

Department of Planning and Environment
23-33 Bridge Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

15 August 2016

Western Sydney Stadium Submission

Dear Mr McManus,

Thankyou for the opportunity to provide a submission to this NSW Government initiative.

I would like to highlight the following points for your consideration and comment:

- Understanding the cost benefits of constructing a 30,000 seat stadium
- Stadium footprint impact on Parramatta Swimming Centre
- The view from Government House and Domain Arena
- Mandating that all steel which is temporary and finished product is procured and fabricated in Australia
- Designs of Stadium including retractable roof

Understanding the cost benefits of constructing a new 30,000 seat stadium

The current stadium in Parramatta needs to be upgraded to reflect the increase patronage of the Western Sydney Wanderers, Parramatta Eels , W League, Concerts and other sporting and cultural events.

Parramatta Stadium opened in 1986 and at this point the population was 130,783

	1986	2001	2006	2011	2015	2019
Number of residents in Parramatta counted by Census*		142,308	148,323	166,858		
Estimated Resident Population*	130,783		153,891	203,264	230,167	
Greater Western Sydney** ¹			1,782,724	1,917,425		
Parramatta Stadium** ²	21,487					30,000

Table 1

Parramatta's estimated resident population has increased by 76% from 1986 to 2015. This is an increase of 99,384 residents. Also the Greater Western Sydney basin has dramatically expanded with new growth suburbs such as Rouse Hill, Pemulway, The Ponds and Marsden Park to name a few. There are many fans of all codes which would enjoy travelling to Parramatta Stadium to watch an event. It is rather disappointing that the new proposed stadium will only increase patronage by 8,513 people.

¹ <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2010.12013?OpenDocument>

² <http://www.parramattasun.com.au/story/3337894/new-300m-stadium-first-cab-off-rank/>

It is not apparent what the quantitative and qualitative benefits of rebuilding a stadium to cater for an additional 8,500 people are. The project value is earmarked to cost \$300 Million which makes each seat worth \$10,000 each. What is the payback methodology for this stadium?

Parramatta needs a stadium that caters for its population and future projected growth. Parramatta needs a stadium that is closer to a capacity of 50,000. Unfortunately unlike Melbourne's stadium precinct which boasts the MCG with a capacity 100,024 and AAMI Park capacity 30,050, Parramatta needs a stadium which caters for large events and promoting events in the West, or else people from the Western suburbs need to travel to Sydney Olympic Park or Moore Park at Allianz Stadium. Since 1986 when Parramatta Stadium was built its population has grown by 76%, by 2036 Parramatta's population is projected to be 236,864³.

By 2050 it is projected the population of Western Sydney to be 4 Million which would be roughly the size of Sydney or Melbourne⁴. 2050 is only 34 years away and again it does not make sense to make minor seating increases to the current stadium.

If the decision is to build a 30,000 seat stadium, it is worth noting that AAMI Park cost \$267.5 Million and has seating for 30,000 people. Although operational costs may have increased over time, the cost of capital is low so it is quite probable to build a stadium for less than \$300 Million.

As a ratepayer of NSW I would urge your department to formulate a cost benefit analysis for public review and comment, which not only shows a stadium at a 30,000 capacity but also at a 40,000 and 50,000 capacity level and why the Government has settled for only 30,000. Another way to look at this project is to say well 21,487 seats already are pre-existing and to spend \$300 million on 8,513 seats is a cost of \$35,240 per new seat.

Stadium footprint impact on Parramatta Swimming Centre

While it is understandable that the new stadium footprint is different to the current structure, the impact on the Parramatta Swimming Centre is of great concern. Questions were asked at the community forum and it would appear that no one knew exactly where or what was going to happen to the Parramatta Swimming Centre.

It is a wait and see what happens approach, I find this to be unacceptable. The swimming centre is used by local schools and the general public. Part of the Stage 1 approval process should present a plan, timeframe and budget allocation to construct a new Parramatta Swimming Centre.

For local schools that would use the Parramatta Swimming Centre they now will need to spend additional funds in hiring buses to take the children to alternative swimming centers, this is an example of a hidden indirect cost to the stadium infrastructure project. Elderly people who have also used the Parramatta Swimming Centre as a meeting place for social gatherings will be disadvantaged by its closure.

³ <http://forecast.id.com.au/parramatta-2015/population-households-dwellings>

⁴ http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/86102/ChrisBrownParramatta-Australias_Next_CBD.pdf

The Parramatta City Swim Club motto is "*Hodie Natare Cognose Cras Vitam Conserva*" which translated is "Learn to swim today. Save a life tomorrow". It is very important that community expectations for those families that take children to learn how to swim have the opportunity to do so and not be left in the dark in terms of its projected new location.

It would be ideal if the community had both projects built at the same time.

The view from Government House

I have reviewed the flyer titled "Heritage Assessment" which advises that "the views from Old Government House and Domain will not be significantly impacted by the new stadium. Consistent with heritage conditions, no more than 20% of the new stadium will be visible from Old Government House and Domain."

How can you make those comments when at the community forums questions were asked about the current designs being offered by the three consortiums and we were told that Stadium design are part of Stage 2 of the approval process. Therefore how can you approve Stage 1 without showing or knowing how the proposed designs would look like?



Exhibit 1

Exhibit 1 provides a good view of the proposed footprint and its proximity to the river and its proximity to Old Government House. The proposed footprint takes hold of the swimming centre location, which could affect the visual surroundings of Old Government House.

Also the trees that currently obstruct the current view also get affected by storms and their life cycle, Parramatta Park is an area that our family spends time in and throughout the last thirty years

changes in tree landscaping has occurred and there is no guarantee that the current lack of visibility of the current stadium or proposed footprint will be maintained in the future.

