

The Director General  
Department of Planning and  
Environment  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

6<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

### Draft Greater Macarthur 2040: An Interim Plan for the Greater Macarthur Growth Area

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the above draft interim plan for Greater Macarthur. I am writing on behalf of the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan (ABGMA) which is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust.

The ABGMA is located adjacent to the Greater Macarthur Growth Area and is arguably the most significant recreational and tourist destination in the south west of Sydney.

The ABGMA, established as a bicentennial project 30 years ago, is Australia's largest botanic garden at 416 hectares and specialises in showcasing and conserving Australian flora. The Australian PlantBank, built in 2013 at a cost of \$19.8 million, has recently received an international award placing it amongst the best in the world. Last year, the NSW Government committed a further \$60 million to build a Centre of Innovation in Plant Sciences at the ABGMA. The completion of this centre of excellence will firmly place ABGMA and the Trust as one of the leading botanic institutes in the world dedicated to horticulture and conservation research.

Today, the ABGMA is a highly popular regional recreational and cultural resource for the south west of Sydney. With improved access, the Trust believes that there is enormous potential to diversify the leisure offer at the ABGMA and to contribute to the amenity and lifestyle of people living in the Greater Macarthur.

The ABGMA offers the following comments on themes under the Draft Greater Macarthur 2040: An Interim Plan for the Greater Macarthur Growth Area.

1. Biodiversity – linking biodiversity corridors between the Growth Area and the Garden  
The ABGMA support the preparation of a Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan for the Growth Area which will identify biodiversity corridors which will be protected from development in perpetuity.



These biodiversity corridors need to link to surrounding corridors and networks. The ABGMA has identified the opportunity for the creation of two north-south biodiversity linkages to the Nepean River in its Strategic Planning Framework 2017-2036. In support of this strategic objective, it is suggested that an additional precinct planning principle be included as follows:

- Provide a biodiversity corridor to link the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan and Nepean River including safe wildlife crossings of major arterial roads and rail lines.

2. Open space and green grid – recognising the value of ABGMA as regional recreational and cultural resource

Over 440,000 people visit the ABGMA a year and annual growth is strong (at about 9%). This is expected to be sustained on the back of the Garden’s emerging international reputation and the Government’s continued investment in conservation infrastructure. The Garden is free and open to the public every day of the year from 8am to 5 pm (March to November) and 8am to 7pm during summer (December to February).

Strategically placed in south west Sydney ABGMA will be a major tourism, entertainment and cultural destination in addition to its horticulture, education and scientific credentials. By 2036, the ABG aims to be a pre-eminent State, National and International institution for botanic and horticultural science and conservation, providing accessible, highly valued and sustainable gardens, landscapes and facilities for the recreational, educational, and cultural advancement of the local and regional community.

To achieve this vision ABGMA needs strategic funding develop enhanced tourism infrastructure, enhanced world-class scientific collections and horticultural displays, a permanent and sustainable water source and community infrastructure to support ABGMA as a major event destination.

The ABGMS suggests the addition of planning principles which support the regional significance and value of the Garden for Greater Macarthur including:

- Link the green grid to the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan and scenic hills to the north via a 4 km corridor between Camden Park/ Menangle and the Georges River Open Space Corridor
- Connect cycling and walking paths to the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan and further north via the historic Upper Canal.



### 3. Movement – Improving transport access for residents of the Greater Macarthur Growth Area

Optimising the recreational and cultural value of the ABGMA relies on improved road and rail access. At present the main entrance to the ABGMA is from Narellan Road on its northern boundary. It is not well serviced by public transport and the ABGMA is advocating for a dedicated railway station on the proposed North South Rail Line between Campbelltown and the new Western Sydney Airport. The ABGMA supports the early introduction of rapid public transport for Greater Macarthur Land Release Area to reduce car dependency and congestion on the regional road system including Narellan Road. The introduction of a new southern entrance to the ABGMA from the proposed Spring Farm Parkway extension would significantly improve access to the Garden from the Greater Macarthur Land Release Area and cement its role as the green nucleus and the major urban recreational space of the region.

In support of this approach, the following comments are offered on movement objectives:

- Public transport – provide rapid public transport in line with land release ensuring the majority of residents can access Campbelltown within 30 minutes
- Walking and cycling – connect cycle and pedestrian networks through to the ABGMA
- Connections and crossings – ensure east-west connections provide for safe and continuous north-south biodiversity corridors
- Road network – improve road access to the ABGMA from the south to enhance access for leisure and recreation.

The Trust envisages that the growth of Greater Macarthur will change the ABGMA from a city fringe destination to the Domain of south west Sydney and is committed to ensuring that it will continue to evolve to meet the needs of region.

Should you have any questions about this letter or require further information please do not hesitate to contact John Siemon, Curator Manager on 46 34 7901.

Your sincerely



Denise Ora  
Acting Executive Director