



WestConnex and Sydney Olympic Park

M4 Widening EIS Submission
NSW Department of Planning and the Environment Project No.SSI 6148
12 September, 2014



SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK

A PLACE TO WORK, STUDY, LIVE AND PLAY

SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Sydney Olympic Park Business Association (the Business Association) is the peak body representing business and key stakeholders within Sydney Olympic Park.

Established in May 2000, the Business Association was formed to provide a common voice in dealing with issues relating to the future of the Park.

The Business Association works to ensure that Sydney Olympic Park is developed and maintained as one of the world's leading sports, entertainment, exhibition, commercial, educational, residential and recreational precincts.

It represents the interests of its members to government and stakeholders and seeks to influence government decisions and commercial activities in the areas of infrastructure, traffic, transport, parking, major events and marketing of the Park.

The Business Association's membership includes some of Australia's leading organisations in the areas of sport, conferences/exhibitions, property, education, retail and finance and is governed by a 13-member board including CEO's and senior management of the following:

- Accor Hotels (Novotel, IBIS, IBIS Budget and The Pullman)
- Allphones Arena
- ANZ Stadium
- Australian College of Physical Education
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- Dexus
- DFO (Colonial First State Retail Property Trust)
- GPT Group
- National Rugby League
- Royal Agricultural Society
- Sydney Olympic Park Authority
- WatervieW in Bicentennial Park
- Watpac

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3. ISSUES

3.1 The WestConnex project does not offer a fully integrated solution which addresses the commuter needs of the expanding events, business, resident, and student populations in the Sydney Olympic Park precinct and surrounding precincts.

3.2 Inadequate public transport increases pressure on roads in Sydney Olympic precinct and nearby arterial roads.

3.3 Inability to handle high and increasing traffic demands at the Australia Avenue roundabout.

4. FUNDING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Sydney Olympic Park Business Association (the Business Association) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the M4 Widening Environment Impact Statement.

This submission is prepared in consultation with neighbouring businesses and community groups and in consideration of commercial, residential, major event and visitor growth in Sydney Olympic Park and surrounding areas including:

- Wentworth Point both as an existing residential community and its proposed growth as one of two Urban Activation Precincts bordering Sydney Olympic Park
- Carter Street as the other Urban Activation Precinct adjacent to the Park
- DFO retail centre on Underwood Road, Homebush

The scope of this submission addresses planning for the first stage of the WestConnex project and specifically to the issues of traffic congestion, accessibility and egress to and from the Park.

The Business Association commends the NSW Government on the decision to construct the WestConnex motorway, a transformative piece of infrastructure that has the potential to dramatically improve the amenity and livability of western Sydney, bring enormous economic benefits to the region and state and significantly enhance the quality of life for many western Sydney residents.

The Business Associations believes that if undertaken effectively the WestConnex motorway gives an unprecedented opportunity to ease traffic congestion on roads surrounding Sydney Olympic Park, connect communities within the Park and its neighbouring communities of Wentworth Point and Carter Street to the greater Sydney region, provide the missing link with connections between the east and west and contribute to the precinct's vibrancy, appeal and potential.

Sydney Olympic Park is a thriving and dynamic destination and a significant contributor of economic benefits to the country. It ranks among Australia's top 20 performing locations for economic output ¹and generates more than \$1 billion in economic activity per annum.

As one of the fastest growing precincts in Sydney, the Park has experienced exponential growth in its residential, business and visitor populations in recent times.

Since 2011 the employee/student population in Sydney Olympic Park has grown from 14,691 to 17,449, a 19% increase over the past four years and a 48% increase since 2006. ²

The Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan forecasts that by 2030, the precinct population will have increased to 50,500, including 36,500 workers and students.

Already a major event destination, Sydney Olympic Park was also named as one of the key precincts to host conferences, exhibitions and entertainment during the three year reconstruction period (2013-2016) of the Sydney Exhibition and Convention Centre.