Standing in 200 acres of parkland overlooking historic Parramatta, the convict-built Old Government House and garrison buildings were built in 1799-1816, the oldest surviving public buildings in Australia. This Georgian house and its surrounds are a World Heritage site.⁵ Old Government House has great historical significance for local and Australian history. The new footprint of the new stadium comes closer to the river as it takes a large section of the current swimming centre facility.



Exhibit 2

Exhibit 2 shows the current view from Old Government House in Parramatta Park. These vehicles are on average 1494mm high⁶ the new stadium footprint will have a definite visual impact from this area.

⁵ <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/old-government-house/>

⁶ <http://www.ford.com.au/cars/falcon/specifications/spec-options>



Exhibit 3

Exhibit 3 The Domain view is debatable because depending where you are in the domain the current view of the stadium is clearly visible. Not only can you see the floodlights of the current stadium but you can see the blue seating arrangement on the Eastern Grandstand. Therefore within the current configuration you can see the seats of the stadium from the domain.

Also what type of lighting will the new stadium have? Will it have lighting that fits within the roof of the stadium such as Allianz or Stadium Australia so the tall lighting columns are not required or will you will have lighting posts as the current stadium?

Mandating that all steel temporary and finished product steel is procured and fabricated in Australia

The majority of finished and temporary steel used on recent government initiated infrastructure projects has been imported. Offshore steel fabricators and offshore steel mills have greatly benefited amongst the Building Contractors of Australia. An example that comes to mind is Darling Harbour where the majority of steel was fabricated in Korea and China and imported to Australia. The volume of steel procured was in the thousands of tonnes and this causes a significant detrimental effect to the whole supply chain of steel processing in Australia.

Barangaroo project is another example where significant steel was imported and local fabrication and local steel suppliers missed out on the opportunity to supply for these Government sponsored projects.

All three consortiums for Parramatta Stadium have a track records in driving offshore procurement for steel, considering that one of these consortiums is now Chinese owned John Holland, I don't hold great expectations that local steel fabricators will be successful in working on primary steel but

rather be given secondary steel packages to tender or tender miscellaneous metalwork packages which are minor compared to the main steelworks.

Note on Temporary Steel

It is important to reflect that on major projects a significant amount of temporary steel is procured, this was the case with the North West Rail Tunneling Project the majority of temporary steel in the tunnels was imported.

Government needs to be far more proactive in ensuring that local steel fabrication companies and supply mills are given a priority because all builders procurement teams focus on one key attribute the cheapest price and that usually means imported fabricated steel.

Federal and State Governments are assisting the Whyalla steelworks to get back online and have poured millions of dollars into the steel mill, why bother if down the supply chain local fabrication cannot compete with imported steel.

If the NSW Government remains silent or provide shallow statements on steel fabrication then the three consortiums will do as they please, all three will be driven by budgets and price initiatives, as they are responsible to their owners and shareholders not to the residents or taxpayers of NSW.

There is no doubt that thousands of jobs will be created on site in other trades however steel fabrication is one trade which misses out because large builders follow profit. With examples given relating to Darling Harbour, North West Rail Tunneling and Barangaroo.

Designs of Stadium including retractable roof

It would be fair to state that all three consortiums are striving to design a world class facility for Parramatta.

This project does not need the misfortune of poor design as experienced at WIN Stadium when the western grandstand buckled and collapsed due to poor bolt connections and strong winds.⁷

In Melbourne the Margaret Court is the third sports facility at Melbourne Park to feature a retractable roof. The Perth Arena which opened late 2012 features a 1,100-tonne operable roof which opens in 11 minutes⁸.

A concern that I would like to raise is with no design on display what happens if the proposed footprint is not adequate enough. For example the Docklands stadium has underground parking, with the current footprint proposal it may be ideal from a design perspective to have parking hidden away below the stadium.

Moveable roofs can also be sizeable as engineering firm, Arup demonstrated on Singapore Sports Hub's 55,000-seat National Stadium. The ultra-thin dome spans 310 metres and is the world's largest free-span dome.⁹

⁷ <http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/2122727/win-stadium-roof-what-went-wrong/>

⁸ <https://sourceable.net/rise-retractable-roofs-sports-stadiums/>

⁹ <https://sourceable.net/rise-retractable-roofs-sports-stadiums/>



Exhibit 4 – Singapore National Stadium seats 55,000

Summary

The five points that I have raised are the key areas of concern that I currently have with this project. It concerns me that demolition will commence in early 2017 and we have no timeline provided for when Stage 2 will be assessed and approved.

The project must make financial sense and be socially responsible, there must be a cost benefits analysis which identifies the qualitative and quantitative benefits to the whole community. Socially the impact of local steel jobs in fabrication cannot go unnoticed. These large infrastructure projects always sound interesting however steel supply and fabrication is always impacted by the builders desire for the bottom dollar.

The view from Old Government House and Domain needs better understanding as outlined. It would be a shame if the view from Old Government House looking towards the current site of Parramatta Swimming Centre is obstructed just for the building of the stadium.

The lack of detail on the Parramatta City Swimming Pool and its future is troubling, again the plan on the future of the pool needs to be released for comment and both of these projects need to run in parallel. Why should the Parramatta and surrounding residents that use the pool facility be left to wait because of the Governments desire to build the stadium. We know that the stadium is to be opened in 2019, what about the pool's opening date?

Finally I want to state that I'm a resident of the Cumberland Council, I'm a qualified Lawyer and Accountant and I work in Australia's steel industry.