



# Assurance Review of Planning in the Ryde Local Government Area

## Stage 2 Report

31 May 2019

## Message from the Panel

The Assurance Panel is pleased to provide the Stage 2 Report of the Assurance Review of planning in the Ryde Local Government Area (LGA).

The Ryde LGA is presently facing challenges owing to the current scale, rate and volume of residential development that is occurring. This has resulted in a mismatch between the timing of development and the delivery of the infrastructure necessary to support it.

These circumstances have resulted in understandable concern across many stakeholder groups, including the resident and business communities of the Ryde LGA.

This Report provides further detail concerning the four preliminary actions suggested by the Panel in the Stage 1 Report to the Premier (February 2019) and responds to four further matters which were raised by stakeholders during the Assurance Review. On the basis of the Review's findings, this Report also provides two additional suggestions to be considered by the NSW Government in relation to planning and infrastructure co-ordination across Greater Sydney more generally.

We trust that this completes the Assurance Review in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

It is the Panel's hope that the recommended actions and suggestions in this Report provide a framework which will assist in the effective and efficient delivery of infrastructure, along with high quality, place-based outcomes for the current and future residents, businesses and landowners of the Ryde LGA.



**Lucy Turnbull AO**  
Chief Commissioner



**Geoff Roberts**  
Deputy Chief Commissioner  
Economic Commissioner  
Chief Co-ordinator for Western Sydney

## Summary of findings

On 23 November 2018, the NSW Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, requested that the Greater Sydney Commission (**the Commission**) undertake an Assurance Review of planning in the Ryde LGA, with a particular focus on the Macquarie Park Investigation Area and its broader impact on the Ryde LGA.

Assurance Reviews undertaken by the Commission are designed to assure the effective implementation of the Greater Sydney Region Plan (GSRP) and District Plans. The reviews seek to optimise outcomes for resident and business communities as well as the environment.

A Review Panel was established comprising the Chief Commissioner, Ms Lucy Turnbull AO and the Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr Geoff Roberts.

The Terms of Reference required the Review Panel (Panel) to:

- provide an assessment of the current situation in the Ryde LGA;
- consult with relevant local and State agencies;
- provide an opportunity for community and stakeholder views to be heard;
- consider the alignment of planning and development in the Ryde LGA with the GSRP and the North District Plan;
- consider the provision of infrastructure; and
- provide a Stage 1 and Stage 2 Report.

The Panel's Stage 1 Report noted the significant scale and rapid rate of housing supply occurring in the Ryde LGA. In the Ryde LGA there were 4,500 new dwellings completed between 2015 and 2018, almost double the number of completions between 2012 and 2015. The growth also occurred at twice the average rate of growth in Greater Sydney over the same period. This has been a major step change for the LGA and has led to a misalignment between the timing of development and the delivery of infrastructure necessary to support it.

Hence four preliminary actions were presented to the NSW Government in the Stage 1 Report. Two of these preliminary actions were proposed to be for a temporary period. This was in order that new arrangements could be put in place to help manage the unprecedented high levels of residential development experienced since 2013.

The preparation of this Stage 2 Report has subsequently allowed for a greater consideration of the issues and further details to be provided to best implement the preliminary actions recommended in the Stage 1 Report. It has also allowed for the commencement of additional research with regard to infrastructure planning, funding and delivery.

On this basis, the Stage 2 Report recommends practical actions to improve outcomes for the current and future resident and business stakeholders of the Ryde LGA through:

- new arrangements to improve collaboration between State Government agencies, the City of Ryde and local resident and business stakeholders;
- the use of existing governance arrangements, including the Commission's Infrastructure Delivery Committee (IDC) to improve co-ordination across State Government agencies and to enhance accountability; and

- the restoration of confidence in the alignment of land-use planning and infrastructure delivery.

Overall and within the scope of the Terms of Reference, the Stage 2 Report contains eight recommended actions and two suggestions for further consideration by the NSW Government.

Subject to the NSW Government accepting the recommended actions and suggestions, implementation can commence immediately, with an immediate focus on Recommended Actions 1, 2 and 3.

## **Stage 1 - Ryde LGA Recommended Actions**

### **Recommended Action 1**

Establish a Ryde Co-ordination Group (RCG), to be chaired by the Greater Sydney Commission's (Commission) North District Commissioner, to better co-ordinate land-use, infrastructure planning and delivery across the LGA.

### **Recommended Action 2**

The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to complete work on the Macquarie Park Investigation Area and deliver a Master Plan within 12-months of the Government accepting this recommendation.

### **Recommended Action 3**

The NSW Government to identify potential locations that would benefit from a co-ordinated, master planned approach to enhance employment and service outcomes that complement existing residential development in the Ryde LGA.

The NSW Government should deliver a Master Plan for the Meadowbank Education Precinct and surrounds, incorporating the Sydney Water Pumping Station and the West Ryde Industrial Area, within 12-months of the Government accepting this recommendation.

### **Recommended Action 4**

Implement the following temporary measures as detailed in the Stage 1 Report:

- 4.1 Maintain the existing pause on new residential planning proposals in the Ryde LGA consistent with the Stage 1 Report;
- 4.2 Maintain the delayed commencement of the Low-Rise Medium Density Housing Code in the Ryde LGA consistent with the Stage 1 Report; and
- 4.3 Pause the finalisation of any existing residential planning proposals in the Ryde LGA.

These measures are proposed to allow for the implementation of new co-ordination and governance arrangements across local and State Government agencies, thereby addressing the existing gap between housing supply and infrastructure delivery whilst adequately planning for future growth.

It is suggested that Action 4.3 occur for a temporary period of 12 months from the date of the Panel's Stage 1 Report, or until the NSW Government has sufficient comfort that the matters raised by this Report have been addressed.

One relevant milestone for the NSW Government's consideration is the Commission's endorsement of the City of Ryde's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), which will set out its capacity and opportunity to address housing demand and associated housing targets for the six to 10-year period. Alternatively, the NSW Government may make its decision based on advice from the RCG.

Also consistent with the Stage 1 Report:

- 4.4 Expedite the review and update of the Ryde LGA Local Environmental Plan (LEP); and
- 4.5 Prioritise the review and update of the Ryde LGA Local Development Contributions Plan.

## **Stage 2 – Ryde LGA Recommended Actions**

### **Recommended Action 5**

The RCG investigate improvements to cycleway connectivity across the Ryde LGA, including those opportunities brought to the Panel's attention during the Assurance Review.

The DPE and the Commission consider opportunities for improved connectivity as part of their respective master planning activities at Actions 2 and 3.

### **Recommended Action 6**

The DPE investigate improvements to pedestrian amenity and connectivity, particularly with regard to Waterloo Road, Macquarie Park, as part of its activities at Action 2.

### **Recommended Action 7**

The DPE, along with the City of Ryde, investigate opportunities to improve the night-time economy in Macquarie Park as part of its activities at Action 2.

