Introduction

Sydney is undergoing the most significant changes to its physical and social environment in more than a generation. Unprecedented levels of population growth together with investment in infrastructure and housing are reshaping the city we live in and love.

The Greater Sydney Commission has been formed to coordinate the way that government, business and the community address the challenge of planning for growth and new technologies, and to guide and direct planning for the future so we can have an active, productive, liveable, sustainable and resilient city.

Planning is happening at two levels. The State Government has developed overarching plans for how we will accommodate the growing population and the jobs and transport we will need.

Local councils have developed Local Environmental Plans to identify what land can be used for, including housing, business and parks.

What has been missing is district level planning that connects local planning with the longer term metropolitan planning for Greater Sydney. Districts represent neighbouring groups of council areas with similar features and shared objectives.

District Plans will be the bridge between strategic planning and on-the-ground local planning.

We have developed this Engagement Strategy to explain how we will engage, who we will engage with and what you can expect.

1. Who we are and what we do

The Greater Sydney Commission has been created with two key but distinct responsibilities:

1. To coordinate and align the planning that will shape the future of Sydney
2. To chair the six Sydney Planning Panels, created to replace the two Joint Regional Planning Panels.

The Commission has four main areas of responsibility:

Develop District Plans over 2016 and 2017 to bring together the priorities and long term visions of government, the community, business and the not-for-profit sector in one cohesive and integrated plan, one for each of Sydney’s six districts. This will support ongoing improvements in liveability, productivity and environmental quality. District Plans are being developed and will be on exhibition from late November 2016 until early 2017. It is important that we engage as widely as possible to ensure that the planning process is informed by an understanding of the city’s aspirations for the future.

Develop the Strategic Plan for the Greater Sydney Region in 2017 which will build on the inputs to the District Plans and bring together and align the planning vision for Sydney with a new transport plan and infrastructure plan to be developed by the State Government in 2017. There will be a coordinated approach that identifies the priorities and thinking behind the strategies guiding growth and infrastructure development for Sydney.

By late November 2016 six Sydney Planning Panels will replace the current Joint Regional Planning Panels in Sydney. These will be chaired by the District Commissioner for the relevant district.

Provide leadership and direction through research and the preparation of policy leadership papers which focus on bringing the best of international thought and policy to the planning and strategy for supporting a thriving, vibrant and resilient Sydney.
We need to engage – with the community and with councils, government departments, industry and not-for-profits to understand how we can collectively deliver great outcomes for Sydney now and for future generations.

Our first priority is district planning. We will provide the coordination and collaboration that government needs so that decisions get made and great outcomes for communities are delivered.

These District Plans will provide a coordinated, practical focus to developing the jobs close to home and great places to live that Sydney needs. Your District Plan will tell you what to expect in the future – where new infrastructure, jobs, housing and parks are going to be developed and what areas and buildings will be protected and/or enhanced.

We can only do that if we understand:
- The data held by government, councils, the community and the private sector – what this evidence tells us, what can we deduce about what the future might hold, what are the impacts of different scenarios of change?
- The particular attributes of each district – what shapes the suburbs and town centres, jobs and facilities, environment and communities of each district?
- The priorities of different parties (including government) – what problems need to be solved, or issues addressed, so that each district can become a great place to live, work and visit?
- What communities need and want – what do the communities of each district value, what is important to them and how can we deliver these outcomes, while making sure we have the homes and jobs for the future?

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- What communities need and want – what do the communities of each district value, what is important to them and how can we deliver these outcomes, while making sure we have the homes and jobs for the future?
Engaging now, before the District Plans are made, will help everyone to understand the challenges and potential solutions for each District.

It will also mean that when we engage on the Greater Sydney Plan, we will all better understand how we can create the vision for a vibrant, sustainable and thriving future.

Once the District Plans have been exhibited and finalised following community feedback, we will focus on developing the Strategic Plan for Greater Sydney.

The Greater Sydney Commission must understand the complex relationship between competing priorities and the needs of each District, and the opportunities and challenges that these present.

Finally, we know that the quality of our work will be improved if we are open to ideas and suggestions. We also know our work will be better understood if we work collaboratively as we develop our plans and strategies.

Together we can plan for a greater Sydney.

3. Greater Sydney Commission’s Engagement Framework

We have looked at best practice in engagement in Australia and around the world.

