

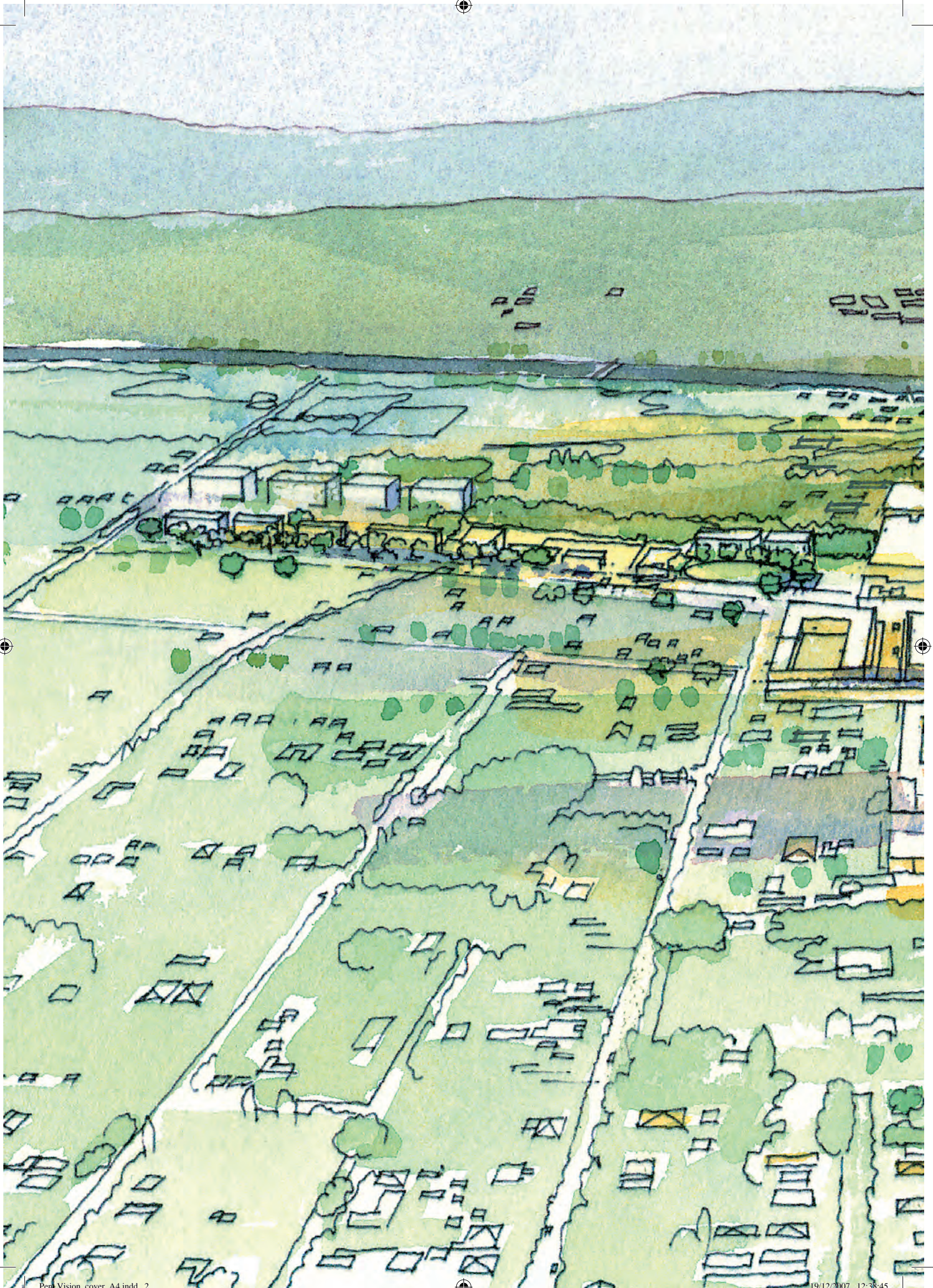


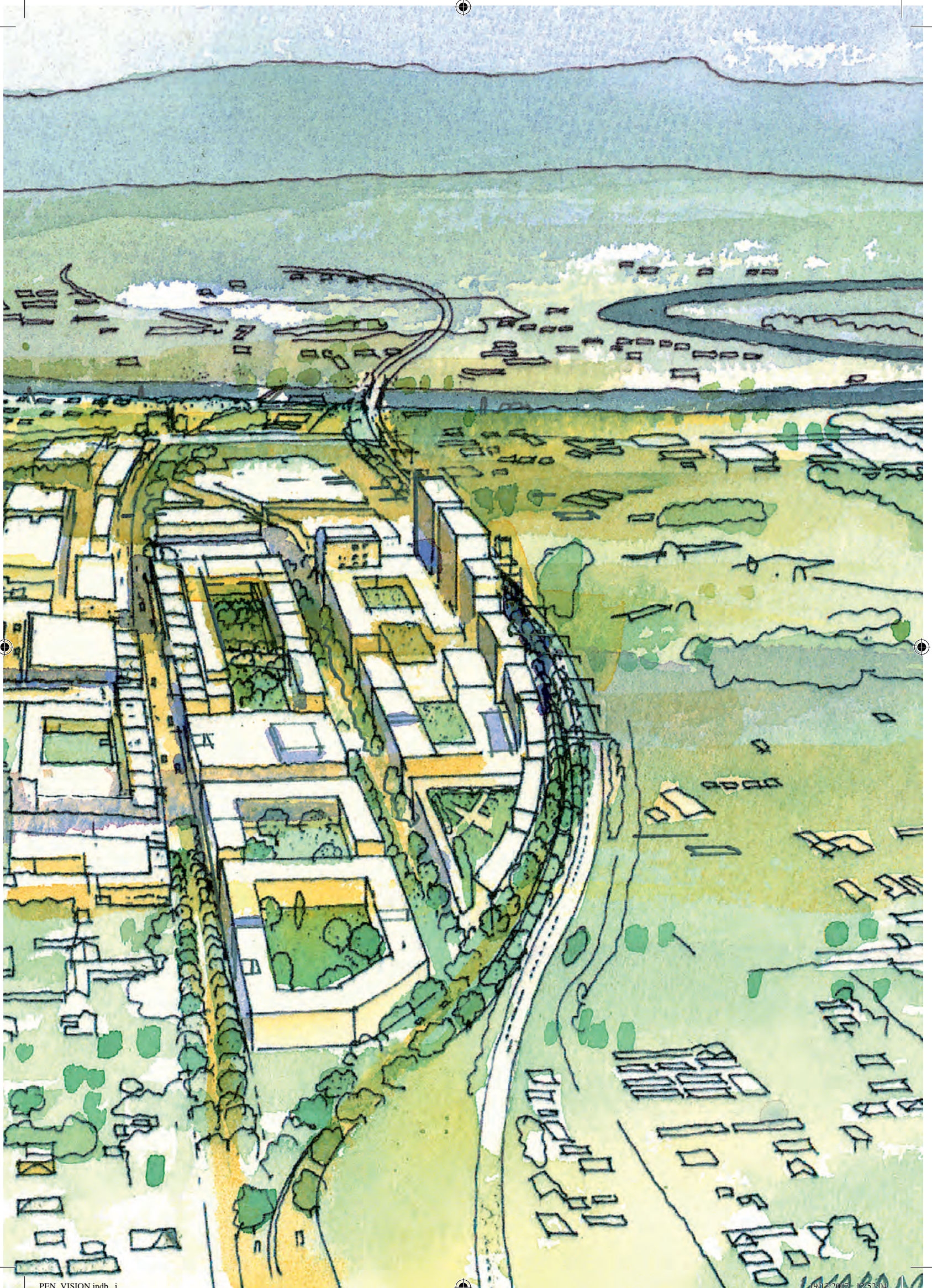
# Vision



# Revitalising Penrith CITY CENTRE PLAN







## ● citiesTASKFORCE

This document was prepared by the Regional Cities Taskforce, a group that included planners and urban designers from the Department of Planning and the local council for each of the six regional cities.

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# Minister's Statement

Penrith

In February 2006, Premier Morris Iemma announced a plan to establish a network of six key regional cities to underpin the State's economic growth and create more local jobs.

The NSW Government is delivering on that plan – with the release today of the draft Penrith City Centre Plan.

The draft visions for Wollongong and Gosford have already been launched, the Liverpool draft vision is also being released today and the draft plans for Newcastle and Parramatta will be launched shortly.

The draft Penrith city centre vision builds on the city's existing strengths and sets the city up for future growth, with new recreational and cultural opportunities, better design and fresh business investment.

Penrith is already a major hub in Western Sydney, with jobs growth and new investment in retail, business, cultural, educational and health industries. This vision plans for an additional 10,000 residents and 10,000 jobs in the Penrith city centre over the next 25 years.

Penrith City Council has worked cooperatively with the Department of Planning on this draft vision and the input of the community reference group has been invaluable.

Today we are releasing four key documents as part of the comprehensive vision for the future of Penrith – a City Vision, a Local Environmental Plan, a Development Control Plan and a Civic Improvement Plan.

These four plans will help to achieve key priorities outlined under the State Plan, which was developed with extensive community input.

The Plan charts a path forward for NSW over the next ten years, setting specific, measurable targets to achieve these outcomes. This includes generating more jobs closer to home and encouraging more people to use parks and recreational facilities.

I would encourage everyone in the Penrith community to read these draft vision documents and have your say on the future of your city.



The Honorable Frank Sartor  
Minister for Planning

# Mayor's Statement

Welcome to Penrith City Council's innovative vision for a vibrant, booming and liveable City centre that will serve the needs and aspirations of residents now and well into the future.

The Council has been working on a plan for the city centre for some time and this detailed work led to the release of its City Centres vision, which feeds into this plan.

Council has recognised for many years that our great City plays a vital role in the greater Western Sydney area. This was officially recognised with the State Government naming Penrith City as one of six regional cities in the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Region.

The City Centre Plan lays a solid foundation to ensure the realisation of securing another 10,000 jobs and 10,000 new residents along with a wide range of retail and cultural facilities.

Our City centre, befitting the leading city in outer Western Sydney, will be a social, safe place where people will want to go, meet, and live.

It will have a lively and contemporary retail centre, be a one-stop shop for business services, be pedestrian friendly and an easy place to get around.

It will be a regional centre for arts, culture and leisure activities. People will want to live in the city centre with its vibrant daytime activities and vivacious nightlife.

The Council will continue to work hard to encourage investment and to provide the infrastructure for the City. The City plan is a major step toward enabling this to happen.

Our City centres are well placed to deliver a range of lifestyle choices and complementary business options that older and established parts of Sydney would find more difficult to provide.

Council thanks residents, community groups, business and other interested parties who support our vision for the city centre. Council looks forward to the redevelopment of the City Centre that will help ensure our economic and social future is a bright one.

Councillor Greg Davies

Penrith City Mayor



JANE ST

RILEY ST

BELMORE ST

HENRY ST

CAYMERE L

ALLEN PI

LAWSON ST

HIGHWAY

STERS PL PATH







LOWER HUNTER

**Newcastle**

CENTRAL COAST

**Gosford**

SYDNEY REGION

**Penrith**

**Parramatta**

SYDNEY

**Liverpool**

**Wollongong**

ILLAWARRA

Scale 20km

# Introduction: About regional cities

Penrith

The Economic and Financial Statement, announced by the Premier, Morris Iemma on the 23rd February 2006, recognised the importance of the regional cities of Parramatta, Penrith, Liverpool, Gosford, Wollongong and Newcastle in the economic growth of the state, and the need for their proper planning and servicing.

This announcement supported key directions of the government's 25 year Sydney, Lower Hunter, Illawarra and Central Coast regional strategies. These strategies aim to create a multi-centred city with a much greater employment and recreation role for key subregional and regional urban centres. Gosford, Parramatta, Penrith and Liverpool in the Sydney region and Wollongong and Newcastle in the Greater Metropolitan Region (GMR), have been nominated as 'regional cities' to play the dominant role in their respective regions.

The definition of regional cities as defined in the Metropolitan Strategy is:

"A city that is a focal point for regional transport and jobs that also has a full range of business, government, retail, cultural, entertainment and regional activities."

## REGIONAL CITIES

The Greater Metropolitan Region of Sydney is almost 250 kilometres from Newcastle to Wollongong. Around two million people live west of Burwood. Over one million live in the Central Coast, Illawarra and the Lower Hunter.

The Metropolitan Sydney is too big, both geographically and in population terms, to rely solely on central Sydney as the jobs, services, tourism and activity hub. Relying on only one key centre means that many people have to travel long distances for jobs and services. The concentration of functions in the city of Sydney means

that cultural, service and infrastructure resources are not distributed evenly across the Metropolitan area. The need for a major suburban centre closer to where the bulk of people live was recognised in the 1960s with the designation of Parramatta as a second 'CBD'. With the continued outward growth of the Metropolitan Sydney the new regional strategies are designating additional regional cities.

An underlying principle is that people should be able to access a range of jobs, health and education services, cultural, entertainment and recreation activities and shopping without travelling long distances. Most people are willing to travel about an hour a day and the regional cities concept is about concentrating services and activities to satisfy this.

## PROVIDING FOR JOBS

The metropolitan and regional strategies are planning for an additional 500,000 jobs in the Sydney region (including the Central Coast), 30,000 jobs in the Illawarra and up to 70,000 in the Lower Hunter to 2031. To accommodate this growth, appropriate building floor space for jobs is required particularly in the commercial services, cultural and entertainment sectors. Jobs in these areas will be concentrated in offices and business zones close to public transport. It is intended that the regional cities are intended to accommodate a significant share of these jobs. In western Sydney and in the outer regions in the GMR in particular, where growth in high quality service sector jobs has lagged, there is a vital need to facilitate and encourage these jobs. The regional cities of Penrith, Parramatta, Gosford, Liverpool, Wollongong and Newcastle need to be carefully planned and supported to provide for the predicted employment growth.

# Introduction: About regional cities

## REGIONAL CITY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

To realise their potential each regional city needs careful planning, supported by government investment and targeted asset management. The primacy of the centres as employment nodes, supported by high quality and appropriately located residential development, needs to be recognised. Common development principles for the regional city centre's include the following:

- grow jobs in the heart of the city centre;
- encourage diverse precincts around the city centre;
- create a living city by encouraging mixed use development that complements the centre's core employment role;
- develop a distinct role and character for the city centre;
- ensure high quality design of building and public areas;
- enhance transport links to and from the centre;
- improve the natural environment; and
- strengthen governance and funding arrangements and partnerships.

## GROWING JOBS IN THE HEART OF THE CITY CENTRE

Regional cities contain concentrations of jobs and service activities. The highest density area for jobs needs to be in the heart of the centre, close to the railway station and thereby accessible to public transport users. Planning needs to allow for sufficient floorspace to accommodate future job growth.

Community, education and government activities currently provide many of the high value, high skill job opportunities in the regional cities. The continued development of these activities, and related spin-off enterprises in the private sector, is fundamental to the future success of the regional cities as job locations.

Government land and assets will also play a strategic role in the development of regional cities. A 'whole of government' approach is essential to ensure that assets are utilised to maximise outcomes for the good of the centre as a whole. The utilisation of Council assets such as libraries, civic centres, parks and land can also be reviewed to ensure they effectively support city centre development.

## ENCOURAGING DIVERSE PRECINCTS AROUND THE CITY CENTRE

The regional cities all have assets which give them their pre-eminent status that are outside the immediate city centre area. Universities, hospitals, parks, light industry areas, cultural and entertainment facilities, river and waterfront assets and parklands – as well as the shopping and business precincts – all make a contribution to the life and attractiveness of these places as diverse destinations.

For example, Central Sydney is more than just the area between Circular Quay and Central Station. Darling Harbour, the University and education Precinct, the waterfront, botanic gardens, the Rocks, the inner suburbs of Surry Hills and Ultimo/Pyrmont and the Domain, Hyde Park and even Centennial Park are all contributors. The regional cities all have a similar set of assets in and around their centres. Planning therefore needs to extend beyond the centre to the wider catchment of assets and attractions, and recognise and build on the inter-connections and relationships between them.

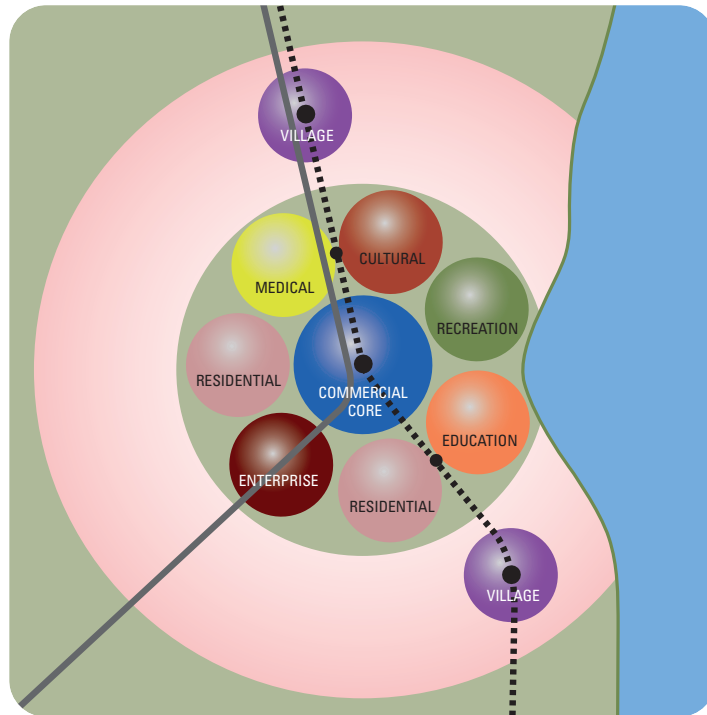
## CREATING A LIVING CITY

While a core employment role is fundamental, opportunities for additional mixed use and residential development in and around the centre exist. Attracting new residents will bring additional retail and service activity, and street life. High quality design outcomes, public places and civic improvements should be a priority in these areas.