### **Recommended Action 8**

The City of Ryde to investigate concerns raised during the Assurance Review regarding the management of waste in high density residential development in Macquarie Park.

## **Suggestions for Greater Sydney**

### **Suggestion 1**

The NSW Government consider the application of place-based co-ordination and collaboration models in other high transformation areas across Greater Sydney.

### **Suggestion 2**

The NSW Government seek the views of stakeholders regarding the role and purpose of site-specific re-zonings given that councils are developing their LSPSs and updating their LEPs to align with the GSRP and District Plans.

## Introduction and background

On 23 November 2018, the NSW Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, requested that the Greater Sydney Commission (**the Commission**) undertake an Assurance Review of planning in the Ryde LGA, with a particular focus on the Macquarie Park Investigation Area and its broader impact on the Ryde LGA.

As an independent agency with specialist planning capabilities, the Commission is well placed to assess the status of planning, development and infrastructure issues in the Ryde LGA, and to provide findings to the NSW Premier.

The Terms of Reference for the Review are at Attachment 1 and are available on the Commission's website, with further material relevant to the Panel's stakeholder engagement activities<sup>1</sup>.

The Panel comprises the Chief Commissioner, Ms Lucy Turnbull AO, and Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr Geoff Roberts. Secretariat support was provided by Commission staff<sup>2</sup>.

In accordance with the Review's Terms of Reference, a Stage 1 Report detailing the Panel's initial findings was provided to the NSW Premier on 25 February 2019 and is at Attachment 2.

The Stage 2 Report, detailing all of the Panel's recommended actions, is now provided to the NSW Premier, in accordance with the Review's Terms of Reference which required it to be submitted in May 2019.

Both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Reports have identified that the Ryde LGA is experiencing challenges owing to the current scale, rate and volume of residential development that has been occurring.

The conclusion of this Review presents a framework for the NSW Government and the City of Ryde to drive future alignment with the GSRP and the North District Plan to deliver relevant objectives, strategies and precincts, such as:

- GSRP Objective 5 – Benefits of growth realised by collaboration of governments, community and business;
- GSRP Objective 6 – Services and infrastructure meet communities' changing needs;
- GSRP Strategy 1.1 – Prioritise infrastructure investments to support the vision for *A Metropolis of Three Cities*;
- GSRP Strategy 2.1 – Align forecast growth with infrastructure;
- North District Plan Planning Priorities N1 - planning for a city supported by infrastructure; and
- North District Plan N2 - working through collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.greater.sydney/assurance-review>

<sup>2</sup> In appointing the Assurance Panel, and Commission Secretariat, consideration was given to ensuring that there were no actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

## Prior advice

Planning and development and infrastructure delivery in the Ryde LGA have been issues of concern for the NSW Government for more than 12 months. In this context, the then Minister for Planning, The Hon Anthony Roberts MP, requested advice from the Commission on:

- the extent of the impact of current and future proposed future development in the Ryde LGA; and
- the Greater Sydney Commission's position on how any of these potential impacts would be better managed.

On the basis of the Commission's advice, steps were taken to:

- delay the commencement of the *Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code* in the Ryde LGA<sup>3</sup>; and
- pause new residential planning proposals in the Ryde LGA<sup>4</sup>.

Owing to the rapid rate of development and its significant scale, concerns continue regarding the alignment of land-use and infrastructure.

This Review has allowed for a further, more extensive investigation of the barriers to the delivery of quality liveability, productivity and sustainability outcomes across the Ryde LGA.

It provides an opportunity for the NSW Government and City of Ryde to consider adopting further initiatives to improve co-ordination and collaboration and to drive place-based outcomes in the Ryde LGA, at the same time helping to restore community and business confidence in the alignment of land-use planning and infrastructure delivery.

## Overview of the Report

**Chapter 1** describes the Ryde LGA and the Macquarie Park Investigation Area.

**Chapter 2** provides an overview of the stakeholder engagement activities undertaken by the Panel to inform the Review.

**Chapter 3** confirms the four preliminary actions proposed in the Stage 1 Report, with further advice as to how they may be most effectively implemented and an overview of the Commission's program of assurance of the City of Ryde's LSPS.

**Chapter 4** recommends four actions which respond to issues raised by the resident and business stakeholders of the Ryde LGA.

**Chapter 5** outlines two suggestions for planning and infrastructure co-ordination in Greater Sydney more generally, based on the findings of this Review.

**Chapter 6** suggests next steps and governance arrangements that could be used to support the delivery of the recommended actions outlined in Chapters Three and Four.

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<sup>3</sup> Currently to 1 July 2020

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/Business-and-Development/Planning-Proposals>

# 1. Ryde LGA in context

## Ryde Local Government Area (LGA)

The Ryde LGA is located approximately 12 kilometres west of the Sydney Central Business District (CBD). It covers a land area of approximately 40 square kilometres<sup>5</sup> in Greater Sydney's North District. It forms part of the Eastern Harbour City. Macquarie Park is strategically located within the Eastern Economic Corridor.

In 2016, the Ryde LGA's estimated resident population was 119,950. The LGA's population is projected to grow by 51,700 additional people (43%) by 2036, to 171,650<sup>6</sup>.

The Ryde LGA includes the suburbs of Ryde, West Ryde, North Ryde and Meadowbank.

**Figure 1: Ryde LGA in the context of the Three Cities**



Source: Greater Sydney Commission

The Ryde LGA has transport links of district and metropolitan significance, including the M2 Motorway, Epping Road, Lane Cove Road and Victoria Road. The Ryde LGA also provides for a range of public transport options, including rail, bus and ferry. Rail stations are located at Meadowbank, West Ryde, Denistone and Eastwood along the Northern Line.

<sup>5</sup> City of Ryde Annual Report 2017/18, pg 4

<sup>6</sup> 2016 NSW State and Local Government Area Population Projections, Department of Planning and Environment; North District Plan, pg 26.



Of particular significance is the commencement of services on the Sydney Metro Northwest which passes through the Ryde LGA with stations at North Ryde, Macquarie Park and Macquarie University. This improves connectivity to the Ryde LGA and Macquarie Park, and will also be of significance to mobility across Greater Sydney.

The Ryde LGA benefits from the presence of Macquarie University and large retail assets, including Macquarie Centre and Top Ryde City Shopping Centre. There are also employment opportunities in Macquarie Park and other centres, and in industrial and urban services lands across the LGA, including those in Gladesville and West Ryde.

The Ryde LGA is estimated to have over 12,000 businesses and Macquarie Park is estimated to include approximately 58,500 jobs (2016), with a target to generate an additional 14,500 jobs by 2036<sup>7</sup>. The policy introduced by the Region and District Plans for the LGA's industrial and urban services lands is 'retain and manage' consistent with the approach across the North, eastern City and South Districts.

