

Engagement Report

Assurance Review of Planning in the Ryde Local Government Area

2018/19

Introduction

The Greater Sydney Commission (the Commission) has undertaken an Assurance Review of planning in the Ryde Local Government Area (Ryde LGA), with a particular focus on the Macquarie Park Investigation Area and its broader impact on the Ryde LGA.

The Assurance Review was undertaken on the request of the Premier and in accordance with the Commission's functions under the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015* (GSC Act).

The Assurance Review was led by a Panel of Commissioners chaired by the Chief Commissioner, Lucy Turnbull AO, and including the Deputy Chief Commissioner and Economic Commissioner, Geoff Roberts.

The Terms of Reference for the Assurance Review announced on 14 December 2018 included:

“The Assurance Review will provide an opportunity for community and stakeholder views to be heard.”

This report documents the engagement activities undertaken for the purposes of the Assurance Review. It summarises the program of engagement, the participation of the community and stakeholders and provides an overview of their feedback and insights.

This report accompanies, and has informed, the Stage 2 Report of the Assurance Review.

Engagement process

Engagement has been at the core of the Commission's work since its inception in 2016. One of its principal objectives under the GSC Act is to provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment in the Greater Sydney Region.

Leading robust conversations with community and stakeholders about land use and infrastructure is also in the Premier's Statement of Priorities issued in June 2018.

Accordingly, engagement with the community and stakeholders was a key component of the Ryde Assurance Review.

The engagement process involved:

- Expression of Interest (EOI): Inviting, through advertisements in the local newspapers and social media, EOIs from those living, working or investing in the Ryde LGA to provide comments to the Assurance Panel; and
- Listening Sessions: Facilitating listening sessions, held over two nights, where the community and other stakeholders could make representations to the Assurance Panel directly.

The Expression of Interest - comments and listening sessions

An EOI was issued on 14 December 2018 inviting stakeholders and the community to register to attend Listening Sessions.

The EOI was made public through:

- 10 advertisements in local and community language newspapers (Appendix A)
- Social media (Appendix A)
- Emails and letters to local community and business groups (Appendices B and C)

Applicants were asked to express in a 500 word application how their interests were aligned with the Ryde Assurance Review [Terms of Reference](#).

People were able to provide written submissions to the Panel and could elect to also present at the Listening Session.

Fifty-six people applied to attend the Listening Sessions or sent written submissions, of these thirty-three chose to speak at the listening sessions. Forty-nine people applied to attend as observers.

Listening sessions

The listening sessions were held at Ryde Leagues Club on Tuesday 5 and Thursday 7 February 2019.

The sessions commenced at 6pm and continued through to 8pm. A short introduction was provided by the Panel Chair, Chief Commissioner Lucy Turnbull AO at the start of each session. A Commission representative facilitated the sessions.

In the introductory comments at each listening session, the Panel Chair outlined the Terms of Reference for the Assurance Review and noted that the Review:

- was being undertaken at the request of the Premier;
- was not looking at individual development applications or planning proposals, and was focussed on the broader strategic planning context of Ryde LGA; and
- was designed to support the effective implementation of strategic plans and to get the best outcomes for the community and the environment.

Participants had an allocation of five minutes in which to give their presentation.

Listening sessions were recorded and placed on the Commission's website so that interested parties not able to attend could access the presentations. Links to videos (with subtitles) and transcripts can be found at Appendix D.

Key themes arising from engagement activities

The stakeholders who made EOI written comments and participated in the listening sessions generally fit into one of four categories:

- Local council and elected representatives;
- industry representatives;
- local community groups; and
- local residents.

The key themes have been organised by stakeholder group.

Local Council representatives, including City of Ryde Councillors, raised concerns regarding:

- the scale and rate of growth and development across the Ryde LGA, and the alignment of associated infrastructure planning and provision, including traffic planning, school capacity, and open space;
- the appropriateness of the use of Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPA) noting their use is wide ranging and varied;
- perceptions of a diminished role for local government in policy making and in shaping local planning laws, including the role of Local Planning Panels;
- the potential impact the Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code, if applied, would have on the character of the Ryde LGA;
- perceived poor relationships and collaboration between local and State Government; and
- the long timeframes associated with the update of local planning controls.

Several of these themes were also raised by the Member for Ryde including in relation to impacts of ad-hoc re-zonings, local character and the Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code, timely updates needed to Ryde LGA's LEP, as well as the planning for key locations at the Meadowbank Education Precinct and Macquarie Park.

