

Report to the Minister for Planning

No. 1: for the period ending 31 July 2016

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Young Sydneysiders giving feedback at a Talk Bus community engagement event in July 2016

1. Introduction

The Greater Sydney Commission (Commission) is the independent agency established by the NSW Government to lead metropolitan planning in Greater Sydney. The Commission is designed to enable the integration of planning decisions. This integration is to occur both vertically between the State government and councils, and horizontally between government departments and agencies responsible for matters that affect Greater Sydney's land use planning.

The *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015* (GSC Act) commenced on 27 January 2016. The Commission is progressing well and all of its Committees will be operational by 21 November 2016 when the Sydney Planning Panels begin operating.

The Minister for Planning agreed a Statement of Priorities with the Chief Commissioner in January 2016. These twenty-four priorities are for the period from January 2016 to October 2018.

In its first year, the Commission's key priorities are to:

- Establish the organisation;
- Work closely with the community, industry and local and State government to discuss a shared vision for the Greater Sydney Region's metropolitan planning;
- Produce six draft District Plans for public exhibition;
- Establish six Sydney Planning Panels to determine regionally significant development matters;
- Deliver a strategic vision for the Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula; and
- Work across government to integrate strategic land use and infrastructure planning.

The Ministerial Priorities request the Commission provide information and advice on a quarterly basis on the implementation of the Regional Plan and the six District Plans for the Greater Sydney Region. Prior to commencing implementation of the Plans, the Commission has prepared this Report to outline the work undertaken and delivered since the Commission commenced operating on 27 January up to the period ending 31 July 2016. As such, this Report is for the first six months of the Commission's operations.

The second quarterly report will be made available on the Commission's website (www.gsc.nsw.gov.au) in late November 2016. In addition, the Commission will make its first Annual Report available in late 2016 in accordance with Government requirements.



2. Commission's Governance and Establishment



The Inaugural Greater Sydney Commission meeting held on 2 May 2016

2.1 Governance

The Commission's governance structure is based on the statutory requirements established by the *GSC Act*. Four Greater Sydney Commissioners and six District Commissioners, with an extraordinary breadth of experience and understanding of urban planning and city-making, have been appointed. Nominations for the six District Commissioners were received from all of the forty-one Greater Sydney Councils at the time. The Commissioners are:

- Chief Commissioner, Ms Lucy Hughes Turnbull AO, an urbanist, businesswoman and philanthropist with a long standing interest in cities, and technological and social innovation. She was the first female Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney from 2003-4 and in 2011 became an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to the community, local government and business. In 2012 she was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Business by the University of NSW.
- Deputy Chief Commissioner and Economic Commissioner, Mr Geoff Roberts, a specialist in city strategy, governance and leadership. He is an Adjunct Professor in the City Futures Research Centre at the University of NSW.
- Social Commissioner, Ms Heather Nesbitt, has over 30 years' experience in social sustainability, social housing, community infrastructure planning and social impact assessment.

