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Chief Commissioner Lucy Turnbull  
Greater Sydney Commission

via email: [engagement@gsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:engagement@gsc.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Chief Commissioner Turnbull,

**Re: Greater Sydney Commission Draft District Plans**

The University of Sydney strongly supports the Greater Sydney Commission's work to ensure sustainable growth for metropolitan Sydney by leading planning to make the city more innovative, productive, competitive and liveable.

Finalising the six [draft district plans](#) released for consultation in December 2016 is a key step towards the achievement of a clear and well-integrated vision and implementation 'roadmap' for the city's future prosperity.

Once in place, the district plans will provide a vital link between the state government's [Greater Sydney Region Plan – A Plan for Growing Sydney](#) and councils' local environmental plans. Together with *A Plan for Growing Sydney* (once updated by the Metropolitan Plan expected in 2017), the district plans will guide state and local government planning and policy about land use, transport and other infrastructure. If the resulting planning framework endures, it will provide individuals and private and public sector organisations (including universities) with welcome certainty on which to base their planning and investment decisions.

We therefore welcome the opportunity to provide the Commission with feedback on the following five district plans that are most relevant to our extensive educational, research and related activities across Greater Sydney:

- Central District Plan
- West Central District Plan
- West District Plan
- South West District Plan
- North District Plan.

We commend the Commission for reconceptualising Sydney as a metropolis of three cities: an established, globally integrated, 'east' city; a reprioritised and balanced 'central' city; and a new 'western' city based around the Western Sydney Airport (WSA) and neighbouring centres.

Our activities and interests span the whole of Sydney, with major assets in each of these three cities, Camden and Bringelly, the Nepean and Royal North Shore Hospital precincts, and in various other sites across metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW. We provide an important cross-city educational and research network, linking the 'east', 'central' and 'west' cities. We attract students and staff from across Greater Sydney, Australia, and from around the world.



## **Universities underpin innovation, jobs and sustainable growth**

*A Plan for Growing Sydney* noted that Sydney accounts for around 70 per cent of New South Wales' economic output and over 20 per cent of the nation's gross domestic product. Australia's future prosperity therefore depends, to a large degree, on the achievement of the Commission's plans for a competitive economy with excellent transport, social services and amenities.

With predictions that as many as five million lower-skilled Australian jobs will be lost in the next decade due to technology, it is vital to Sydney's future economic success and social cohesion that we are able to create and grow new industries and meaningful jobs across its subregions. The city's universities have a critical role to play in helping to realise the vision — by underpinning Sydney's skills and innovation ecosystem through their core education and research activities — but also through their partnerships with industry, government agencies, communities, schools and vocational education providers, each other, and through their international linkages.

Universities play a positive role in place-making, giving structure and vibrancy to Sydney's major centres, stimulating spillover industries, cultural and sporting activities, and start-ups. Tertiary education is a leading creator of quality, high-value jobs and economic activity in Sydney. The University of Sydney alone has 62,000 students, employs more than 7,000 people, and has revenues of over \$2 billion a year. Tertiary education is now Sydney's largest and fastest growing export sector, and the University of Sydney is playing a leading role in helping Sydney grow a sustainable, high-quality, international education industry.

## **A University for all of Sydney**

### ***Central District Plan***

Our Camperdown campus sits at the heart of the 'east' city, adjacent to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and a short distance from the University of Technology, Sydney and the University of Notre Dame's Ultimo campuses. As a key partner in the Camperdown–Ultimo Health and Education Super Precinct, we will play a significant role in helping to deliver the objectives and aspirations of the Central District Plan. For example, we will, over the next five years, expand the range and scope of our operations at Camperdown, with \$800m in new buildings and campus improvements planned. We anticipate continued expansion in international and domestic student enrolments at Camperdown, with staff numbers expected to rise accordingly. We will triple our targeted institutional investment in research to \$150 million annually by 2020, and more than double (to 9,000) the number of affordable accommodation beds available to students over the next 15 years.

### ***West Central District Plan***

The 'Westmead Precinct' is home to four hospitals, three major medical research institutes, and the largest pathology service in NSW. Westmead Hospital was planned and operated from the beginning (1978) as a teaching hospital of the University of Sydney. Today, more than 900 University of Sydney staff and affiliates and 300 research students based at Westmead continue to play integral roles in clinical service delivery, education and research. With the other partners in the precinct, we are closely involved with the vision and planning work currently underway to transform the precinct's built infrastructure and approach to service delivery. Our strategy is focused on building capacity in new academic disciplines at Westmead to foster innovative models of health and community care through multidisciplinary collaboration.

Expanding our presence and contribution at Westmead will be a major priority for the University over the next decade and beyond. Our current plan is to grow student enrolments at Westmead to 6,000 – 10,000 students. With better transport linkages and lands available to support education zonings, we would be able to expand this number even further. The University is considering the strategic value of this possibility in conjunction with the Western Sydney Local Health District, the Children's Hospital at Westmead and the other partners in the Westmead precinct.