The Region Plan contained a 0-5 year housing supply target (for the period 2016-2021) for the North District of 25,950 dwellings and a 20 year strategic housing target of 92,000 dwellings. Within this context the North District Plan identified a minimum 0-5 year housing supply target for Ryde LGA of 7,600, which is significantly lower than the supply set to be delivered during this period.

The Ryde LGA also has many natural attributes, such as frontage to the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers, and the presence of Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest. Green Grid priority corridors identified in the North District Plan that coincide with Ryde LGA include:

- Lane Cove National Park and Lane Cove River - enhancing open space linking the Lane Cove National Park to Macquarie Park, Macquarie University, Chatswood and Epping
- Eastwood to Macquarie Park Open Space Corridors - extending and enhancing green links, including upgrades to ELS Hall Park to link the two major recreational corridors of Shrimptons Creek and County Road shared.

### **Macquarie Park and the Macquarie Park Investigation Area**

The GSRP places Macquarie Park as a northern anchor in Sydney's Eastern Economic Corridor. Its significance is reflected in its designation as a health and education precinct and Strategic Centre in the North District Plan.

Macquarie Park is the most prominent business and employment centre in the Ryde LGA.

The North District Plan's Action 33 sets a direction to strengthen Macquarie Park through approaches that<sup>8</sup>:

- enable additional capacity for commercial floor space and maintain a commercial core*
- improve urban amenity as the centre transitions from business park to a vibrant commercial centre, including reducing the impact of vehicle movements on pedestrian and cyclist accessibility*
- deliver a finer grain road network to enhance pedestrian connections and provide new access points*
- promote design excellence in urban design by upgrading public areas*
- deliver an innovation ecosystem in Macquarie Park, capitalising on the relationship with Macquarie University and nearby high-tech and medical corporations*

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<sup>7</sup> North District Plan, pg 63

<sup>8</sup> North District Plan, Action 33, pg. 63

f. improve public transport connections to Parramatta and the District's other strategic centres, including the Northern Beaches Hospital.

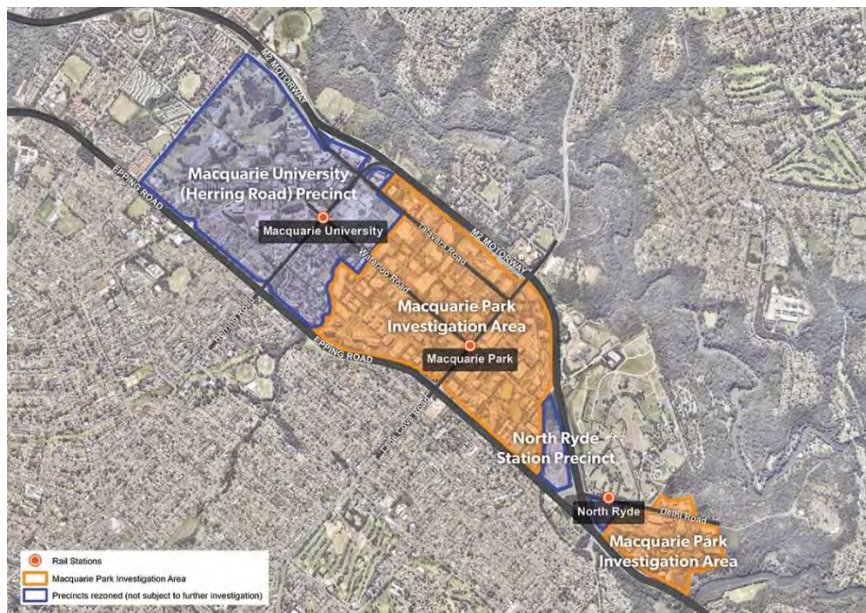
There is cross-Government accountability for delivering this vision for Macquarie Park. The Commission, DPE<sup>9</sup>, the City of Ryde, NSW Health and other agencies all have a role to play. This signals the importance of effective collaboration between these various agencies and tiers of Government.

Recent amendments to planning controls applicable to two precincts within the Macquarie Park corridor were made as part of the NSW Government's Planned Precinct program:

- The North Ryde Station Planned Precinct was rezoned in 2013 and was proposed to provide around 3,000 new dwellings and 1,500 new jobs<sup>10</sup>; and
- The Macquarie University (Herring Road) Planned Precinct was rezoned in 2015 and was proposed to provide up to 5,800 new dwellings<sup>11</sup>.

In early 2016, the DPE commenced further investigations into the Macquarie Park corridor, with specific attention given to the defined Macquarie Park Investigation Area.

**Figure 2: Macquarie Park Investigation Area**



Source: [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts/Epping-and-Macquarie-Park/Macquarie-Park](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts/Epping-and-Macquarie-Park/Macquarie-Park)

The Macquarie Park Investigation Area straddles the North Ryde Station Planned Precinct and adjoins the Macquarie University (Herring Road) Planned Precinct.

Among other things, the investigations are intended to identify opportunities to enhance the area's existing role as a major commercial centre and innovation district, and identify the infrastructure needed to support the sustainable development of Macquarie Park<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Machinery of Government changes take effect on 1 July 2019

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/northryde>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts/Epping-and-Macquarie-Park/Macquarie-University-Station>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts/Epping-and-Macquarie-Park/Macquarie-Park>

It is understood that the DPE's investigations to date have included the preparation of various preliminary background studies, technical reports and Discussion Papers. This includes work on transport, urban design, social infrastructure and open space, economic feasibility and capacity analysis.

The Panel received positive feedback from stakeholders concerning the early directions of these investigations and the associated engagement between State Government agencies and local government. However, anticipated deliverables, including a Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan (LUIIP), have not been finalised.

### **Development activity**

The stakeholder engagement which informed this Review identified that the Ryde LGA is an appealing area to live, work and invest as evidenced by the strong market conditions in recent years.

However, the scale, rate and volume of residential development, in particular, has been challenging for Ryde LGA, with the timely delivery of infrastructure necessary to meet this growth not meeting the expectations of the local community.

In particular, the acceleration of residential growth in recent years has been a step change for the LGA. There have been over 4,500 dwelling completions in the Ryde LGA over the three years from 2015/16 to 2017/18.<sup>13</sup> This compares with around 2,500 completions in the three years prior 2012/13 to 2014/15 for the same period.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of Greater Sydney, a comparison of the annual percentage growth in dwellings in the Ryde LGA for each of the past five years, 2013/14 to 2017/18 has been higher than the annual percentage growth in dwellings across Greater Sydney.