Industry representatives, including industry peak bodies, landowner representatives and business owners:

- the desire for clarity on an agreed vision for Macquarie Park, including regarding the future potential for residential development;
- opportunities to improve urban-form, vibrancy and amenity, including the night-time economy and pedestrian movement, in Macquarie Park in particular;
- the importance of supporting Macquarie Park as an innovation precinct;
- the development and urban form of Macquarie Park not being reflective of its economic significance;
- the need for the development industry to be engaged positively and constructively in the planning process;
- the role of the Assurance Review and the need to avoid uncertainty which may undermine confidence;
- the perceptions of anti-development sentiment and the potential risk it presents to investment certainty;

Community groups:

- the protection of biodiversity and remanent bushland, including impacts on the extent and quality of the Lane Cove National Park, Shrimpton's Creek and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest;
- missed opportunities to enhance and connect habitat corridors;
- consideration of the use of public land for open space and recreational opportunities; and
- planning system concerns, including the adequacy of assumptions and data and the potential for State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP) to open doors to development.

Local residents:

- over-development, including the visual, traffic and character impacts of high-density residential development in particular;
- negative amenity impacts on local communities, including congestion, inadequate public transport, poor-quality built form outcomes and inadequate open space;

- negative impacts on, and the erosion of, the environmental qualities of the Ryde LGA including the loss of urban bushland;
- the visual impact of poor design quality;
- the timing of development relative to the provision of infrastructure, including school and health infrastructure;
- the desire to protect and enhance the character of local communities; and
- the desire to protect an environment and built-form appropriate for a variety and vibrancy of flora and fauna.

A synthesis of the key matters that emerged is summarised following:

- concern about the rapid rate of development occurring in the Ryde LGA, particularly residential development, that has the potential to lead to 'over-development', and resultant impacts on the liveability and character of the Ryde LGA;
- the need to deliver appropriate infrastructure to support growth and address the misalignment in the timing of upgrades to, and delivery of new, infrastructure;
- a desire to ensure the protection of the Ryde LGA's natural landscape and biodiversity;
- the need to enhance the vibrancy and amenity for residents and workers of the Ryde LGA, specifically agreed directions on the future in Macquarie Park;
- the need for agreed direction on the future of Macquarie Park to optimise the potential of Macquarie Park as a strategic centre that supports innovation;
- the need for better collaboration between State Government agencies, the City of Ryde, and the development community to ensure quality outcomes; and
- The need to ensure that local strategic planning balances liveability, productivity and sustainability outcomes.

Local issues

There were several specific comments and presentations to the Panel which relate to local matters that may require further investigation through the appropriate channels.

These are:

Cycleway connectivity

Reference was made to linking existing cycleways, including the opportunity to leverage government-owned land and opportunities presented by ongoing development activities in the Ryde LGA, including the development of the Meadowbank Education Precinct.

Pedestrian connectivity on Waterloo Road, and across Macquarie Park

The Panel received representations regarding the ease of pedestrian movement within and throughout Macquarie Park, including Waterloo Road. Restrictions on the ease of movement and, in this instance, access to planned open space in Macquarie Park were specifically noted.

Night-time economy in Macquarie Park

The Panel received representations from various stakeholders, including business representatives, about the need to improve the vibrancy and amenity of Macquarie Park. A restriction on trading hours was specifically mentioned.

Waste management in high density residential development

The Panel was made aware of a circumstance where a resident of a high-density apartment building was having their liveability impacted by the proximity of waste storage facilities to their dwelling, and the inconsistent management of waste collection.

Appendix A - Full list of advertisements and social media posts concerning the EOI to present to the Assurance Panel

Date	Medium	Messaging
17-Dec	Newsletter	Assurance Review announcement
17-Dec	Twitter	Assurance Review announcement
17-Dec	Facebook	Assurance Review announcement
17-Dec	LinkedIn	Assurance Review announcement
19-Dec	Newspaper Ad (Weekly Times & Northern District Times)	Assurance Review announcement
24-Dec	Facebook	What is an Assurance Review?
27-Dec	Twitter	Assurance Review announcement
3-Jan	Twitter	Assurance Review announcement (re-run)
8-Jan	Twitter	Assurance Review announcement (re-run)
8-Jan	Facebook	Assurance Review announcement (re-run)
9-Jan	Newspaper Ad (Weekly Times & Northern District Times)	Assurance Review announcement
10-Jan	LinkedIn	Assurance Review announcement (re-run)
15-Jan	Twitter	Register to be an observer.
15-Jan	Facebook	Register to be an observer.
16-Jan	Newspaper Ad (Weekly Times & Northern District Times)	Assurance Review announcement
17-Jan	LinkedIn	Register to be an observer.
22-Jan	Twitter	One week to go
22-Jan	Facebook	One week to go
22-Jan	LinkedIn	One week to go
23-Jan	Newspaper Ad (Weekly Times & Northern District Times)	Assurance Review announcement
25-Jan	Newspaper Ad (Sydney Korean Herald)	Assurance Review announcement
26-Jan	Newspaper Ad (Australian Chinese Daily)	Assurance Review announcement

