



24 April 2020

Sydney Business Chamber

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Dear Steve

Pymont Place Strategy – Submission

Please find attached a submission from Sydney Business Chamber in relation to the development of the Pymont Place Strategy.

The growth and advancement of the Pymont peninsula is critical to the economic and cultural future of our City.

Sydney Business Chamber welcomes the opportunity to provide input and insights on the ten initial directions that will shape the Place Strategy.

As you may be aware Sydney Business Chamber is a division of Business NSW, formerly NSW Business Chamber, and represents Sydney's leading organisations from the corporate, public and not-for-profit sectors.

The Chamber is focused on developing and advocating measures and public policies that advance Sydney as a competitive, collaborative and liveable global City.

The impact of the Coronavirus on the economic health of the City and on the lives and livelihoods of its citizens heightens the importance of the development of the Pymont precinct as a place for economic and cultural prosperity. The jobs that the precinct has the capacity to generate, the opportunities for enhancement for arts, performance and entertainment it can provide, and the ability for the precinct to integrate a mix of housing typology, make the development of the Pymont peninsular a critical component of the States' strategy to build back better.

Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me on at katherine.oregan@thechamber.com.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K.O. Oregan'.

Executive Director
Sydney Business Chamber



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DIRECTIONS FOR THE PYRMONT PENINSULA PLACE STRATEGY SYDNEY BUSINESS CHAMBER

INTRODUCTION

The growth and advancement of the Pyrmont peninsula is critical to the economic and cultural future of our City. For this reason, for many years, Sydney Business Chamber has directly and through collaborations such as the Western Harbour Alliance, taken a strong and active interest in the design, development, and delivery of this significant precinct.

Our principle motivation for our interest in the peninsula stems from a long-held concern that Sydney's CBD is too constrained and that its economic potential is being held back by a shortage of suitable floor space. For decades Sydney CBD has had the highest commercial rents in Australia and some of the highest in the world. This is a serious drag on our urban productivity and considerable barrier to both new business formation and job generation.

Sydney's CBD is the economic powerhouse of our national economy and has been a leading generator of employment. For this to continue it needs to be able to grow to meet demand. The Chamber believes that Sydney's CBD should be expanded to encompass the neighbouring precincts immediately adjacent to it, including Pyrmont/Ultimo.

As has been demonstrated with the rapid take up at Barangaroo over the past few years, that there is a latent demand for new floor space in the CBD which is currently not being met. While the future plans for the Central to Eveleigh precinct will help, these are still some years, if not decades, away from coming to market. The Chamber believes that the Pyrmont peninsula offers a good opportunity to meet this pressing economic need and to allow the expansion of Sydney's CBD.

The impact of the Coronavirus on the economic health of the City and on the lives and livelihoods of its citizens heightens the importance of the development of the Pyrmont precinct as a place for economic and cultural prosperity. The jobs that the precinct has the capacity to generate, the opportunities for enhancement for arts, performance and entertainment it can provide and the ability of the precinct to integrate a mix of housing typology, make the development of the Pyrmont peninsula a critical component of the States' strategy to build back better.

To this end we welcome the Government's initiative to review the planning controls for the peninsula and to develop a clear vision to guide future development of the precinct.

PYRMONT PENINSULA PLACE STRATEGY DIRECTION STATEMENTS

In this submission Sydney Business Chamber has provided feedback on each of the Ten Directions for the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy.

1. Development that complements or enhances the area

The Chamber agrees that new development needs to be in the right places and designed “...to enhance Pyrmont’s dynamic, interesting and intimate places”. However, the current planning controls, which had their genesis in the late 1980’s, do not achieve this and need to be reconsidered.

In seeking to ensure that development complements and enhances the precinct, the Chamber believes there needs to be a root and branch reassessment of the current planning and design controls. We think a good methodology to achieve these new controls is to replicate the process undertaken by Sydney City Council (the City) in developing the new LEP and DCP for the CBD.

Here the City established the height and bulk constraints on new development as being the Aviation Safety controls (PANOPs and the OLS) and the solar access plans for protecting key open space and parklands. If a similar methodology were applied to Pyrmont it would readily identify which parts of the precinct can support greater height controls and more intensification of development.

The Chamber also believes many of the controls and policies contained in the draft Sydney City LEP could also be applied to the Pyrmont peninsula. In particular incentives to ensure design excellence, a higher quality urban design, public and civic improvements. We also believe that if this process is followed it will lead to a much more flexible, performance based, zoning for much, if not all of the precinct. The Chamber’s preferred outcome is for the Peninsula to be rezoned to **B8 Metropolitan Centre**.

2. Jobs and industries of the future

The Chamber agrees that current economic activities in the precinct provide a good foundation for future economic development and we agree that these need to be better linked to create an innovation district. However, we think a deeper and more considered analysis needs to be undertaken of the current and future economic drivers of the precinct.

For example, the largest private sector industry cluster currently in the precinct is media and communications, with most of the major media companies in Australia head quartered here. This industry is currently being severely disrupted and many of the leading companies will likely leave the precinct or significantly downsize their operations over the next few years. If the peninsula is to continue to be a major centre of employment these industries will need to be replaced.

Here the Chamber sees a growing role to be played by the new and emerging innovation companies, a greater emphasis on the performing arts and creative sectors, and an expanded visitor economy. Connecting and linking these industries, both to neighbouring precincts and to each other, should be giving particular attention.