Further, as illustrated in Figure 3, this growth has occurred at twice the average rate of growth for Greater Sydney. Notably in the five years 2013/14 to 2017/18, over 95% were multi-unit dwellings.<sup>15</sup>

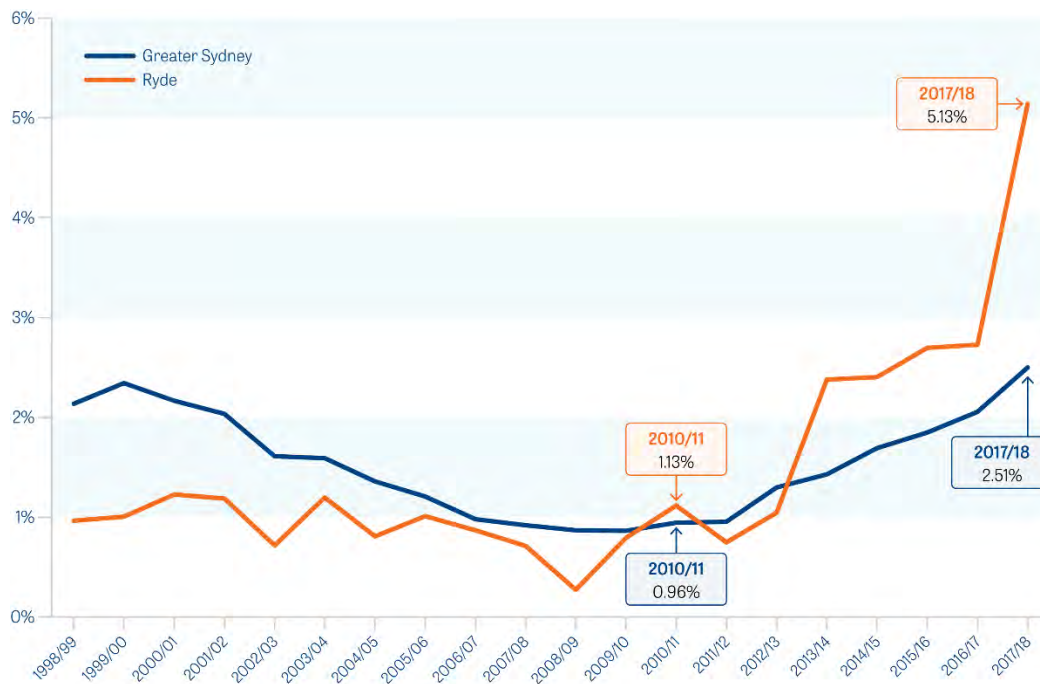
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<sup>13</sup> Housing completions based on Sydney Water Connections, 1998/99 to 2017/18, Department of Planning and Environment

<sup>14</sup> Housing completions based on Sydney Water Connections, 1998/99 to 2017/18, Department of Planning and Environment

<sup>15</sup> Greater Sydney Housing Activity, North District Completions, Department of Planning and Environment

**Figure 3: Annual growth in housing stock – City of Ryde and Greater Sydney (1998/99-2017/18)**



Source: Department of Planning and Environment; Greater Sydney Commission

Looking forward, it is now forecast that there will be a net increase of 10,000 dwellings in Ryde LGA in the five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23<sup>16</sup> (increasing from the earlier 5-year forecasts for 2017/18 to 2021/22 of 9,500, and the forecast for 2016/17 to 2020/21 of 7,550).

This dwelling forecast also represents an increase of over 20% in total dwellings in the Ryde LGA between July 2018 and June 2023. Over the same period in Greater Sydney an increase of 191,550 is forecast, which represents an 11% increase on existing dwellings.

The wide range of programs that support infrastructure delivery are managed by council, and a range of state agencies. In recent years the City of Ryde has budgeted for increased spending on capital works,<sup>17 18</sup> having identified a backlog<sup>19</sup> in the delivery and renewal of infrastructure. The City of Ryde last updated its Section 7.11 Contributions Plan in 2014,<sup>20</sup> when forecasts for the rate of growth were notably lower.

In the Ryde LGA, Voluntary Planning Agreements for infrastructure / public benefit combine to a value of \$200m. This is distributed across more than 30 agreements (including completed agreements, operating agreements and finalised agreements).<sup>21 22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Sydney Housing Supply Forecast 2018 – by Local Government, Department of Planning and Environment

<sup>17</sup> Our Vision for Ryde 2018; 2018-2022 Four Year Delivery Plan (Including One Year Operational Plan 2018/19)

<sup>18</sup> City of Ryde Four Year Delivery Plan 2014-2018 (Including One Year Operational Plan 2014/15)

<sup>19</sup> Report on Local Government 2018, Office of Local Government (February 2019)

<sup>20</sup> City of Ryde Section 94 Development Contribution Plan 2007 Interim Update (2014)

<sup>21</sup> City of Ryde Voluntary Planning Agreement Register, <https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/Business-and-Development/Voluntary-Planning-Agreements-Register>

<sup>22</sup> Department of Planning and Environment Voluntary Planning Agreement Register, <http://vparegister.planning.nsw.gov.au>

Recent State budget provisions to address infrastructure needs across Greater Sydney and have contained significant commitments across many sectors including transport, health and education. The 2018 publication of the three strategic plans – the Greater Sydney Region Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities, Future Transport 2056 and State Infrastructure Strategy - provide a basis to better advance a coordinated approach to land use planning and infrastructure.

A significant challenge to the delivery of infrastructure is the alignment across the wide range of infrastructure programs. These challenges often arise due to the long-time frames associated with planning, funding and delivering infrastructure, and may be in relation to the scale of investment or processes for the collection and spending of contributions.

In light these circumstances, this Report finds that:

- There is a misalignment of between the scale of development and the co-ordination of infrastructure necessary to support it;
- There is a pressing need to address to co-ordination challenges due to the significant and rapid rate of housing supply and the nature of planning for, and delivery of, infrastructure;
- This misalignment has the potential to be exacerbated without improvements to co-ordination and planning governance.

## 2. Stakeholder engagement

Consistent with the objectives of the GSC Act to increase opportunities for community participation, the Terms of Reference of this Review required the Panel to provide an opportunity for community and stakeholder views to be heard<sup>23</sup>.

The engagement program subsequently developed by the Commission ensured that feedback was received from critical stakeholder groups. This includes community groups and local residents, the business community, the City of Ryde and neighbouring City of Parramatta, the North District Commissioner, and relevant State Government agencies together with elected representatives, including councillors and the Member for Ryde.

### **Engagement with the Ryde LGA local resident and business communities**

The Panel invited comments to be submitted by resident and business stakeholders and provided them with an opportunity to present their views in person.

The Panel hosted two community listening sessions in the Ryde LGA during February 2019. In her introductory comments, the Panel Chair noted the Review's Terms of Reference and that the Review:

- was being undertaken at the request of the Premier;
- was strategic in its considerations and would not be considering any individual development applications or planning proposals; and
- was designed to support the effective implementation of strategic plans and to get the best outcomes for the community and the environment.

A synthesis of the key matters that emerged from the Panel's engagement activities is summarised following:

- concern about the rapid rate of development occurring in the Ryde LGA, particularly residential development, that had 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 supports growth and addresses 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 its potential 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.

