



Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

14 November 2016

To whomever it may concern  
NSW Government Department of Planning and the Environment

**Ref: Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030 (2016 Review) and State Significant Precincts SEPP Amendments**

Dear Sir/Madam

**A. Executive Summary**

The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS) is pleased to be able to provide this submission regarding the 2016 review of Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030.

The RAS is a key stakeholder in Sydney Olympic Park (SOP) and a strong supporter of the NSW Government's vision to grow the precinct off the back of infrastructure investments that will integrate the area with the rapidly developing Parramatta CBD and surrounding suburbs.

Accordingly, the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) Master Plan review sets about accommodating more residents and jobs than was previously envisaged. The Greater Sydney Commission's (GSC) recently released vision for Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) is also an encouraging indication of where SOP sits in the government's broader plans for the growth of Central Sydney, ahead of the release of GSC regional plans in late November 2016. The RAS anticipates that the two plans are co-ordinated and seek to prevent the multi-layered planning framework that the GSC was designed to overcome.

Further, the RAS notes that the SOPA Master Plan has been released for comment at a time of significant uncertainty around the delivery of the Parramatta Light Rail (PLR) project – both in terms of the final route and timing. Reviewing the SOPA masterplan with uncertainty presents challenges.

The RAS Master Plan

As SOPA is aware, the RAS has been developing a Master Plan for the Sydney Showground site over the last 12 months in response to a number of key challenges and opportunities that the organisation is facing. The RAS Master Plan includes new and upgraded exhibition, plenary and arena facilities, a permanent education development inclusive of a permanent Urban Farm, upgrades to Spotless Stadium and the relocation of the Sydney Royal Easter Show Carnival to enable revitalisation of the Show and to also enable the PLR route and potential development of the P6 car park.

In discussion with the GSC, Department of Primary Industries, Department of Planning, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Transport for NSW, City of Parramatta Council and SOPA itself, support has been provided for the plans, of which there are a number of key desired outcomes within the context of the RAS being the custodian of the Sydney Showground site:

- Reinvigoration the Royal Sydney Easter Show;
- Ensuring on going self-sufficiency of the organisation;
- Permanent activation of the 30 hectare site, through increased business and community events;
- Expansion of the already significant contribution of the RAS to the NSW economy and agriculture industry for many years to come.

Importantly, the RAS Master Plan seeks to ensure that Sydney Showground can play a vital role in supporting the growth of SOP, through providing flexible and more weatherproof spaces intended to enable community events on a permanent basis, activating and connecting the site with the broader SOP precinct, and provision of permanent facilities for local communities including schools, residents and workers.

These facilities will support the generation of \$505m of economic benefit to the NSW economy and 182,900 additional out-of-state bed nights per annum. The plans also align with government objectives in regards to jobs, visitation and amenity in the GPOP and Western Sydney.

As such, it is the view of the RAS that the RAS Master Plan cannot be considered in isolation of the SOPA Master Plan. The two plans must be integrated to optimise development, precinct activation outcomes and overall benefit to NSW. Further details on the RAS Master Plan can be found below.

## **B. RAS Recommendations:**

1. That the SOPA Master Plan include, in full, the RAS Sydney Showground Master Plan.
2. That SOPA support RAS' hotel/short term accommodation plans, considered vital to ensure success of expanded leisure and business events within SOP, given existing accommodation constraints.
3. Opportunities for land use value generation, such as those identified by the RAS, are supported and directed to improvements within SOP, notably to support the delivery of the RAS Master Plan.
4. That SOPA increase density in areas that best support densification, including those in close proximity to key transportation routes, retail and community facilities and open space. Notably, this includes around the Olympic Park Station and the site of the current RAS administration facility.
5. That the NSW Government provide certainty around the timing of delivery of the Parramatta Light Rail project and provides updates on the progress of decision making of the West Metro project.
6. That SOPA allow for further review of its Master Plan if the delivery of major infrastructure to SOP is significantly altered from current plans.

## **C. About the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW**

The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS) is a truly iconic Australian organisation and has been an influential force in the direction and development of Australian agriculture through competitions, education and events since its foundation in 1822. In 2022 we celebrate our bicentenary and enter our 3<sup>rd</sup> century of continued operation.

In its role as an exponent for excellence in agriculture, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW organises events and competitions, acts as a guardian for the state's agricultural heritage, celebrates Australia's achievements in agriculture and works to promote the viability of rural communities by ensuring that Australia remains a thriving and innovative agricultural producer.