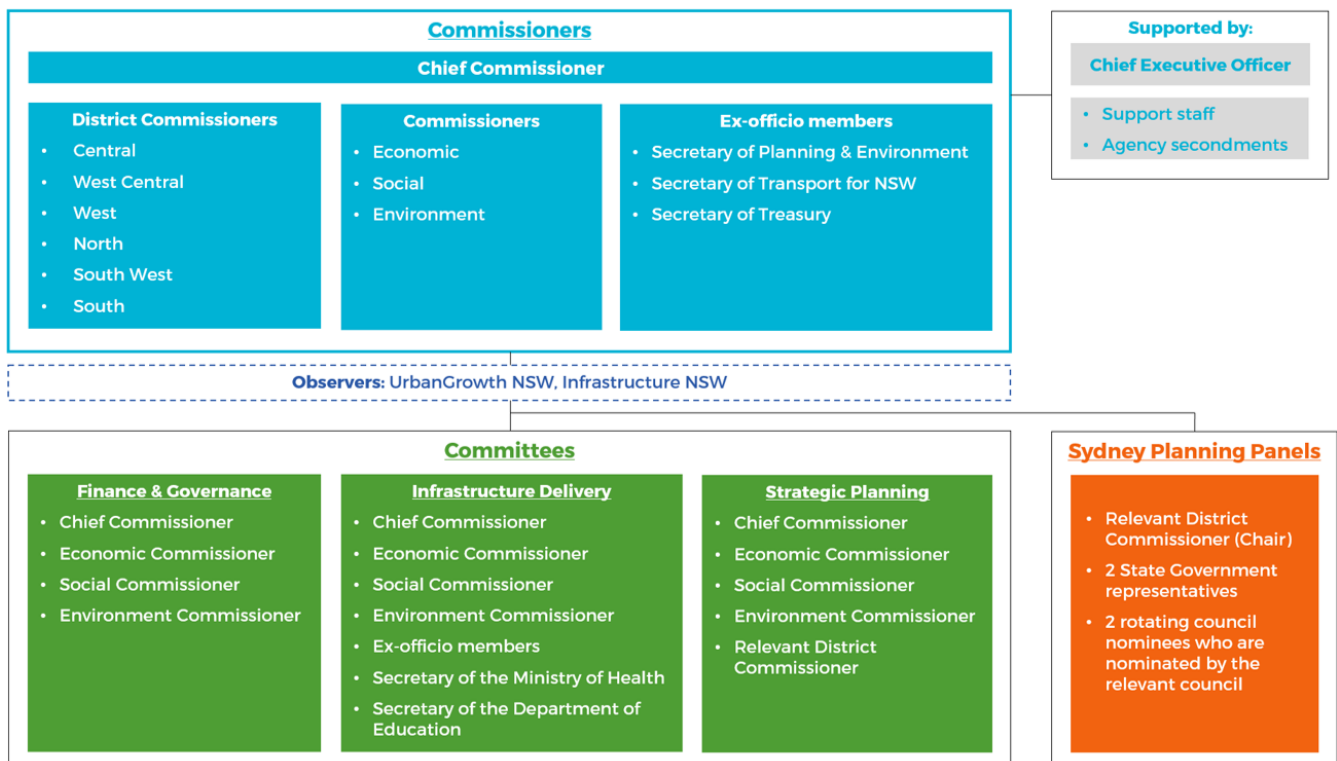
- Environment Commissioner, Mr Rod Simpson, an architect and urban designer who was instrumental in developing sustainability strategies and tools including BASIX and PRECINX.
- District Commissioners:
 - Dr Deborah Dearing – North
 - Ms Maria Atkinson AM – Central
 - Mr Sean O'Toole OAM – West
 - Professor Edward Blakely – Central West
 - Ms Sheridan Dudley – South West
 - The Honourable Morris Iemma – South.

Biographical information on each of the Greater Sydney Commissioners and District Commissioners is provided on the Commission's website.

In addition, the Commission has ex-officio members at Secretary level from NSW Treasury, the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and Transport for NSW (TfNSW), and observers at the Chief Executive Officer level from Infrastructure NSW (INSW) and UrbanGrowth NSW (UGNSW).

The inaugural meeting of the Commission was held on 2 May 2016. The Commission's Committees – Strategic Planning and Finance and Governance meet one to two times per month; whilst the Infrastructure Delivery Committee has 3 major meetings scheduled over 2016 to align with key project milestones.

Figure 1 The Greater Sydney Commission Governance Chart



2.2 Organisational Establishment

From an organisational perspective, in six months the Commission established itself as a well functioning agency with appropriate systems and processes in place. The Commission is under the leadership of the Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Hill, the current NSW and Australian Planner of the Year at the Planning Institute of Australia 2016 National Awards for Planning Excellence. Sarah is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Technology Sydney and formerly a Director of one of Australia's leading urban economic and planning firms, Hill PDA.

A strong interim structure is operating; some 35 staff now support the Commission's work. In the interests of collaboration and transparency, fifty percent of the Commission's staff are seconded from either State Government agencies (11 from the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE), Sydney Water, UrbanGrowth NSW (UGNSW), Government Property NSW (GPN), TfNSW and INSW) or from local councils (seven senior planners from Blacktown, Marrickville, Sutherland, Blue Mountains, North Sydney, Canada Bay and Wollondilly councils). Permanent recruitment to key positions will commence shortly.

An Operational Plan has been put in place to underpin and support all governance and procedural requirements. It sets out how the Commission will fulfil both its statutory and non-statutory roles and provides guidance on how the Commission will work with local government and NSW Government agencies to ensure it meets its obligations and principal objectives as set out under the GSC Act. The Commission has prioritised procedures and documentation in the areas of conflicts of interest, confidentiality and declarations of private interests. The Commission is also in the midst of developing an audit and risk enterprise management framework to ensure it manages its risks effectively.