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<sup>23</sup> A principal objective of the Commission is to provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment in the Greater Sydney Region, section 9(g), *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*

An Engagement Report detailing the Panel's approach to listening to the local resident and business communities is provided at Attachment 3. It includes:

- a timeline of the Panel's engagement activities;
- a list of organisations that the Commission informed of the Review and a brief explanation as to how and why those groups were identified;
- an overview of how awareness across the Ryde LGA resident and business communities was raised regarding the Review and the engagement process;
- details of the Expression of Interest (EOI) process, which invited brief written comments from stakeholders, and a description of how the Panel Listening Sessions were managed; and
- an overview of the themes and issues raised by stakeholders.

### **Engagement with State and local Government**

The Panel engaged with representatives from the following State Government agencies<sup>24</sup>:

- Department of Planning and Environment;
- NSW Health;
- Health Infrastructure NSW;
- School Infrastructure NSW;
- Sydney Metro;
- Transport for NSW;
- Roads and Maritime Services; and
- Land and Housing Corporation.

The Panel also engaged with representatives from the City of Ryde and the City of Parramatta<sup>25</sup>, and the North District Commissioner to inform the Review.

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<sup>24</sup> Machinery of Government changes take effect on 1 July 2019

<sup>25</sup> City of Parramatta was asked to present to allow the Panel to consider the potential impacts of growth in neighbouring LGAs on the Ryde LGA.

### **3. Stage 1 – Recommended Actions for Ryde LGA**

The four preliminary actions contained in the Panel’s Stage 1 Report are presented to the NSW Government as recommended actions of this Review.

#### **Recommended Action 1 - Establish a Ryde LGA Co-ordination Group**

The establishment of a Ryde LGA Co-ordination Group (RCG) reflects the Panel’s view that good planning is a shared responsibility between local and State Government, the development industry and the community.

The best outcomes are achieved through collaboration, co-ordination and partnership. This approach aligns various strategies of the GSRP, including:

- Strategy 2.2 – Sequence infrastructure provision across Greater Sydney using a place-based approach; and
- Strategy 12.1 which, in summary, emphasises the use of place-based and collaborative approaches throughout planning, design, development and management to deliver great places.

It is the Panel’s suggestion that the RCG facilitate regular co-ordination and collaboration between the City of Ryde and relevant State Government agencies. This will enhance the alignment of development with the provision of infrastructure across a wide range of infrastructure programs and identify gaps and impediments to co-ordination and delivery.

The RCG is intended to adopt a similar approach to the Commission’s existing Collaboration Area model which has been operating successfully in other high transformation areas in Greater Sydney, including Randwick, Liverpool and Camperdown/Ultimo.

Consistent with this model, the RCG should be chaired by the Commission’s North District Commissioner. It would lead co-ordination and collaboration between the following core members, each of which are considered critical to improving the co-ordination of land use planning and infrastructure delivery in the Ryde LGA <sup>26</sup>:

- City of Ryde Council;
- Department of Planning and Environment;
- School Infrastructure NSW;
- Health Infrastructure NSW;
- Transport for NSW; and
- Roads and Maritime Services.

It is also proposed that appropriate representatives of other relevant agencies will be invited to attend RCG meetings as issues require. These may include, but would not be limited to:

- Land and Housing Corporation;
- Office of Environment and Heritage;
- NSW Treasury;

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<sup>26</sup> Note that Machinery of Government changes take effect on 1 July 2019



- Office of Sport;
- Sydney Metro;
- Infrastructure NSW; and
- Department of Premier and Cabinet.

As necessary, representatives of adjoining LGAs, including the City of Parramatta, may also be invited to attend RCG meetings.

Industry and landowner engagement should be especially important for the RCG. The RCG needs to be advised of emerging issues, such as planning processes or infrastructure constraints that are impeding the delivery of quality projects and places across the Ryde LGA.

As a priority, the RCG should:

- establish a program for industry and landowner engagement, including the establishment of an Industry Reference Group comprised of relevant property and planning peak bodies or representatives;
- meet monthly, or as regularly as considered necessary by the Chair;
- complete and progress the findings of the research being undertaken by the Commission regarding infrastructure in the Ryde LGA;
- monitor existing and proposed development occurring in the Ryde LGA, together with its alignment with infrastructure;
- operate for a minimum of 18 months (to the end of 2020, assuming a mid-2019 commencement), at which point it will report to the Commission's IDC which will determine whether the term of the RCG should be extended;

In making the above determination, the IDC must consider:

- whether the proposed master plans are finalised and approved (see Actions 2 and 3);
- whether sufficient improvement has been achieved regarding infrastructure co-ordination in Ryde LGA; and
- advice from the RCG Chair and members.

The IDC should also consider appropriate arrangements for the delivery of each master plan referenced at Actions 2 and 3, once finalised.

### **Recommended Action 2 - Complete a Macquarie Park Investigation Area Master Plan**

The Panel understands that the DPE has undertaken considerable background research to inform the Macquarie Park Investigation Area since 2016.

This has included:

- the engagement of technical experts and receipt of advice to build an evidence base on critical matters relating to transport, urban design, social infrastructure, open space, economic feasibility and capacity analysis;
- engagement with the business community of Macquarie Park via briefing sessions and surveys; and

- briefing of the Commission's North District Commissioner and representatives from the City of Ryde.

Representatives of the Ryde LGA's business community have expressed a particular interest in the resolution of the future vision of Macquarie Park.

The Panel supports this view and recommends the Master Plan should have a strong economic foundation which considers and responds to the evolution and future of employment in the centre. It should also focus on facilitating innovation and collaboration. The finalisation of a Master Plan must also implement the objectives, strategies and priorities of the GSRP and the North District Plan.

Relevant Actions in the North District Plan, in particular, set a clear vision for the future of Macquarie Park focussed on strengthening the corridor, transitioning it into a vibrant commercial centre and maximising the opportunity presented by its designation as a strategic centre, health and education precinct (Actions 29, 33 and 36).

The Master Plan must also have due regard to the natural environment of the area consistent with North District Planning Priority N16 – protecting and enhancing bushland and biodiversity.

To avoid any confusion and to ensure a consistent line-of-sight across planning documents, the Master Plan must also be consistent with the Ryde LGA's LSPS.

The Master Plan should also be supported by a plan for funding, securing and delivering necessary local and regional infrastructure. This is critical to ensuring that future growth is aligned with infrastructure provision.

The RCG should play an active role in the review and finalisation of the infrastructure funding investigations and arrangements to ensure alignment and agreement between the identified planning and infrastructure delivery agencies.

The preparation of the Master Plan should be overseen by the RCG and the final Master Plan approved by the Commission's IDC.

This project should be brought to conclusion within 12 months of the of the Government accepting this recommendation (unless otherwise agreed by the IDC) to ensure the earliest possible certainty for the business and investment community.

### **Recommend Action 3 - Master plan additional sites to complement existing residential development**

The Ryde LGA has experienced significant dwelling activity in recent years. The Panel's engagement activities identified, however, that stakeholders felt it had not achieved a corresponding investment in local employment, service and open space facilities. The Panel, therefore, identifies the need for a focussed effort on improving opportunities for, and access to, these services and places by better planning and investing in existing local centres and businesses via master plans.

