



Council of Social Service of New South Wales

66 Albion St, Surry Hills NSW
phone 02 9211 2599 fax 02 9281 1968
email info@ncoss.org.au web www.ncoss.org.au

abn 85001 797 137

2 February 2007

Ms Nuala Cavanagh
Cities Taskforce Coordinator
Penrith City Council
PO Box 60
Penrith NSW 2751
penrithcitycentreplan@penrith.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Cavanagh

The Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) is the peak body for the social and community services sector in New South Wales. NCOSS works with its members on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities towards achieving social justice in NSW.

We welcome this opportunity to comment on the draft *Revitalising Penrith City Centre Plan* (the Revitalisation Plan) that was released in November 2006. We recognize that the State Government's Metropolitan Strategy *City of Cities* designates Penrith, along with Parramatta and Liverpool, as one of three regional cities that are planned to provide for more lifestyle and work opportunities close to those parts of the Sydney that are experiencing the most rapid and sustained population growth. Because of this the Revitalisation Plan has implications that go beyond just the local area.

NCOSS appreciates that the Revitalisation Plan is the product of genuine collaborative work between the Council and the State Government. We welcome the fact that it contains an explicit target of attracting 10,000 new jobs to the Penrith CBD by 2031 in areas such as business services, health, education, retail, tourism and cultural activities. If translated into action, this will generate more jobs closer to home, in line with the objectives of both the Metropolitan Strategy and the NSW State Plan.

We note that, in contrast to other city centres, there are only a handful of residential dwellings located in the immediate CBD at present. As the Plan notes, housing and mixed use development is essential to the achievement of a vibrant and interesting city centre which operates, and is safe, at all hours. Locating housing within reasonable distance of the railway station is also important in increasing public transport usage. This in turn contributes to the development of a more liveable and sustainable community.

The Revitalisation Plan has identified a number of areas adjoining the core business centre which would suit residential development, and suggests that by 2031 some 10,000 new residents could be attracted to the city centre.

In working towards this objective NCOSS believes it is important to plan for a diverse and mixed income future population. As is well known, the current population of Penrith LGA is marked by higher levels of families with children, and lower proportions of older people and single people, than is Sydney as a whole. In developing new options for people to live within

the CBD it will be important to encourage a diversity of housing stock that is suitable for a greater proportion of lone person and childless households. This should include a proportion of adaptable housing in new multi-unit residential developments.

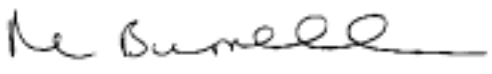
NCOSS is particularly keen to ensure that the Revitalisation Plan includes provision for affordable housing. It is well documented that low to moderate income households in Sydney are experiencing increasing housing affordability problems and that the supply of low rent private rental stock for low income households has been declining in both relative and absolute terms. The State Government's own figures show that there are some 175,000 low to moderate income households in Sydney in housing stress, in that they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. This group comprises 115,000 private renters and 60,000 home purchasers.

We welcome the inclusion in Action Item 10 of the Revitalisation Plan the commitment that "Council and key stakeholders will investigate affordable housing opportunities within and around the city centre" (p. 71). The real challenge is to translate this sentiment into a concrete plan of action. *NCOSS recommends* that the appropriate response would be for Council to prepare, in conjunction with NGO stakeholders and the Departments of Housing and Planning, a draft Affordable Housing Strategy for the City Centre. We suggest that an appropriate target would be for 10% of the new dwellings arising from the Revitalisation Plan to be designated as affordable housing. The draft Affordable Housing Strategy should detail the precise mechanisms by which this target could be met. We believe it should be feasible for the draft to be placed on public exhibition within 12 months, with the final Affordable Housing Strategy put into effect by no later than mid 2008.

We believe that the inclusion of a more explicit process to develop and implement an Affordable Housing Strategy would strengthen the Revitalisation Plan and significantly contribute to the achievement of its objectives.

If you require any further information on this submission please do not hesitate to contact Warren Gardiner, Senior Policy Officer, on 02 9211 2599 or warren@ncoss.org.au

Yours sincerely



Michelle Burrell
Acting Director