We have reviewed the policies and suggested charters of other organisations, including IAP2 and Involve (UK) and we have studied the findings of research and projects on city making and engagement, such as that of the Grattan Institute in Cities: who decides? (2010) and the Journal of Public Deliberation, all of which identify that engagement must be:

- Early, before decisions are made
- Genuine, with a commitment to act on what is heard
- Open, no attempt to shape or promote a favoured approach
- Timely, participants have enough time to consider and participate
- Provide feedback on what was said and the difference it did or did not make
- Hear from everyone, not be held hostage to the voice of a few because they are angry, articulate, loud or otherwise powerful.

We have already commenced our engagement, including talking with councils, organisations and groups, and through this we have heard strongly the importance of engaging well.

We have heard what is important to stakeholders and communities and we have incorporated this feedback into our approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We have heard:</th>
<th>How we will engage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We all have a right to understand the changes happening in our area</td>
<td>We will establish a range of engagement and communication channels, including online, social media, newsletter and face-to-face activities, so that everyone can see what we are doing, where we are up to and how to have a say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans and strategies are hard to understand and they should be explained clearly</td>
<td>We will use plain English, graphics and diagrams and real life examples wherever we can so it is easier to learn about the pressures and challenges at a district level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need to keep you informed</td>
<td>We will provide regular updates and information through our newsletter, our website and our partners in state and local government so you will be able to know what is happening and when.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Deliberative Planning for Disaster Recovery: re-membering New Orleans, Patricia A Wilson, December, 2008 and A Case Study in Deliberative Democracy: Dialogue with the City, Jeanette Hartz-Karp, April, 2005, among others.
4. Elements of best practice

The theoretical principles of good engagement are:

1. An openness to new ideas and challenges to existing thinking
2. A clarity on what is possible and what aspects of decision-making can be influenced through engagement
3. Information is clear, easy to access and understand
4. There are several different ways to be involved so people can choose what suits them
5. Effort is made to understand what the widest possible number of community members think, especially younger people and those from culturally diverse backgrounds
6. Feedback on what was heard and how it was used in a timely way.

The Greater Sydney Commission has taken these elements on board and integrated them into our approach:

- Our **principles** reflect our commitment to meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders
- A range of **tools** help us to plan, implement and evaluate our engagement so we can continually learn and improve

- We will let you know what you can expect, how we will behave and how you will know how feedback has informed our work, through this Strategy, social media (including Facebook and Twitter) and our website.
5. Engagement principles

Our engagement principles guide how we engage and develop our relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>How we will act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>The Greater Sydney Commission engages with all stakeholders in a respectful manner. We openly discuss the challenges and listen before taking action. We respect differing views. We make decisions that take into account the range of views we’ve heard and the evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>The Greater Sydney Commission works collaboratively to create a greater Sydney. We work together with all levels of government, the private sector, industry groups, peak representative bodies, local community groups and the individuals to inform our decisions. We will not be limited to the passive supply of information but will encourage and record views and informed opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>The Greater Sydney Commission is accessible and visible in the community. We communicate by using direct, clear language that is free of jargon to reach as many people as possible. We provide multiple opportunities for people to get involved, provide feedback and share their ideas. We tailor our engagement to people’s needs by using channels that are widely used (such as social media), providing opportunities for face-to-face engagement (briefings and Talk Bus) and we go to people in their communities, rather than always relying on them to come to us. Assistance will be provided to ensure the community is able to interrogate and understand complex information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent</td>
<td>The Greater Sydney Commission acts in an open, honest and accountable manner. We provide clear direction on the scope of our decisions and decision making. We are honest about what can and cannot be influenced through engagement and we explain how feedback has informed our decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>The Greater Sydney Commission engages broadly, early and often with all stakeholders. We ensure that a diverse range of community members have opportunities to be actively engaged in the process, including young people, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples and people with a disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluated</td>
<td>The Greater Sydney Commission evaluates the effectiveness of its engagement to ensure we can continually improve and innovate. We establish pre-set key performance indicators and assess our engagement practice against these indicators.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Engagement tools and how we will use them

We have identified a number of tools to help us plan engagement activities and programs. Every district and every community is different, so we will plan for engagement that suits that community and the issues we need feedback on.

Some tools we will use to help us plan our engagement include:

**IAP2 Spectrum** - helps us to identify the level of influence engagement can have and the types of activities that might be appropriate.

The spectrum is the only international universal tool for engagement and will help clarify exactly what is negotiable, and open to change, and what is not. Clear expectations are the basis of sound engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>IAP2’S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To place final decision making in the hands of the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TACTICS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFORM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will keep you informed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will work together with you to translate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will implement what you decide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Stakeholder mapping — Sydney is very diverse and is made up of different communities and stakeholders. We will identify the stakeholders and communities in each district and work with them to identify what is important and what some strategies are to address these.

