

28 Feb 2016

SUBMISSION TO NSW GOVERNMENT – DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

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RE: [Sydney Metro Northwest Priority Urban Renewal Corridor](#)

Dear Commissioner of State Planning

I wish to make a submission to the North West Sector both as a local resident and long standing community member with extensive experience of a range of community and cultural organisations.

I applaud the approach of state planning and council to make the most of this once ever opportunity to redevelop these key precincts intelligently with good urban design to enhance the community development for the future while respecting the natural, cultural, historic and environmental features of this special part of Sydney.

Some key aspects that I urge must be included are:

- Provision of adequate cultural facilities including a theatre,
- Staggered housing and commercial development that enhances rather than clashes with and the existing community and highlights heritage assets
- Provision within the town centres of affordable community spaces for community service providers (both for service delivery and offices for not for profit organisations).
- Protection and enhancement of open space and preservation of natural bushland areas.

These are key factors that provide the character and amenity of the Hills District.

My particular interest due to proximity is The Hills Cultural and Innovation Precinct – Showground Rd Precinct as well as the Bella Vista and Kellyville precincts.

With approximately \$5 million allocated to this precinct (and the same amounts for each of the two other precincts) for local infrastructure to improve the safety, quality and accessibility of community facilities I am delighted to see that these priorities have been identified early and that this area has been highlighted as the cultural and innovation precinct.

**Cultural Centre**

With the loss of the Hills Centre (the only performing arts facility in the north-west sector) I am alarmed that there has been no mention of a replacement. As a growth area, the cultural and entertainment needs of current and future populations are not being addressed. Major infrastructure, such as is being planned in this current process for the precinct should be including a

performing arts space of significant size and flexibility of use to ensure that theatrical productions, dance, school events, concerts and perhaps conferences can meet the future needs of the area.

### **Housing Density**

I applaud the decision to ensure that there is a staggering of housing types graduating from highest density immediately in the town centre and reducing to lower level and lower density such as town houses further from the station so that the mix of housing types graduates more appropriately into the surrounding suburban housing types.

### **Affordable Community Facilities within town centre precincts.**

Having worked for a number of not for profit organisations in this and other locations a key obstacle to provision of services where they are most needed and most easily accessed by clients (ie in central locations, easily accessible by public transport) is impossible for most not for profit and non-government organisations due to commercial pressure for leases and hire fees. Planning requirements need to stipulate that developments on these key sites must include access to spaces within these town centre precincts that offer affordable rent for NFP's and NGO's as well as community spaces for hire that are sufficient in number and of high quality to ensure that the needs of the community are well met. Organisations that provide health & social services that address the needs of community members, help to build community connections and enhance the wellbeing of the community are best served where the community can access services easily. Allowing commercial pressures to drive such vital services into harder to reach/fringe locations with poor access undermines community wellbeing.

### **Protection of Open Space and natural bushland areas**

The Hills area is blessed with remnant forest and bushland around creek areas as well as hilltops. These are characteristics that are unique to this part of Sydney and add beauty as well as environmental benefits that must be preserved. Ensuring the protection of connected bushland, large trees, creek lines and other waterways is to be applauded. However it is important that in providing greater access, eg building walkways and cycleways, sporting facilities within and through these areas that their intrinsic value is not damaged and that development around these areas does not create pollution, run off issues etc that undermine their safety.

If there are consultation opportunities in future I would be delighted to participate as I have a great interest in urban design, environment, cultural and community development as well as a lifelong interest in the local area from having lived most of my life in Kellyville, Baulkham Hills and Castle Hill, worked in Parramatta, The Hills and Hawkesbury.

Regards

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