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NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
Major Projects Unit
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SYDNEY NSW 2001

The Hon. Patricia Forsythe
Executive Director

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Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Centre Precinct

The Sydney Business Chamber ("the Chamber") welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Centre Precinct (the 'Precinct') including the redevelopment of facilities, associated public domain works, and the construction of a mixed use development site in southern Haymarket.

The Chamber is a division of the NSW Business Chamber and represents Sydney's leading corporations. The Chamber advocates for Sydney to be a competitive and sustainable global city and strives to identify, develop and promote opportunities to build and grow Sydney's reputation as a city in which to live, work and invest.

The proposed SICEEC Precinct development is absolutely vital if Sydney is to build and maintain its position as a leading destination for business, events and tourism within the Asia Pacific region. Sydney has fallen behind Melbourne as a destination for international conventions and business events, according to the International Congress and Convention Association city rankings. The NSW Government's response to the *Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan* and its *NSW 2021 Plan* acknowledged the critical need for the redevelopment of the Precinct in revitalising NSW's visitor economy.

To be truly competitive in attracting international events, Sydney requires multi-functional convention and exhibition space, co-located accommodation options, and a vibrant entertainment offering. To date the lack of space, functionality and geographic isolation of the current exhibition precinct area has impacted upon Sydney's ability to attract major business events to the City.

The Chamber believes that the Precinct master-plan provides the appropriate solutions to the current challenges facing the exhibition area, by providing:

- a modern multifunctional exhibition and convention precinct, with suitable accommodation and entertainment facilities, befitting a global city;
- a mixed use integrated design allowing for ample public space complemented by residential and retail/commercial premises;
- appropriate density for the development that is consistent with, and enhances, the visual and functional character of the Precinct and surrounding suburbs; and
- physical links to and from Darling Harbour, via pedestrian and cycleway connections, that will provide unprecedented access to the CBD, Haymarket, Ultimo and transport options at Central and Town Hall stations.

The Chamber's confidence in the potential of the new precinct is tangibly reflected in its pursuit, together with the NSW Business Chamber, to host the 2017 World Chambers Congress at the new Convention and Exhibition Centre. The 2013 Congress in Qatar attracted more than 2000 delegates from around the world. The 3-4 day Congress will be a great opportunity to showcase Sydney to a global business audience and provide a significant economic boost to the NSW economy.

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Sydney Business Chamber:
Helping Sydney maximise its
potential as a leading global city.
Sydney Business Chamber is a
division of NSW Business Chamber
which represents 30,000
businesses across the state.

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The Chamber notes that the Precinct's construction phase must be undertaken in an appropriate manner, and in close consultation with local businesses, to avoid any unnecessary impact on business activity within the area.

A key plank to Sydney's international competitiveness is the ability to showcase itself and Australia through the facilitation of international business activities and events. The proposed Precinct development will provide Sydney with world-class convention, exhibition, entertainment and accommodation facilities that will allow the city to be truly competitive with other cities within the region.

While the existing exhibition precinct was fit-for-purpose at its time of occupation in 1988, the requirements for attracting and hosting international events have dramatically changed in the past 25 years. The Chamber believes that the plans for the new Precinct will meet these requirements by providing an exhibition centre that will cover 8000 square metres and provide 40 rooms of different sizes and functionalities to cater for large and small scale events, 900 additional beds through the planned hotel complex, and 1200 public parking spaces that will provide easy access to attend events for both local and international guests.

A vibrant functional Precinct

The master plan for the Precinct provides more than just a space for conventions and exhibitions; it provides a complete experience for international visitors and locals alike. The proposal to build a mixed residential/commercial/retail development in the southern part of the Precinct will ensure that the space that is not just occasionally used for conferences and events, but a vibrant community where people can live, work and play. The upgrade and expansion of Tumbalong Park will provide greater public space for residents and the ability to host live events for up to 27,000 people.

Currently, the Haymarket, Ultimo and CBD South region has a shortage of medium to long-term accommodation options for international visitors. Chamber members involved in the international education sector have conveyed their concern about the lack of suitable accommodation options for international students within this area. Given the Precinct's close proximity to major educational institutions, such as the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and the University of Sydney, the additional accommodation provided by this mixed development will greatly ease the shortage of suitable housing for international students.

Integration with the CBD and surrounds

The Chamber welcomes the plans to integrate and link the Precinct with surrounding neighbourhoods. The planned walkways and cycle-ways will integrate Darling Harbour into Haymarket, Pyrmont, the city centre and Chinatown. These paths will also provide easy access to transport located at Central and Town Hall stations.

The Precinct development will help to revitalise Sydney's Haymarket area and link the proposed one billion dollar revamp of the UTS City Campus to the rest of the CBD and Sydney's waterfront.

The Chambers wish to thank the Department of Planning and Infrastructure for seeking comment on the development of the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Ash Salardini, Policy Advisor, NSW Business Chamber on 9458 7491 or ash.salardini@nswbc.com.au or Patricia Forsythe 9350 8101 patricia.forsythe@thechamber.com.au



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