At the heart of the RAS is a not-for-profit commitment to support the development of agriculture in Australia whilst creating over \$616 million of annual economic contribution for the State of NSW, generated by events at Sydney Showground and 1 million hotel bed nights every year.

Revenue generated through the Sydney Showground activity and events such as the Sydney Royal Easter Show allows the RAS to invest \$11 million back into agricultural programs, competitions, education and youth initiatives, and rural communities annually.

#### Sydney Royal Easter Show

The Sydney Royal Easter Show (SRES) is Australia's largest annual ticketed event, attended by approximately 8-900,000 visitors when Sydney celebrates the vital role that agriculture plays in the health and wealth of our nation and applauds the highest achievers in agricultural excellence. Non-stop competitions, a thrilling entertainment program featuring international stars and innovative ideas are the highlights of this 14-day event.

#### Sydney Royal Wine, Dairy & Fine Food Shows

The Sydney Royal Wine, Dairy & Fine Food competitions showcase the best of Australia's food, wine and dairy and where the industries display their finest produce in head-to-head competitions, where a win represents the highest industry accolade. The award of a 'Sydney Royal' medal is a most sought after prize and is a significant contributor to product demand both domestically and overseas.

#### Sydney Showground

Sydney Showground is at the heart of Sydney Olympic Park and is operated by the RAS on a long term 99 + 99 year lease from SOPA.

Home to the RAS and the SRES, Sydney Showground provides a year-round exhibition and events venue that hosts a diverse range of activity, sporting events, corporate functions, conferences and concerts. It is a complementary venue to the new International Convention Centre at Darling Harbour catering to the domestic event market and is Western Sydney's number 1 event venue. Sydney Showground is also home to the AFL's Greater Western Sydney Giants and cricket's Sydney Thunder both playing out of the Sydney Showground Stadium otherwise known as Spotless Stadium, Western Sydney's premier sporting oval.

#### RAS Foundation

The RAS also has a charitable arm of the business, the RAS Foundation (RASf). The RASf aims to build strong, vibrant rural communities in NSW through investment in education, training and skills development by providing grants and scholarships. The RAS contributes a significant amount annually to the RASf to invest in these programs. The RASf also receives donations from individuals, corporates and foundations.

#### Australasian Animal Registry

The Australasian Animal Registry (AAR) is Australia's largest and most comprehensive not-for-profit animal registration and recovery service, with a database of over 1,800,000 animals from across Australia and New Zealand.

## D. Discussion

### The Sydney Showground Site

- The RAS has been in discussion with SOPA for over 12 months regarding plans to improve the Sydney Showground site to ensure the RAS can maintain and replace its facilities as required as a responsible long term custodian of government owned land and to respond to the proposed increases in site density and activation at Sydney Olympic Park.
- It is noted that there is little reference in the Review to Sydney Showground, future plans for its development or recognition of the importance of the site. In fact on Page 21 Figure 12 'Proposed amendments by precinct' of the **'Sydney Olympic Park Summary of Proposed Planning Changes, August 2016'** it states there are no changes planned for Sydney Showground (albeit we note the comment in the **Southern Sports Precinct summary item 1** regarding relocation of the Sports Halls from the Showground precinct).
- We have enclosed in this submission the overall site plan detailing the proposed Sydney Showground Master Plan identifying improvements to the site that are required to be implemented in stages over the next 8 years (approximately), this plan and its elements have been discussed with SOPA. The RAS sees no reason why permitted uses on the Showground site could not be changed to mixed Commercial and Entertainment as is proposed for the Stadia Precinct **'Sydney Olympic Park Summary of Proposed Planning Changes, August 2016 Stadia Precinct item 3'**. This plan includes RAS's proposed changes to accommodate PLR which must be implemented before the RAS could release the current Carnival site.
- The RAS respectfully requests its site plans are integrated into the relevant government documents in both written and visual form, as per other sites within SOPA.
- The RAS further recommends that provision be included for the development of short term accommodation on the Sydney Showground site adjacent to Australia Avenue as identified on the site plan in the location of the current Wynne Pavilion (item 3 on the site plan below) and changing the use to mixed commercial/hotels/serviced apartment uses to complement events and future development on and around the Showground site consistent with **'Sydney Olympic Park Summary of Proposed Planning Changes, August 2016 Stadia Precinct item 7'**. This will enable the RAS to provide a competitive environment for its event based clientele and for the increased activation of SOP. The current lack of short term accommodation space within the Sydney Showground site is an impediment to the realisation of event based business opportunities.