The changing demographic profile of Australian households is leading to an increase in the number of one and two person households compared to families with children. Many of these smaller households will prefer to live in a more urban, cosmopolitan environment like a regional city.

### CELEBRATING THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE CENTRE

Each of the centres has a different role in its subregion and their assets underpin different competitive strengths. It is not anticipated that all the regional cities will be central Sydney or even Parramatta replicas. They must develop with their own distinct character and roles. An understanding of the character and role of topography and landscape, and economic and community assets in each centre, and preparing development settings as appropriate, is critical.



Key elements of a regional city.

### IMPROVING THE DESIGN OF BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC AREAS

High quality architecture and design, of buildings and the public domain, attracts investment and visitors. Places are simply more enjoyable where innovation in design and development is on display. Regional cities need to be a symbol for wider aspirations for much better quality urban development.

### IMPROVING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

With looming environmental and climate change, the sustainability of our cities is under increasing scrutiny. The regional cities need to be exemplars for best practice performance in terms of energy and water consumption, solar access for public spaces and in encouraging transport forms that minimise air and noise pollution.

### ENHANCING TRANSPORT AND ACCESS TO AND AROUND THE CENTRE

As the regional cities are to become the focus for new investment and accelerated development, access to the centres, and around them, is fundamental. New and upgraded public transport links, improved private vehicular access and enhanced environments for pedestrians and cyclists must be a priority.



# 1. About the Penrith City Centre Plan

Penrith

The Penrith Local Government Area (LGA) and outer western Sydney are maturing rapidly as new greenfield areas for development begin to diminish. Residential offerings are diversifying, job markets are slowly deepening and more cultural, entertainment, shopping and recreational activities are now available within the subregion.

Penrith has emerged as the 'capital' of the region, with growing employment and new investment in retail, business, cultural, educational and health premises.

Penrith's potential far exceeds its current market position as the western gateway to Sydney. Penrith can mature as a cosmopolitan city in its own right. It needs to focus on its uniqueness in providing economic and lifestyle opportunities in a spectacular, natural setting on the Nepean River and at the foothills of the Blue Mountains. The M4 and Mulgoa Road and the Western railway line provide Penrith with the significant links to the rest of the Sydney region. Penrith City Council has outlined a number of themes for the development of the centre in its Centres Vitality and Viability Strategy. This Plan incorporates key strategic objectives of Council's vision for Penrith, which are:

- a regional business and commercial city centre;
- a living centre;
- a safe and attractive city centre;
- an accessible centre; and
- a social and culturally vibrant city centre.

In pursuing these themes, Council has put forward a number of directions in the following areas:

- promote diversity of use and a balance of activities;
- encourage compactness and intensity of development;
- provide a high quality environment for people and pedestrians;

- ensure high levels of walking, cycling and public transport access; and
- build a positive identity.

This City Centre Plan recognises the fundamental connection between future economic developments and the quality of place through the redevelopment of the city centre. The economics of the future redevelopment of the city centre are dependent on having the underpinnings of a strong and growing regional and city based economy. At the same time as securing this growth, the city centre has to present itself as an attractive and vibrant location to work, live, operate a business in and visit.

## 1.1 THE FOUR PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The City Centre Plan is the first step in delivering this positive future for Penrith. The Plan includes the following planning documents.

### The City Centre Vision

This document describes a vision for the regional city centre, provides information on the history and development context, and includes an action plan to facilitate the city centre's growth. It sets a strategic framework for the city centre to grow into a prosperous, vibrant and attractive city.

Key actions include:

- promote office development in the commercial core with appropriate planning controls;
- promote Government office accommodation options for the city centre;
- investigate options for the development of a city park;
- develop strategies, involving TAFE and the University of Western Sydney to add to educational facilities within the city centre; and

# 1. About the Penrith City Centre Plan

- enhance movement in and around the city centre by investigating the feasibility of a shuttle bus.

## Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

The LEP is the statutory planning framework that establishes zoning, heights, floor space ratios and the main provisions for development across the city centre. The Penrith City Centre LEP is based on the new Standard Instrument (LEPs) Order 2006 that now applies to all councils in NSW. Key features of the new LEP are:

- increases in allowable development to provide for anticipated job and housing growth (increased 'Floor Space Ratios' and building heights);
- development incentive provisions to encourage office development and high quality design, with all buildings above six storeys and development in special precincts to be subject to architectural competitions.

## Development Control Plan (DCP)

The DCP outlines the more detailed planning provisions for the built form such as pedestrian amenity, access and environmental management for future development in the city centre. It establishes controls for building setbacks, awnings, and separations between buildings in order to take advantage of the winter sun within the city centre.

Key features of the DCP are:

- creation of attractive and well formed public domain and city centre scale;
- protection of views to the mountains;
- enhancing pedestrian environment in city centre streets and improvement of city centre pedestrian access by provision of new mid-block connections; and
- provisions which guarantee solar access to key public spaces.

## Civic Improvement Plan (CIP)

This document establishes the importance of the public domain in terms of design principles for paving, parks, signage, lighting and the improvement of key public places. The document also lists the projects that Council would like to undertake based on funds levied from individual developments. This will include the Section 94 contributions for the city centre and special contribution areas.

## 1.2 OTHER DOCUMENTS

### Reference Documents

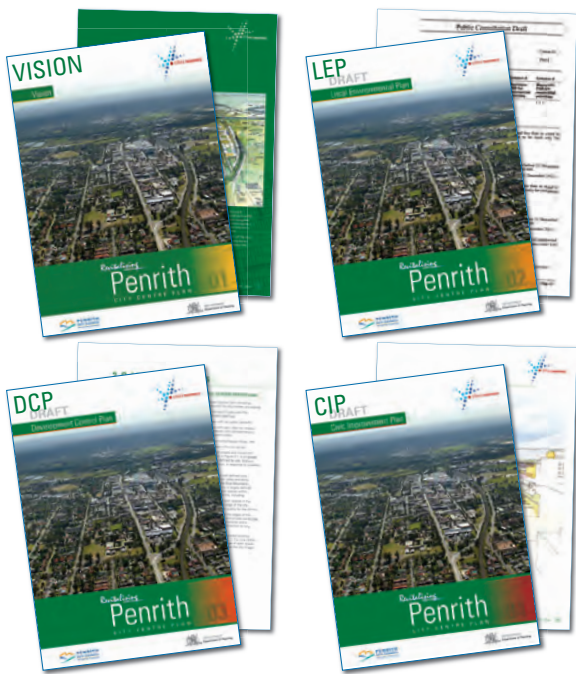
Many other reports and studies have been utilised in the preparation of the four key planning documents. These include detailed reports about economic, traffic, urban design, public domain, social and environmental issues. These documents are listed at the end of the Vision document.

### Future Supporting Documents

Although the four planning documents produced for the city centre are the publicly exhibited documents, there will be a need for more detailed documents to ensure the implementation of the plan. Likely documents to accompany the plan include:

- Public Domain Technical Manual – this describes the detail of the public domain elements such as: paving, lighting, tree planting, signage and street furniture;
- Project Plans – as key projects gain priority, specific project plans will be prepared, designed and documented in detail; and
- review of City Centre Plans – all planning documents need to be reviewed over time to accommodate changing circumstances or standards. The planning system in New South Wales builds in a process for modifying planning instruments and for regular reviews.





The regional city sits in a broader context that includes the Penrith Lakes development to the north and the University of Western Sydney to the east.

The Penrith city centre (the 'walkable' centre) is bounded by the Western Railway line to the north, the Nepean River to the west, and the western end of High Street, Union Road, Lethbridge Street, Higgins Street, Fulton Street and High Street east – to its intersection with North Street and the rail line – to the south. In addition, the land between Station Street and Woodriff Street north of Jamison Road is also included.

The Penrith City Centre Plan (incorporating the LEP, DCP and CIP) applies to this area.

### 1.3 DEFINITION OF PENRITH REGIONAL CITY

As a regional city, Penrith extends across a broader geographic area than just the city centre. Its activity nodes include the bulky goods precinct and service areas along Mulgoa Road, industrial areas around Batt Street and Coreen Avenue, the north Penrith urban area (former Defence land), the Nepean Hospital, the 'Riverlink' area, Penrith Panthers and the river frontage to the west.

The city centre, with these adjoining key sites and precincts, all contribute to Penrith's economic, educational and recreational role in the region. This broader 'Regional City' area is consistent with the definition provided within the Metropolitan Strategy, and has a radius of around two kilometres.

Detailed planning for the broader 'Regional City' area will be undertaken by Council as part of the city wide Local Environmental Plan process, which is already underway.

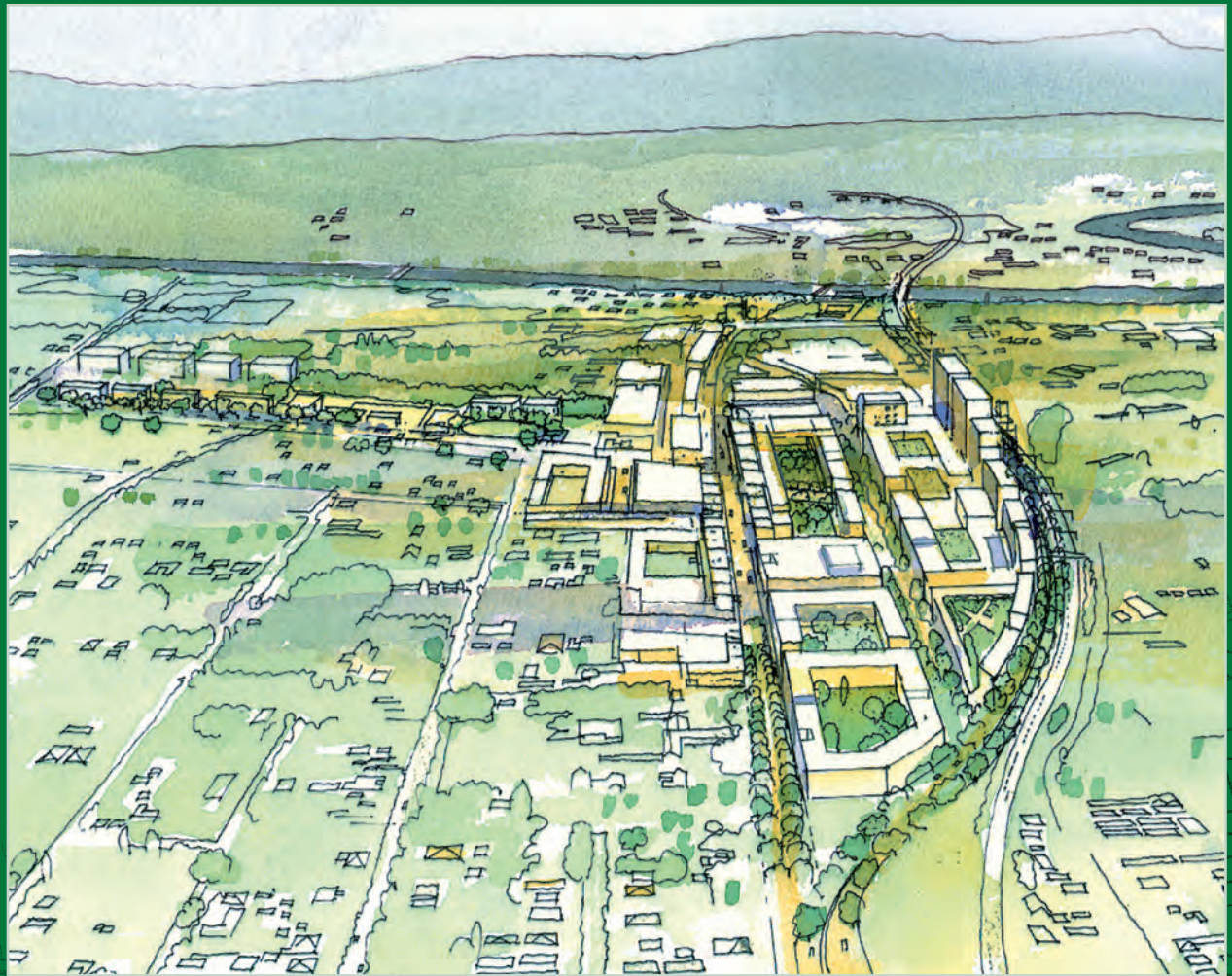


Penrith city centre and the broader 'Regional City'



# 2. The vision for the Penrith city centre

## GROWING THE CITY CENTRE

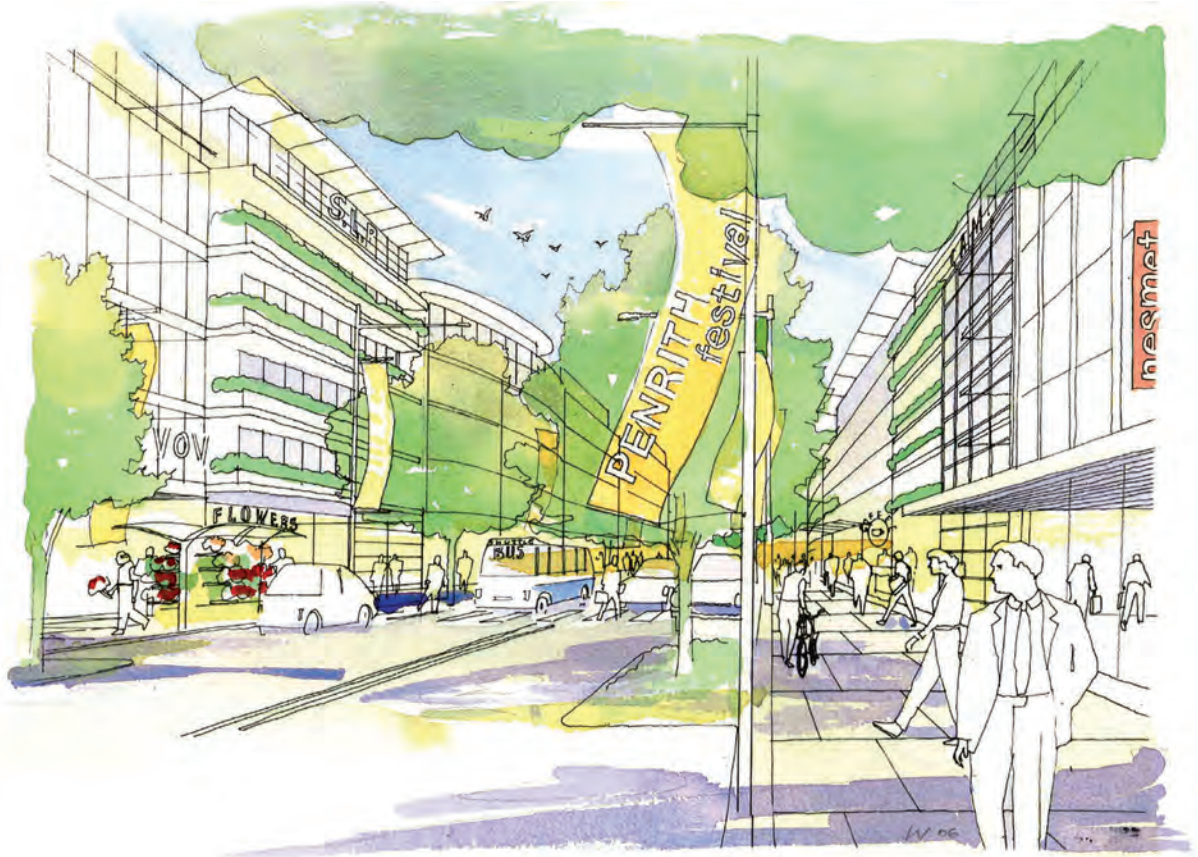


As the regional city for outer and north western Sydney, Penrith will be a vibrant, forward looking centre that provides quality urban living, within easy access to unique natural surrounds. The city centre will offer a more relaxed pace than Metropolitan Sydney and maintain tangible links to the rural past and unique natural and community assets, whilst providing contemporary living and working opportunities. Jobs will focus on high growth industries that build the city's strengths in business services, health, education, retail, tourism and cultural activities

The city centre will accommodate 10,000 new jobs and 10,000 new residents. The form of the city will protect Penrith's unique setting in the river valley at the foothills of the Blue Mountains by maintaining views of the escarpment by concentrating higher buildings along the railway line and closer to the railway station.