The Commission has a Service Level Agreement with the DPE and is in the process of finalising a memorandum of understanding to govern the relationship between the Commission and DPE.

The Government's decision to allocate the Commission an additional \$41 million over four years signals its support for the Commission and commitment to strategic planning excellence in NSW. The Commission has a clear mandate to lead strategic conversations across the community, across all levels of government, and with as many stakeholder groups across Greater Sydney as practical. The Commission's activities are frequently published on its website and circulated via an e-newsletter so that every Sydneysider can be kept informed.



Greater Sydney Commission staff at a community engagement event in Hornsby in July 2016

2.3 Collaboration and Engagement

The success of the Commission will, in large part, depend upon its capacity to collaborate and engage. Forming strong, constructive relationships across government, non-government and community organisations and the citizens of Greater Sydney is an integral part of the Commission's work and has been its early focus.

Chapter Four outlines in detail the three stages of collaboration and engagement designed and implemented since the Commission's inception in January 2016 through to the exhibition of draft District Plans later in 2016.



Our first *Our Sydney, Your Home* event, at the Canterbury Wholefoods Market in June 2016

3. Delivering Six District Plans for Greater Sydney

In its first year the single largest task of the Commission is to produce six draft District Plans¹. Through our district planning process, we're connecting local planning with longer term metropolitan planning for Greater Sydney – a big picture approach to better coordinate State and local government planning.

Sydney is a complex growing city. District level planning will connect the NSW Government's aims for Greater Sydney with the important planning that councils undertake every day for their neighbourhoods. This approach can guide public and private investment decisions in a way that brings more benefits to more people.

¹ The Commission has a statutory requirement to deliver the six draft District Plans within 12 months of 27 January 2016

More specifically, District Plans will be the link between Council's Local Environment Plans and the State Government's regional plan – *A Plan for Growing Sydney*. Released in December 2014, the goals of *A Plan for Growing Sydney* will underpin the foundation for the District Plans. These goals are:

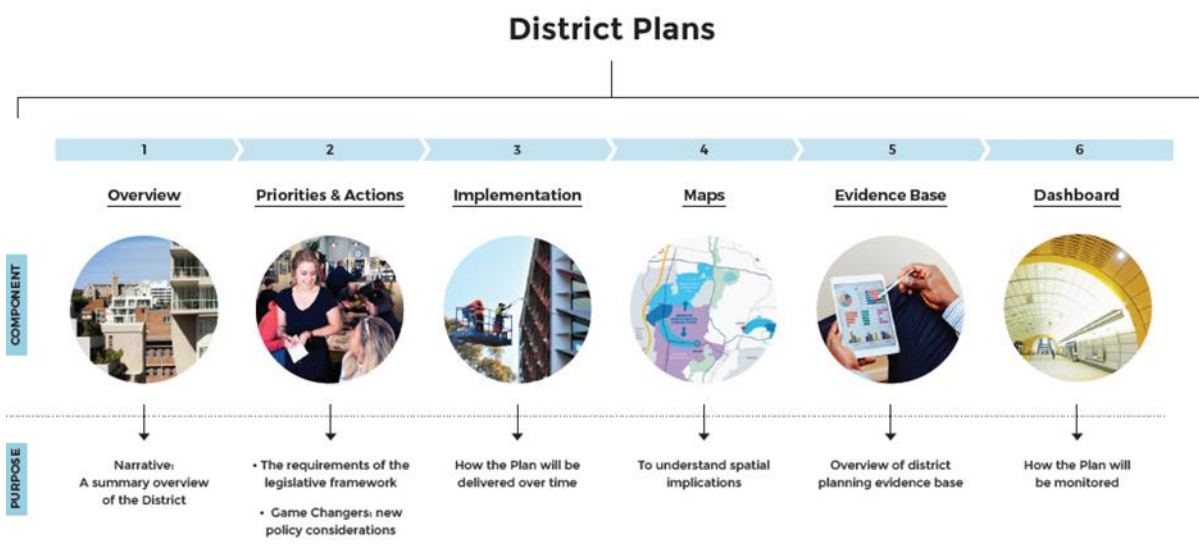
- A competitive economy with world-class services and transport
- A city of housing choice
- A great place to live
- A sustainable and resilient city.

