by adding an Objective which addresses the adequacy of access to natural light and ventilation, a maximum depth of 18m should not be necessary (as currently proposed in Control 6). An Objective which

generally acknowledged a reduced footprint for taller towers could eliminate the proposed impost of a 750m² maximum floorplate on buildings over 16 or more storeys (Control 7).

The minimum separation distances in Control 3 are excessive and could be dealt with via Objectives addressing privacy and access to natural light.

The setbacks under Control 1 of Section 6.1.3 could encourage slightly greater flexibility within the context already provided by Objectives 2 and 6.

4.7 Access, Parking and Servicing

Car parking rates in the proposed DCP Amendment are generally equivalent to or lower than the prevailing metropolitan standards across residential and commercial land use categories.

For apartments the proposed DCP Amendment rates sit between the medium density and high density rates recommended by the RMS and, again, compare favourably with RMS quoted rates for retail and commercial development. From this perspective the proposed rates are supported.

The shortcoming in the application of these rates without a wider adoption of the new standards across the whole of Norwest Business Park is that development within Bella Vista Station Precinct has a distinct commercial advantage over its competitors because it can bring any development to market with a lower level of car parking provision and hence a lower capital cost. It may also achieve this on a smaller land parcel, given the reduced car parking footprint required by a lesser number of cars. AEC Group's Retail and Commercial Markets Strategy emphasizes this point in the upsurge in development activity at Macquarie Park as a result of reductions in car parking ratios.

This has very obvious disadvantages to Bella Vista's competitors, notably Norwest Marketown, in terms of retail, residential and commercial development, as well as other commercial sites in Norwest Business Park in terms of commercial development.

It is therefore beholden upon the State Government to authorise the Bella Vista Station Precinct DCP simultaneously with a Norwest Station Precinct DCP and for the nominated car parking rate amendments to apply across both precincts. Alternatively, Government should ensure that the new car parking rates are adopted by Council in Norwest Station Precinct and throughout Bella Vista Station Precinct under the prevailing S117 Direction.

4.8 Environmental

The Proposed DCP Amendment rightfully seeks to protect the historical significance of Bella Vista Farm. However, the DCP provides no incentive for its economic use and hence runs the risk of its eventual deterioration unless continuously underwritten by public funds.

Furthermore, the complex is currently rarely open to the public and therefore not appreciated by the vast majority of the population.

Encouragement of its use as a restaurant, a conference or function centre, a unique accommodation experience, an education or training centre, a tourist facility or similar activity would provide a mechanism for the on-going funding and maintenance of the facility and facilitate its wider appreciation by the public.

Development of the Circa Precinct will assist with the activation of the Park and the viable operation of uses within the Farm complex.

5. Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

Mulpha has a major stake in Bella Vista Station Precinct, with some 25 hectares of consolidated land holding within the Precinct, much of which is serviced vacant land ready for immediate development.

Circa Precinct, at the southern end of Bella Vista Station Precinct contains some 20.77 hectares of vacant allotments ready for development as well as additional lands which are partially developed and have additional development potential. This land can be developed immediately with commercial buildings and employment activities, thereby delivering commuter patronage to Bella Vista Station from its commencement of operation in 2019. Circa is a real opportunity to deliver 13,000 jobs for the future in an area where the built form has limited or no impact on surrounding neighbourhoods.

Mulpha also has significant interests outside of Bella Vista Station Precinct, in the adjacent Norwest Station Precinct, which are potentially impacted by policy decisions made in respect of Bella Vista Station Precinct. These interests include Marketown Shopping Centre and Norwest Town Centre known as “The Lakes”.

Mulpha supports the general intent of the Bella Vista Station Precinct DCP Amendment. However, it believes that Government can significantly increase its rail patronage dividend and employment generation arising from its investment in Sydney Metro North West and the Bella Vista Station by addressing Circa Precinct within this DCP.

Figure 5.1 *Circa Main Street Indicative Image*



5.2 Recommendations

Circa Precinct should be included in the Bella Vista Station Precinct DCP Amendment as a matter of top priority.

FSR and building heights should be amended to encourage development within the Precinct. Amendments should be in accordance with Figures 4.2 and 4.3 within the body of this report.

Views to and from Bella Vista Farm Park should be framed in accordance with Figures 4.1 and 4.2 within the body of this report.

B2 Local Centre zoning should be introduced over the Circa Core, west of Norwest Hospital, in accord with Figure 4.4 within the body of this report.

Minor adjustments to building heights should be introduced within the proposed R4 Zone adjacent to Jardine Terrace and Craigend Place to ensure solar access is maintained to existing residents.

The proposed new car parking ratios should apply throughout the Bella Vista Station Precinct (and should be extended to the Norwest Station Precinct under the North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy S117 Direction).

The role and hierarchy of the three existing and proposed centres (Norwest Marketown, Circa Shopping Centre and Bella Vista Station environs) should be clearly articulated in the DCP's Vision, principles and indicative structure.

The proposed shareway and cycle link from Bella Vista Station and along Lexington Drive should be extended along Elizabeth Macarthur Drive to Norbrik Drive in Recommended DCP Amendments DCP Figure 10.

Open space links within Circa Precinct to Bella Vista Farm Park should be identified on Recommended DCP Amendments DCP Figure 11.

Appendix 1. Circa Precinct Preliminary Concept

Appendix 2. Planning Proposal Circa Precinct

Appendix 3. Master Plan and Stage 1 Seniors Housing Development
Statement of Environmental Effects Lot 701 DP 1198639, Nobrik
Drive, Bella Vista