## 2. The vision for the Penrith city centre

### DEVELOPING A VIBRANT REGIONAL BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL CENTRE



The Penrith regional city will be attractive for business and generate new job opportunities for residents in western Sydney. The government will assist in consolidating its regional office activities in Penrith. Strong partnerships will be maintained between key stakeholders, recognising that the commitment and cooperation of both the private and public sectors is necessary to grow Penrith as a successful regional city.

## ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE CENTRE

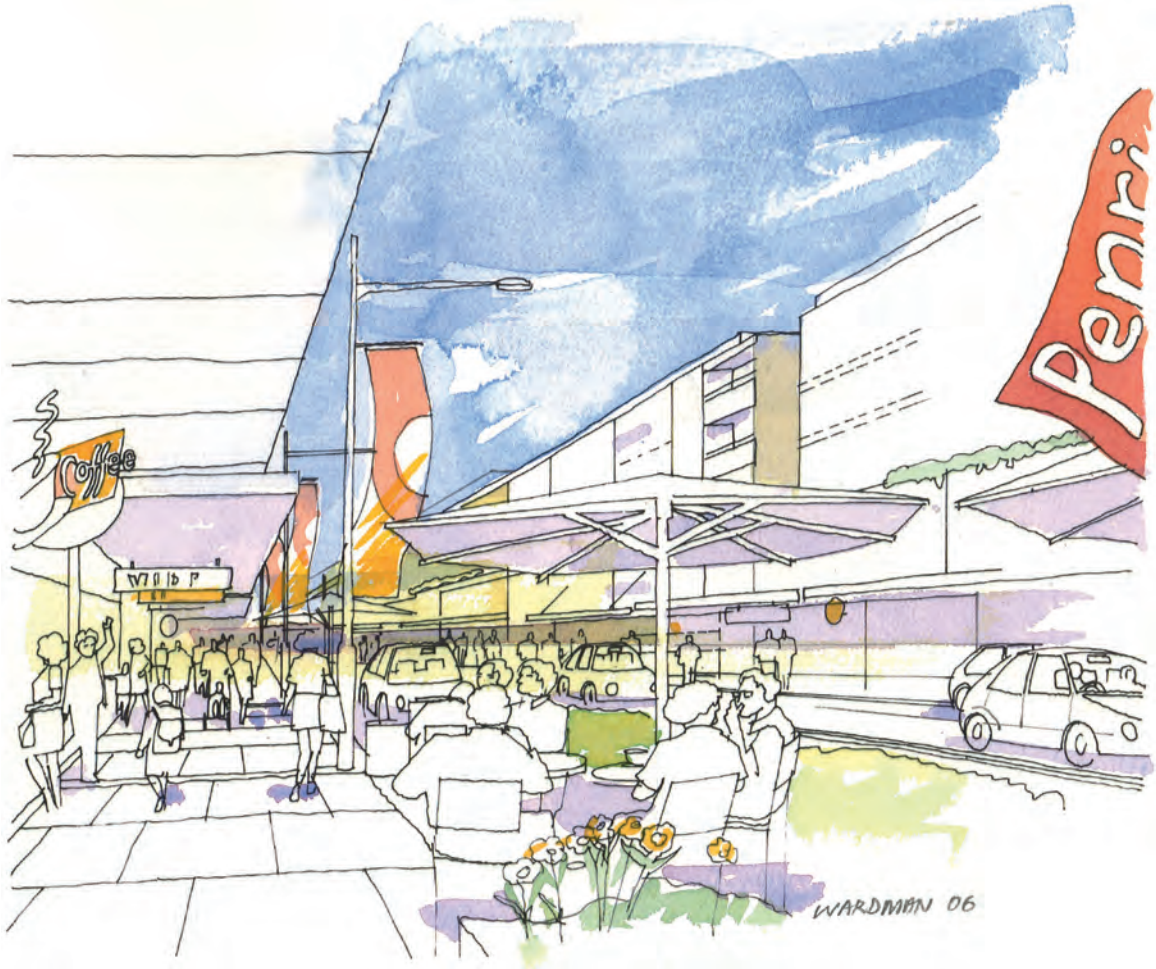


All development will be subject to environmental, social and economic sustainability tests. This means that the built environment and public spaces will minimise the consumption of energy and water, and promote social interaction and activity, and a diversity of uses will be encouraged to generate economic activity.

## 2. The vision for the Penrith city centre

### CREATING A SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE CENTRE

Planning and development will focus on street activation, a high quality public realm and promotion of pedestrian friendly environments. New development will be of a high quality and contribute to a visually attractive built form.

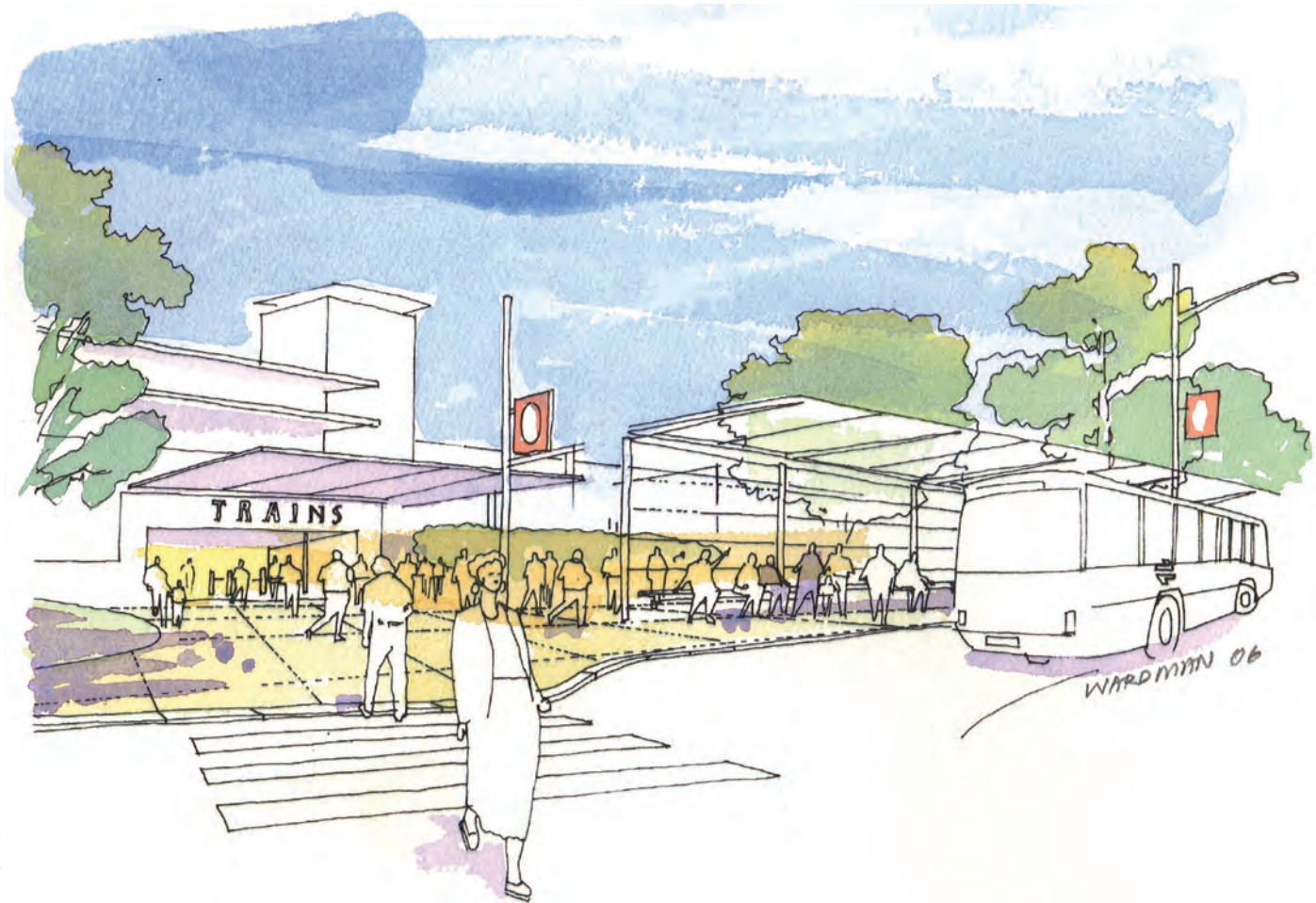


### ENSURING HUMAN SCALE ACTIVE STREET EDGES

The form of the city centre will have a strong sense of place with buildings relating to streets and public areas. The major streets will have buildings with active frontages at pedestrian level with fewer blank walls.

## FACILITATING ACCESS AND MOBILITY AROUND THE CITY CENTRE

The precincts in the regional city will be integrated and linked by clearly defined pedestrian and cycle ways, and internal public transport. Public transport access to the centre will be improved and car parking will be specifically managed to meet the needs of different user groups – train commuters, city centre workers and short stay visitors.



## CREATING AN ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT AT THE RAILWAY STATION

Penrith Station will be the focus for regional train and bus services. It will also be a focus for development and improved local access arrangements for pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists, including across the rail line from north to south.

## 2. The vision for the Penrith city centre

### CREATING A SOCIALLY AND CULTURALLY VIBRANT CENTRE



The city centre will become the hub of cultural and arts activities including performing and visual arts. Council will use its assets and resources to facilitate arts activity and stimulate opportunities for both audiences and artists.



## CREATING A LIVEABLE CITY



The range of public domain amenities and services will attract people of all ages and from diverse communities to live in Penrith. The streets will be safe, and easy to move around. Street life and activity will increase with a greater mix of uses serving residents, workers and visitors. The city centre will be a more desirable place to live. It will offer greater housing mix and cater for greater residential diversity.

## 2. The vision for the Penrith city centre

### RE-CONNECTING THE CITY TO THE RIVER

The historical connection of Penrith to the Nepean River will be strengthened by the extension of High Street landscape to the riverfront. The 'Riverlink' precinct will become a recreational, leisure and entertainment destination for the locals and visitors. The river frontage will become the focus of local restaurants, clubs and recreation uses.



### DEVELOPING THE 'KNOWLEDGE' ASSETS IN AND AROUND THE CENTRE

Penrith Lakes, north Penrith, the city centre, Nepean Hospital and University of Western Sydney will be renowned as locations for innovation and knowledge activity. Physical and virtual connections between these locations will be facilitated.

## ESTABLISHING THE NEW CITY SQUARE AND PARK



Allen Place between Henry Street and High Street in the city centre will become the city's green lung and a major civic focus. The existing surface car park will be transformed into the major city square and park with shade trees, water fountains, seats, lighting and high quality paving. The square and park will be well connected to surrounding streets and will be framed by active uses and mixed use buildings.

## 2. The vision for the Penrith city centre

### IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN



The public domain will be well designed and give a pedestrian a feeling of importance. A network of public squares, laneways and parks will be provided. The quality of footpath paving, street trees, signage and lighting will be improved.

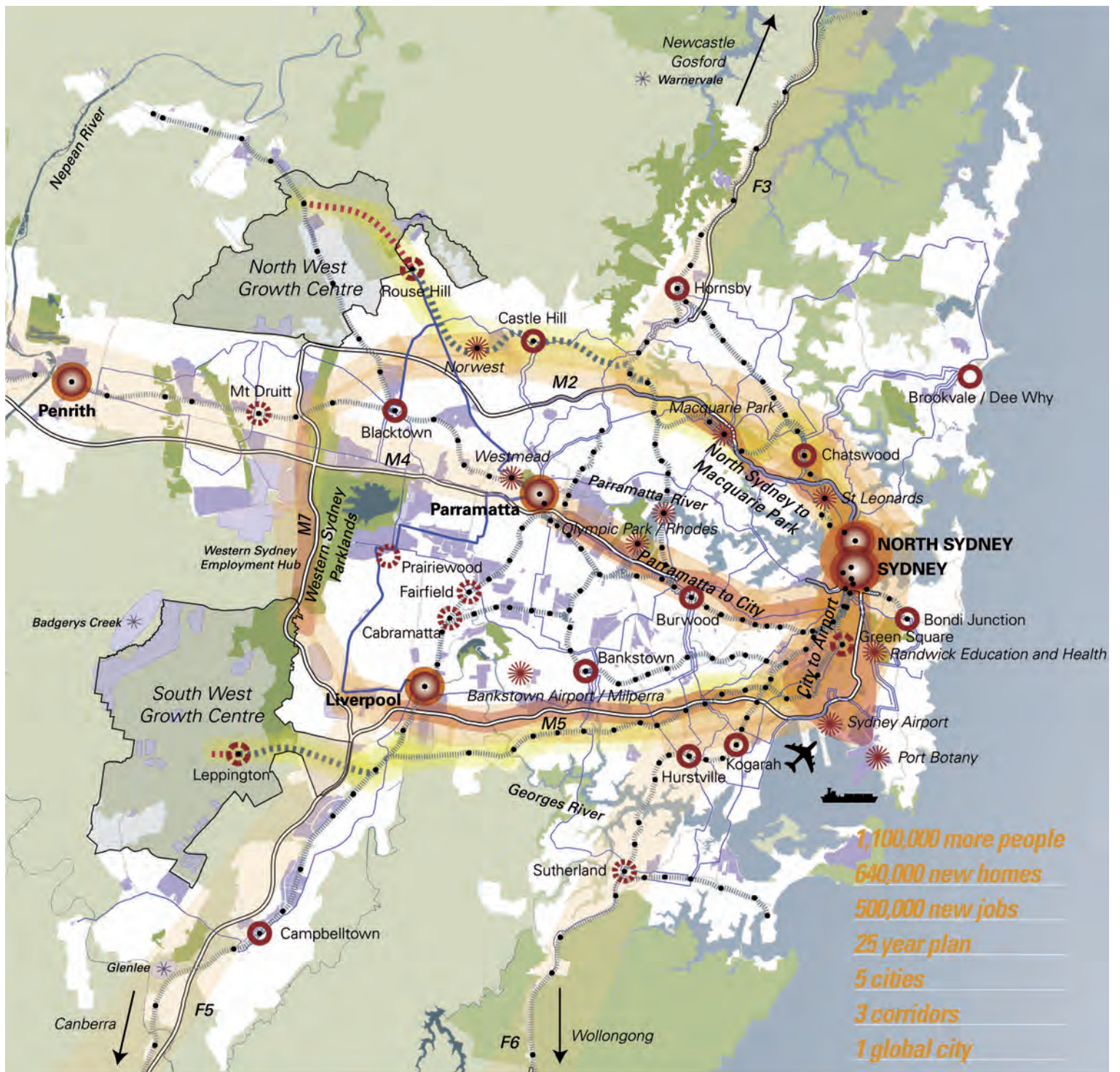
## CELEBRATING THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF PENRITH

The city form will reflect the horizontal forms of the river flats and the Blue Mountains. Significant views and connections to the Blue Mountains and the surrounding rural environment will be protected along High Street. The new city park will bring the atmosphere of the country into the city.



## IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF NEW BUILDINGS

The city centre will be distinguished by high quality new architecture and design. Architectural competitions will ensure well-designed buildings for special precincts and buildings over six storeys.



**1,100,000 more people**  
**640,000 new homes**  
**500,000 new jobs**  
**25 year plan**  
**5 cities**  
**3 corridors**  
**1 global city**



**GLOBAL SYDNEY**

Main focus for national and international business, professional services, specialised shops and tourism. It is also a recreation and entertainment destination for the Sydney region with national significance.



**GLOBAL ECONOMIC CORRIDOR**

The corridor of concentrated jobs and activities in centres from North Sydney to Macquarie Park and from the City to Airport and Port Botany, will remain the powerhouse of Australia's economy.



**REGIONAL CITY**

Parramatta, Liverpool and Penrith will provide for more lifestyle and work opportunities close to the growing parts of Sydney.



**SPECIALISED CENTRE**

Places such as hospitals, universities and major research and business centres that perform vital economic and employment roles across Sydney.



**MAJOR CENTRE**

The major shopping and business centre for the district, usually with council offices, taller office and residential buildings, a large shopping mall and central community facilities.



**PLANNED MAJOR CENTRE**

These places are currently being planned to become major centres.



**POTENTIAL MAJOR CENTRE**

These places may grow to take on the role of major centres in future.

# 3. Regional context

Penrith

## 3.1 THE METROPOLITAN STRATEGY

The Metropolitan Strategy designates Penrith as a regional city, based on a number of reasons which include:

- its status as the largest centre in outer and north western Sydney;
- its large and growing regional catchment area;
- its location in relation to natural assets including the Nepean River and Blue Mountains;
- high forecast employment growth;
- its potential to attract further additional economic, cultural and social activity because of existing and new assets in and around the centre; and
- its focus for rail and other transport links.

The centre is located centrally between the North West and South West land release areas, and will serve part of the new development at the former ADI site, located in Penrith and Blacktown LGAs, which is one of the largest urban development projects in Sydney.