Our work in the six districts will help us to determine the best locations for new housing, with good access to transport, jobs, schools and health services, and open spaces that help to make our lives easier, happier and healthier. The boundaries for Greater Sydney's six Districts were developed as part of the metropolitan planning process. Each District is made up of groups of local government areas. While each District is a unique thread, when they are woven together they become something unified and strong, they become the fabric that makes up a thriving, future Greater Sydney. A map illustrating District boundaries is available on the Commission's website: www.gsc.nsw.gov.au.

Given the time of year, the Commission is aiming to release the draft District Plans in late 2016 for public comment in advance of the statutory deadline. The consultation period will extend to at least March 2017 so genuine community and stakeholder discussions can take place.

At this stage the District Plans are designed to have six components (for ease of reading and monitoring by Sydneysiders with a range of interests):

1. **Overview** – a high level, plain-English narrative outlining the unique features and vision for each District and how this ties together to create a plan for Greater Sydney
2. **Priorities and Actions** – which address key cross-District issues such as jobs targets, health and education data and the role and hierarchy of strategic centres
3. **Implementation** – setting out detailed actions and priorities to deliver the District Plans. Priorities will be identified over the short, medium and long term
4. **Map** – the spatial representation and implications of the District Plans across a series of maps that layer together to form the basis of Greater Sydney's planning
5. **Evidence Base** – methodologies and evidence that underpins the District Plans' policy objectives and implementation priorities
6. **Dashboard** – an interactive web based tool setting out key facts and figures and enabling Sydneysiders to monitor District Plan implementation.



4. Collaboration and Engagement

Effective collaboration and meaningful engagement is a priority for the Minister and is at the heart of the metropolitan planning process.

The Commission has had a commitment from its commencement to listen and learn from people with a vast range of expertise and interests. We are engaging with community groups, Sydneysiders, businesses, State and Commonwealth agencies as well as local councils to understand what people want and need.



Commissioners meet with Mayors and Administrators of Greater Sydney Councils on 6 June 2016

A detailed stakeholder mapping exercise has been undertaken to ensure there is appropriate engagement with all key stakeholders.

In light of the different activities occurring, five stages of collaboration and engagement are being implemented to the end of June 2017.

Stage One – January to April 2016: Introductions and Listening

The Chief Commissioner, Chief Executive Officer and Commissioners participated in over 200 stakeholder briefings, meetings and presentations with Commonwealth and State Government agencies, councils, industry and community stakeholders in its first few months of operation. This has included an ongoing series of boardroom lunches with stakeholders from across Greater Sydney, to introduce the Commission and establish relationships. We also held five meetings with visiting overseas delegations, reinforcing the level of international interest in the Commission, our interest in international best practice, and our innovative approach to metropolitan governance.

Stage Two – May to August 2016: Active discussion to inform the draft District Plans

The Commission established a program of technical working groups with senior council staff, incorporating six workshops per District during June-August 2016. The workshops are giving council officers the opportunity to directly raise and discuss local planning issues with the Commission for consideration in the District Plans and to provide local input. Senior State

Government agency representatives also presented projects, data and emerging trends to the workshops.

During May–July 2016, the Commission also hosted more than a dozen stakeholder luncheons attended by close to 150 peak bodies and representative groups during May–July 2016. These stakeholders represent a diversity of views and interests across the economic, environmental and social sectors, drawn from across Greater Sydney.

The *Our Sydney, Your Home* community engagement program was launched on 20 June 2016. The program has been designed to understand community values, needs and aspirations for each District, to inform the District Plans.



The Honourable Morris Iemma, District Commissioner – South at our first community engagement event in Canterbury in June 2016

To date, the Commission has engaged face-to-face with over 1,700 community members across 14 events. It has held 26 technical workshops with senior council planners from every Council across Greater Sydney. Stage one of the environment and social peak panel workshops is complete and we are consolidating feedback and finalising details for the next stage.

The Commission's social media program has reached out across several channels, with a total of 1.1 million impressions (views, appearances in people's newsfeeds) over 77,000 engagements (likes, comments, shares and clicks) across all social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter) so far (17 June – 3 August). The Commission has had 4,400 website clicks driven to various pages across the www.greater.sydney website from Facebook activity alone. Our photo competition closed with a total of 150 entries.

Stage Three – August - November 2016: Finalising the draft District Plans

District Commissioners are out talking, listening and brainstorming with community groups and individuals, councils, representative groups and industry and with elected representatives across their districts. Every District is distinct and its engagement plan has been designed around the local context.