¹ Sydney Morning Herald, The daily exodus from western Sydney 5 April 2014

² Sydney Olympic Park Authority annual reports and 2014 Workplace survey

Despite the Park's expanded role as a premier business, residential and event precinct, little has been done since the 2000 Sydney Olympics to improve access and egress to the Park for the millions of people who use, live and work there. This lack of investment in infrastructure to keep pace with the growth of the Park is now threatening the sustainability of the Park as the number of stakeholders and visitors continue to grow.

The Business Association believes the WestConnex motorway gives the opportunity to address key issues that have not been considered so far.

This submission will highlight the need for the NSW Government to give consideration to a number of recommendations in the planning of the WestConnex motorway.

These improvements are essential if the Park is going to continue to function according to community expectations and remain viable as one of Australia's leading major sporting and entertainment event precincts and rapidly expanding business and residential destinations.

2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sydney Olympic Park Business Association supports the construction of the WestConnex and the Hill Road on-ramp which will improve egress to the East for the growing number of employees, residents and event patrons travelling from Sydney Olympic Park, Wentworth Point, Carter Street and Newington. But,

- 1. Strongly recommends the construction of an off-ramp from the WestConnex onto Hill Road to provide a much needed, direct way to access the Precinct travelling from east to west.**
2. Recommends Hill Road be reclassified and upgraded from a local road to a major road to reflect its status as a strategic thoroughfare to and from Sydney Olympic Park and as part of an interchange connecting it to an urban motorway.
3. Recommends that the WestConnex Authority give consideration to a bus priority lane between Sydney Olympic Park and Strathfield, to efficiently transport large numbers of people during morning and afternoon peak periods, and during major events in Sydney Olympic Park.
4. Strongly recommends the Australia Avenue roundabout be upgraded to accommodate current high volumes of traffic and increased traffic demands that will be brought by the WestConnex.
5. Recommends that the Sydney Olympic Park Authority proposal for an on/off ramp from Homebush Bay Drive to Parramatta Road utilising the currently unused land owned by SOPA in the Welfare Street Precinct be constructed.

3. ISSUES

3.1 The WestConnex project does not offer a fully integrated solution which addresses the commuter needs of the expanding events, business, resident, and student and populations in the Sydney Olympic Park precinct and surrounding precincts.

Since the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Sydney Olympic Park has seen tremendous changes to its character, role and use, evolving from major events to a mixed-use precinct integrating commercial, residential, retail and educational activity.

Despite significant increased population growth to Sydney Olympic Park, little has been done by way of improving road access. This is most severe for people arriving from the east, with motorists required to use local roads that are inadequate to meet high traffic demands.

By 2030 the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Master Plan forecasts a daily population of more than 50,500 – 31,500 workers, 15,000 visitors, 14,000 residents and 5,000 students.³

Moreover, the Sydney Olympic Park Authority has stated it will seek to explore opportunities to increase the activation of the Sydney Olympic Park precinct in advance of its review of the precinct's Master Plan in 2015⁴ making it likely that these figures will increase even further.

The Business Association believes that forward planning and strategic solutions are needed to meet the requirements of the Park now and into the future to accommodate its expanded role including supporting the Carter Street Urban Activation Precinct with its "public transport and world class open space, entertainment and recreational facilities"⁵ and to ensure growth is sustainable.

The WestConnex and in particular the Hill Road on-ramp has potential to improve the livability and amenity of the area for the growing community of residents, improve access to and from the Park for employees and event patrons and maintain the precinct's appeal for residential, recreational and business purposes.

However at present the Hill Road on-ramp provides an incomplete solution for the area. There is currently no planned improvement on arrival. This situation can be addressed by adding an off-ramp onto Hill Road for west bound traffic as part of phase 1 of the WestConnex project.

The construction of an off-ramp onto Hill Road travelling west, would provide a complete and integrated solution for local residents as well as 'sports fans and concert goers' and allow for the following scenarios which will greatly reduce congestion at the site:

- Traffic heading west to avoid the Australia Avenue roundabout completely.
- Those heading from the east (e.g. from the city) would be able to continue along the M4 and exit at Hill Road.
- Those heading from the north (e.g. from North Ryde) would be able to access the M4 at Homebush/Flemington and exit at Hill Road.