The stakeholder wheel identifies the six key groups that we will engage with, together with our relationship goals for each:

**Stakeholder centred wheel**

1. **Greater Sydney Community**
   - We are a trusted feedback guardian and source of information
2. **Community groups**
   - We can discuss issues and share data, information, feedback and advice
3. **Business and industry**
   - They provide access to information, data and advice to help us perform better
4. **Local councils**
   - They are our partners in planning and delivery
5. **State Government**
   - We have a strong long-term relationship based on respect and trust
6. **5 million voices across Sydney**
   - This is our way to be heard

The stakeholder wheel keeps us focused on our relationships, helping us to choose and shape activities that are fit for purpose, effective and appropriate.

7. **Evaluation and learning**

We know that we need to learn as we go — it is the only way to improve.

That’s why we have identified goals for each of our objectives for engagement, together with how we will evaluate whether we have achieved these, so we can get it right from the start and keep improving:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Evaluation measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain the role of the Greater Sydney Commission and how it will improve Sydney's strategic planning</td>
<td>Information is available in a variety of formats (plain English, large print, online and hardcopy) and utilises graphs, infographics and diagrams to help simplify complex concepts</td>
<td>Regular audit of information for simplicity and accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the issues, needs and priorities of the six districts and Greater Sydney as a whole</td>
<td>Feedback represents people as well as the organised groups, peak bodies, government agencies for each district and people who are hard to reach.</td>
<td>Data on participation is collected and analysed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore innovative, effective and practical solutions, ideas and strategies to create a greater Sydney</td>
<td>Create conversations and discussions which explore the complexities of competing priorities, needs and goals at district and metropolitan levels.</td>
<td>Participants’ reflection on their participation and input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report back on what we heard and what this will mean for the plans we develop</td>
<td>Feedback on what we are hearing is publicly available and easily accessible. Our decisions are always linked to what we heard, what the evidence says and why we have made the decisions we have.</td>
<td>Feedback is progressively provided on the Greater Sydney Commission’s website, through social media (including Facebook) and directly to stakeholders and participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will report against these objectives and goals as we undertake our engagement over 2016/2017.
8. Putting it all into practice

The Commission is committed to innovation and excellence in our engagement. Developing the District Plans is our first priority and the first thing we need to talk with people about.

We have developed four key objectives for our engagement:

• Explain the role of the Greater Sydney Commission, as a new government organisation, and how to participate/engage with us
• Understand the issues, needs and priorities of the six districts and Greater Sydney as a whole
• Explore innovative, effective and practical solutions, ideas and strategies to create a greater Sydney
• Report back on what we heard and what this means for the plans and strategies we develop.

Good engagement needs good planning

We will need to engage in a number of ways, at a number of levels as we develop District Plans, the Greater Sydney Plan and research to provide the leadership in city-shaping that is our mandate. We will plan this engagement so you can be confident that we are hearing from everyone as we do our work.

We will develop engagement strategies to help us plan and target our engagement so it is purposeful and effective. Over time, our commissioners will work with stakeholders and communities:

• On issues (social, economic and environmental)
• On geography (district, LGA or suburb level)
• On interests (public transport, community facilities, safety and wellbeing).

It will depend on what works best for that issue, the district or location and its stakeholders and communities.

We have developed a simple tool that provides the key steps for planning engagement. It starts with the people we need to be talking and working with and provides a focus for us on:

• Understanding what is negotiable, and what is not. We know it is important that expectations are realistic and practical
• Using a range of activities that will work for the communities, locations and issues we need to understand, and so a wide range of people can participate
• Focus on what we need to hear, as well as what people want to say, so that the information we collect can inform and enhance our work
• Provide clear, unambiguous feedback on what we heard and how it we have taken it on board. We won’t be able to do everything everyone wants, but it is important that we are very clear on why that is.

Finally, evaluation and our commitment to learning is embedded in all our work. We are committed to learning from our mistakes and building on our successes.

Our engagement strategies will each be based on our engagement planning tool.
9. How will you know we have listened?

We will keep a register of what we are hearing and how we are taking it on board. This will also allow us to share what we are hearing with our partners and other government agencies, helping them to understand what is important to people and why.

For each district, we will tell you:
- Who we talked to and what we heard
- How it has helped shape our strategies and plans
- If it hasn’t been taken on board, why
- What has happened so far, and what will happen next.

The Greater Sydney Commission has begun talking to councils, industry and peak groups and government departments. We have started working with community groups and the wider Sydney community from June 2016 and this will continue as we develop first the District Plans and then the Strategic Plan for Sydney during 2017.