District Commissioners are meeting with NSW and Commonwealth Members of Parliament, as well as councils to hear local ideas and issues and to be guided on the community groups and local peak bodies to engage with. Local Health Boards and Aboriginal Land Councils will also give Commissioners a critical insight into the needs of their local communities.

District Commissioners will engage through many channels - face-to-face meetings, site tours, pop-up booths at public places and roundtable discussions.

Towards the end of this period the Commission will finalise the draft District Plans for exhibition, along with an accompanying communications and engagement strategy for the exhibition period. The Commission will continue to integrate engagement activities with our key partner agencies, TfNSW and INSW.

Stage Four – November 2016 - March 2017: Public exhibition and community engagement on the draft District Plans

The draft District Plans are planned to go on public exhibition in late 2016. A series of stakeholder functions and feedback channels is being planned for the exhibition period to March 2017.

A summary of current stakeholder engagement activities is provided in Table 1 overleaf.



The Greater Sydney Talk Bus has proven to be a hit with young Sydneysiders.

Table 1: Greater Sydney Commission engagement activities from March 2016

Event / Activity	Description	Dates
Local Government General Manager roundtables	Meetings with every General Manager across Greater Sydney	March - June
Stakeholder roundtables	Meetings with over 150 peak bodies from across Greater Sydney	May - July
Mayor and Administrator morning tea	Hosted by Sydney Water in Parramatta with every Mayor and Administrator invited	June
Local Government technical working groups	Six theme-based workshops within each District and with every council	May - Aug
Vivid partnership	The CEO sought feedback from Sydneysiders on their aspirations for Sydney. Feedback has been uploaded to social media platforms (including Twitter and Facebook) using #GreaterSydney	June
Interactive website	Provides information about the drafting of the District Plans. Also provides the community with a mapping tool and discussion forum as direct channels for feedback	Ongoing
Electronic newsletter	Provides information regarding the latest and planned engagement activities by the Commission	Monthly from June
The Greater Sydney Talk Bus	Visiting locations (including schools) within each District to gain feedback and insights. TfNSW is also participating	June – August
Social and local media campaign	Implemented across the Districts, the campaign <i>Our Sydney, Your Home</i> is seeking feedback on community values and aspirations on jobs, housing, places and the local environment	June – August
Photo competition	Sydneysiders were encouraged to share what they love about their neighbourhood by uploading a photo to Instagram or via our website	June – July
Greater Parramatta & Olympic Peninsula Business roundtable	Draws together 25-30 businesses in the area to discuss current and future prospects for business and jobs; factors that encourage or discourage growth and investment; and priorities for Government to deliver economic outcomes for the area. Meetings are also being planned with local community groups	July-August
Online forums	With thought provoking questions to encourage public discussion via our website	June ongoing
Social, economic and environmental reference panels and roundtables	Draws together peak representative groups to identify priority issues for consideration in the draft District Plans. The peaks and the Commission will then work collaboratively with local community groups across Greater Sydney to brief and involve them in the development of policy papers that respond to the draft District Plans	July – Aug

5. Progressing Key Deliverables in 2016

In addition to leading District planning, the Commission considers its key priorities and deliverables in 2016 (consistent with the Minister's Priorities) to be:

- 1 **Infrastructure Priorities** – working with delivery agencies to map existing infrastructure demands, challenges and gaps and aligning this with strategic land use planning and decisions.
- 2 **Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula** – ongoing cross government co-ordination to support effective revitalisation of the Parramatta Central Business District. The Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula Collaboration Group (Collaboration Group) is also collaborating to produce a shared vision for the broader area spanning 13km between Greater Parramatta and Strathfield and a further 7km to Carlingford. Community engagement will commence over the coming months.
- 3 **Transition to the Sydney Planning Panels** – to determine regionally significant development matters from 21 November 2016.
- 4 **Governance arrangements for the Western Sydney Airport** – Working across all levels of government to unlock the potential for Western Sydney, especially in terms of jobs.
- 5 **Metropolitan Greenspace Grants** – working with Councils on initiatives that improve regionally significant outdoor recreational space.

5.1 Infrastructure Priorities

In developing the District Plans, the Commission is working with local government and delivery agencies to map existing infrastructure demands, challenges and gaps. The findings of this research will be overlaid with planned projects to determine what infrastructure will be required to support future land-use changes, housing and employment outcomes.

The Commission is working closely with TfNSW and INSW to ensure that major long term planning for Greater Sydney is done collaboratively.

