

# A DESIGN VISION FOR GREATER SYDNEY

Greater Sydney Design Institute Alliance

## Who are we?

We are a design alliance for the Sydney metropolitan area advocating and helping deliver an overarching vision and design approach for the city which captures the outstanding natural and cultural qualities of this unique basin between the Pacific Ocean and the Blue Mountains, Kuring-Gai and Royal National parks.

We comprise the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, the Australian Institute of Architects, the Planning Institute of Australia, and the Committee for Sydney, and together represent over 5000 NSW design and planning professionals in the private and public sectors.

## What is the problem?

Sydney is growing at a fast pace and predicted to nearly double in size in the next 30 years. The pressures we place on our environment and the threats from our climate are unprecedented and will be more challenging with a bigger population. A more populated city can also mean more conflict and a less liveable environment. The effects on our health from unliveable, unwalkable environments are severe. The additional infrastructure we build for housing, transport and power can have a dramatic impact on the beauty and urban quality of our city.

Good planning can help with these issues but we also urgently need a design-based vision for Greater Sydney if we are to have a high quality city for future Sydneysiders that is able to compete on a global scale. A vision responding to the city's natural and cultural qualities – both European and Aboriginal - and focusing as much on urban quality as design excellence,

## What do we want to achieve?

In short we need a beautiful, green, natural city that accommodates population density and its necessary infrastructure, in a way that creates well connected, healthy and economically thriving communities with a sense of place related to our natural and cultural heritage.

In developing and expanding our city we need to learn from the past and not recreate the concreted, harsh, hot and treeless environments that we are now struggling with. In western Sydney we have the opportunity to create a new

city, with an identity using the rivers, creek lines, the topography and the endemic Cumberland Plain woodland. In eastern Sydney we can improve connections by completing missing green links and providing much needed open space in new development.

We also need to recognise that sufficient, accessible and well-designed passive and active open space has a significant economic, social and health value and should be set aside, protected and implemented as a key support structure for the future city.

These attributes are called green infrastructure in recognition of their value to society. In the long term green infrastructure is as important for people as infrastructure for transport, utilities and the internet.

## How do we achieve this?

A Green Grid has been developed for Greater Sydney. It is a web or network of interconnected green spaces that responds to the ecology and natural landscape that cools and civilises our environment, enhances existing green space and allows people to walk, cycle, play, get healthy and interact with nature. The Green Grid needs to be implemented by the Government and developers so that Sydneysiders are connected to the Grid with no more than 10 minutes' walk to gain access.

We need to all work together to achieve this goal and the best way to do that is to adopt an urban design approach. Urban design unifies the people involved in city shaping – engineers, builders, economists, developers, architects, planners, landscape architects – to plan design and deliver a balanced outcome focused on the liveability, sustainability and productivity of the whole city.

We also need to ensure we have the right information and tools. Existing policies, principles, models and design guidelines need to be collated updated or added to for a high quality green infrastructure approach to transport, housing, public buildings, civic offices and industrial buildings, streets, pathways and parks. These need to be accessible for all involved in the development of Sydney.

## What next?

The Greater Sydney Design Alliance will engage with the Government, developers and the media to advocate this approach; assist in its implementation and raise the profile of the green infrastructure and the Green Grid. Individually we can adopt these principles in all our work.

The Great North Walk

South Creek



"Greater Sydney is situated in a unique, outstandingly beautiful basin between the National Parks and the Pacific Ocean"



"An interconnected network of walking and cycling corridors will improve our health and take the pressure of non-active transport networks."



"We must learn from the past and avoid utilitarian, unsympathetic and single purpose infrastructure."



"So that open space is equitable we should be no more than 10 minutes' walk away from the Green Grid."



"We should implement the Sydney Green Grid throughout our cities and provide a network or web of green links and spaces."



"All roads streets and rail corridor should include trees to provide shade, good air quality, a connection to nature, beauty and a cooler city."



"We must have passive and active, accessible and equitable open space across the city."

Royal NP

Wolli Creek NP + M