³ Sydney Olympic Park Authority Master Plan 2013

⁴ Sydney Olympic Park Authority, 27 March 2014

⁵ Carter Street Urban Activation Precinct – Website of Department of Infrastructure and Planning

To accommodate increased demand on Hill Road from the provision of the new ramps and construction of the M4 East, the Business Association believes Hill Road as a major strategic thoroughfare to and from Sydney Olympic Park, should be reclassified from a local to a major road to reflect this status.

The growth of Sydney Olympic Park and surrounds for residents, employees and major events is shown in Appendix 1

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Strongly recommends the construction of an off-ramp from the WestConnex onto Hill Road to provide a much needed, direct way to access the Precinct travelling from east to west.*
2. *Recommends Hill Road be reclassified and upgraded from a local road to a major road to reflect its status as a strategic thoroughfare to and from Sydney Olympic Park and as part of an interchange connecting it to an urban motorway.*

3.2 Inadequate public transport increases pressure on roads in Sydney Olympic precinct and nearby arterial roads.

The lack of adequate public transport to and from Sydney Olympic Park is forcing people into private vehicles and onto an already congested road system. Increased road usage has exacerbated congestion on the arterial roads around the Park, namely Silverwater Road, Parramatta Road, Hill Road, Homebush Bay Drive, and the M4. These roads are already beyond capacity during peak periods. When a major event is hosted this 'beyond capacity' situation is further intensified.

The 2014 Workforce Study conducted by Sydney Olympic Park Authority has shown an increased use of private vehicles by Park employees and students – 67% in 2011 up to 71% in 2014, with the greatest difference being a reduction in train travel, 36% down to 28%, which is directly attributable to the changes to the rail timetable in October 2013.

Despite a train station within the precinct, public transport services are inadequate to meet the needs of the thousands of people who require direct am and pm rail services between the CBD and the Park (via Strathfield) as a place of business, residence, work and study.

The new rail timetable removed all off peak direct rail services between the Park and the CBD, stopping at Strathfield, and replaced them with an all-day 10 minute shuttle service between the Park and Lidcombe. This does not meet the needs of commuters as Strathfield is the main transport hub for most connections. The number of rail services stopping at Lidcombe and continuing to Sydney Olympic Park, have been reduced and a bus service operating between the Park and Strathfield is slow and inefficient. This necessitated the Commonwealth Bank, the Park's largest employer, operating its own bus services for its employees.

A daily average of 1,006 CBA employees use the Commonwealth Bank's privately funded direct bus services between the Park and Strathfield (main hub for majority of employees) – 744 daily CBA users and the Park and Parramatta – 262 daily CBA users. NB: These figures are **not** captured in Transport for NSW Park public transport figures.

Over the next 20 years Sydney Olympic Park will play an integral role in diversifying Sydney's jobs base, attracting Australia's \$6.4 billion events industry to NSW and providing high-value transit-orientated residential developments.⁶

About 200,000 commuters travel from western Sydney to the CBD, North Sydney, Pyrmont or Macquarie Park for employment.⁷

⁶ Sydney Olympic Park Authority Master Plan 2030

⁷ Sydney Morning Herald, The daily exodus from western Sydney, 5 April 2014

Sydney Olympic Park offers a viable option to address the western Sydney jobs deficit and represents a more convenient and cost- effective location to live and work than the CBD. However the lack of transport services and road congestion is hampering its potential.

Even though the employee and residential population has increased, public transport services to and from the Park have gone backwards.

Nothing in the NSW Government's Long Term Transport Master Plan suggests that these issues will be addressed between now and 2030.⁸

Premier event destination for NSW

Whilst the construction of the Wentworth Point-Rhodes bridge should assist with event day buses, the Business Association also believes consideration should be given to the provision of bus priority lanes on the WestConnex for major event buses to and from Sydney Olympic Park to encourage further take up of public transport.