The Penrith LGA is located in the north west subregion in the Metropolitan Strategy, along with Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury. Within the North West region the Strategy is planning for an additional:

- 140,000 total new dwellings (with over 300,000 people) consisting of;
  - 60,000 dwellings in existing areas to 2031,
  - 60,000 dwellings in the North West growth centre (which includes dwellings that will be built after 2031), and
  - 20,000 dwellings in other greenfield areas to 2031;
- 99,000 new jobs to 2031.

## 3.2 PENRITH AND THE REGION

Penrith city centre is 54 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD. It serves parts of the neighbouring local government areas of Blacktown, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury, but also parts of the south west corridor. It is a regional centre for settlements further west including Lithgow, Bathurst and beyond.

Early development in the immediate region was in rural towns and settlements, serving good farming land on the Nepean and Hawkesbury river plains, and around the main rail stations at Penrith and St Marys. Since the Sydney Region Outline Plan of the late 1960s development has been concentrated in a corridor along the western rail line and Great Western Highway, but with the Penrith and St Mary centres being the focus for the new development areas. To the east Mount Druitt became a focus for a new centre and residential development.

The population of Penrith LGA is estimated to be 180,000 and is forecast to reach 230,000 by 2031. The city has a diverse range of housing including public housing estates, detached older style private houses, a scattering of medium density dwellings and an increasing share of 'higher-end' houses, particularly within Glenmore Park.

There are many major regional facilities located in or nearby to the Penrith city centre area, including Nepean Hospital, University of Western Sydney, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Penrith Regional Gallery and Lewers Bequest, Law Courts, Australian Tax Office, various government agencies and community service providers.

There are also several large urban development areas and sites which will further contribute to Penrith's role as a regional centre, including: Penrith Lakes, former ADI site, North Penrith urban area, Werrington Enterprise Living and Learning Precinct, Carpenter Site and Waterside.





# Penrith

## 4. Historic context

Penrith city centre was known to local Aboriginal people as Muru Murak. Penrith became established as a white settlement through the location of the police and judiciary at the punt crossing on the Nepean River and through the development of inns, holding stock yards, and stores developed for the convenience of travellers to the western districts. Freehold titles of the relatively fertile land around Penrith were granted early in the establishment of the colony to settlers. The claiming of land by white people came at the cost of the Dharug people whose way of life was altered completely post settlement with the population declining as a result of epidemics and due to the 'dispersal' of tribes undertaken by authorities and settlers. However references to corroborees and gatherings of Aboriginal tribes around the Nepean River are noted as late as 1914 and there was provision of some refuge granted on large estates such as Mamre, Mulgoa and Dunheved in the early years of settlement.

The name Penrith was first recorded in 1822, and may have been named after the city of Penrith in Cumbria, England. Penrith was not formally laid out as a town centre with virtually all land within the LGA released as freehold title by the 1820s. Captain Daniel Woodriff R. N. received a grant of 1000 acres in 1803 covering the area where the central business district of Penrith now stands.

The town centre itself grew and developed along the margins of the Western Road (High Street – constructed in 1815) contributing to the lineal and elongated nature of the city.

The current street grid originates from 1889. The city suffered many floods and the significant public buildings were erected on a slightly elevated land to the east of Woodriff Street. The town of Penrith was proclaimed in 1871.

The introduction of the railway line in 1863 contributed to the establishment of Penrith as the largest populated centre within the district. Population growth was sustained over the next 20 years supported by a competent and self reliant local government with the completion of council chambers in 1881, provision of reticulated water in 1892, and an electricity supply in 1890, 14 years ahead of Sydney.

The reclamation of land in the LGA by the Commonwealth government and the establishment of significant industry to support the war effort boosted the local population and economy in the first half of the twentieth century.

By 1950 Penrith became a regional city in recognition of its strategic location on the western fringes of metropolitan Sydney. Large land releases for housing within the Penrith LGA area considerably increased the local population, particularly young families, in the later periods of the twentieth century, and required the provision of an increased range of services and facilities commensurate with Penrith's growing status as a city centre. Government had relocated offices and developed the major regional facilities such as the Nepean Hospital and the University of Western Sydney. In 1959 the Municipality of Penrith became the city of Penrith.



# 5. Demographic and housing context

Penrith

## 5.1 KEY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The population of Penrith LGA is on average younger than in other parts of Sydney, with a higher proportion of children and lower proportion of people aged over 65. However these characteristics are expected to change over the next twenty years as the 'baby boomers' (the 45-54 year olds) age, in line with broader demographic trends occurring across Australia. Nevertheless, while the average age of the population will increase, the number of children will continue to rise as the high share of families and young people currently within the LGA move through their life cycle and have additional children.

The number of households in the Penrith LGA increased by 80 percent between 1981 and 2001 from 31,846 to 57,249, whilst household size decreased from an average of 3.4 persons per house to 2.8 persons. The biggest proportional increase of household types was in the lone person category which increased by 58 percent. Couples without children grew by 35 percent and couples with children increased by only 4 percent.

The current trend towards a greater proportion of lone person and childless households is projected to continue. This change is likely to translate into a shift in housing demand, away from the traditional suburban family home towards medium and higher density forms, including villas, town houses and apartments.

Notwithstanding the growth in population and in average incomes, household income disparities remain and many families struggle. Affordable housing options in centralised and connected locations will need to be provided.

The city centre defined for this planning work has a total of only 24 residential dwellings.

There are no statistical boundaries recorded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that align with the city centre as defined for this planning work, so it is not possible to readily identify rates of change over time, or other typical indicators. In the profiling below, demographic indicators relate to dwellings in the broader regional city area, as compared to the Penrith LGA and the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Region.

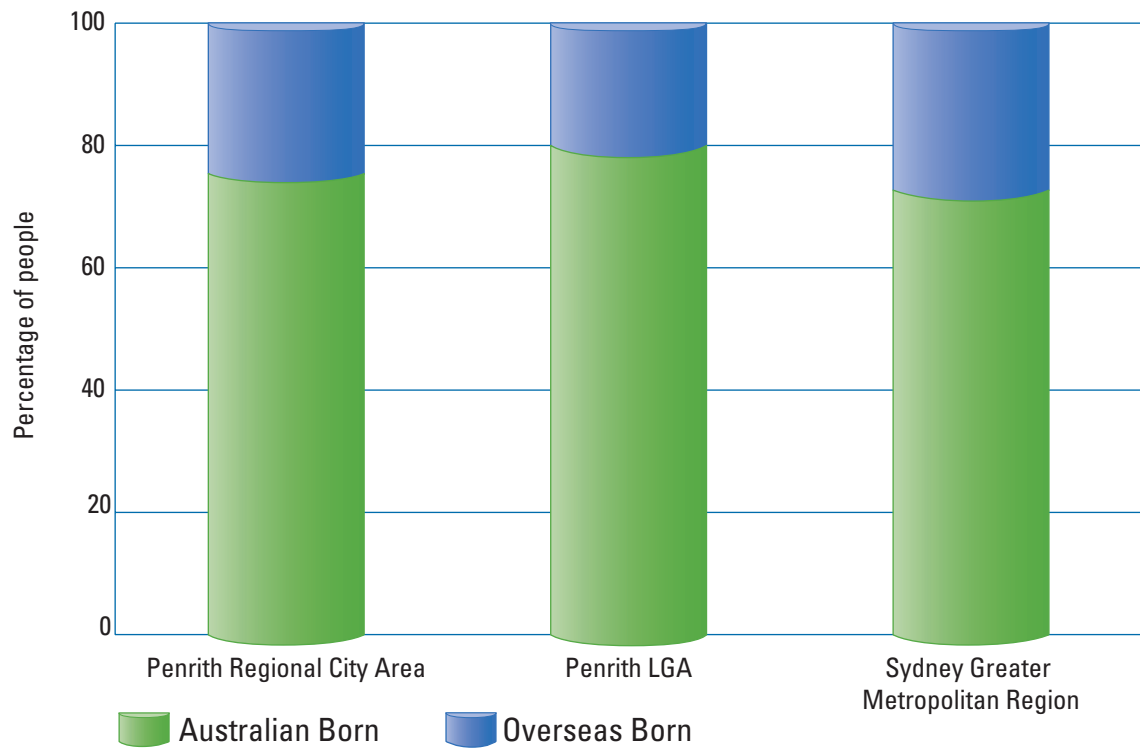
TABLE 1. KEY POPULATION STATISTICS, 2001

	Total Population	percent of LGA population	percent Change 1996-2001	percent Working Age (15-64 years)	percent Change Working Age Population
Penrith city centre	50	.03 percent	n/a	n/a	n/a
Broader Regional City Area	9,647	5.6 percent	6.8 percent	63.9 percent	6.7 percent
Penrith LGA	172,397	100 percent	5.7 percent	68.2 percent	7.5 percent
Sydney GMR	4,725,441	n/a	6.5 percent	66.6 percent	6.6 percent

Source: ABS 1996 and 2001

## 5. Demographic and housing context

FIGURE 1: ETHNICITY



Note: No statistics are available for the Penrith City Centre – Regional City statistics used.

### Ethnicity

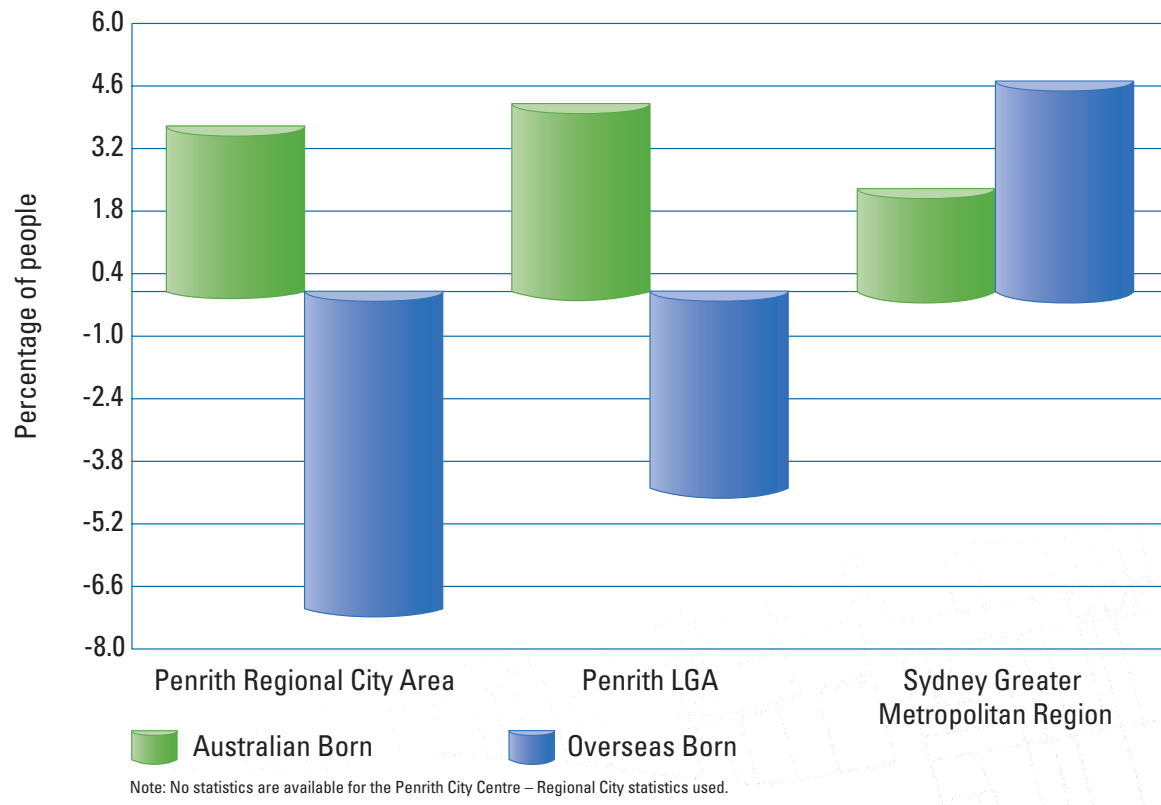
Close to the city centre, within the Broader Penrith 'Regional City' area, there is a slightly higher share of overseas born (22 percent) than in the Penrith LGA as a whole (20 percent). Nevertheless both are well below the rate in the Greater Metropolitan Region (28 percent).

Ethnic diversity declined in the 'Regional City' area and the LGA between 1996 and 2001.

In general Penrith has a more ethnically homogeneous population than in other larger centres in Sydney.

New and more diverse forms of housing in the city centre will attract different population groups – which could include migrants and other new housing market entrants. This could add more diversity to the population profile.

**FIGURE 2: ETHNICITY CHANGE**



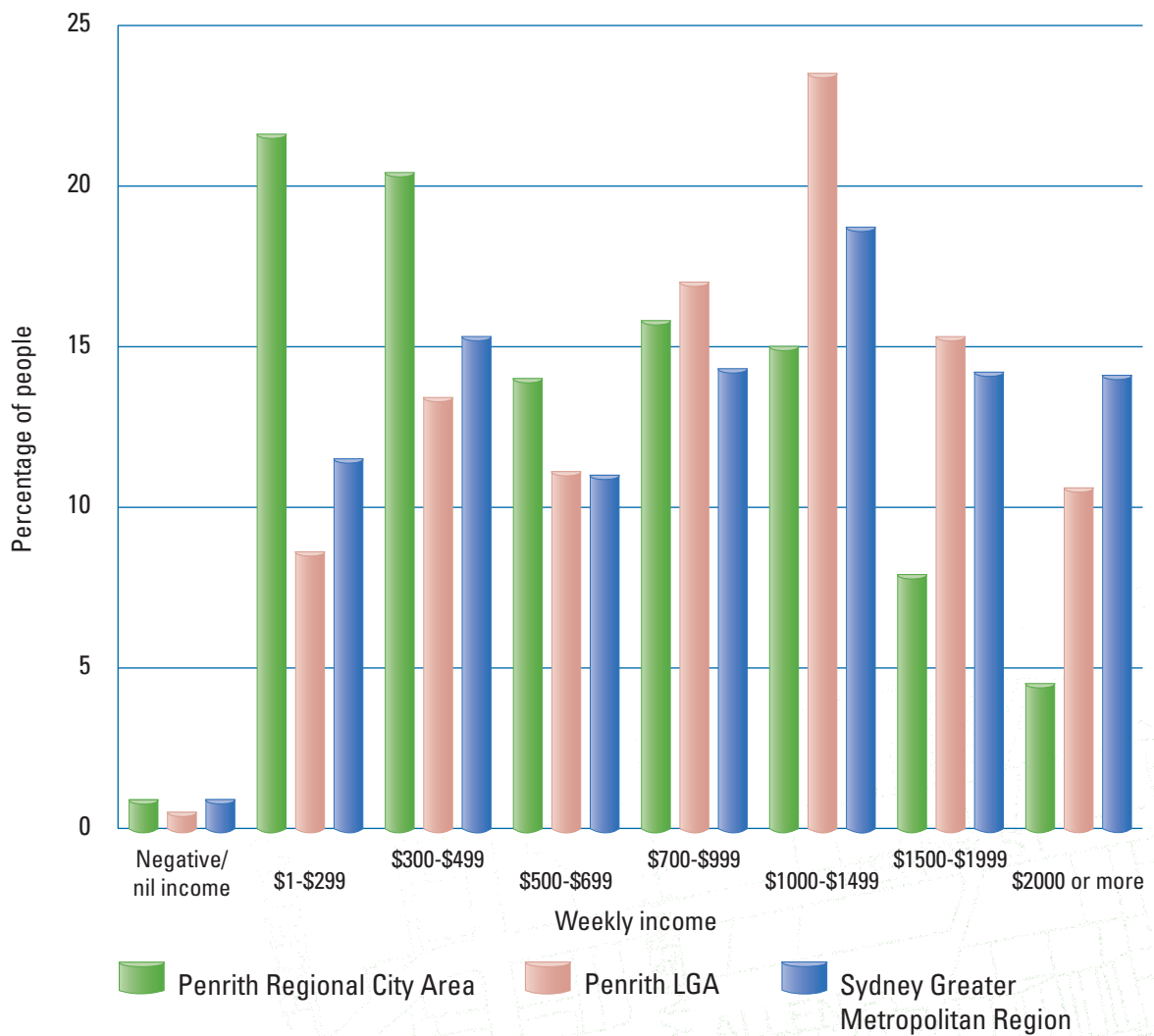
# 5. Demographic and housing context

## Household Income

Residents in dwellings around the city centre have significantly lower incomes on average than in the LGA or Greater Metropolitan Area as a whole. This partly reflects the fact that the boundaries for the broader regional city

area included in these statistics extend to some public housing areas south of the city centre. Nevertheless it also highlights that new housing development facilitated by this plan should consider affordable housing options, as well as introducing higher quality housing to diversify the local housing stock.