Appendix B – List of stakeholder groups invited to attend or make a submission to the Ryde Assurance Review

Eamon	Waterford	Acting CEO	Committee for Sydney
Juliet	Grant	NSW President	Planning Institute of Australia
Chis	Johnson	CEO	Urban Taskforce
Steve	Mann	CEO	Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA)
Jane	Fitzgerald	NSW Executive Director	Property Council of Australia
Patricia	Forsythe	Executive Director	Sydney Business Chamber
Wendy	Hayhurst	CEO	NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc.
Jeff	Angel	Executive Director	Total Environment Centre
Chris	Brown	Chairman	Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue
Penny	Dillon	National Manager, Experience & Culture	Optus
Rita	Lepedjian	President	Armenian Chamber of Commerce
Brad	Chan		Chinese Business Community (Ryde)
Vic	Tagg	President	Eastwood Chamber of Commerce
Ernie	Zappia	President	Gladesville Chamber of Commerce
David	Kwon	President	Korean Chamber of Commerce
Tony	Abboud	President	Riverside Business Chamber
Nora	Etmekdtian	President	West Ryde Chamber of Commerce
Mike	Foster	CEO	Fujitsu
Dig	Howitt	CEO	Cochlear
Steve	Ashe	Corporate Affairs	Metcash
Ian	Barter	GM, North Region	Frasers Property
Joanna	Hull	GM, People	BSA
Andrew	Nimmo	NSW Chapter President	Institute of Architects
Mark	Steinert	CEO	Stockland
Professor David	Wilkinson	Deputy Vice Chancellor	Macquarie University



Assurance Review on planning in the Ryde LGA: opportunity to participate

19 December 2019

The Greater Sydney Commission (the Commission) has commenced an Assurance Review of planning in the Ryde Local Government Area (LGA), with a particular focus on the Macquarie Park Investigation Area and its broader impact on the Ryde LGA.

Assurance Reviews are designed to support the effective implementation of strategic plans and optimise outcomes for the community and the environment. They will consider issues such as relevant policies on housing, commercial and industrial lands; and the provision of infrastructure, including education, transport, roads and open space.

The Assurance Review is being undertaken on the request of the Premier and in accordance with the Commission's functions under the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015* – to provide advice and make recommendations to the Premier on matters relating to planning and development in the Greater Sydney Region.

The Commission will engage with the Department of Planning and Environment, City of Ryde Council, other relevant state and local agencies, stakeholders and the community.

The Assurance Review will be chaired by Chief Commissioner Lucy Turnbull AO and identify key planning issues facing the LGA, together with options to address these going forward.

The Commission is inviting community members, groups and stakeholders to register expressions of interest to speak with the Assurance Panel at Panel Listening Sessions from 6pm to 9pm on the evenings of Tuesday 5 and Thursday 7 February 2019. People also have the option of lodging a short summary of their views online or attending as observers.

While the Assurance Panel will try to hear from as many people as possible, it may not be possible for everyone who wishes to speak to have the opportunity to do so. We may therefore use the information provided by you in your expression of interest to prioritise speakers whose concerns most closely relate to the Assurance Review [Terms of Reference](#) or select a speaker to represent common issues or themes.

Expressions of Interest close at 5pm on Tuesday 29 January 2019. Applicants will be informed of the status of their request on 31 January 2019.

For more information and to submit an expression of interest, [click here](#).

Appendix D - Full video and transcript of listening sessions

[Watch the video of Panel Listening Session - 5 February 2019](#)

[Read the transcript of Panel Listening Session - 5 February 2019](#)

[Watch the video of Panel Listening Session - 7 February 2019](#)

[Read the transcript of Panel Listening Session - 7 February 2019](#)