The addition of short term accommodation, as proposed, would complement the RAS's intentions to improve its existing exhibition and event space by introduction of a small plenary and auditorium facility. By way of comparison, the successful activation of Brisbane Showgrounds as a year-round business event destination has been supported by on-site hotel facilities. The adjacency of the proposed new hotel facilities at Sydney Showground makes this site considerably more viable for short-term accommodation than many other sites in SOP.

To satisfy requirements for a 300-key hotel on the proposed site of 3595m<sup>2</sup> would require a total GFA of 20,000m<sup>2</sup>, at 75m in height and an FSR of 5.56:1, consistent with other proposed developments in the vicinity.

- ***Site plans have been prepared and can be provided to assist in the inclusion in the final Sydney Olympic Park Master plan.***



The image below identifies the proposed Sydney Showground master plan including requirements to relocate the Carnival



#### LEGEND :

##### Accommodation

- 2. P6 Residential/Retail Development site
- 3. Future Hotel accommodation (300 Key)

##### Livestock

- 4A. The Ark
- 4B. The Ark (Equine arena)
- 5. New working Dairy + Animals Storage
- 6. Falkiner Pavilion (refurb.)
- 7. Kelly Pavilion (refurb.)

- 8. Jenko Pavilion (refurb.)

- 9. The Stables

- 10. Mackay Pavilion

- 11. Grace Pavilion

- 12. Existing Warm up

- 13. Munro Pavilion (maintain partial)

##### Sport & Entertainment/Hospitality/Education

- 14. Spotless Stadium

- 15. Main Entry Canopy / Ticket Office

- 16. Proposed Future Cricket Facilities

- 17. McIntosh Pavilion – Nursery Farm Animals + Food & Fibre Exhibition

##### Conference & Exhibition

- 18. Plenary Centre + Basement Car Park

- 19. Southee Complex

- 20. The Dome

- 21. Exhibition Halls

##### Commercial

- 22. Existing Facilities

- 23. Facilities under construction

- 24. Future development

##### Public Amenity

- 25. Train Station

- 26. Ticket Office

- 27. Cathy Freeman Park

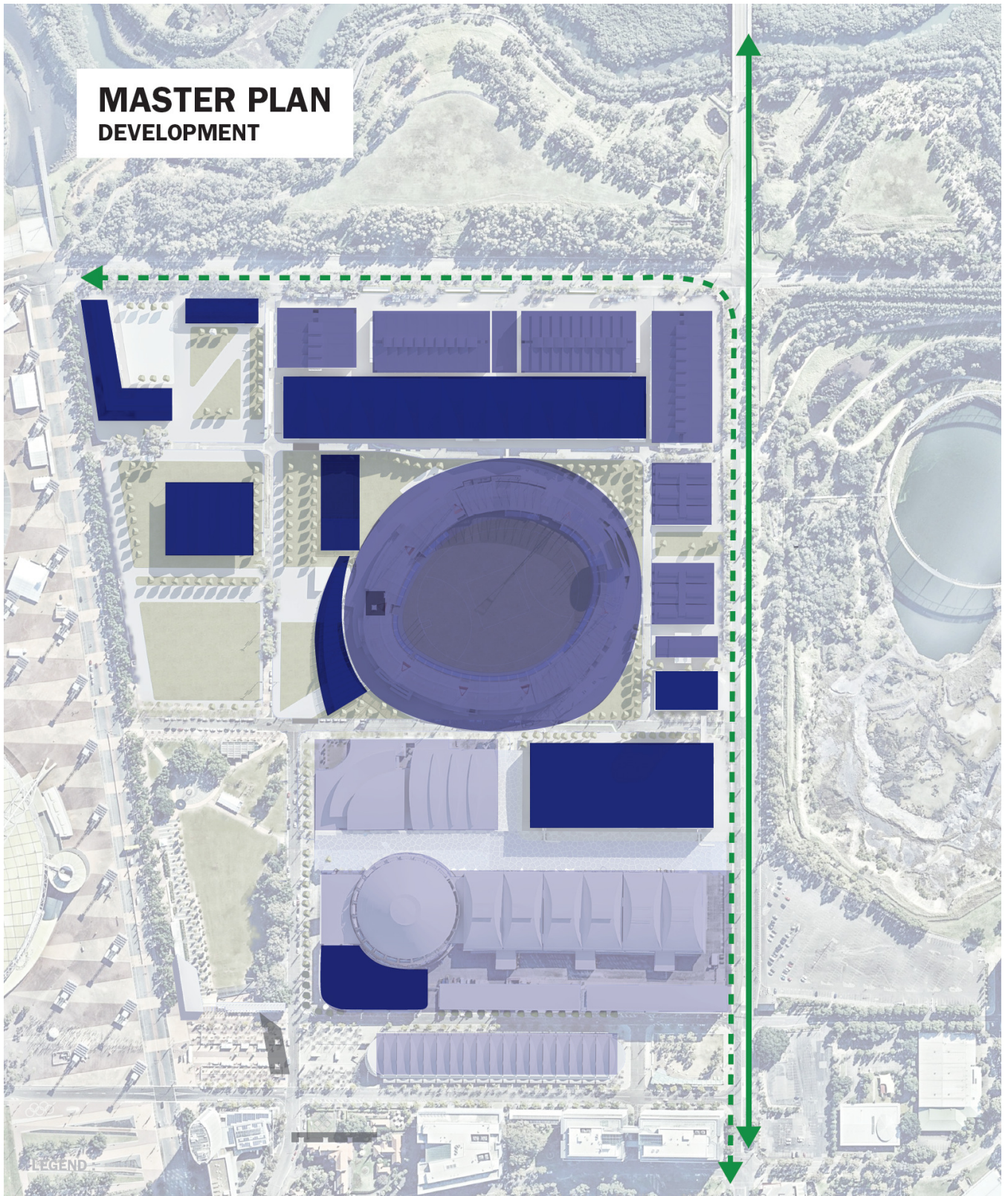
- 28. Canopy SRES Carnival Kids (Height Restriction)

