



Joint SHOROC & NSROC Submission

Greater Sydney Commission & Subregional planning

March 2015

1. Introduction & background

This is a joint submission by the Shore Regional Organisation of Councils (SHOROC) and the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC), collectively representing the 11 councils of the Northern Sydney subregion.

SHOROC is a partnership of Manly, Mosman, Pittwater and Warringah councils led by a Board of the council Mayors and General Managers. We advocate for our region, coordinate regional planning, and build partnerships to improve the strategic capacity of our member councils.

NSROC is a voluntary organisation of local councils established to work co-operatively for the benefit of the Northern Sydney region and advocate on agreed regional positions and priorities. NSROC member Councils are: Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, North Sydney, Ryde and Willoughby.

Together we collectively represent the 11 councils of northern Sydney and a population of 880,000 residents who contribute over \$68 billion annually to the NSW economy.

This submission: The Greater Sydney Commission and subregional planning

The focus of this submission is to put forward a model for a strong governance framework for subregional planning under the NSW Government's *A Plan for Growing Sydney*. It proposes a model for collaboration between councils, the planned Greater Sydney Commission and the NSW Government in developing and implementing the new Subregional Plan for our region, as well as contributing to delivery of *A Plan for Growing Sydney*.

The proposed model outlined in this submission was unanimously endorsed on 19 March 2015 by a meeting of the Mayors and General Managers of the 11 councils of northern Sydney.

Both NSROC and SHOROC have a strong history in regional planning and intergovernmental relations. Established, owned and governed by councils, a core role of both organisations is coordinating regional strategic plans and projects. For example SHOROC's *Shaping Our Future* strategy is an integrated regional land-use and infrastructure plan for the region and the *NSROC Regional Priorities* Plan sets out the priorities agreed by Councils across the region and the actions needed to enhance performance against them.

Local government will play a pivotal role in the future of Sydney and we welcome the opportunity to provide feedback to the NSW Government on this issue.

This submission

The submission is structured to provide comments as follows:

- 1. Introduction & background
- 2. Proposed model for the north subregion's subregional planning process and governance framework
 - 2.1 Delegates for the Commission and North Subregion Local Government Advisory Committee
 - 2.2 Role and function of the Commission and the Local Government Advisory Committee
 - 2.3 Decision-making on the Local Government Advisory Committee
 - 2.4 Selection process for a subregion to select its representative for the GSC/MAC
 - 2.5 Working framework
- 3. Responses to the questions raised by the Department regarding the Greater Sydney Commission

2. Proposed model for the north subregion's subregional planning process and governance framework

2.1 Delegates for the Commission and North Subregion Local Government Advisory Committee

Based on the briefings by the Minister and Department, discussions at the meeting of Mayors and GMs of councils of northern Sydney together with meetings of SHOROC and NSROC, and advice of council professional officers, it is considered there are three main options:

- 1. Elected representatives
- 2. Professional officers
- 3. Independent skills-based appointments

It is the view of the Mayors and GMs of councils of northern Sydney that the most appropriate model includes:

- Greater Sydney Commission and Subregional Local Government Advisory Committees (SLGAC) consisting primarily of elected representatives.
- Council delegates on the SLGAC being the Mayor, or Mayors delegate.
- Support for the Commission and Subregional Local Government Advisory Committees through senior officers groups of senior council and NSW Government Departmental officers to act as the 'working parties' to provide technical input, manage the expected significant workload and advise the elected representatives.

This framework reflects NSW and local government governance frameworks and provides a balance of elected representatives with responsibility for strategic planning in the interests of the community and professional officers with a wealth of strategic planning experience.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the proposed model.

2.2. Role and function of the Commission and the Local Government Advisory Committee

The high level role and functions identified to date for the Greater Sydney Commission and the Local Government Advisory Committees identify that:

- The Commission is to 'Oversee implementation of A Plan for Growing Sydney' and 'Lead development of subregional plans'.
- The SLGAC are to 'Assist the Commission in developing & delivering the subregional plans'.

However we argue that the Commission's primary role should be focussed on metropolitan-wide issues and enabling appropriate growth through infrastructure delivery. The Subregional Committees should be empowered to lead the development and delivery of the respective subregional plans, with the subregional plans ultimately approved by the GSC.

It is the view of the Mayors and GMs of councils of northern Sydney that the role and function of the Local Government Advisory Committee should be to:

- Oversee the preparation of Subregional Plan from a subregional approach including identification of strategic land use and infrastructure priorities
- Monitor implementation of the Plan and report to the Commission on the performance of the subregion and any issues in regard to targets, infrastructure and other identified matters
- Contribute where requested to subregional or regional planning initiatives, including consideration
 of proposals for rezoning of major precincts, structure planning and supporting local councils with
 the preparation of Local Plans
- Identify and advise the Commission on strategic planning issues for the subregion.