For example, the precinct currently has several of Sydney leading venues, including the Wharf, Ros Pac, Capitol, Lyric, First State Super, and Darling Harbour Theatres. This will soon be augmented by the new theatre being planned for the Powerhouse site.

Linking these separate venues offers the opportunity to develop a coherent and functional theatre and live performance district, something Sydney has long lacked. The Chamber will soon be releasing a discussion paper on how to develop a better night-time economy built around live performance and the creative industries which will add further insights as to how to achieve enhanced economic and cultural value to areas including the Pyrmont peninsula.

Growing and broadening the employment base for the precinct will require both active curation and some strategic investments which the Chamber sees as being best delivered by a public private partnership involving local business and the different tiers of government. (see section 4 & 10 below).

3. Centres for residents, workers and visitors

The Chamber strongly believes that better public transport is critical to the future social and economic vitality of the precinct. To this end we have been pushing for the inclusion of a new station on the proposed Western Metro. We understand that the Western Metro's effectiveness might be undermined if too many stops are introduced on its route, however a station at Pymont has much more strategic merit than a station under White Bay and should be given greater priority.

The Chamber believes the proposed metro station under White Bay should be reconsidered. Much of the original rationale for this station is now gone because of changes to the Westconnex interchange at Rozelle. As has recently been shown, much of the Bay's Precinct can still be developed (such as the Fish Markets and Rozelle Stabling Yards) without the need for an enabling metro stop. Furthermore, the GSC's planning directive "**A city that Works**" clearly states that the critical shortage of employment lands in the Eastern City means areas like White Bay should not be lost from industrial and port activity.

However, a metro station at nearby Pymont has much greater strategic merit and 'city shaping' impact. The biggest constraint to the future development of the Pymont Peninsula is its lack of connectivity to the rest of the Sydney. This constraint would be removed by inclusion of a metro station at Pymont.

4. A unified planning framework

It is an understatement to say that the current confusing planning and governance arrangements for the Pymont peninsula are undermining the orderly development of the area.

Sub precincts are lacking any integration and many deliberately turn their back on each other, such as the 5-metre wall which separates the Chinese Gardens from China Town. The lack of integrated signage and wayfinding makes for a labyrinthine experience for tourists and visitors. This lack of integration reflects the demarcations between the proliferation of State Government agencies who have a role in some parts of the precinct as well as the City Council and private landowners and institutions.

A unified planning system should be developed with a unified tripartite governance arrangement involving State and Local government as well the business community. To this end the Chamber has been actively working with our members and other stakeholders to devise a Business Improvement District (BID) model that can be applied to the precinct and to other key areas.

5. A tapestry of greener public spaces and experiences

The Chamber agrees that the precinct needs better connected open space and much better tree canopy coverage. Where possible we support planning and investment for new open space. We also think the precinct would be significantly improved with better and more street trees. To this end we see the undergrounding of overhead power and telephone cables (as was done decades ago in the CBD) as a key move in making space for larger and more street trees.

6. Creativity, culture, and heritage

The Chamber has been actively championing the role of live performance, creativity, and culture in revitalising our town centres and in supporting our night-time and visitor economy. We will be soon be releasing a paper outlining how our planning and regulatory environment can be changed to enable precincts like Pymont to expand their cultural and creative output.

7. Making it easier to move around

The Chamber supports a focus on greater mobility and permeability across and through the precinct. The government is right to identify active and public transport as the key priorities.

To this end we see the cycle network should be better integrated with the existing Sydney City network as well as better connectivity to the west by reopening the old Glebe Island bridge. We also reiterate our support for a new Metro station.

Further, the precinct provides an ideal opportunity to trial micro transport options. A lack of first mile - last mile mobility options has been a challenge across Sydney and the precinct provides an opportunity to test any constraints or perceived constraints, of micro transport so it can be a valued part of an integrated and holistic transport system.

8. Building now for a sustainable future

The Chamber supports a sustainable and adaptable approach to both new development and the precincts enabling infrastructure. Creating a resilient and adaptable Pyrmont peninsula offers an opportunity for government and industry to showcase sustainable urbanism. We believe there is a real opportunity to explore best practise in sustainable design, the circular economy and to test case innovative housing modal, such as adaptable build-to-rent formats.

9. Great homes that can suit the needs of more people

The Chamber supports both increased residential densities across the precinct as well as retention of the current affordable housing scheme. We think a greater diversity of housing formats should also be considered such as build-to rent, student and key worker accommodation.

10. A collaborative voice

The Chamber sees the current disjointed governance arrangements as the biggest impediment holding back the Pyrmont peninsula. Over the years the precinct has been governed by a dizzying array of government agencies, including the Barangaroo Delivery Authority, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Sydney Ports, Darling Harbour Authority, Casino Licencing Board, the Ultimo/Camperdown Innovation Precinct, to name just a few.

The result is a tapestry of local sub-precincts, divergent planning schemes and a lack of coherent place making. This needs to change.

The Chamber has been working with our members and partners on developing a BID model to provide for industry and land-owner input into the future development of the precinct.

We see establishing a BID as the first step in establishing a tripartite governance model involving State and local governments and industry.

Conclusion

The Chamber welcomes the steps being taken by Government in reassessing the governance and future planning of the Pyrmont peninsula. We believe that many of the current land use conflicts can be resolved by establishing a common vision for the future of the precinct in collaboration both Sydney City and local businesses and landowners.

We would welcome to opportunity to continue working with the State Government in defining this vision.

Yours sincerely,



**Executive Director
Sydney Business Chamber**