- 29. Potential Pub/Bar Development

- 31. SRES Carnival Kids and Coca Cola



# MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT



## LEGEND :

- Proposed New Development
- Proposed Refurbishment
- Existing Facilities
- Proposed Light Rail Network on Australia Ave
- Alternate Light Rail Network



### Parramatta Light Rail (PLR)

- The RAS notes the inclusion of the indicative PLR route along Australia Avenue adjacent to Sydney Showground within the 2016 Review. Whilst the RAS explicitly supports the Parramatta Light Rail, consideration must be made within the Master Plan to the operational impacts, particularly on the annual SRES Carnival or plans to offset this impact.
- The RAS utilises the entire P6 car park site and adjacent section of Australia Avenue to host the Carnival component of the SRES. This requires Australia Avenue to be closed to the public and traffic from Kevin Coombes Avenue to Murray Rose Avenue for approximately 40 days each year, incorporating 'bump 'in and 'bump out' time of large Carnival rides and associated logistical requirements. The proposed PLR route alignment and existing Carnival location on the P6 site are incompatible.
- Relocating 30,000m<sup>2</sup> of large scale activity onto an already constrained site is no easy task. The RAS believes that the SOPA Master Plan should include our preferred option for relocation of the carnival **which is predicated on the assumption that the RAS masterplan is incorporated in full**. This proposed solution is supported by the SOPA Executive. Relocation also supports the RAS' plans for reinvigoration of the SRES through reconfiguration.
- Relocation of the carnival by the RAS enables redevelopment of the P6 site, and maximisation of the use of the site beyond on grade car parking. Given the economic benefit generated by the RAS proposed plan and activities, and the impact of relocating the carnival within these plans, the RAS proposes that the value generated from this site be firstly directed to fund the RAS Master Plan, with any additional value redirected to NSW Government.

The image below identifies the existing SRES Carnival located on the P6 car park and Australia Avenue with the proposed PLR route in green



## The Importance of Transport

- The significant increase in residential, commercial and retail development is intended to densify the park and will significantly increase all year site wide activation. This intent is supported by the RAS, however, in absence of major improvements in transport links, density will occur at the expense of congestion and liveability of the site. Lack of access improvements and improved transportation may impact the deliverability and success of the SOPA Master Plan.

Of note, a fundamental expectation of local stakeholders is that the Master Plan should offer a tangible and immediate solution to the much-documented issues around the Australia Ave/Underwood Road roundabout. The master plan does not seem to address this critical requirement.