FIGURE 3: HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2001\*



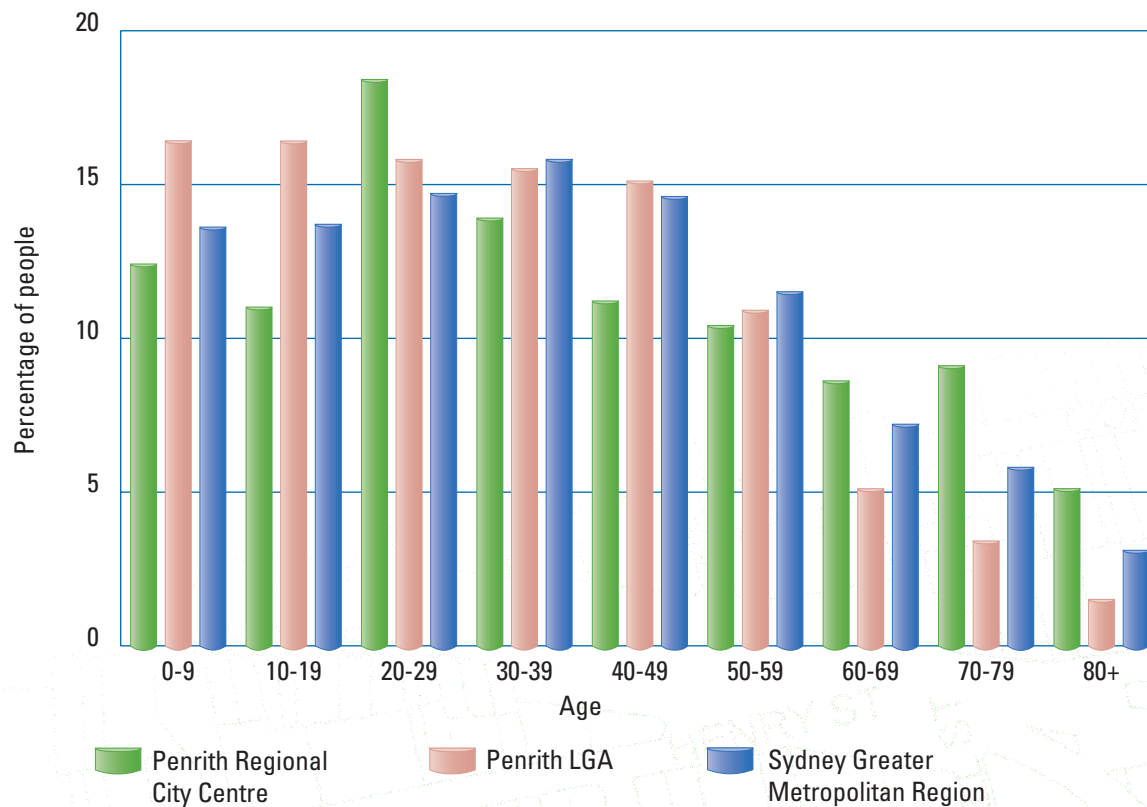
Note: No demographic statistics are available for the Penrith city centre – Regional City statistics used.  
Source: ABS 2001

## Age Profile

The share of residents in dwellings around the city centre peaks in the young adult and older adult categories. This highlights that housing close to the centre is preferred by

new households which are concentrated in the 20 to 29 age group category, and also by older residents who value proximity to services and transport. The older residents near the centre may also be concentrated in the public housing in this area.

FIGURE 4 AGE PROFILE, 2001\*



Note: No demographic statistics are available for the Penrith city centre – Regional City statistics used.  
Source: ABS 2001

## 5.2 POPULATION AND DWELLING SUPPLY TARGETS

The Metropolitan Strategy promotes employment growth in the core of regional cities but also recognises that there is significant scope to increase residential densities beyond the core employment areas within a radius of around one kilometre from railway stations. Typically, target residential densities in regional cities including the mixed use and commercial zoned areas will reach approximately 50 dwellings per hectare.

In centres where the jobs to population ratio is anticipated to be lower (in major centres such as Bondi Junction) residential densities can reach 60 dwellings per hectare or higher.

The Penrith city centre has very few dwellings and a range of under-developed sites where there is potential for mixed use and residential development. At 50 dwellings per hectare it is estimated that these areas when developed will yield around 5,300 dwellings and around 10,000 people.





# 6. Economic development

## 6.1 BACKGROUND

Penrith was initially settled to serve the surrounding rural areas and also grew as a 'stop over' for east west travellers. For most of the 20th century it was a retail and services hub for a relatively contained local residential catchment. With the continued growth of population in western Sydney the city centre expanded to include office, recreational, educational and health activities. The city centre now has a regional role and has grown rapidly.

The centre is located on the Main Western Rail line, the Great Western Highway and

has good access to the M4 Motorway. Penrith is a business service centre for a number of employment areas including St Marys/Dunheved, Emu Plains, North and South Penrith and Erskine Park.

While job growth has been modest or static in other western Sydney centres such as Bankstown, Blacktown and Liverpool, jobs have doubled to around 19,000 in the Penrith regional city area over the last decade. Within the city centre as defined for this plan the current jobs are estimated at around 11,400. Table 2 shows the job figures for 1996 and 2001.

TABLE 2. KEY EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS, 2001

	Total Employment		percent of LGA Employment	percent Change 1996-2001
	1996	2001		
Penrith city centre	9,600*	11,400*	22.88 percent	18.85 percent
Penrith regional city area	13,036	16,451	32.99 percent	26.2 percent

\* Approximate only; exact figures for the city centre as defined are not available.  
Source: ABS 1996 and 2001

Penrith is now the seventh largest commercial centre in Greater Sydney, as defined by the provision of commercial office space and office employment. With approximately 100,000 square metres of commercial office space and 156,000 square metres of retail floor space it has a trade catchment area with a population equivalent to that of Canberra. The current ratio of commercial to retail floorspace is high for a regional centre.

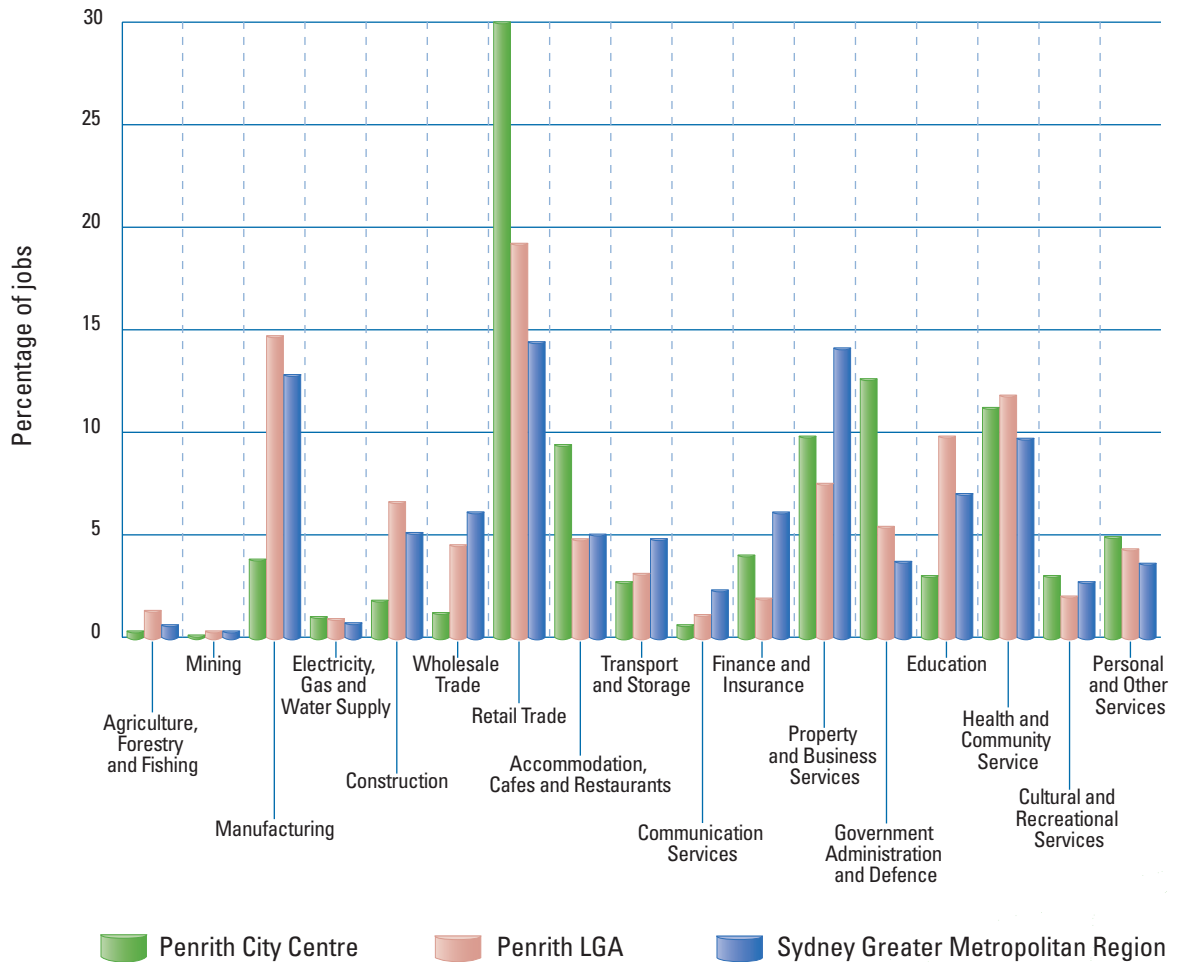
Within the centre there is a 'traditional' main street, major courts, police facilities, Westfield Penrith Plaza, Centro Nepean, swimming centre and other community and social facilities. The centre contains a cultural and civic precinct focused around

the Penrith Council chambers, regional library, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and Q Theatre.

Near or adjacent to the city centre is a collection of assets that add to the city centre's role and appeal including the Nepean River, Penrith Panthers entertainment complex, Waterside and Penrith Lakes residential development and recreation area, Mulgoa Road bulky goods precinct, Nepean Hospital, University of Western Sydney and Western Sydney Institute of TAFE.

# 6. Economic development

FIGURE 5: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY ( PERCENTAGE SHARE), 2001\*



Note: No demographic statistics are available for the Penrith city centre – Regional City statistics used.  
Source: JTW 2001

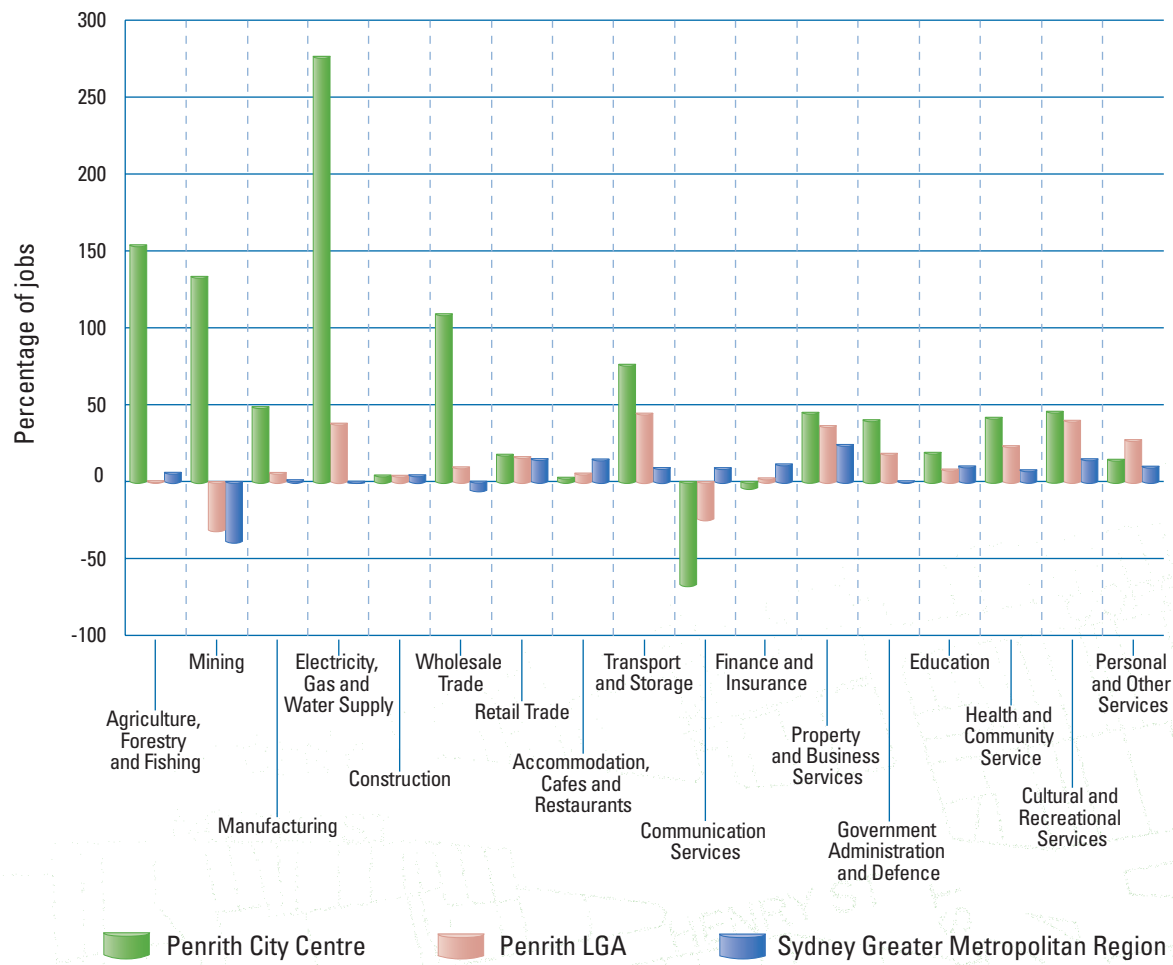
Key aspects of employment in Penrith city centre can be summarised as follows:

- Jobs in the core part of the centre are dominated by retail and government administration, and health and community services in the broader area which extends to the hospital. Property, business services and accommodation, cafes and restaurants are also concentrated in the core area. Compared to the LGA or GMR as a whole, the centre has higher shares of jobs in retail and property and business services. For a regional city with an extensive catchment

the share of jobs in finance and insurance is relatively modest.

- The modest growth in employment in manufacturing in the centre is evidence of a growth in 'knowledge related' employment in this sector, as it is unlikely that these are 'shop floor' jobs.
- Growth in property and business services and in personal and other services are evidence of a maturing and deepening employment base in the centre, though these are mostly locally focussed.

**FIGURE 6 CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, 1996 – 2001**



Note: No demographic statistics are available for the Penrith city centre – Regional City statistics used.  
Source: JTW 1996, 2001

## 6. Economic development

The table below shows the ten fastest growing and fastest declining detailed industry sectors between 1996 and 2001 in the broader Penrith city centre. It is clear that central government administration consolidated its role in this period (and this is set to continue given current development projects under consideration). Employment in hospital related employment (located off-site from the Nepean Hospital) also grew. It should be noted that increased growth occurred in other 'higher order' services

including legal and employment placement services. These are signs of the centre maturing and consolidating its role as the key centre in the subregion.

The decline in jobs in important and generally growing sectors such as technical and further education and telecommunication services is of concern, and opportunities exist to reverse these trends.

**TABLE 3. GROWTH AND DECLINE IN JOBS IN DETAILED INDUSTRY SECTORS, 1996 – 2001\***

Description	1996	2001	Total Change
<b>Top Ten</b>			
8111 Central Government Administration	621	1043	422
5730 Cafes and Restaurants	404	604	200
5125 Takeaway Food Retailing	385	532	147
8611 Hospitals (Except Psychiatric Hospitals)	173	313	140
3701 Water Supply	4	115	111
8112 State Government Administration	67	177	110
6200 Rail Transport	50	147	97
9312 Sports Grounds and Facilities, nec	56	153	97
7861 Employment Placement Services	52	140	88
7841 Legal Services	164	251	87
<b>Bottom Ten</b>			
8622 Specialist Medical Services	98	70	-28
5222 Footwear Retailing	116	79	-37
8432 Technical and Further Education	100	58	-42
9629 Interest Groups, nec	67	15	-52
4111 House Construction	126	73	-53
8113 Local Government Administration	408	343	-65
7321 Banks	343	269	-74
5210 Department Stores	801	725	-76
7120 Telecommunication Services	169	35	-134
5740 Clubs (Hospitality)	650	406	-244

\* Note: No demographic statistics are available for the Penrith city centre. Penrith regional city includes some areas adjacent to the city centre.

Source: JTW 1996, 2001

## 6.2 EMPLOYMENT CAPACITY TARGETS

Within the regional city area employment is estimated to grow by 10,000 to 30,000 over the next 25 years. This includes growth in jobs in the city centre, in the Panthers and hospital precincts and at North Penrith.

Within the current city centre employment is anticipated to grow from approximately 11,400 to 18,500, or around 7,000 jobs.

The studies prepared for Council and recent consultation indicate the following details about floorspace provision in the city centre.

### Retailing

- Retail floor space in the Penrith city centre is estimated to be approximately 156,000m<sup>2</sup>.
- The retail space is divided between five indoor retail centres ranging in size from 60,800 square metres at Penrith Plaza to 2,200 square metres at Henry Street Mall. These indoor retail centres contain a range of department stores, discount department stores, supermarkets and specialty stores.
- The city centre also has a major retail shopping strip located primarily along High Street with a floorspace of approximately 50,300 square metres. In addition to a number of major retailers, retail activity in the shopping strip precinct is characterised by smaller specialty stores interspersed with commercial offices. Local commercial estate agents suggest that the retail market in Penrith city centre is strong.
- Studies indicate that retail floorspace in Penrith is expected to expand by a further 100,000 square metres in the next decade and beyond. Further supermarket developments are unlikely due to both a requirement for parking and current supply of four large supermarkets. However it is possible that another department store could be accommodated such as David Jones although given the variation of residents in the area, further development of bulky goods shopping may be favoured.