The Panel, therefore, identifies the need to master plan additional locations in the Ryde LGA to be master planned to complement existing residential development.

The Panel has identified Meadowbank Education Precinct and surrounds as one such precinct appropriate for the preparation of a Master Plan to complement existing residential development.

A Master Plan for this location would build on the NSW Government's existing commitment to developing the Meadowbank TAFE site, including the relocation of two existing schools – Meadowbank Public School and Marsden High School – to the precinct.

This approach also reflects the NSW Government's commitment to optimising the use of Government-owned land to deliver improved public spaces and community uses<sup>27</sup>.

Relevant State Government agencies have acknowledged the benefit of broadening the boundary of the existing education precinct to consider the opportunities presented by the Sydney Water Pumping Station site and the adjacent industrial and urban services precinct at West Ryde.

The NSW Government should confirm its commitment to delivering a Master Plan for the broader precinct incorporating the Sydney Water Pumping Station and the West Ryde Industrial Area<sup>28</sup>.

It should also be confirmed that the Commission will lead the master planning activities in collaboration with other State agencies, including TAFE NSW, DPE, Transport for NSW and School Infrastructure NSW. The City of Ryde should also be involved in these activities, wherever possible.

The Master Plan should be supported by a plan for funding, securing and delivering the necessary local and regional infrastructure for the precinct. This is critical to ensuring that growth is aligned with infrastructure.

This project should be brought to conclusion within 12-months of the Government accepting this recommendation (unless otherwise agreed by the IDC) to ensure the earliest possible certainty for those State agencies involved in the development of the education precinct, and the business and investment community.

The preparation of the Master Plan should be overseen by the RCG and the final Master Plan approved by the Commission's IDC.

The NSW Government should consider further sites to be master planned for a mix of local employment and service opportunities to complement existing residential development in the Ryde LGA.

#### **Recommended Action 4 - Review local planning controls**

The Panel reiterates that the NSW Government should:

- Maintain the existing pause on new residential planning proposals in the Ryde LGA consistent with the Stage 1 Report;
- Maintain the delayed commencement of the Low-Rise Medium Density Housing Code in the Ryde LGA consistent with the Stage 1 Report; and
- Pause the finalisation of any existing residential planning proposals in the Ryde LGA.

These measures are proposed to allow for the implementation of new co-ordination and governance arrangements across local and State Government agencies. Thereby addressing

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.nsw.gov.au/your-government/the-premier/media-releases-from-the-premier/new-minister-for-public-spaces-protections-for-public-land-150-million-for-new-parks/>

<sup>28</sup> These master planning activities for the broader precinct should not impact the ongoing planning and associated delivery timeframes tied to the redevelopment of the Meadowbank Education Precinct.

the existing gap between housing supply and infrastructure delivery whilst adequately planning for future growth.

It is suggested that the pause on existing residential planning proposals in the Ryde LGA occur for a temporary period of 12 months from the date of the Panel's Stage 1 Report, or until the NSW Government has sufficient comfort that the matters raised by this report have been addressed.

One relevant milestone for the NSW Government's consideration is the Commission's endorsement of the City of Ryde's LSPS) which will set out its capacity and opportunity to address housing demand and associated housing targets for the six to 10-year period. Alternatively, the NSW Government may make its decision based on advice from the RCG.

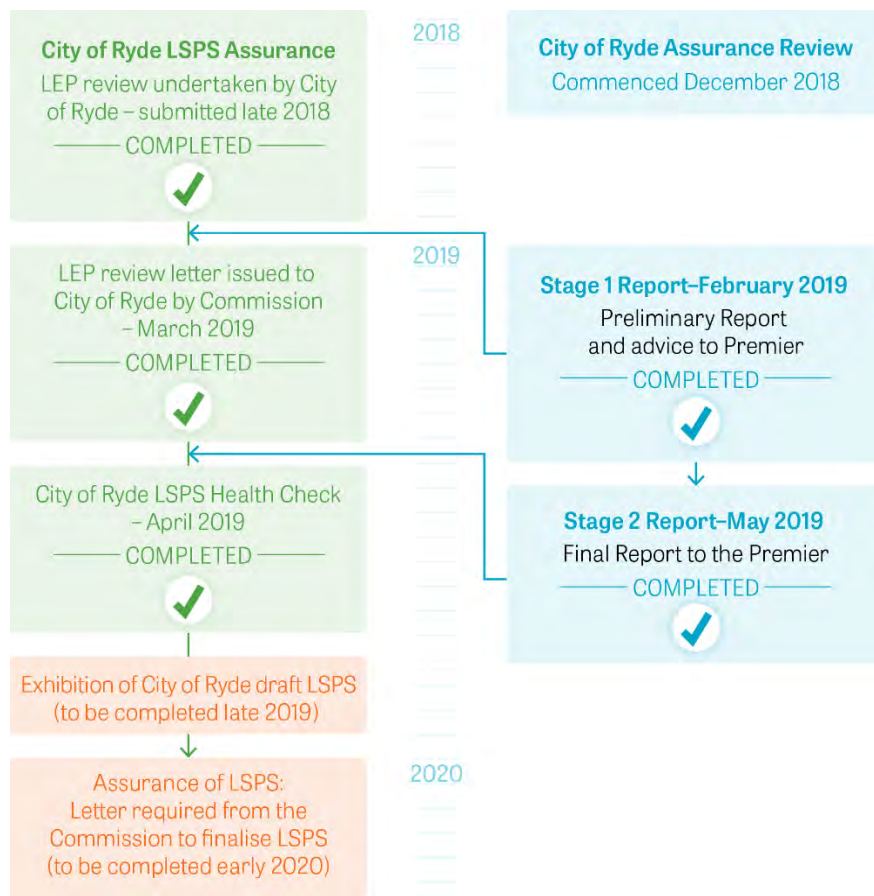
To assist in meeting these deadlines, the Panel continues to recommend the following preliminary actions:

- Expedite the review and update of the Ryde LGA Local Environmental Plan (LEP); and
- Prioritise the review and update of the Ryde LGA Local Development Contributions Plan.

In the interests of timely improvements and resolution, this Review and the Commission's LSPS assurance programs are running concurrently, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Importantly, the Commission's assurance of the City of Ryde's LSPS and ongoing monitoring of the LEP review and update process have informed each other, and the LSPS assurance program will continue beyond the conclusion of this Review.

**Figure 4: Assurance streams applicable to the Ryde LGA (2018-2020)**



Taken together, the concurrent assurance processes applicable to Ryde LGA will:

- provide the NSW Government and the City of Ryde with a series of recommended actions to address the current challenges observed in the Ryde LGA (Ryde Assurance Review); and
- provide ongoing oversight and assurance of the preparation of its LSPS to ensure the City of Ryde gives effect to the GSRP and North District Plan (LSPS assurance).