### ***West and South West District Plans***

Our lands across the South West and West District are economically linked and provide complementary roles in delivering on the Commission's strategic outcomes for Western Sydney. Expansion of education and research hub at Camden will provide a pipeline of highly skilled workers for the district and beyond, while its research will improve productivity in agriculture, horticulture, veterinary, and environmental industries.

Clever use of our land holdings at Bringelly and Badgerys Creek will be critical to the success of the third city, and the employment potential of the new Airport region. We support the development of industry clusters in advanced manufacturing, aero-logistics, and other high-value industries to help release the economic potential of the Airport and underpin the continued growth of the region.

Airport gateways will connect high-value, time-sensitive firms to their distant suppliers, customers, and enterprise partners. They will create an employment base for local residential populations, encouraging work closer to home and the shift towards the 30-minute city. Together, our South West and West District lands will help deliver on the Commission's employment, education and housing goals.

### ***North District Plan***

We have a significant presence in the North District, through our longstanding educational and research partnerships with the Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) and more recently through our clinical school collaboration with the Sydney Adventist Hospital at Wahroonga. Like Camperdown–Ultimo and Westmead, the St Leonards Health and Education Super Precinct has great potential to deliver new industries and jobs. These will be generated through the outstanding education and research that occurs within Royal North Shore Hospital, through our joint venture Kolling Institute for medical and health research, and by other public and private organisations.

Our activities within the North District are focused on educating and training the next generation of health professionals, and on making research breakthroughs that deliver constant improvement across all aspects of wellbeing and healthcare delivery. We therefore welcome the Commission's identification of St Leonards as a Collaboration Area, and its commitment to facilitating a partnership with state agencies and local governments to coordinate growth in the area.

### **Delivering the goals of the regional and district plans**

To ensure achievement of the goals for the districts in which we are located, as we have discussed with the Commission recently, we seek its support for the following four key recommendations:

- 1. The creation of city specific governance frameworks.** The Commission is uniquely placed to support the establishment of governance structures to coordinate the various government agencies, industry and community stakeholders in identified strategic locations. In the Central District, we are working with neighbouring institutions to develop a draft governance model to give coherence to a new strategic centre based around the Camperdown–Ultimo Health and Education Super Precinct. We will advise on our deliberations in a separate, joint submission after our Governance Forum on 31 March. The West Central District Plan, and especially its component productivity priority to expand the Westmead Health and Education Super Precinct, would benefit from the Commission supporting the development by precinct partners of clear and enduring governance to support consultation and shared decision-making. Similarly, in the West District, we are advocating for the creation of a development authority to work across federal, state and local agencies and landowners, to support the development of the WSA. **In each of these districts and others, the Commission should play a role in facilitating a governance framework to coordinate private, public and community efforts.**



2. **Coordinated infrastructure planning.** The provision of infrastructure is crucial to make the three-city structure of Sydney a reality. For example, rapid transit linking the Parramatta and Camperdown Strategic Centres is essential because it could eventually be extended to support the emerging 'west' City, linking the WSA and Parramatta to the Ultimo Camperdown Strategic Centre and beyond. We believe that this link should be prioritised in the revised Metropolitan Plan and given shape in the district plans. **The capacity of the University to meet its commitments to expand education and research infrastructure and employment across all three cities will be hampered without better east-west and north-south connectivity.**
3. **Zoning for affordable housing and employment lands.** Provision should be made to ensure suitably zoned employment lands are protected and expanded to support spillover industries and start-ups. Similarly, it is important to support key worker and student accommodation. The University of Sydney is a leading provider of affordable student housing in Sydney, with 4,000 beds currently provided at Camperdown and plans to deliver a further 5,000 beds in the surrounding area. We are keen to expand accommodation capacity beyond these levels within the Central and West Central districts in particular, but our capacity to do this depends on the availability of affordable and appropriately zoned land.
4. **Defining and promoting measurable outcomes.** Finalising the district plans is the first step towards delivering a productive, sustainable and liveable Sydney. Ensuring that the clear and enduring processes for their implementation, progress monitoring and refinement matters much more. The collection and dissemination of data on each district's performance against the delivery of its goals and priority initiatives will be crucial if the community is to have confidence in the planning process.

Please find **attached** our separate submissions on the draft Central, West Central, West, South West and North District plans.

We reiterate our commitment to work with the Commission to ensure the success of the district plans, and of the forthcoming updated *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, once the new Metropolitan Plan is released.

We would welcome the opportunity to brief you on our submissions on these five draft district plans, and on how we can contribute more broadly to delivering the ambitious goals the Commission has set for Sydney's future. We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

*(Signature removed for electronic distribution)*

Michael Spence

#### **Attachments**

1. Submission to the Central District Plan
2. Submission to the West Central District Plan
3. Submission to the West District Plan
4. Submission to the South West District Plan
5. Submission to the North District Plan