5.2 Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula

The Collaboration Group being led by the Commission is working to deliver a strategic vision for the area extending from Westmead to Strathfield (via Sydney Olympic Park), and up to Carlingford to feed into the District planning process. The vision is drawing together a coherent narrative linking major government and private sector projects and investments, to articulate the potential and longer term aspirations of the area. Government spending alone in this area is about \$8 billion over the coming years. The vision will also support TfNSW's development of the Parramatta Light Rail project.

The Collaboration Group comprises the City of Parramatta and eight State agencies, with special interest agencies joining as required (e.g. Venues NSW, Powerhouse Museum, Land and Housing Corporation, Parramatta Park Trust and Western Sydney University).

A roundtable discussion, chaired by Chief Commissioner Lucy Turnbull, will ensure this shared vision is also informed by insights from major employers and those doing business in Greater Parramatta the Olympic Peninsula.

The strategic vision is being developed alongside the West Central District Plan and, as such, is being informed by the community engagement process underway. The vision will be released for public exhibition by the end of 2016 to canvas ideas and invite feedback from Sydneysiders. It will also form part of the draft West Central District Plan going to public exhibition in late November 2016.



A snapshot from the Parramatta River of the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula

5.3 Transition to Sydney Planning Panels

Planning for the Sydney Planning Panels (SPPs), to replace the Sydney East and Sydney West Joint Regional Planning Panels, is underway for the target date of 21 November 2016. Six SPPs will be established to reflect the District boundaries declared under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. The relevant District Commissioner will chair the SPP for their District.

As with the Joint Regional Planning Panels, council appointed representatives for the relevant local government area will sit on the relevant SPP, when considering matters in their local government area.

The SPPs will continue the current functions of the Joint Regional Planning Panels, which are to determine regionally significant development applications (generally development with a capital investment value of more than \$20 million) within the Greater Sydney Region and consider pre-Gateway (rezoning) reviews².

More information on the SPPs and the process of transition from the existing Joint Regional Planning Panels is available on the Commission's website.

5.4 Western Sydney Airport

The Commission recognises that the new Western Sydney Airport will play a critical role in planning for Western Sydney. Negotiations continue with the Commonwealth Government on the governance and administration arrangements for a multi-level Government approach. The Commission is working with the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and with all levels

² Pre-gateway (rezoning) reviews are the means through which proponents can request a review if a council decides not to support a rezoning request or does not make a determination within 90 days.

of Government to unlock the potential of this project for Western Sydney. NSW is also commissioning work from airport planning specialists to give guidance on how to optimise jobs creation and economic uplift from the airport investment for inclusion in the South West and West District Plans.

5.5 Metropolitan Greenspace Program (MGP)

Responsibility for the MGP has transitioned to the Commission, in accordance with the Minister's Statement of Priorities. The MGP supports local councils in Greater Sydney to improve regional open space. Funding is provided to councils on a matching dollar-for-dollar basis. Since 1990, over \$35 million has been allocated to 562 Metropolitan Greenspace projects.

The funded projects improve regionally significant outdoor recreational space through initiatives such as new or upgraded access paths and trails, signage, landscaping and picnic facilities.

Looking forward, the Commission will work with stakeholders to ensure the program aligns closely with the aims and objectives established by the District Plans.



The Metropolitan Greenspace Program funds projects to improve outdoor recreational space

6. Next Steps

Over the next few months the Commission is largely focused on building on its collaboration and engagement activities to support the drafting of the District Plans, and the transition to Sydney Planning Panels. Draft District Plans will go on public exhibition in late 2016. The Sydney Planning Panels will commence on 21 November 2016.

The Commission will also continue to progress a number of additional Ministerial Priorities, including:

- A strategic vision for the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula
- Implementation of the Metropolitan Greenspace Program for 2016/17
- Drafting Policy Leadership papers to lead the dialogue on issues of importance to metropolitan planning in the Greater Sydney Region
- Reviewing the infrastructure needs necessary to support future land-use changes, housing and employment outcomes.

The Commission will make available to all stakeholders regular Progress Reports on its website: www.gsc.nsw.gov.au. The next update will be available in late 2016. In accordance with Government requirements, an Annual Report will be published on the Commission's website in late in 2016.



The Talk Bus is travelling across Greater Sydney to talk about, *Our Sydney, Your Home*



At the Vivid Festival, Sarah Hill, the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission, talks with Sydneysiders about their aspirations for Greater Sydney.