### Office Space

- The core area of the city centre contains the bulk of the commercial office space in Penrith. Commercial office space is approximately 111,000 square metres and the ratio of commercial to retail floorspace is 2:3 (which is high compared to other suburban centres). The supply of commercial office space is predominantly located in low-rise office or retail/office buildings.
- Two major commercial buildings, the Australian Tax Office and Civic Centre, at approximately 32,000 square metres make up the majority of the A grade space. Almost all the A-grade commercial office space is occupied by government agencies including Council, ATO, Centrelink and Department of Housing. Remaining office space within the city centre is occupied by a range of small to medium businesses that are typically found in suburban centres. The NSW government has recently submitted a Development Application for a new Government Office Building.
- The prime uses aside from government agencies include medical and health services, financial and insurance, property, educational and community and employment services. These businesses are generally very client oriented and require a central position so that they are easily accessible.
- The reports indicate that the current floorspace potential in the planning controls will be more than sufficient to accommodate the forecast growth in commercial and retail floorspace, but in general terms the existing FSRs are modest and are amenable to review given the city centre's new regional city designation. In fact there is a case for shrinking and/or shifting the commercial core of the centre towards and around the station, while increasing the intensity of allowable development (raising FSRs), to accommodate the anticipated future commercial and retail floorspace.

## 6. Economic development

### 6.3 ISSUES TO REVIEW

Notwithstanding the assets of the centre and its precincts, the city centre faces some issues which need consideration. These include the following.

#### Increasing investment and employment diversity

The distance from the Sydney CBD and lack of high quality commercial and business space has limited the potential for the Penrith city centre to deepen its employment base, particularly in higher value knowledge industries and finance and business services. Currently, Penrith does not have sufficient A-Grade office space to attract the larger firms currently choosing to locate in new business parks such as Norwest. In order to foster economic investment, there needs to be a shift in the culture and character of the city centre to demonstrate not only the cost advantages of locating in the centre, but also the lifestyle attributes of the city centre and its environs. The proximity to higher income professionals in the Blue Mountains and the deepening skills base in the immediate region represent opportunities for the city centre to position itself to attract new commercial development.

#### Dispersed precincts

Penrith activity hubs are spread across a large area. The area containing Penrith Lakes, Penrith Panthers, the riverfront, the Mulgoa Road bulky goods precinct, the city centre, the North Penrith land and the Nepean Hospital extends around six kilometres west to east and six kilometres north to south. While the objective should be to concentrate the highest density employment activity in the city centre, the other nodes have different assets and prospects which should be encouraged as appropriate.

Creating a liveable and distinctive character for the city centre in such a context is difficult. From a strategic perspective it means that:

- choosing a site for and creating a lively, pedestrian friendly heart for the centre is important (a town square with active frontages that represents the 'centre' of the city); and
- an internal transport system is vital.

#### Activating the city centre

Penrith needs the cosmopolitan feel of some other metropolitan centres. This can be facilitated by appropriate higher density residential development immediately outside the commercial core (to provide a diversity of housing product for migrants and for a different age groups), facilitating cultural, entertainment and other leisure activities and by attracting new and different users to the centre such as students. Maintaining housing affordability within the city centre is also of critical importance.

A restaurant or food precinct, focussed around a new city space in the centre further promotes social interaction and diversity.

#### Competing for commercial and retail growth

There are a number of proposed and existing developments located outside the city centre that could compete for employment and retail. The expansion of Penrith Panthers threatens to shift some trade out of the city centre as it will incorporate additional retail, restaurants and entertainment uses. The North Penrith former Defence sites may challenge the traditional city centre if it becomes a 'city centre' in its own right. These nodes are relatively close to the city centre and can be developed to complement the city heart over the long term. This will require clear thinking about what the role of the different precincts will be and strategies to ensure development is consistent with this.

The Werrington Living and Learning Precinct (WELL) precinct focuses on the University of Western Sydney and TAFE at Werrington four kilometres to the east of the Penrith CBD and represents a key asset. However, its development needs to be carefully managed to ensure it does not draw businesses away from the city centre.

### Reducing traffic congestion and improving regional public transport access

Issues of access into and through the city centre are a vital concern to the success of plans to revitalise Penrith. Currently the majority of roads in the city centre are carrying significant volumes of traffic in peak hours with vehicles experiencing considerable delays on Mulgoa Road and High Street in particular.

In the longer term, the issue of faster rail access to the Sydney CBD will need to be addressed. This is about reducing transaction costs and drawing the pool of knowledge and advanced business services in central Sydney 'closer' to Penrith to encourage its development.

## 6.4 ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Setting

The Metropolitan Strategy recognised Penrith's unique setting on the Nepean River and at the foot of the Blue Mountains, with its world heritage area, in designating Penrith as an important Regional City Centre. The natural environment and assets have been central to recent marketing and positioning for the city centre, and this should continue.

### A 'string' of high quality 'knowledge, business and recreational assets

Starting from Penrith Lakes and running through the city centre to the hospital (and beyond to the university) there is a range of assets which would be the envy of many centres. These include outstanding cultural and entertainment facilities, including the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Penrith Regional and Lewers Bequest Gallery and Penrith Panthers, as well as health and educational assets such as the Nepean Hospital and University of Western Sydney and Western Sydney Institute of TAFE. These recreation, business, retailing, transport, education and health assets are all magnets for activity which together will help position Penrith as the regional city for outer and north west Sydney.

### High quality residential development nearby

Penrith Lakes and the ADI development in particular will include high quality housing developments that will attract new residents, many with business skills and advanced education qualifications. This both deepens the pool of higher skilled labour and brings wealth for new investment. The city centre is well positioned to attract new jobs and investment as a result.

### Sites and opportunities for new development

The city centre is currently 'under-developed' with significant opportunities for development. Buildings are predominantly low to medium rise and the road pattern is permeable, and there is a large number of Council and government owned sites in the city centre close to the railway station. Relatively 'unencumbered' sites are attractive to new commercial development

## 6. Economic development

because they allow for larger floorplate buildings (to attract lease pre-commitments), the latest environmental and workplace features, and high amenity settings.

Pre-eminent amongst these potential redevelopment sites is the 50 hectare North Penrith urban area, adjacent to the rail station to the north. Its future use and development should be planned carefully to attract new forms of development to the city centre, while complementing and reinforcing the existing city centre. The Commonwealth Government is currently seeking expressions of interest for development of the North Penrith site.

### Relative isolation

The centre is some distance from other major centres, and is the largest centre for the Blue Mountains and areas further to the west. This means that as the catchment grows it is well placed to attract regional activities and expenditure.

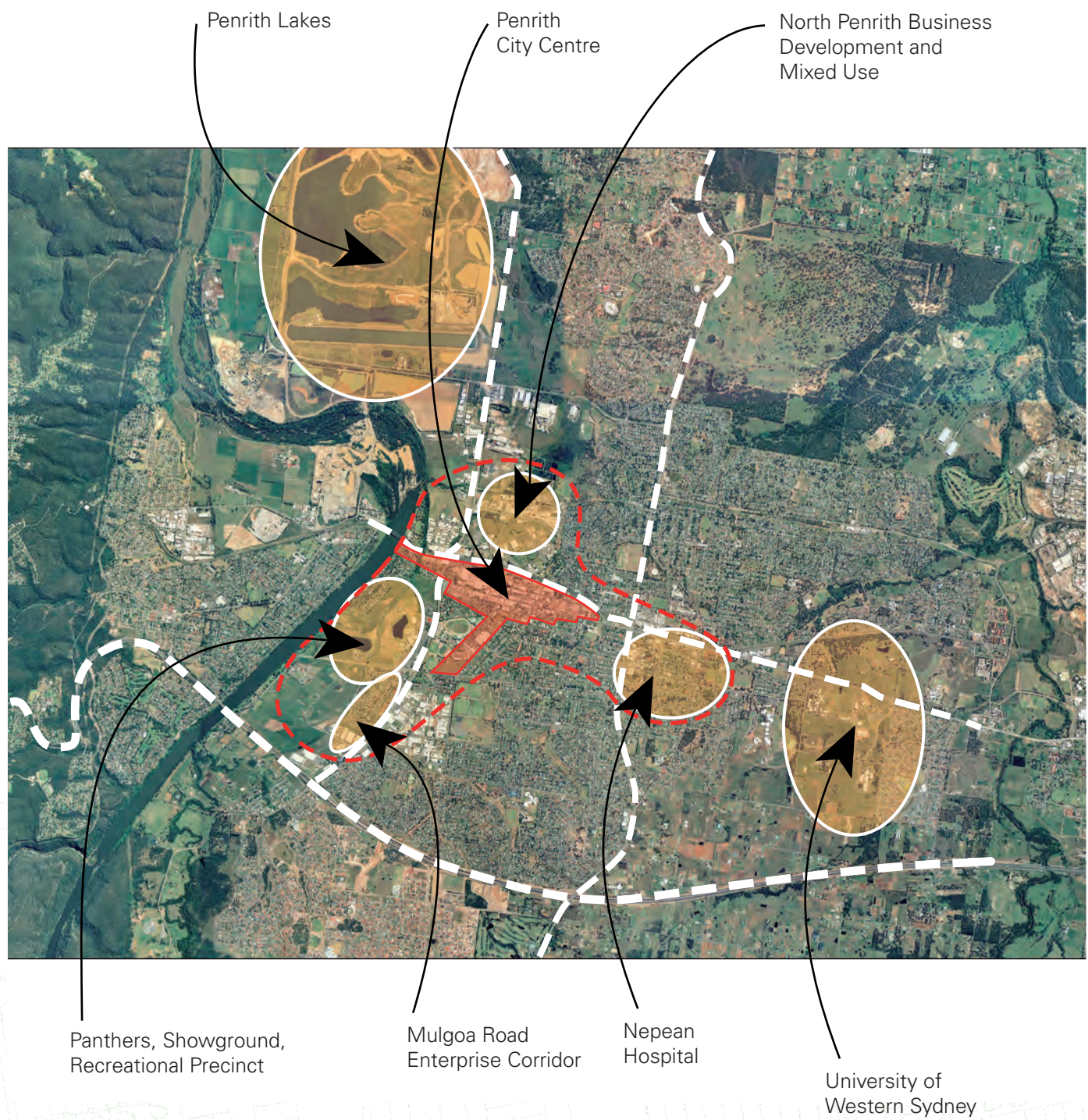
### 6.4 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Penrith has already established many of the features that distinguish regional cities. Major regional shopping, civic and government offices, arts and cultural establishments, some tertiary education and growing health and medical assets are all part of the successful mix. The challenge remains to expand the city's role in higher order business services, education and as a destination for regional recreation and entertainment. It will be necessary to meet these challenges, and further build on the centre's considerable assets, to diversify the economic base and meet the employment capacity target. Future directions for the city centre's continued economic development include:

- establishing a planning framework and environment to attract new high quality office development, including a commercial core allowing for greater densities and complementary business and economic activities in the future development of the north Penrith area;
- building on and enhancing the links between the 'knowledge assets' in the city centre and the Penrith region, expanding educational activities located in and around the city centre and improving the skills base of the local workforce;
- recognising and supporting the different economic roles of the various precincts in the regional city area, and supporting their continued development complementary to the city centre;
- supporting higher density residential development outside the commercial core to attract new and diverse households, to add to the cultural and social diversity of the city centre;
- improving access to the city centre, from within the outer and western region of Sydney, but also to other centres with job concentrations such as Parramatta and central Sydney;
- continuing to develop and market the city centre, focussing on its environmental attributes, and building on these with new city parks and squares; and
- working with owners of key and strategic sites, utilising government owned land to achieve positive economic and employment outcomes consistent with this vision.



PENRITH REGIONAL CITY





# 7. transport and infrastructure

Penrith

## 7.1 THE TRANSPORT CONTEXT

High Street, which runs through the Penrith city centre, is the continuation of the Great Western Highway, which was the main road between Sydney and Parramatta and the Blue Mountains. It is still an important intra-regional arterial road in the outer west but the M4 freeway which runs from Strathfield to the Blue Mountains, to the south of the city centre, is now the key east to west road. The key north south routes are Mulgoa Road to the immediate west of the city centre and the northern road which separates the city centre from the Nepean Hospital.

The city centre is serviced by the Main Western Rail line to central Sydney which provides relatively high frequency services during peak periods, as well as a good spread of services. The rail provides connections to Sydney via Parramatta in the east and the Blue Mountains and Central Western NSW to the west.

The rail services are generally well patronised with an average of 4,000 commuters boarding the train at Penrith during the morning peak. A significant proportion of these commuters drive to Penrith and make use of the commuter's car park – or use the local bus services.

Private bus operators under contract to the NSW Ministry of Transport provide bus services in the Penrith LGA. Bus services generally provide for local trips and as a feeder service for rail travel. Penrith is a hub for two strategic bus corridors which will improve higher frequency connections to Blacktown.

The strong emphasis on the provision of car parking for private vehicles within Penrith city centre reflects the dominance of this mode of travel and 'way of life' within western Sydney. This transport choice response by the population has arisen from the inadequate provision of public transport services away from the lineal rail network traversing the LGA, and lower density of development when compared to eastern Sydney.

There is a total current car parking supply within the city centre of 10,866 car parking spaces. Of these spaces 63 percent are privately managed, 26 percent are public spaces owned by Council and 11 percent are managed by RailCorp and utilised as commuter car parking.

The pedestrian network within the Penrith city centre is by and large well defined. Footpaths within the city centre are generally adequate and made of high quality materials. Conflicts exist between pedestrians and vehicles at Belmore Street at the bus rail interchange and jay walking is common in Station High, Henry and Riley Streets.

Cycle paths are limited and cycling has a very minor role in trip making to the city centre.

## 7.2 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT TRENDS

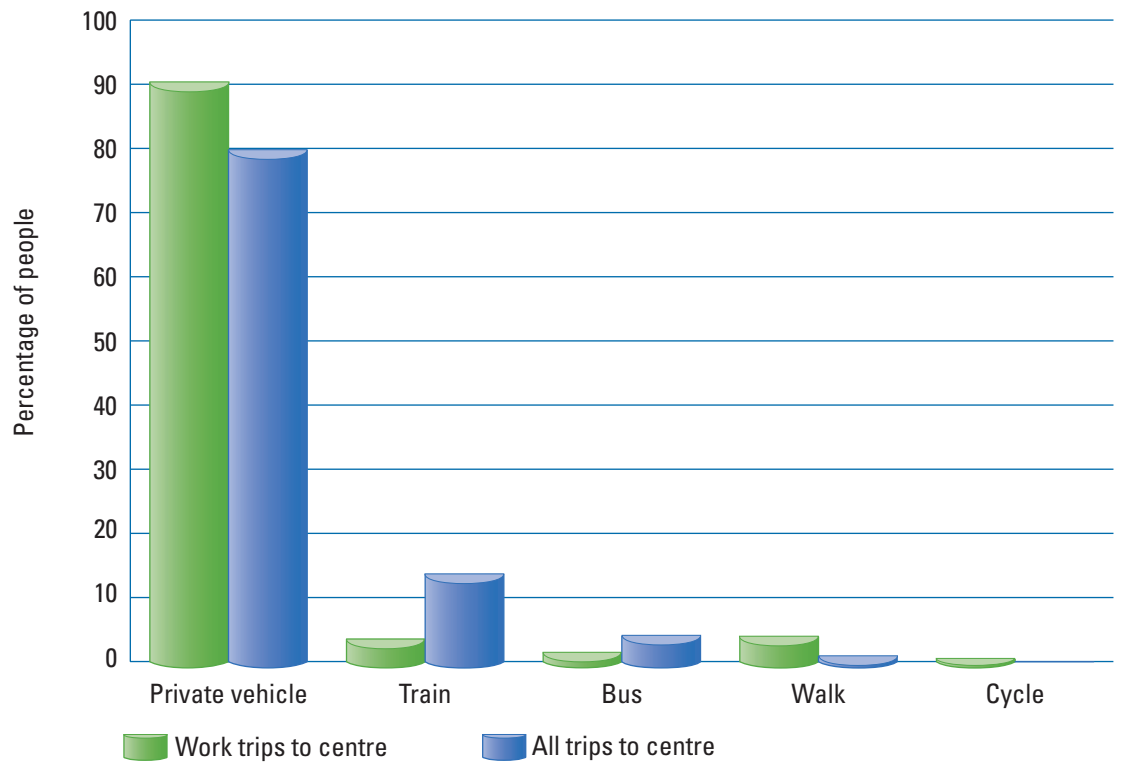
According to data from the Transport and Population Centre of the Department of Planning, a total of 123,000 'average weekday trips' were made to the Penrith city centre in 2001. Around 16 percent of these trips are related to work.