Sydney Olympic Park has a major event capability of up to 250,000 patrons.

Major events have a positive economic impact for NSW and enhance the image of the state. Major events at ANZ Stadium in June and July 2013 alone generated \$50 million in economic benefit for NSW.

Given that the NSW Government is funding a light rail project to improve access and egress for events at Moore Park and a light rail feasibility study for seven potential routes from Parramatta, access improvements to Sydney Olympic Park, with its major event capacity and the enormous economic benefits it generates, is overdue for attention and consideration.

The benefits of enhanced public transport include:

- Increased road capacity and reduced traffic congestion along the park arterial roads.
- Improved travel time for residents, employees and event patrons.
- More reliable travel times, particularly during peak periods

However in the absence of any such improvements, the WestConnex Motorway provides the only solution to facilitate easier access and ease congestion and improve traffic flow on roads leading into and around the Park. These improvements are essential if Sydney Olympic Park is to sustain employment growth, continue to attract businesses, employees and investment and be a major contributor of economic output in western Sydney.

RECOMMENDATION

3. Recommends that the WestConnex Authority give consideration to additional bus priority lanes to efficiently transport large numbers of people during morning and afternoon peak periods to and from Sydney Olympic Park and during major events in the Park.

⁸ NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan 2012

3.3 Inability to handle high and increasing traffic demands at the Australia Avenue roundabout

The Australia Avenue roundabout, the main gateway for traffic in and out of Sydney Olympic Park and the Waterfront residential community, is already at maximum capacity.

Due to the volumes and makeup of the main feeder roads of M4, Homebush Bay Dr, Silverwater Road and Parramatta Road, it is estimated that up to 80% of the daily car movements enter and leave via Australia Avenue.

It is a major traffic bottleneck during peak hours and weekends and does not have the capacity to carry the increased population over the next 5-10 years.

The roundabouts ability to deliver the growing number of park visitors, safely and efficiently, has been severely limited due to traffic congestion. It is a constant source of negative feedback from residents, employees, visitors, event organisers and business visitors alike traveling to and from Sydney Olympic Park during major events and weekdays at peak times. There is increasing demand by residents and business to address the issue.

Traffic congestion generally occurs:

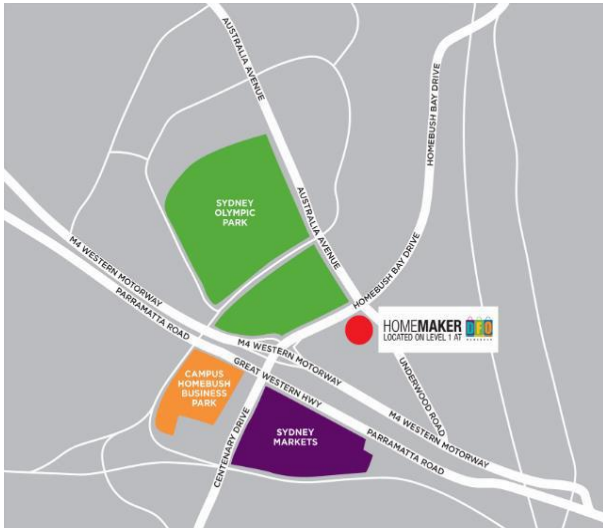
- In the weekday afternoon peak period when residents make their journey home and Park business employees exit the park.
- On weekend afternoons when many people are entering and exiting DFO retail centre
- During Park events when there is a high volume of park visitors.

During the year there are occasions when all of the above situations occur concurrently.



Wentworth Point Community Central is currently conducting a social media campaign to improve the roundabout
<https://www.communityrun.org/petitions/fix-traffic-flow-at-the-australia-ave-dfo-roundabout>

DFO Expansion



In December 2013, a \$100m redevelopment of DFO Homebush, located at the junction of Underwood Road and the Australia Avenue roundabout was completed, making it Sydney's leading retail factory outlet.