The table below provides an outline of the activities that we currently have planned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>1. Listening</th>
<th>2. Active discussion to inform draft District Plans</th>
<th>3. Finalising draft District Plans</th>
<th>4. Public exhibition and dialogue on draft District Plans</th>
<th>5. Communication on Greater Sydney Plans and release of final District Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>March to April 2016</td>
<td>May to August 2016</td>
<td>September to October 2016</td>
<td>November 2016 to March 2017</td>
<td>April to June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milestones</td>
<td>Evidence base published (April)</td>
<td>Engagement plan published (July)</td>
<td>Draft District Plans released (November)</td>
<td>Engagement outcomes report released (November)</td>
<td>Dashboard (open data source) released Extended four-month exhibition period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement purpose</td>
<td>Explain the role of the Greater Sydney Commission and how it will make the planning system better</td>
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<td>Understand the issues, needs and priorities of the six districts and Greater Sydney as a whole</td>
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<td>Explore innovative, effective and practical solutions, ideas and strategies to create a greater Sydney</td>
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</table>

9.1 How it has helped shape our strategies

9.2 Who we talked to and what we heard

9.3 For each district, we will tell you:

- What has happened so far, and what will happen next.

What you have told us so far

We have met with hundreds of people and groups over the first few months as we got established and you have told us that:

- Planning in a coordinated way for our future is very welcome
- Certainty at a local level helps with important decisions about investment, jobs and growth
- There is concern that local planning is not being considered when big planning and infrastructure decisions are being made
- Local communities are worried about whether they will see the benefits of increased density and activity, such as improved open and public space and access to services

Next steps

We want to know if we are taking the right approach and we want to invite you to participate in shaping Sydney with us.

Firstly you can let us know if we have got it right with this Engagement Strategy. Is it clear? Does it explain how we are going to engage and what you can expect? Is there anything missing?

As we continue to engage with you, we want to know whether there are areas we can improve. We will collect and monitor feedback from our stakeholders to make sure that our engagement activities are meeting our objectives. We will amend our engagement activities in response to feedback. You can let us know by:

- Sending us an email or comment through the website www.gsc.nsw.gov.au
- Calling us on 1800 617 681
- Emailing us at engagement@gsc.nsw.gov.au

We are still in the first stage of our engagement as we do the foundation work drafting the District Plans and get established.

Stage two will see us working with local communities, councils and peak organisations as we prepare the draft District Plans.

Stage three will be the exhibition of the draft District Plans and we will be coming to every district to hear what you think of them and their ambitions.

Stage four will see the Greater Sydney Commissioners talking with communities about the Strategic Plan for the Greater Sydney Region and how the opportunities for creating jobs, vibrant and resilient communities and a healthy environment can be realised.
The following diagram illustrates our engagement activities for the next few months in the lead up to the release of the draft District Plans.

**Stage**

1. **Listening**
   - March to April 2016
   - Activities by stakeholder type:
     - Community: Greater Sydney Commission website
     - Output: As above for ‘community’, plus:
       - As above for ‘community’, including:
         - Deliberative panels (November to December 2016 and February to March 2017)
   - Priorities and actions to inform District Plans

2. **Active discussion to inform draft District Plans**
   - May to August 2016
   - Activities by stakeholder type:
     - Community: Greater Sydney Commission website
     - Output: As above for ‘community’
       - As above for ‘community’, including:
         - Deliberative panels (November to December 2016 and February to March 2017)
   - Priorities and actions to inform District Plans

3. **Finalising draft District Plans**
   - September to October 2016
   - Activities by stakeholder type:
     - Community: Greater Sydney Commission website
     - Output: As above for ‘community’
       - As above for ‘community’, including:
         - Deliberative panels (November to December 2016 and February to March 2017)
   - Priorities and actions to inform District Plans

4. **Public exhibition and dialogue on draft District Plans**
   - November 2016 to March 2017
   - Activities by stakeholder type:
     - Community: Greater Sydney Commission website
     - Output: As above for ‘community’
       - As above for ‘community’, including:
         - Deliberative panels (November to December 2016 and February to March 2017)
   - Priorities and actions to inform District Plans

5. **Communication on Greater Sydney Plans and release of final District Plans**
   - April to June 2017
   - Activities by stakeholder type:
     - Community: Greater Sydney Commission website
   - Output: As above for ‘community’

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So as we are talking to people over the next few months to develop the draft District Plans, please come along, drop us a line or visit our website and tell us what you think.

We will be engaging with you on draft District Plans from late November 2016 until at least March 2017 and we will continue to provide a wide range of opportunities for you to have your say.