Travel within the Penrith LGA is predominantly by private vehicle. Improved services and better intra regional public transport services are required in order to stall the downward trend in public transport usage within the Penrith LGA.

Studies undertaken by Penrith City Council identify that over 90 percent of all trips and 80 percent of work trips to the city centre were made using private vehicles. Almost 14 percent of work trips were made by train but this was the only significant non private vehicle mode of travel for trips to the city centre. For example, bus was the mode of choice for only 4 percent of work trips and just over 1 percent for all trips, while cycling barely registered as a mode choice. There is scope for encouraging greater residential development in the city centre with people also working there, to facilitate walk and cycle choices.

# 7. Transport and infrastructure

FIGURE 7: MODE SHARE FOR TRIPS TO THE CENTRE



### 7.3 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Successful regional cities feature effective public transport, road, pedestrian and cycle networks that provide:

- connections to major centres and nodes of activity;
- efficient access into the centre along major corridors; and
- convenient circulation systems linking the key commercial, recreational, and cultural destinations within the city centre.

Penrith has some way to go in achieving these outcomes. Demand for car parking increases to grow within the city centre. Studies undertaken for Penrith City Council indicate that the projected growth of the city centre over the next 25 years would result in a tripling of existing car parking provision potentially creating significant traffic related problems including congestion and lack of amenity for pedestrians and residents within the city centre.

#### Centre Road Hierarchy and Traffic Management Works

The majority of roads in the city centre are carrying significant volumes of traffic during peak hours and at other peak usage times. Both Penrith Plaza and Centro shopping centres are significant generators of traffic within the city. Vehicles currently experience delays in Mulgoa Road, westbound in High Street and westbound in the Great Western Highway approaching Parker Street during the afternoon peak. Traffic speeds within the city centre are generally low, below 35 kilometres per hour. Mulgoa Road is also congested on the weekends.

Council has undertaken a study of the arterial road network to identify and prioritise upgrades to road networks. These upgrades would meet current and projected demand, particularly arising from the development of urban release areas. Most intersections are operating at

good or satisfactory levels of service. Council's study of the arterial road network has identified the upgrade of the Jane Street/Castlereagh interchange as a major priority to improve the functioning and flow of traffic through and into the city centre. This work is being funded through an interagency agreement with the Roads and Traffic Authority.

#### Railway Services

With Penrith identified as a regional city the provision of regional public transport facilities is important.

The provision of radial rail transport within Metropolitan Sydney dislocates large pockets of the population 'between the spokes' and results in a reliance on private vehicles. The attempt to reduce the reliance on central Sydney as a job location needs to be accompanied by a parallel increase in the provision of regional public transport networks around each of the regional cities to improve accessibility to surrounding and growing residential populations, in particular to areas not currently serviced with adequate public transport facilities.

Better links between the Sydney CBD and Penrith job markets effectively lowers business transaction costs. Successful regional cities elsewhere in the world are linked by quality rail transport connections to serve the pool of skills and jobs in central city areas.

Access and public entry areas around Station and Belmore Streets will be redesigned to provide a safe and attractive arrival experience.

#### Car Parking

There is a need to centralise and consolidate car parking within the city centre. The large proportion of privately managed car parking spaces has resulted in a fragmented provision of car parking. Surface car parking areas occupy large areas of strategically located and highly visible land within the city centre and create

## 7. Transport and infrastructure

large areas of open land between buildings and fragmenting the urban structure. As a result shops and services are spread to accommodate the surface car parking and opportunities for walking within the city are reduced.

Additional commuter car parking is required. Land within the North Penrith urban area has been identified as being suitable for additional stack car parking facilities for commuters.

Penrith Council's Draft Car Parking Strategy proposes a revision of the existing car parking codes to respond to increased car parking demands while reducing expectation and dependence upon private vehicular access to the city centre. Car parking issues have also been reported within the city centre with a 125 percent increase in the provision of car parking in association with future development projections.

### Bus Services

Bus service frequency is a critical issue, with a 30 minute time gap typically offered between services during non peak services. Cross regional services are also not catered for. Links between the precincts in and around the centre is critical to creating a coherent regional city, and a shuttle bus should be investigated to facilitate these.

### Pedestrian Networks

There is a need to provide a network of legible pedestrian routes through the city centre, which connect up with green spaces and parks and link the major uses within and just beyond the city centre.

### Cycle Routes

A number of existing bikeways on the periphery of the city centre provide options for cyclists. There are plans by Penrith Council to install bikeways along sections of a number of major routes, including Mulgoa Road, Greater Western Highway, Belmore Street and Station

Street. This would improve access to the city centre from the immediate surrounds. This will be of particular importance as residential densities grow around the city centre.

### Overview

Successful regional cities feature effective public transport, road, pedestrian and cycle networks that provide:

- connections to major centres and nodes of activity;
- efficient access into the centre along major corridors; and
- convenient circulation systems linking the key commercial, recreational, and cultural destinations within the city centre.

Demand for car parking increases to grow within the city centre. Studies undertaken for Penrith City Council indicate that the projected growth of the centre over the next 25 years would result in a tripling of existing car parking provision, potentially creating significant traffic related problems including congestion and lack of amenity for pedestrians and residents within the city centre. Intra-regional public transport access to the centre is important. Rail connections to central Sydney are also important. Pedestrian and cycle options are limited.

This Vision aims to address these issues through the following measures:

- consolidating car parking provision by providing decked public car parking facilities in strategic locations;
- investigating a range of alternative public transport options, including better intra-regional connections and a shuttle bus within and around the city centre to link regional city precincts such as Panthers, the hospital and the university, as well as outlying car parking stations;
- future investigation of improved rail connections between Penrith and central Sydney;

- improving pedestrian networks through and across the city centre by upgrading existing pedestrian networks and identifying new lanes for increased permeability;
- improving pedestrian connections between the city centre and the river;
- reducing vehicle/ pedestrian conflict;
- upgrading forecourt at the transport interchange;
- providing commuter car parking in north Penrith and providing pedestrian bridges across the railway line;
- gradually introducing a sustainable supply policy to balance the increased demand for car parking caused by future economic growth; and
- cycle routes to connect with cycle routes proposed to the north and south of the city centre.





## 8. Environment and parks

# Penrith

Penrith is unique in its location – situated at the foothills of the magnificent Blue Mountains and on the shores of the Nepean River. It is surrounded by beautiful and varied countryside which supports a mix of residential, industrial and agricultural industries, including horse and cattle studs farms, as well as fruit and dairy farms.

The city centre itself, being located within the Nepean River basin is relatively flat, and because of this, the city centre character has developed as essentially low rise with a prominent tree canopy of surrounding trees. When viewed from a distance the tree canopy cover defines the predominant form of the city. In planning for future development, it is important to established view lines in order to retain these impressive views.

Penrith's spectacular natural setting and proximity to the Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers has attracted settlers to the area since the early 1800's. Early development occurred along the fertile farming land on the rivers, and the main rail stations at Penrith and St Marys. However, since the 1960's, development has been concentrated in a corridor along the western rail line and Great Western Highway.

The urban quality of the city centre is related to its rich urban history, the urban structure, its public buildings and places, its built form and public domain centre. Public buildings and associated places provide a focus for public life in the immediate local area or for the city as a whole. Street types and building types combine to form the character of various parts of the city centre.

Penrith's climate can be described as having low rainfall, high summer temperatures, frosts and wind exposure. These difficult conditions require sensitive design responses for environmental comfort and appropriate energy use. Designing within Penrith must, by environmental necessity, require a different response from development in areas with access to sea breezes.

The city centre approaches are flanked by prominent open space and recreation areas which carry substantial vegetation. Landmarks adjoining the city centre and strongly influencing the landscape setting of the city include:

- Howell Oval;
- Panthers Park (Credit Union Australia Stadium);
- showground along Mulgoa Road;
- civic centre public spaces at the western city entry;
- Woodriff Gardens on the western entry; and
- Henry Lawson Park at the eastern entry to the city on High Street.

Within the city centre significant green space includes:

- Judges Park – well placed as a sizeable town park, but yet to realise its full potential; and
- Memory Park as a smaller strategically located park also used for ANZAC memorial services, has prominent landmark Palm trees amongst other vegetation.

There are opportunities to enhance the natural ecosystem within the city centre and beyond. There is a need for a large park in the centre of the city to provide the 'green lungs' for future urban development. Strategies for enhancing city ecology should take advantage of existing resources in the form of waterways, parks and green open spaces, and Penrith's natural setting to promote a distinctive visual character and satisfy community needs for a vibrant and exciting city centre.

## 8. Environment and parks

### 8.1 PUBLIC DOMAIN PROJECTS

A number of strategies have been identified for enriching and expanding the public domain and design parameters for streetscapes and key public spaces. The design strategies for the public domain are for street and park improvements, creating new public squares and enhancing the landscape setting of the city centre. The public domain design strategies are set for the provision of new paving, tree planting, lighting, urban furniture, signage and city ecology. A new park has also been proposed for the city centre.

Detailed design guidelines for proposed works will be further defined in the Penrith City Council's Public Domain Manual and Access and Movement Strategy.

The design strategies for the public domain are intended to:

- set a series of common goals and objectives to guide Council, community and developer decisions;
- build on the qualities and characteristics of the physical setting and that reflects the cultural lifestyle of the city centre;
- develop a contemporary, location sensitive, streetscape typology that recognises the aspirations of the community and Council;
- outline both qualitative and quantitative guidelines to assist the appropriate choice of individual design treatments having regard to the conditions and characteristics of each precinct;
- identify improvements to the functionality and liveability of the public domain; and
- provide a balance between pedestrian and vehicle occupation of the city centre.

### 8.2 PARKS AND PUBLIC SQUARES STRATEGY

Parks and public spaces should provide a range of public amenity that provides for the needs of all members of the community. These spaces join with streets to provide a public domain network with a variety of recreation opportunities. The design of each space should reflect the function of the place, its existing or potential character, and its place in the overall structure and hierarchy of the public domain.

The city centre lacks a cohesive system of civic spaces – those spaces that are highly urban in character and which cater for intensive use patterns, festivals and cultural celebrations.

A new park and square have been proposed in the Civic Improvement Plan to provide improved amenity in the city centre. Existing small parks should be upgraded to suit the image of the city centre, and to provide a balance of opportunities throughout the public domain.

### 8.3 PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

Public art is an important way to build on the identity of the city. It has a role in way finding, to improve legibility, and in place making – interpreting the physical character and defining a cultural identity. It can also engender civic pride and promote the city's regional and national significance.



Nepean River frontage landscape improvements

## 8. Environment and parks

### 8.4 PAVING AND STREET FURNITURE STRATEGY

Materials used in the public domain should be durable, robust and easily maintainable and should meet the requirements of environmental sustainability. Selection of paving materials and surface treatments are particularly important in coordination of the public domain to ensure consistency and continuity. Appropriate design of surfaces in streets and open spaces is essential in meeting the access needs of all pedestrians.

Generally, there should be a range of furniture that is standard throughout the city centre, to promote a homogenous image and allow for easy maintenance. Some places are defined as special, allowing for custom designed or individually selected furniture.

### 8.5 CONNECTIONS TO THE NEPEAN RIVER

Tangible connections to the river directly from the city centre will be significantly improved through the provision of upgraded open space, pedestrian routes and a pedestrian bridge across the river.

### 8.6 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Future development will need to minimise the impacts on the environment and reduce reliance on important energy and water resources. All new residential developments are required to comply with the Government's Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 40% and water consumption by up to 40%. Non-residential developments will also need to reduce water and energy consumption through the use of water and energy efficient systems and technologies.

In the future, industry and the community will need to develop more innovative and cost-effective ways to improve environmental performance. This will include improved use of onsite water collection and use and re-use, onsite energy generation as well as cogeneration technologies. Emerging industries could be further developed in response to the growing demand to improve environmental performance.

New development can result in an increase in impervious surfaces and, leading to higher levels of urban stormwater runoff, increased stormwater velocities. In addition to the potential for localised flooding due to over extended stormwater systems, increased runoff has the ability to mobilise pollutants that can result in further water quality problems in receiving waters. Other consequences include scour and erosion of unlined open channels and creeks as well as water quality concerns due to increased sediment loads.

Increases in Penrith's residential and workforce population are expected to increase the potential impact on the water quality and ecological health of Nepean River. Mitigation of some of these impacts can occur through the use of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD). WSUD aims to integrate the urban built form and the three aspects of the urban water cycle, namely potable water, wastewater and stormwater, to minimise impacts on the natural water cycle. WSUD promotes sustainable water cycle management and protects aquatic ecosystems by improving the quality and quantity of stormwater discharges.

Integrating WSUD in an existing urban setting can also enhance the visual quality and amenity of the urban environment.

Principles for minimising the environmental impacts of the built form are further expressed in both the Penrith City Centre Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan 2007.

Consideration of waste management and recycling through all stages of development will be required to minimise potential harmful impacts to the environment and to contribute to the amenity of the building and the public domain.



City Park at Allen Place will showcase Water Sensitive Urban Design



# 9. City centre character

Penrith

Penrith is located in the Nepean River valley at the base of the Blue Mountains. Rural land and landscapes directly adjoin parts of the city. The landscape qualities of the region permeate the city with a relatively strong presence of trees and a continuous tree canopy in some areas. Many in the community appreciate the different pace of life within Penrith city centre compared to the intensity of city life within Sydney. As the centre grows to achieve regional city status it is inevitable that building activity and new development will increase. However, with careful planning and good urban design the balance between growth and protecting the 'green' feel and character of the centre is possible. Within the city centre and the broader regional city area a number of character precincts can be identified.

The city centre boundaries include the Western Railway line to the north, the Nepean River to the west, and the western end of High Street, Union Road, Lethbridge Street, Higgins Street, Fulton Street and High Street east – to its intersection with North Street and the rail line – to the south. In addition the land between Station Street and Woodriff Street north of Jamison Road is also included.

There are nine distinct precincts in the Penrith city centre which are complemented by the neighbouring precincts in the broader regional city area.

These adjoining precincts are linked north-south by the Castlereagh Road/Mulgoa Road enterprise and business corridor and east-west by the High Street/Greater Western Highway which has a 'knowledge corridor' flavour, anchored by the Penrith Lakes and the Nepean Hospital – and beyond to the University of Western Sydney.

The precincts are described below.

## 9.1 CITY CENTRE CHARACTER

### High Street Mixed Use

High Street is the historic heart of Penrith. The street is the focus of the city centre activities with its central retail spine of 2.5 kilometres that is segmented into sub-precincts. The street has many low rise, small scale retail shops, and a concentration of civic and cultural functions. The street is the focus of pedestrian activities, with its wider, covered footpath areas already encouraging alfresco dining.

The street will continue to be the hub for pedestrian scale street life in the city centre, accompanied by central city 'greening'. Mixed use developments will encourage a diversity of uses located in the centre to further activate the street, whilst the residential development aligning the southern edge of the street will engage pedestrian activities into the city centre.

Views of the Blue Mountains escarpment are available along sections of High Street, particularly the eastern half of High Street up to mid-block past Station Street, and should be retained at street level.

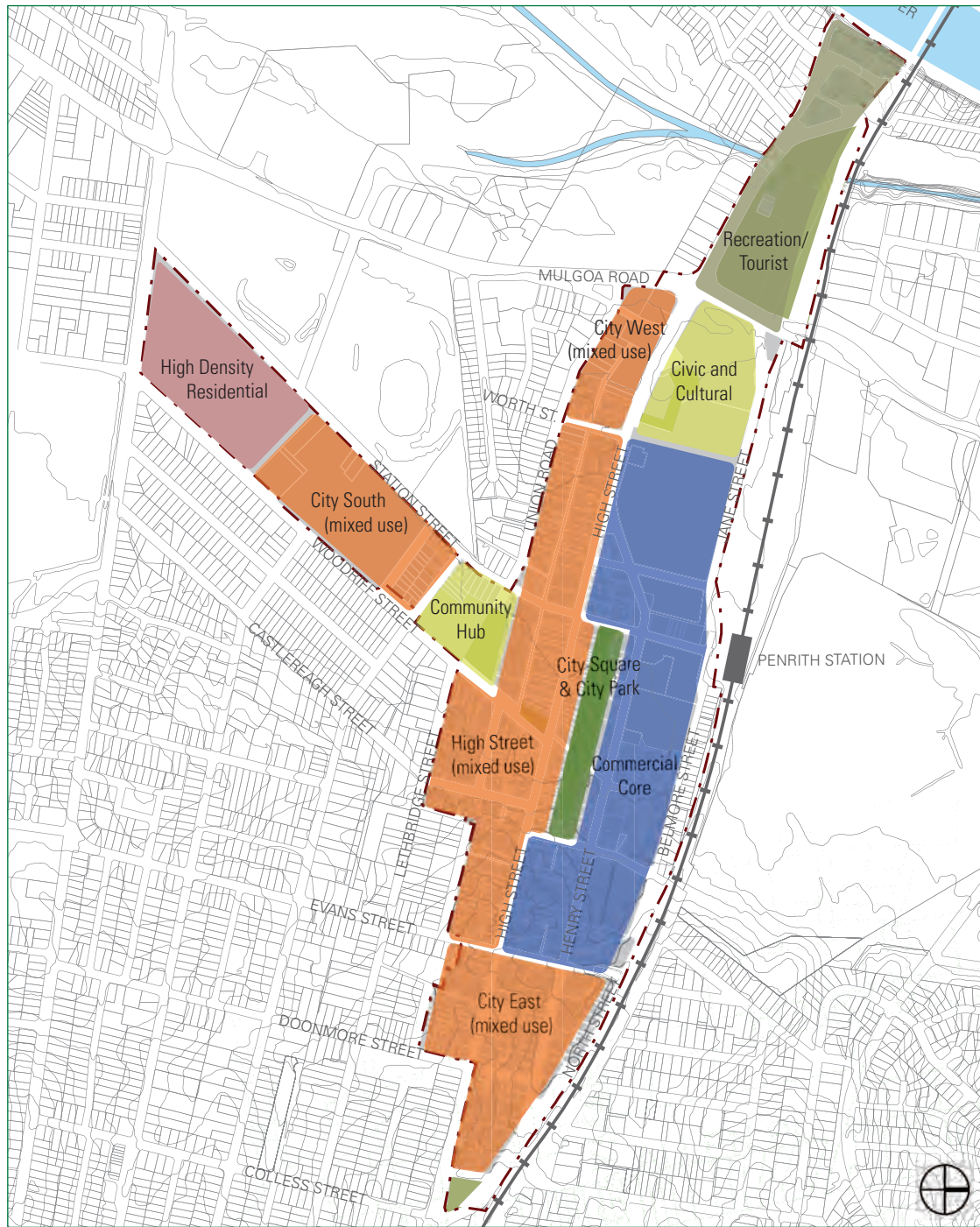
This precinct offers the new City Park and City Square, which will be located in what is currently the Allen Place parking area. These public space areas are intended to be a series of linked areas, each expressing its own character to entice residents and workers to visit and enjoy these spaces. The City Park and City Square will be connected to High Street and surrounding streets via laneways and arcades.