2.3. Decision-making on the Local Government Advisory Committee

Individual Council Input

Input and advice from individual Council on various

technical matters

In regard to the operation of the Local Government Advisory Committee, although the Committee is advisory in nature it will need to determine an appropriate decision-making framework. It is considered that the Committee should operate on a basis of mutuality with decisions made by consensus. When consensus cannot be reached, recommendations to the Commission could be made by super-majority of 75% of delegates with any dissenting views noted and a referral to the Commission to resolve.

<u>Figure 1. Overview of proposed model for Greater Sydney Commission and Local Government Advisory Committee and Subregional planning</u>

Metropolitan planning (Greater Sydney Commission) Greater Sydney Commission (Ministerial Advisory Council) - Approx 12-14 delegates: Secretariat (provided by Relevant Ministers (Premier, Planning, Transport, Treasury) Dept. Planning A delegate appointed by each Subregional Local Government Advisory Committee (6) or DPC) Government nominated independent/s (3) Information and technical work **Subregion Planning/Perspectives Technical Work** via Local Government Advisory Committees Other technical advice that the Greater Sydney (see below) Commission/Working Group may commission. Subregional Planning & advice **Subregional planning (Local Government Advisory Committee)** North Subregion Local Government Advisory Committee – approx 12 delegates Mayor (or Mayors delegate) from each LGA in the northern subregion (11). GMs as advisors. Delegate that sits on Greater Sydney Commission (selected by Committee) (note: this would essentially see the existing meetings of Mayors of northern Sydney (NSROC/SHOROC) become the northern sub-region Local Government Advisory Committee) Secretariat (provided jointly by North Subregion Local Government Advisory Committee Working Group NSROC and SHOROC) Planning Director Level Local Government Officer (one from each of the 11 Councils) Senior Officers from Department of Planning & Environment Senior Officers from relevant agencies (Transport, Education, Health) Executive Directors of SHOROC & NSROC Information and technical work

Technical Work

Other technical advice that the Working Group

may commission.

2.4. Selection process for a subregion to select its representative for the GSC/MAC

The selection of an appropriate subregional representative for the Commission is a key issue in ensuring effective representation on behalf of the subregion and also as part of wider metropolitan planning. It is considered there are two main options:

- 1. Election of a representative from the council delegates on the SLGAC
- 2. Appointment by the SLGAC of a suitably qualified person to a designated position based on agreed section criteria (could be from the SLGAC or not)

Both approaches have merits. Key criteria in identifying the most appropriate option and best candidate are the capacity to represent (and be perceived to represent) the subregion as a whole, as well as negotiation and strategic planning capabilities.

It is the view of the Mayors and GMs of councils of northern Sydney that the selection of a person to the position by a Panel of SLGAC members based on section criteria agreed by the SLGAC. This is the most appropriate model because it enables selection of suitably qualified individual to represent the interests of the region and reduces potential perceptions of favouring one council area over another.

2.5. Working framework

The Department has advised it is planning subregional planning workshops with local government and state agencies. It appears that the Department plans to work with senior council officers on a subregional basis to collaboratively input into the development of the subregional plan. This approach is supported as it appears to align with the proposed subregional planning model above.

It is considered the working framework on a subregional basis should include the following:

- Individual Councils
 - Provide input into Subregional planning process via senior officers and elected delegate on North Subregion Local Government Advisory Committee
 - Briefed on regular basis by senior council officers
- North Subregion Local Government Advisory Committee Working Group
 - Working group to collaboratively develop draft subregional plan and advise North Subregion Local Government Advisory Committee
 - o Senior council, NSW Government and ROC staff
 - Working in conjunction with existing Northern Planners group
- North Subregion Local Government Advisory Committee
 - Oversee the preparation and implementation of Subregional Plan from a subregional approach including identification of strategic land use and infrastructure priorities for recommendation to Commission (interim MAC)
 - Briefed by representatives of Department and Working Group on a regular basis through subregional plan development and implementation process
 - Monitor implementation of the Plan and report to the Commission on the performance of the subregion and any issues in regard to targets, infrastructure and other identified matters
 - o Provide advice on process for community and stakeholder engagement
 - Established using existing meetings of Mayors and GMs of councils of northern Sydney, with Secretariat provided jointly by SHOROC and NSROC.
- Greater Sydney Commission
 - Approve Subregional Plan, monitor its implementation and resolve issues as required

SHOROC and NSROC have central roles in the working framework, providing the Secretariat and coordinating the North Subregional Local Government Advisory Committee. The Executive Directors are delegates to the North Subregion Local Government Advisory Committee Working Group, bringing a regional perspective to the subregional planning process and a linkage to the North Subregional Local Government Advisory Committee.