This approach should give the NSW Government confidence that, following the conclusion of this Review, the Commission will continue to have oversight of the finalisation of the Ryde LGA’s LSPS and the DPE will continue to work with the City of Ryde to update its planning controls to give effect to the GSRP and North District Plan.

## **4. Stage 2 – Recommended Actions for Ryde LGA**

The Panel has considered all of the matters raised by stakeholders during the Review. This chapter draws on four in particular that, in the Panel's view, are deserving of further and specific investigation by relevant State Government agencies and the City of Ryde.

The Panel will arrange for the North District Commissioner, in their capacity as Chair of the RCG, to be briefed on all of the submissions made to the Panel, and those four more specifically. The RCG should then be charged with monitoring the agency investigations and, as appropriate, responses to these issues and opportunities by relevant local and State Government agencies.

### **Recommended Action 5 – Cycleway connectivity**

The Panel notes the importance of active transport, including cycle connections.

The North District Plan highlights the importance of prioritising opportunities for people to cycle in the delivery of healthy, safe and inclusive places. This includes specific reference at Action 11(b) of the North District Plan<sup>29</sup>.

The Panel received specific representations regarding possible enhancements to existing cycleway connections in the Ryde LGA to facilitate ease of access across the Ryde LGA and to adjoining LGAs, such as Parramatta.

These representations noted gaps in these cycleways which, it was understood, necessitated cyclists to navigate informal cycle-routes on local streets. It was interpreted that, should these gaps be addressed, there could be an uninterrupted cycleway from Macquarie Park through the Ryde LGA toward Parramatta LGA and its associated jobs and services.

The potential to better utilise Government-owned land to address these reported gaps in cycleway connectivity, and opportunities presented by ongoing development activities in the Ryde LGA, was also expressed to the Panel.

For example, the representations noted the opportunity to consider embedding cycleway connections in the planning and development of the Meadowbank Education Precinct.

The Panel notes that Government-led infrastructure investment and development activity should leverage opportunities to maximise place-based outcomes for the benefit of new and existing residents and workers.

DPE and the Commission should investigate opportunities to improve cycleway connectivity as part of the activities at Actions 2 and 3 respectively with appropriate input and support by the RCG.

### **Recommended Action 6 - Pedestrian connectivity across Waterloo Road, and within Macquarie Park**

The amenity offered to residents and workers in Macquarie Park was raised by stakeholders. This related to matters such as walkability and street level activity, and concerns regarding access to open space.

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<sup>29</sup> See North District Plan page 34

Specific representations were received with regard to Waterloo Road being a particular barrier for ease of pedestrian movement. Specifically, it was noted that the current nature of Waterloo Road would present a barrier to workers and visitors to Macquarie Park accessing planned open space.

Consistent with Action 33 of the North District Plan, the Panel is of the view that ease of pedestrian movement throughout Macquarie Park, and access to quality open space, must be appropriately balanced with other relevant matters, including road safety. This requires the attention of key stakeholders, including the City of Ryde and Transport for NSW.

Consideration of improved pedestrian connectivity, including the investigation of improvements to Waterloo Road, should be considered in the context of the Macquarie Park Investigation Area Master Plan and be a matter for consideration by the RCG.

Similar pedestrian connectivity issues have also been observed by the Panel in other parts of Ryde LGA, including at Meadowbank. Similarly, the Commission should also address this issue in its master planning activities.

### **Recommended Action 7 - Night-time economy in Macquarie Park**

The Panel received representations from stakeholders about the need to improve the vibrancy and amenity of Macquarie Park so that residents and workers enjoy the precinct outside of typical working hours. There was a clear desire for Macquarie Park to be a lively and vibrant strategic centre consistent with Action 33 of the North District Plan.

The Panel agrees that this is an important objective that should be actively pursued by the DPE in the master planning activities detailed at Action 2 in close collaboration with the City of Ryde and landowner and business representatives.

Specifically, the Panel was made aware of a perceived constraint associated with applicable trading hours of a licenced premise in Macquarie Park. The view was expressed that the current controls are unnecessarily restrictive.

The Panel does not form a view on this specific issue, rather it suggests that the City of Ryde investigate it further, along with other relevant agencies.

### **Recommended Action 8 - Waste management in high density residential development**

The Panel was made aware that the liveability of a high-density residential dwelling was being negatively impacted by the proximity of the building's waste storage facilities, and the inconsistent and, in this instance, purportedly unsatisfactory, management of waste collection.

These representations were received on behalf of a resident of Delhi Road, North Ryde.

Maintaining the liveability and sustainability of all housing types, including high-density residential dwellings, is critical to facilitating housing choice across Greater Sydney. The management of externalities, such as waste, is an important component of this objective.

The particular matter raised with the Panel may relate to building design, strata management and/or waste management/collection. The City of Ryde should investigate this particular matter further, and report back to the RCG.

## **5. Suggestions for Greater Sydney**

The Panel has identified a number of suggestions that could be considered by the NSW Government to inform broader improvements to planning practices and the alignment of development with infrastructure across Greater Sydney.

While the Ryde LGA has, in effect, been a catalyst for the consideration of these issues, the Commission's LSPS assurance process has indicated that similar challenges are being experienced in other locations across Greater Sydney.

These challenges include several locations where councils and communities are experiencing transformation involving high rates of change compared to past rates. A common concern of communities and councils is the alignment of this growth with infrastructure delivery and the creation of great places. In addition, several of the local matters raised in the Ryde LGA are being experienced in a range of local government areas.

The Panel therefore proposes that the NSW Government consider the following suggestions for Greater Sydney.

### **Suggestion 1 – Improved co-ordination and collaboration**

A key initiative of the Commission has been the creation of Collaboration Areas across Greater Sydney where there is significant potential and/or forecast population and jobs growth or where there are complex issues that require cross-stakeholder solutions.

These Collaboration Areas seek to improve the alignment between land-use planning and infrastructure planning to improve the liveability, productivity and sustainability of places as envisaged by the GSRP and District Plans.

The Panel is of the view that the Collaboration Area model has been successful in building trust between State Government agencies and local government.

As noted in Chapter 3, the RCG is intended to be in keeping with the Commission's existing Collaboration Area model.

The Panel suggests that the NSW Government consider the application of place-based co-ordination and collaboration approaches modelled by the Commission in other high transformation areas across Greater Sydney. This could include areas where there is significant anticipated growth in housing or jobs, and / or significant infrastructure investment.

This approach could be specific to a centre or LGA, or be applicable to adjoining LGAs (for example Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsular). Further, there is the potential for existing and future Collaboration Areas or similar approaches to identify where issues may be appropriate to be elevated to the IDC for consideration.

### **Suggestion 2 – Site-specific re-zonings**

The Panel suggests that the NSW Government seek stakeholder views on the role and management of site-specific re-zonings. This suggestion is predicated on the adequate update and adoption of LEPs across Greater Sydney which are aligned with the GSRP and District Plans.

