



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Letters of support for Local Strategic Planning Statements in Greater Sydney

4 March 2020

This Frequently Asked Question document is not to be construed as legal advice, does not form part of the plans and does not have statutory weight under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Users are advised to seek professional advice and refer to the relevant legislation, as necessary, before taking action in relation to any matters covered by this information note.

**GSC Information Note 2020–01** further outlines the role of Local Strategic Planning Statements in Greater Sydney. For more information, and to access Letters of Support, visit: [www.greater.sydney/project/assurance-local-strategic-planning](http://www.greater.sydney/project/assurance-local-strategic-planning)

### 1. What is the purpose of a Local Strategic Planning Statement?

- In March 2018, amendments to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act) introduced a new requirement for local councils to prepare and make a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS). All Greater Sydney councils are required to have an LSPS in place by 31 March 2020.
- Each council's LSPS sets out the 20-year vision for land-use in the local area and demonstrates how change will be managed. This includes local priorities for implementing the Greater Sydney Region Plan, *A Metropolis of Three Cities* (GSRP), and the relevant District Plan.
- Each LSPS incorporates council's established evidence base across social, economic and environmental matters and has regard to council's Community Strategic Plan. The LSPS may also identify the need for further local strategic planning effort such as precinct and master planning, local character statements and local housing, employment and infrastructure strategies.
- The LSPS will shape how development controls evolve over time to meet the community's needs and will guide future updates to local environmental plans (LEPs).

### 2. Why does a LSPS need a Letter of Support to be made?

- A Letter of Support is issued under Section 3.9(3A) of the EP&A Act which requires:

*The council for an area that is in the Greater Sydney Region must not make a local strategic planning statement unless the Greater Sydney Commission has advised the council in writing that the Commission supports the statement as being consistent with the applicable regional and district strategic plans.*

- In establishing consistency, consideration is given to the different context of each council's strategic planning. A LSPS that is consistent demonstrates a way to implement the Region and District Plans that is comprehensive, in progress or sets out a committed program.
- The issuing of a Letter of Support by the Greater Sydney Commission (the Commission) should not be regarded as a general endorsement of the merits or quality of the whole draft LSPS. It should be regarded as an answer to the specific question that must be addressed by the Commission under section 3.9 (3A) of the EP&A Act.



### 3. What does a Letter of Support contain?

- The Commission's Letter of Support confirms consistency of the draft LSPS with the Region Plan and relevant District Plan. It recognises the fundamental role of the LSPS in council's program to give effect to the Region and relevant District Plan.
- The letter also recognises the different context and progress of each council's strategic planning work program. Whilst some councils have a significant evidence base underpinning their LSPS, others are undertaking ongoing studies, or have established a clear intent to undertake work programs to support implementation or LEP updates.
- For this reason, the Letter of Support includes Advisory Notes to assist councils with the program of work going forward. The Advisory Notes reflect the interdependencies with State Government plans and programs, key studies to be undertaken and the context of each LGA. It also highlights key factors relating to implementation in that LGA.

### 4. What process has been followed to determine consistency?

- In order to determine consistency with applicable regional and district strategic plans, the Commission undertook a new independent assurance program.
- Assurance Panels, chaired by the Chief Commissioner or her delegate, with input from the relevant District Commissioner, were held throughout late 2019 and early 2020.
- The Panel considered each Council's LSPS in relation to its consistency with the Region Plan and District Plan as required under Section 3.9 (3A) EPA Act, and confirmed that it was satisfactory in this regard. In making this decision the Commission considered:
  - the unique context and current commitments for each LGA including State and local government collaboration;
  - current and future programs that support the implementation of the District Plan and LSPS, including matters requiring endorsement by the Secretary of the DPIE; and
  - matters relevant to metropolitan planning.
- As the LSPS is a council document, it may contain council commentary on emerging policies and strategies, as well as council-led initiatives.

### 5. How have the community and relevant stakeholders been involved in the process?

- Each council publicly exhibited their draft LSPS for a minimum of 28 days, giving the community and other stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback.
- Stakeholder submissions were addressed by councils in the development of their LSPS. For more information, contact Council.
- Councils are encouraged to continue to consult with their communities and stakeholders during the development of further studies and strategies that were identified by the LSPS.

### 6. How often will an LSPS be updated?

- While there is a minimum requirement for an LSPS to be reviewed at least every seven years, the LSPS should be revised on an ongoing, as-needs-basis, to ensure that it continues to reflect the community's views on the future desired state for the local area and ensure it remains responsive, relevant and local.
- Re-visions to the LSPS may be required in response to:
  - significant changes within the LGA, such as announcements on centre revitalisation;
  - completion of supporting studies and strategies (e.g. Local Housing Strategy);
  - new infrastructure investment and employment opportunities;
  - significant changes in projected population growth; and
  - changes to the relevant higher order strategic plan.
- Future amendments to LSPSs require a new Letter of Support from the Commission prior to being made.