3. Responses to the questions raised by the Department regarding the Greater Sydney Commission

The Department of Planning & Environment in its briefing on the NSW Government's new Metropolitan Strategy *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, the Greater Sydney Commission and the subregional planning process advised it is seeking feedback on following questions:

- 1. How do we best incorporate subregional perspectives and local government expertise through membership of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC)?
- 2. How could the GSC effectively collaborate with subregions and individual councils within the subregions?
- 3. Which immediate priorities should the GSC focus on?
- 4. How could the GSC work with communities across Sydney as they plan for the future of Sydney?

Feedback is outlined below.

2.1. How do we best incorporate subregional perspectives and local government expertise through membership of the Greater Sydney Commission

Local government representation on a subregional basis on the Greater Sydney Commission is a central element of successful implementation of *A Plan for growing Sydney*.

The best way to incorporate subregional perspectives and local government expertise through membership of the Greater Sydney Commission is to establish a framework based on the model outlined in this submission. This includes:

- A Greater Sydney Commission and Subregional Local Government Advisory Committees (SLGAC) consisting primarily of elected representatives.
- Appointment of a delegate to the Commission from each subregion, selected by the respective Local Government Advisory Committees of that subregion.
- Support for the Commission and Subregional Local Government Advisory Committees through senior officers groups of senior council and NSW Government Departmental officers to act as the 'working parties' to provide technical input, manage the expected significant workload and advise the elected representatives.

2.2. How could the GSC effectively collaborate with sub-regions and individual councils within subregions?

Councils in this subregion have significant experience in local and regional strategic planning and in intercouncil collaboration, and a willingness to facilitate appropriate growth when it is accompanied by appropriate and timely enabling infrastructure.

The most effective mechanism for the GSC to collaborate with subregions and individual councils within subregions is through the subregional planning model outlined in this submission, including:

- Focussing the GSC's primary role on metropolitan-wide issues and enabling appropriate growth through infrastructure delivery, as well as approving and monitoring implementation of subregional plans
- Empowering Subregional Committees to lead the development and delivery of the respective subregional plans by delegating the following roles:
 - Oversee the preparation of Subregional Plan from a subregional approach including identification of strategic land use and infrastructure priorities
 - Monitor implementation of the Plan and report to the Commission on the performance of the subregion and any issues in regard to targets, infrastructure and other identified matters

- Contribute where requested to subregional or regional planning initiatives, including consideration of proposals for rezoning of major precincts, structure planning and supporting local councils with the preparation of Local Plans
- Identify and advise the Commission on strategic planning issues for the subregion.
- Determining that the Subregional Committees consist of the Mayor, or Mayor's delegate, from each council in that Subregion plus that subregions representative on the Greater Sydney Commission.
- Providing support for the Commission and Subregional Local Government Advisory Committees
 through senior officers groups of senior council and NSW Government Departmental officers to act
 as the 'working parties' to provide technical input, manage the expected significant workload and
 advise the elected representatives.

A major priority in collaboration between the GSC and local councils is ensuring that Subregional Plans include approved infrastructure growth plans to truly integrate, fund and phase infrastructure construction by the NSW Government together with housing and employment delivery by councils. This is critical to address the risk that development occurs without the necessary infrastructure as has occurred in the past.

For example a Subregional Plan may include council zoning land parcels for increased housing density in stages over time, with progression to the next stage subject to delivery by the NSW Government of a planned road or public transport upgrade.

The accountability for implementation needs to be binding for both state and local governments. It will be critical that the GSC ensures that priorities agreed in the metropolitan and subregional plans are funded by Treasury and implemented by the agency responsible. Successful implementation of subregional and local plans rely on delivery of these priorities such as transport infrastructure, which have in the past been outlined in state planning documents but not delivered.

2.3. Which immediate priorities should the GSC focus on?

The focus of the GSC should be on managing population growth through housing, employment and infrastructure planning and delivery.

Central to this is a key priority to engage the people of Sydney in developing and delivering *A Plan for growing Sydney*, clearly articulating the vision and strategies for Sydney's growth and building an understanding and ownership of the Plan.

Its role is to provide leadership and confidence in the Plan, to provide surety on the planned growth for all Sydneysiders. It needs to play a central role in apportioning housing and employment to priority areas, guaranteeing associated infrastructure delivery, and protecting and retaining strategically important areas for the future of Sydney such as defining the urban/rural boundary and protecting environmentally sensitive and heritage areas.

2.4. How could the GSC work with communities across Sydney as they plan for the future of Sydney?

As outlined above, by implementing a long term strategic communications and engagement program to build an understanding and ownership of the Plan, the vision and people's role in the future of Sydney.

4. Contacts and more information

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