The Panel's observation is that multiple, site-specific planning proposals for significant change that are inconsistent with the agreed strategic direction for an area can undermine the community's trust in land-use planning and are unforeseen for infrastructure planning.



Progressing a site-specific planning proposal can also be an uncertain and a time and resource intensive process for proponents.

Recent planning reforms require a line-of-sight between the GSRP and the planning priorities and actions detailed in the District Plans, through to the LSPS and local planning controls.

With funding support from the NSW Government, 18 of 33 councils in Greater Sydney are fast-tracking the update of their LEPs to deliver this line-of-sight.

On the basis that LEPs will have been adequately updated and reflect the Government's agreed directions in the GSRP and District Plans, the Panel suggests that the NSW Government seek stakeholder views on the future role and parameters regarding site-specific re-zonings and the provision of infrastructure.

Engagement with stakeholders, including the development community and local government, would be essential to ensure that a future approach was suitably responsive to demonstrated needs for change in local planning controls.

## 6. Governance and Next Steps

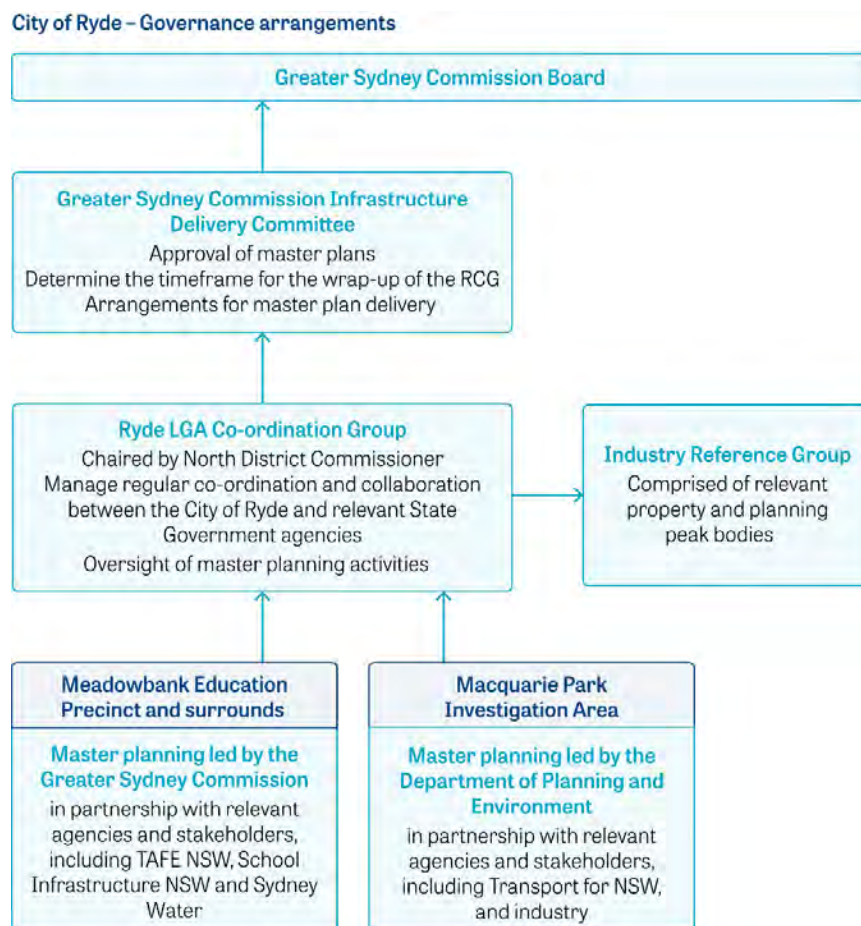
The Ryde LGA has experienced a significant and unprecedented increase in the scale, rate and volume of housing supply over the last three years. There were 4,500 new dwellings completed between 2015 and 2018, almost double the number of completions between 2012 and 2015. This has been an unpredicted and major step change for the LGA and has led to a misalignment between the timing of development and the delivery of infrastructure necessary to support it.

The Commission is therefore recommending a series of practical actions be taken over the next 12-18 months to ensure that growth is better aligned with infrastructure delivery and the objectives, strategies and priorities of the GSRP and District Plans. The overall intent being to enhance the quality of outcomes for resident and business stakeholders in the Ryde LGA. This will in turn help to restore confidence in the planning system.

The recommendations are also designed to improve collaboration and co-ordination between State Government agencies, the City of Ryde and local resident and business stakeholders. The recommendations leverage the Commission’s existing governance arrangements and co-ordination models whilst creating a new bespoke yet temporary arrangement for the Ryde LGA.

The recommendations are reflected in the proposed governance model at Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Implementation roles and responsibilities**



It is the Panel's intention that the recommended actions and suggestions in this Report, subject to Government support and implementation, deliver a framework to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of infrastructure, along with high quality, place-based outcomes for the current and future residents, businesses and landowners of the Ryde LGA.

To achieve these outcomes, it is suggested that the next steps be to:

- Establish the Ryde Co-ordination Group (Recommended Action 1);
- Recommence master-planning activities for the Macquarie Park Investigation Area and commence master-planning activities for the Meadowbank Education Precinct and surrounds (Recommended Actions 2 and 3);
- Pause the finalisation of any existing residential planning proposals in the Ryde LGA (Recommended Action 4);
- Investigate local issues raised by the resident and business stakeholders in the Ryde LGA, as identified in this Report (Recommended Actions 5 to 8);
- Explore how place-based co-ordination and collaboration could best be applied in other high transformation areas across Greater Sydney (Suggestion 1); and
- Seek the views of stakeholders regarding the role and purpose of site-specific re-zonings given that councils are developing their LSPs and updating their LEPs to align with the GSRP and District Plans (Suggestion 2).

## **Attachment 1 – Assurance Review Terms of Reference**

1. The Commission will conduct an independent Assurance Review of planning in the Ryde LGA, with a particular focus on the Macquarie Park Investigation Area and its broader impact on the Ryde LGA.
2. The Assurance Review will also consider:
  - The alignment of planning and development with the GSRP and the North District Plan, including relevant policies on housing, commercial and industrial lands;
  - The provision of associated infrastructure, including education, transport and roads; and
  - Any other relevant matters.
3. The Assurance Panel will work and consult with the Department of Planning and Environment, City of Ryde Council, Transport for NSW, Department of Education, other relevant state and local agencies and Dr Deborah Dearing as the District Commissioner, North.
4. The Assurance Review will provide an opportunity for community and stakeholder views to be heard.
5. The Commission will provide to the Premier a preliminary assessment identifying key matters for further analysis in February 2019.
6. The Commission will report to the Premier in May 2019 with an assessment of the current situation and any steps the Commission would recommend be taken to improve outcomes for the current and future residents of the Ryde LGA.