- The proposed Parramatta Light Rail is a significant boon for the site. However, recent speculation regarding its delivery may lead to a reduction in private sector investment and development. The Review is an opportunity for SOPA to collaborate with GSC and Transport for NSW, to commit to and fully detail the proposed PLR route. The Master Plan is an opportunity to demonstrate cross-government integration in strategy and planning.
- In relevance to the RAS, certainty around transport would enable the RAS to progress solutions with regards to the carnival relocation in a timely and efficient manner.
- Certainty is also needed regarding the future of the West Metro connecting Central to Westmead via Olympic Park, notably in relation to timeframes currently proposed for PLR. It must be noted that Light Rail and Metro play different roles in terms of transportation objectives: PLR is a surface activator, providing connectivity to this significant event precinct to surrounding localities and Metro is best suited to mass transportation, moving large numbers of residents and workers further distances. The RAS recognises the importance and role of both forms and if current plans for SOP, Silverwater, Camellia and Rosehill are realised, the RAS would argue that both solutions will be required in time.
- The updated Sydney Showground layout as proposed does not change regardless of PLR implementation and/or West Metro. Relocation of the SRES carnival and the resultant opportunity created for significant value realisation of the current P6 car park should be pursued under all options.
- Failure to deliver transport infrastructure will lead to further chronic under investment should the park be left in transport “limbo” again.
- If Government is to fulfil its vision for Sydney Olympic Park as outlined in the Review, RAS and others require certainty around these projects as an immediate priority.

## The Importance of Health and Education

- Sydney Olympic Park provides a significant educational opportunity. Located in Central Sydney and with direct links via Parramatta Light Rail to both Parramatta CBD and Westmead, SOP is an ideal location for a university campus, student accommodation and key worker housing. This is particularly important given densification and rising land values of both Parramatta CBD and Westmead.
- We understand both Western Sydney University and University of NSW are well-advanced in exploring sites for satellite campuses, making the SOPA Master Plan review an ideal opportunity to provide for the establishment of a university campus.
- In addition, SOP is known as Sydney’s number one event destination and, as such has a heavy reliance on a casual workforce that student accommodation on the site could deliver. It will also assist in activating the site through promotion of after-hours activity and diversity in population, **‘Sydney Olympic Park Summary of Proposed Planning Changes, Central Precinct item 4’**.



- With residential numbers proposed to increase significantly on the site, provision must be made for both primary and secondary education. Whilst the RAS supports sites that have been broadly identified, more detail should be provided in relation to the volume of students these sites are proposed to absorb. In addition, in order to develop liveable communities and decrease pressure on road systems and congestion, location of required health facilities should be identified.

#### Olympic Boulevard

- The RAS welcomes the proposed developments in and densification of Olympic Boulevard in the Central Precinct. However, whilst the scale and 'openness' was appropriate for large-scale crowds during the Sydney 2000 Games, this scale is not appropriate for the requirements of a modern liveable city. Efforts will need to be made to address the exposed nature of the Boulevard, particularly along its boundary with the Showground precinct notably through reduction of scale and new activation opportunities.
- The RAS would welcome discussions on how the Showground site could be expanded to absorb some of this space to provide permanent activation.

#### Amenity

- There are no clear provisions within the Review for playing fields, soccer/rugby pitches and the like, other than a minor comment in the **'Sydney Olympic Park Summary of Proposed Planning Changes, August 2016 Central Sports Precinct item 3'**.
- Given additional housing targets, to make Sydney Olympic Park a truly liveable and independent hub, provision must be made for these essential community amenities and they must be available for community use, not just school use. In recognition, the RAS Master Plan suggests that the area currently occupied by the Sports Halls earmarked for demolition, which would become the new carnival location within 'SRES mode' and be used for other Sydney Showground activity, be utilised as community sports fields and other community activity as depicted in the image below outside these uses.

#### Sydney Olympic Park as a Destination

With the impending delivery of the proposed new Western Sydney Airport, Sydney Olympic Park has the opportunity to become Western Sydney's equivalent of Darling Harbour; a true Western Sydney Destination. However, this ambition requires whole of Government support. It cannot be delivered without the matters above being integrated and requires collaborative methods to drive site activation. It should be the collective ambition to ensure trips made into Western Sydney Airport domestically and internationally aim to increase activity in Western Sydney in particular.



Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission, should you require anything further please do not hesitate to contact our Head of Property Development, Jonathan Seward.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brock Gilmour".

Brock Gilmour  
Chief Executive