The premier shopping destination, open seven days a week, is located in the geographical centre of Sydney. It has expanded from 86 stores on a single level to feature 126 stores across two levels. The city's first combined factory outlet and homemaker centre includes 90 fashion retailers plus 18 bulky goods and home-ware stores and a new 475-seat food court dining precinct. The redevelopment also includes a significant upgrade to the existing DFO complex and improved car parking services including a queuing system.

Part of the upgraded DFO car park is an increase in car spaces from 500 to 2,000 to support the additional retail space.

Increased patronage has added to the traffic congestion at the Australia Avenue roundabout especially at weekends in addition to event patrons, Park recreational visitors and local Sydney Olympic Park and Wentworth Point residents and visitors. This results in phone and Facebook complaints from DFO customers
<https://www.facebook.com/dfohomebush/reviews>).

DFO management anticipates the number of guests visiting the centre to increase this year, with an estimated number of three million people visiting DFO Homebush over 2014.

Businesses in the adjoining Homebush Business Park on Underwood Road are also experiencing increased delays during the week in exiting onto Underwood Road due to the build-up of traffic at the Australia Avenue Roundabout as Park employees leave work.

Approaches to Australia Avenue roundabout weekday during peak hours and major events



The Business Association urges the NSW Government to take into consideration traffic issues at the Australia Avenue roundabout as part of the WestConnex to ease congestion.

Relieving traffic congestion at the Australia Avenue roundabout is critical to accessibility and improving safety for residents of the Park, Wentworth Point and Newington and patrons to the DFO retail centre and employees and event goers.

<https://www.facebook.com/AustraliaAveRoundabout?fref=photo>

As part of Phase 1 of the project, the Business Association also supports Sydney Olympic Park Authority's proposal to improve the road connection between Homebush Bay Drive and Parramatta Road and the M4 via an on/off ramp at Homebush Bay Drive by using currently unused land owned by SOPA at the Welfare Street Precinct. This is in addition to the new Homebush Bay Drive.



These improvements are essential if Sydney Olympic Park is to sustain employment growth, continue to attract businesses, employees and investment and be a major contributor to economic output in western Sydney.

RECOMMENDATION

4. *Strongly recommends the Australia Avenue roundabout be upgraded to accommodate current high volumes of traffic and increased traffic demands that will be brought by the WestConnex Project.*
5. *Recommends that the Sydney Olympic Park Authority proposal for an on/off ramp from Homebush Bay Drive to Parramatta Road utilising the currently unused land owned by SOPA in the Welfare Street Precinct be constructed.*

FUNDING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Cost of Off-Ramp from WestConnex onto Hill Road

The Business Association believes that the establishment of an off ramp onto Hill Road would cost around \$140 million, where \$100 million is allocated for construction and \$40 million is allocated for land acquisition.

The Business Association believes the off-ramp can be funded through:

- Stamp duty from the sale of new units in Sydney Olympic Park, Wentworth Point and Carter Street with ongoing revenue as units are resold;
- Sale of Roads and Maritime Services land;
- Council rates;
- Tolls, especially from event patrons travelling from the east to events in Sydney Olympic Park who currently enter the Park via the Australia Avenue roundabout.

Auburn Council

- Section 94 contributions are now likely to be closer to \$40 million for Homebush Bay West Development Control Plan plus a further \$40 million for Sydney Olympic Park and Carter Street;
- Annual council rates at \$1000 per unit will generate around \$23.6 million.

NSW Government

- The sale of Roads and Maritime Services land at Wentworth Point is reported to bring in \$200 million;
- Stamp duty on apartment sales (22,100 apartments across the 3 areas x \$600,000 average price x 5%).

These measures would generate a total of **\$663 million** on the initial sale of these units only. Ongoing revenue will be generated as units are resold.

Given that \$663 million is likely to be generated from Sydney Olympic Park, Wentworth Point and Carter Street, allocating \$140 million for the construction of the off-ramp appears to be a practical use of this revenue with positive PR value for government.

