

13th September 2020

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2142

RE: Regional Development Australia (RDA) Sydney's Submission on the Draft Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy and its Economic Development Strategy July 2020.

To Whom It May Concern,

Regional Development Australia Sydney (RDA Sydney) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy & its Economic Development Strategy July 2020.

RDA Sydney is part of a network of national regional development bodies, overseen by a local Committee and Chair appointed by the Australian Government. We receive funding from the Australian Government, and source other funding to deliver projects that align with our charter of investment attraction, economic growth, and jobs creation. Our region is the 33 local government areas of greater Sydney and we have been operating since 2009.

RDA Sydney, as part of its portfolio of projects, has worked in partnership with UTS, ANSTO and local government in the southern corridor of greater Sydney to map the entrepreneurial ecosystems to identify potential growth opportunities post Covid. RDA Sydney has a deep knowledge of flexible workspace models and understands the need for place-based strategies to activate and grow economies. Over the last 11 years RDA Sydney has contributed feedback to the various major planning documents that have contributed to the shaping of greater Sydney as a global city.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for these draft strategies that demonstrate a well thought out consultative process including the formation of a Bounce Group. What also comes through clearly in these strategies is the acknowledgement of the pre-existing character of this Precinct and its importance to our First Nations People as well as our industrial history.

RDA Sydney is in support of the Precinct Strategy's *Five Big Moves* with particular interest in the completion of the final links of the Harbour Foreshore and the aim for a low-carbon, high performance space with the introduction of multiutility hubs, solar panels, precinct scale battery storage, water recycling facilities and centralized waste services. We would like to highlight that connectivity is not only important for people but



also for the movement of goods and we would like to see somewhere in the Precinct Strategy the thinking of how this would be managed with an increased population, both worker and residential.

We note that both the Precinct and Economic Development Strategies make cautious comment on the potential for existing businesses to be pushed out of the area due to rising business accommodation costs. RDA Sydney is in strong support of Voluntary Planning Agreements providing subsidized commercial floorspace to targeted businesses and / or sector specific concessions.

We also strongly support the Economic Development Strategy's recommendation to 'foster a collaborative /networking environment for companies and educational institutions within the Innovation Corridor' and the suggestion that government could engage with anchor tenants in Adtech for example to establish long term collaboration with businesses and industries across the whole corridor would seem sound advice.

The seven Sub-Precincts and their role in the overall Precinct is clearly defined and it is good to see a true intention of not overdeveloping in areas which would lose their unique character upheld. RDA Sydney would like to provide some comments regarding two of the Sub-Precincts, Tumbalong Park & Ultimo. In the Precinct Strategy the focus for Tumbalong Park has some really positive aspects but it does focus heavily on the business users of the Corridor and the creation of alternate meeting spaces, RDA Sydney's concern is that it will lose its current offer to families. It is a free space in the middle of the city that offers a lot of activities for children and it would be sad to lose that focus.

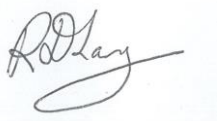
The Ultimo Sub-Precinct, is a highly developed area with a real opportunity to repurpose some sites, but our concern is the reliance on anchor tenants such as UTS to deliver the vision. Universities have been confronted with extraordinary circumstances with the lock down of international travel and their international student population diminishing. This has had extreme financial impacts on universities and UTS is not the exception, it would be good to have a post Covid view on how this could be managed, for example the provision of various options. As highlighted in the Economic Development Strategy, in the risk analysis, the loss or diminishing role of an existing anchor tenant can have a considerable impact on the delivery of the Strategy.

Although, the Economic Development Strategy did highlight the impact of Covid on the future of work and commercial office space requirements as a risk factor, RDA Sydney envisages a different usage rate into the future which may influence floorspace requirements. From our discussions with government, commercial operators and business in general there seems to be a blended model developing – time in the office, time working from home or working near home. So, the question is will floor space requirements be the same as the past or will the demand for floor space diminish in the Sydney LGA as the hybrid model expands? There is a service offering that the Peninsula can develop, if transport connections are in place, which is flexible office provisions.

RDA Sydney would like to provide feedback on the proposed Governance Models proposed in the Precinct Strategy and recommends returning planning controls in relevant sub-precincts (such as Ultimo) to the City of Sydney with the support of the NSW Government and allow them to be integrated into wider planning instruments. Ultimately, all controls should be returned to the City of Sydney but in a staged process based on complexity and wider implications for the economy.

If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Officer, Therese O'Dwyer at therese.odwyer@rdasydney.org.au.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rob Lang', is positioned above a faint rectangular stamp.

Dr Rob Lang
Chair
Regional Development Australia Sydney