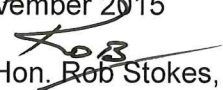




Our ref: R96/0008-06 Out-24115
Further contact: Jennifer Dennis

4 November 2015


The Hon. Rob Stokes, MP
Minister for Planning
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister

Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015

Thank you for providing us a copy of the Bill on the day it was originally planned to be introduced. Local Government NSW (LGNSW) has some amendments that we think will assist improving the Bill from a Local Government perspective.

While LGNSW welcomes the Government's intention to establish a Greater Sydney Commission (GSC), we believe that some important changes to the draft legislation are needed to improve transparency and accountability for councils and communities.

The key concerns that LGNSW has with the Bill are as follows:

- It needs to articulate a workable partnership arrangement between state and local government;
- It needs to demonstrate the capacity to deliver much needed state and local infrastructure at a local level and in a timely manner to support growth; and
- Instead of a 'top down' approach to regional/district plan making, the views of councils need to be incorporated, and the rights of communities to have a say in key land use decisions for their areas need to be secured.

Suggested changes

Eleven changes are recommended to enable the purpose of the GSC to be strengthened and councils' concerns to be addressed.

A. Membership and procedures of the GSC

1. Widen membership expertise so as not to exclude past mayors and councillors;
2. Improve links between the District Commissioner and councils;
3. Remove unlimited access to council staff and information;
4. Enable sub-committees to include Local Government representatives; and
5. Enable LGNSW to retain concurrence powers for the chair of the Sydney Planning Panels.

B. Infrastructure Delivery Committee

6. Strengthen the role of the Infrastructure Delivery Committee.

C. Partnering with Local Government on Plan making responsibilities

7. Include as an object of the Bill that decision making on district plans be shared with councils; and
8. Require councils to be consulted during the preparation of district plans.

D. Changes to the strategic planning making processes under Part 3B of the EP&A Act

9. Strengthen councils' involvement in the preparation of strategic regional and district plans;
10. Moderate the requirement for councils to implement the strategic plan;
11. Limit the power of the NSW Government to fast track matters of state, regional and district significance, without the knowledge and support of council. The draft legislation provides no information on what matters are considered to be of regional or district significance and councils' involvement, if any, in the process of the identification of such matters.

Our proposed changes are set out in a marked up copy of the draft GSC Bill attached, with the suggested changes made in red.

These changes are important to Local Government and will provide councils with the assurance that the new processes will not be detrimental to them, nor will they unnecessarily undermine councils' current local planning powers, but bring benefits through a more metropolitan and strategic approach to planning.

If there are any questions on the detailed wording please contact our Senior Policy Officer - Planning, Jennifer Dennis, via email jennifer.dennis@lgnsw.org.au or on 9242 4094.

We strongly recommend that these changes be considered and supported. We look forward to discussing them with you, your personal staff and/or senior officers of your Department.

Yours sincerely



Cr Keith Rhoades AFSM
President