Increased Government revenue from tolls

- Additional, ongoing revenue will be generated through toll charges for drivers travelling from the east for major events, work and visitors exiting via an off-ramp off the WestConnex at Hill Road. The majority currently enter toll-free via the Australia Avenue roundabout.

Growth of Sydney Olympic Park

1. Residential community

The Park has a growing residential community as well as currently servicing both Wentworth Point and Newington on its doorstep. The following provides a summary of the current key residential sites:

- Sydney Olympic Park – Within the next few years the Park residential population will increase from 600 to 5,000 with the completion of AT11 (25 storeys), One Australia Avenue (30 storeys) and The Opal, a 30 level development with marketing due to commence at the end of 2014. Meriton will commence work in 2015 at 100 Bennelong Parkway on a 10 storey residential development of approximately 300 apartments and an additional 600 residents.
- Wentworth Point - there are currently 1550 apartments which equates to 3,200 residents. It is one of eight Urban Activation Precincts and will result in 7,700 dwellings and 20,000 people living in the Wentworth Point area.
- Carter Street, Lidcombe has also been announced as an urban activation precinct with a projected 5,500 dwellings (11,000 residents) on the doorstep of Sydney Olympic Park.

2. Major business and employment precinct

Sydney Olympic Park has grown to currently accommodate over 200 businesses and a daily population of 18,000 residents, workers and students.

- Since 2006 major relocations to the Park have included Commonwealth Bank - 5,600 staff, Lion – 843, Thales Australia – 560, Jemena – 500, GWS Giants – 100.
- 13.9 million people visited the Park in 2013 which includes over 700,000 business visitors. This is up nearly 50% on 2006 at 9.3 million.
- Adjoining Carter Street precinct employee numbers are expected to grow to 8,000 with the development of the Urban Activation Precinct, a 129% increase from 2013 with 3,500 employees.

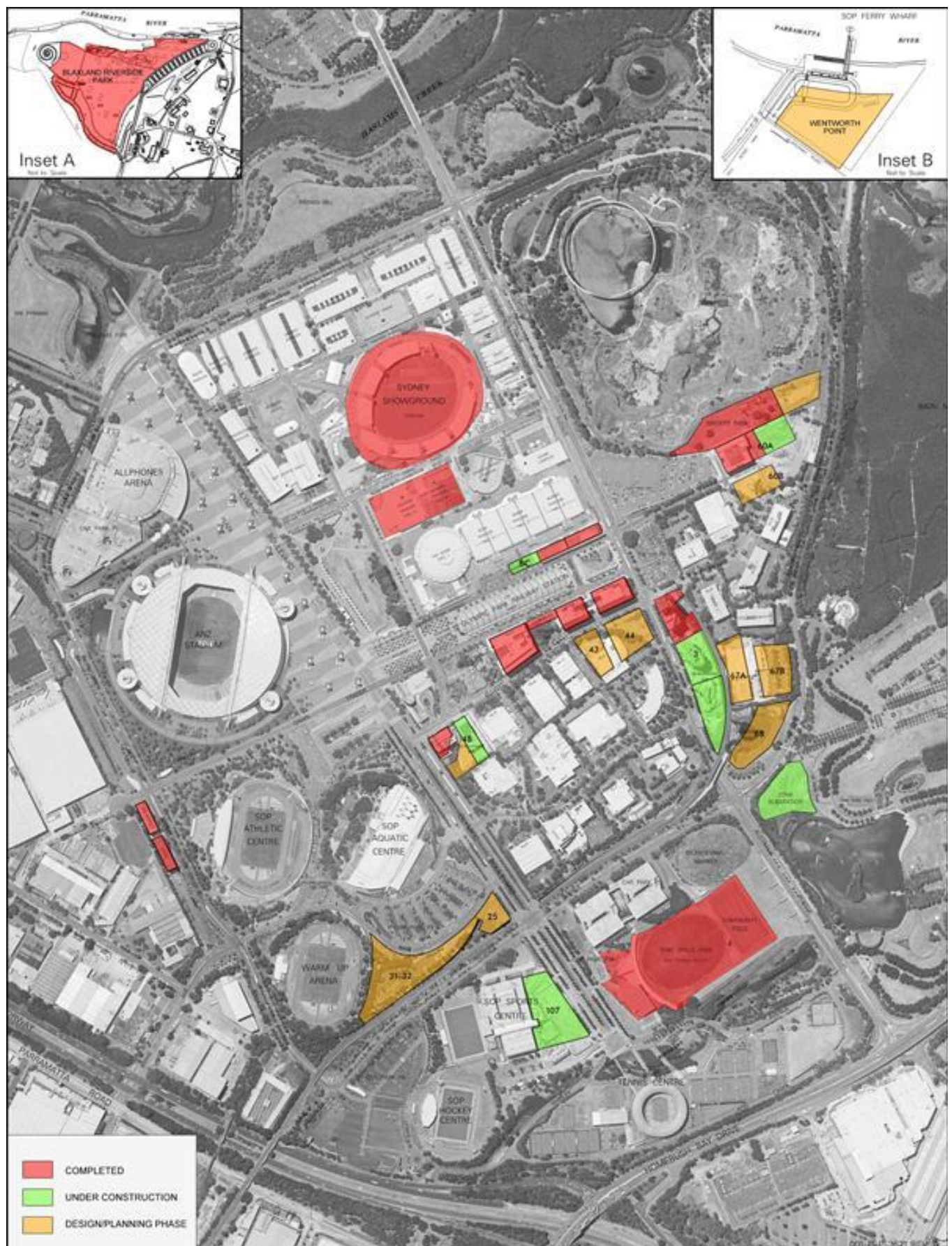
3. Major Events Precinct

As one of Australia's premier major event precincts:

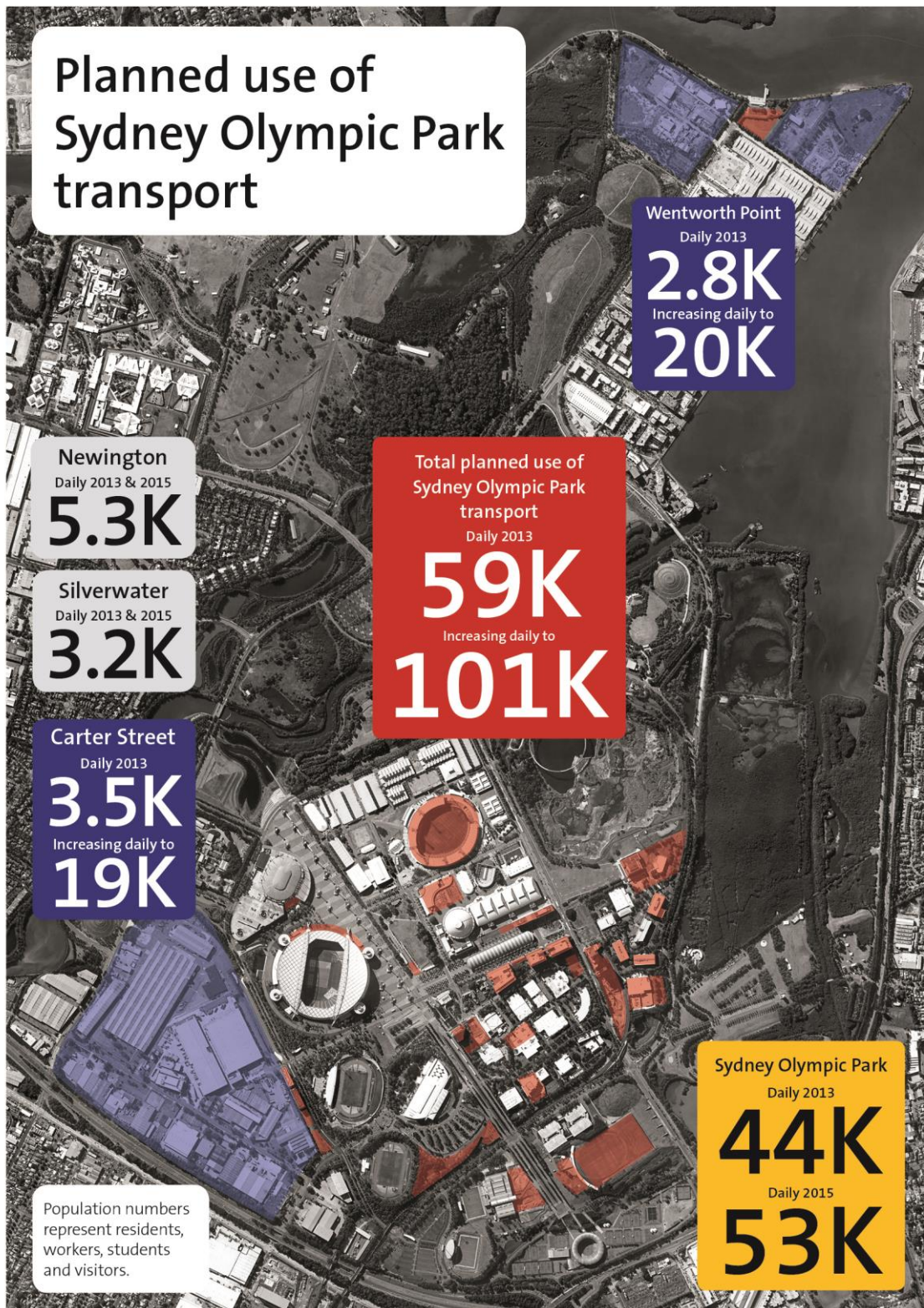
- There are approximately 6,000 events annually, including an increasing number of business events.
- ANZ Stadium attracts 1.5 million spectators annually to around 50 major events
Including:
International concerts, State of Origin, NRL Grand Final, Bledisloe Cup (contracted until 2021), Socceroos World Cup qualifiers and Swans games, AFL club matches, Sydney T20 Big Bash League teams and international T20 Cricket matches. It is one of the busiest sporting venues in Australia.
- ANZ Stadium's recent master plan includes building a retractable roof and reconfiguring its stands to optimise the stadium's capacity and attract more events.
- In 2013 Allphones Arena hosted 7 out of Pollstar's 2013 Top 10 Highest Grossing Worldwide Tours as well as coming in 11th in the 2013 Year End Worldwide Venue Ticket Sales, attracting over one million visitors annually.
- The closure of the Sydney Entertainment Centre for 12-18 months of refurbishment provides more opportunities for events, especially at Allphones Arena and ANZ Stadium
- The Sydney Showground has in excess of 1.5 million patrons annual and is home of Australia's largest annual event, the Royal Easter Show which brings 900,000 visitors to the Park.
- An additional 10,000 m2 expansion of the Sydney Showground Exhibition Centre ensures that major national and international conferences and exhibitions are not lost to NSW whilst the new facility is being constructed.
- Sydney Showground is also home to AFL's newest team, the GWS Giants.
- In January 2015 the FIFA Asian Cup competition, the biggest football competition ever held in Australia will include seven games in Sydney Olympic Park.
- In August 2015 the Netball World Cup will be played totally in Sydney Olympic Park with 16 competing nations.
- The Sydney Telstra 500 V8 Supercars race is held over three days in the first weekend in December.
- The Netball School of Excellence (Netball Central) , currently under constructions, is due to open in November 2014 ensuring additional netball events for the Park, in addition to the 2015 World Netball Championship.

APPENDIX 2

MAP SHOWING STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT SITES IN SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK



CURRENT AND FUTURE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK AND SURROUNDS





Please direct all enquires about this submission to:

Karen Grega
CEO, Sydney Olympic Park Business Association
Telephone: 02 9746 1200
Mobile: 0418 965 936
Email: karen@sopba.com.au