### Commercial Core

This area is the 'gateway' to Penrith on arrival by rail, and given this status, needs to be a focus for the highest quality developments.

# 9. City centre character

## CITY CENTRE CHARACTER



 Area covered by this plan



The precinct is dominated by the 60,800 square metres Penrith Plaza shopping centre. The interface of the shopping centre with the city and the 'street life' activity along High and Station Streets needs to be strengthened.

The eastern side of Station Street contains a mixture of commercial uses with some fringe retail and car parking. Council has significant land assets in this area. The TAFE College brings student life and activity into the area, and its presence should be strengthened. The proposed government office development, now under construction, will consolidate State Government activities in one building, opposite the station. This area, close to the station, has the potential to significantly intensify as a location for high quality commercial development, supported by some ground level retail.

This precinct will form the northern boundary of the new City Square and City Park. Both public spaces will be located in what is currently the Allen Place parking area, and are intended to be a haven for workers and residents in the City Centre. It is envisaged that the City Square and City Park will become the focus of city activities.

### City East / Mixed Use

The area east of Evans Street currently contains a mix of fringe retail and residential development. It can develop in the future as a mixed use precinct with a village character of its own, including mixed use buildings containing retail, commercial and residential uses and a small retail hub with emphasis on access and walkability. It is envisaged for this area to develop a live-work character.

High rise commercial development should be restricted in this area to minimise leakage from the Commercial Core area. Links through this area to Nepean Hospital need to be protected and strengthened.

This is the eastern gateway into the city centre area and should be enhanced.

### City South / Mixed Use

This area comprises the single storey 19,000 square metre Nepean Plaza Centro shopping centre, surrounded by a large surface car park. It enjoys street frontages aligning its eastern and western boundaries that provide very distinct characteristics either side. Immediately adjoining the southern boundary is a former industrial property that will be redeveloped into a high density residential precinct.

It is envisaged this area redevelop into a mixed use precinct with its own identity with clear connections to and synergies with the adjoining high density residential precinct, in particular act as the shopping and service hub for the surrounding and intensifying residential area. There needs to further emphasis on the land uses and activities located at, as well as the design and utility of urban spaces at the common boundary with that precinct. Future development should reduce the impact of surface car parks on local streets.

Its redevelopment opportunities will need to consider the interface with different environments aligning its boundaries, being residential (to its east) and sporting facilities (in the west).

The precinct can be redeveloped as a mixed use precinct with its own identity through better connectivity to the city centre at the northern end.

### High Density Residential

This precinct comprises the former industrial site, which is unique given its location in the city centre, size and that it is under a single ownership. The site forms the southern gateway to the city centre, and is identified as a key site under the Plan.

The redevelopment opportunities of this precinct should result in a wide range of housing types at a density similar to a highly urbanized city. Such redevelopment needs to clearly address the interface with the much lower residential environment abutting its eastern boundary and to a limited extent, its

## 9. City centre character

southern boundary. Its proximity to services and facilities including transport nodes makes it ideally placed to encourage opportunities for live-work environments and affordable housing.

It is envisaged that this precinct will be primarily residential in landuse, there will be opportunities for a range of commercial and retail uses to be located here, adjacent to the City South (mixed use) precinct.

### City West (Mixed Use)

The precinct comprises the southern side of High Street, between Worth Street and the intersection to Mulgoa Road. This area is presently underdeveloped, with a number of apartment buildings having been approved or under construction immediately behind High Street.

This area should be redeveloped, primarily as a high density residential precinct that will complement and bring additional activity to the adjoining civic and cultural precinct. It is envisaged that this area develop a live-work environment, which is promoted through the design and layout of residential buildings, and the location of compatible commercial and retail uses at the street level of such buildings.

This precinct currently enjoys unobstructed views of the Blue Mountains escarpment. It is acknowledged that redevelopment will result in loss of such views however, where view corridors can be reasonably maintained from High Street, then the views should be retained.

There is an opportunity to locate an urban space in this precinct that affords an "eat street" environment with connection to the adjoining civic and cultural precinct.

### Civic and Cultural Precinct

Penrith's Civic Centre, comprising the council's offices and library, as well as the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre comprise the civic and cultural precinct. It is located at the north-eastern corner of the High Street and Mulgoa Road

intersection, enjoying unobstructed views of the Blue Mountains escarpment.

The precinct contains green public spaces which can be redeveloped to enliven this precinct, making it attractive and vibrant after hours.

### Community Hub

A number of community facilities are already sited in the city centre and there is an opportunity to amalgamate these facilities in a central precinct at the heart of the city centre, between Station Street and Woodriff Street. There is opportunity to enhance the existing public space with landscaped and shaded spaces for community groups to meet and gather.

Its central location is ideal in ensuring that the precinct is easily accessible from adjoining residential areas, and greatly enhances the precinct's focus for community functions.

### Recreation / Tourist

The precinct between the Nepean River and the Commercial Core is critical to creating Penrith as a true river city. The sports facilities at Woodriff Gardens and the rowing club along the river provide recreation opportunities for the local residents and workers. The area has low scale development, with some tourist facilities already located along the river (such as a hotel and function centre).

Creating a recreational link between the city centre and the river is a priority in this area. The landscape extension of High Street to the riverfront will be the priority to reconnect the city with the river and to create attractive and legible pedestrian links.

There is a potential to improve pedestrian and cycle connections across the river in this area. Opportunities for outdoor restaurants and cafes along the river should be examined, with the riverfront being landscaped as links to the Great River Walk are established, and improved pedestrian/ cycle paths provide 'bridge to bridge' recreational opportunities.

## 9.2 SUPPORTING CHARACTER AREAS IN THE BROADER REGIONAL CITY AREA

These precincts are part of the broader regional Penrith city and are not within the boundary of the Penrith city centre.

### Panthers and Showgrounds Entertainment and Recreation

This area south-west of the city centre between Mulgoa Road and the residential areas near the river, contains the Panthers club, Showgrounds and extensive areas of under-developed open space.

Landcom is currently assisting the Penrith Panthers club in a review of their extensive landholdings and assets in this area. Further development of the entertainment facilities is anticipated, including accommodation and a limited range of associated retail.

The Showgrounds area is also a strategic asset adjacent to the city centre. Its role in the sporting and recreational life of the centre should be considered along with Penrith Panthers.

### Mulgoa Road 'Bulky Goods' and Enterprise Corridor

This area has developed with highway retail and ancillary activities. Council has 'softened' the road with effective street planting.

A 'bulky goods' precinct has developed west of Mulgoa Road close to the M4 junction. It is some distance from the city centre but is linked by Mulgoa Road which for part of its length is fronted by enterprise activities.

### North Penrith

Development plans for the North Penrith Urban Area, recently earmarked for sale by the Department of Defence, are required to guide future land uses. The largely vacant site presents a significant opportunity for an innovative, transit focused, mixed use development.

The preferred direction from a Metropolitan Strategy perspective is for higher density development around the railway station precinct, focusing on employment opportunities such as educational, research and technology uses that complement, but do not compete with, the City Centre. Housing of predominantly 4 to 6 storeys should locate on the eastern half of the site.

Strong pedestrian connections across the railway line are required. The site's special heritage values are to be retained and celebrated within the context of a gridded urban neighbourhood character.

### Health and Medical

The Nepean Hospital is a high value asset anchoring the city centre area to the east. The ancillary and associated services that develop around hospitals should be recognised, and in Penrith there is a need to plan for these to the south and west of the hospital.

### WELL precinct: University and TAFE

The Werrington Living and Learning Precinct, containing the University of Western Sydney, TAFE and other development sites, four kilometres east of the city centre, is another asset in the immediate region. The role of the education institutions in facilitating the growth of the regional 'knowledge' economy and labour force capacity is critical. Again significant development potential exists in this area but this should be complementary to and not detract from city centre prospects.



## 10. Funding city improvements

There are a number of key sites that present major opportunities to achieve the vision for the growth, revitalisation and development of the Penrith city centre. These sites are specifically addressed in the Local Environmental Plan and the Civic Improvement Plan. These projects are to be funded either through the State Infrastructure Strategy or through the new city centre Section 94 Contributions Plan detailed within the Civic Improvement Plan.

### NEW CITY PARK AND SQUARE

Public open space within Penrith city centre is limited. The city centre and its future growth and development will greatly benefit from the development of a central civic open space and park that gives relief from the surrounding built form and provides amenity and recreational space for the city workforce and future residents. The Allen Place site is a central accessible location that provides the perfect opportunity to develop a central park and civic space (a green heart) surrounded by active building uses in the city centre.

### REVITALISING CITY STREETS

The reinforcement of High Street as the main active spine within the city centre requires the upgrading of street furniture, lighting and planting strategies. These works will assist in realising the street's potential as the premier main street of retail activity and will benefit from improved pedestrian links to Westfield – Penrith Plaza.

Station Street and Woodriff Streets will benefit from signature planting strategies that will create green corridors and entry avenues to the city centre.

### RIVERLINK CONNECTION AND RECREATION

Creating a recreational link between the city centre and the river is a priority. Elements of this project include the extension of landscaping and civic improvement in High Street to the river, and garden and open space settings for new cultural and entertainment related development.

### CONSOLIDATING A CENTRAL COMMUNITY PRECINCT

Developing on existing public land, Judges Park will be reinvigorated with improved community green space with community facilities that provides a high level of amenity, functionality and accessibility for public recreation, relaxation, leisure, access and community facilities for workers, residents and visitors in the city centre.

### TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT WORKS AND CITY CAR PARKS

The purpose of the traffic management work and the car parks is to ensure the road network can accommodate vehicular traffic in Penrith city centre and sufficient parking is available for city centre users. Car parking will be consolidated into accessible locations for commuters, workers and visitors to the centre. Part of the traffic management works will include the Jane Street by-pass which will alleviate congested intersections at crucial entry points to the city centre.

# 10. Funding city improvements

## BUS TRANSPORT INITIATIVES

Bus transport initiatives will be investigated to improve linkages to key sites and important services around the city centre such as the Hospital and University. The potential for a shuttle bus to service the needs of the community within the city centre boundaries will be investigated by Council. These initiatives will support the growth and development of the city centre and reduce the reliance on private vehicles to access various services across the city.

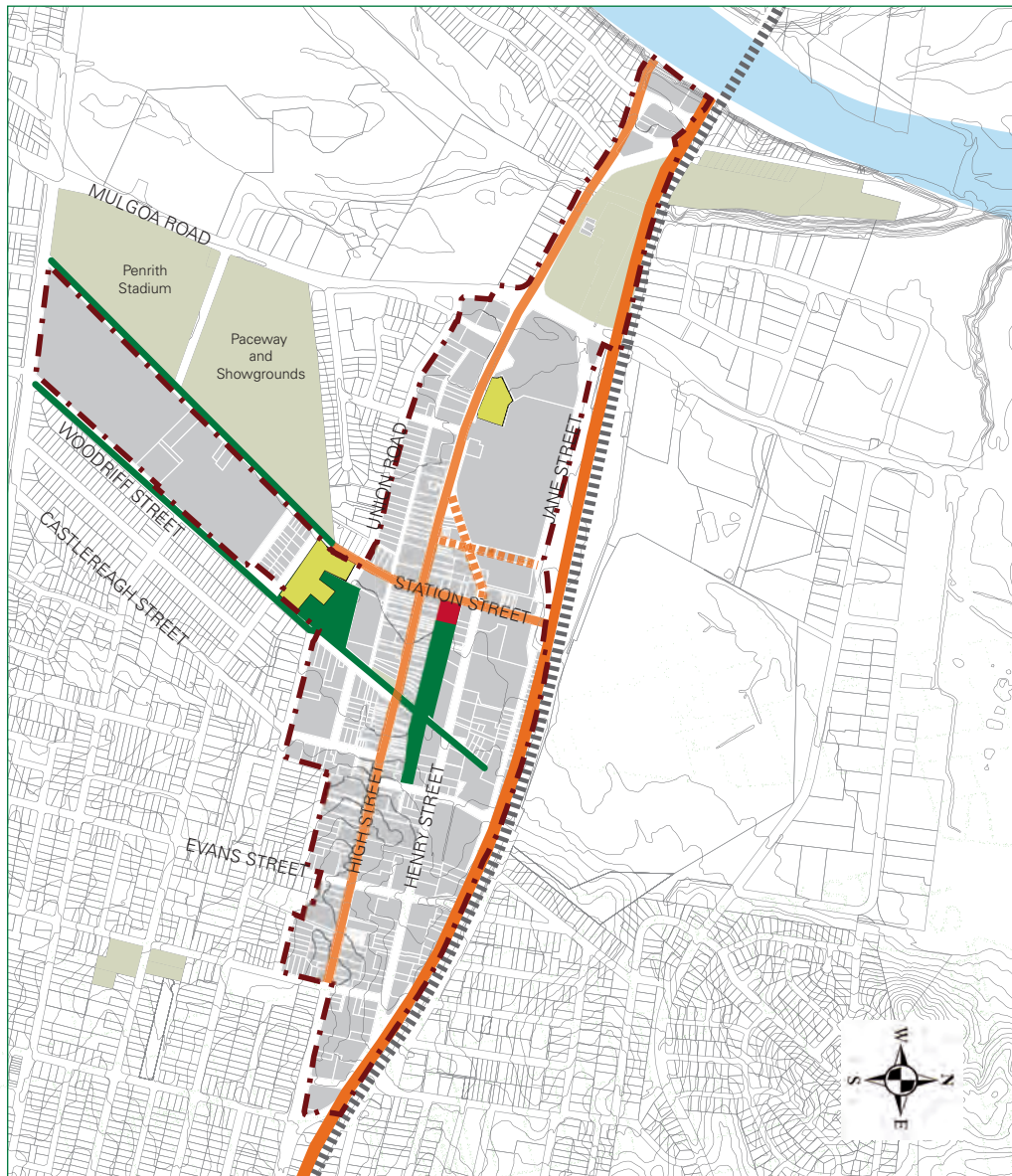
## CIVIC PRECINCT

The precinct bound by Westfield Penrith Plaza, the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and Penrith Council Headquarters/ Penrith Regional Library provides an opportunity to establish a lively and pedestrian focused community space which benefits from the strong presence of cultural and entertainment facilities. The upgrade planned for this area will improve landscaping treatments and provide high quality urban furniture.



Improving the quality of the public domain

## PENRITH SPECIAL PROJECTS



- City Centre Boundary
- Special areas:
- 3.1 City Park and Square
- 3.2 Civic Precinct public domain improvements
- 3.3 Public Domain
  - a) High Street civic upgrade
  - b) Station Street landscape improvements
  - c) Woodriff Street landscape improvements
  - d) Jane Street eastern gateway landscape improvements
- 3.4 Community Precinct, Judges Park and Memory Park improvements
- 3.5 Traffic Management and Access
- 3.6 Storm water improvements





# 11. Future actions

The primary outcome of the Cities Taskforce is the set of four planning documents for the development of the Penrith city centre. These will reduce uncertainty for developers, employers and the broader community in terms of the building and development directions. The New South Wales Government, State agencies and Penrith City Council also have major roles to play in implementing the vision. The city centre also contains a number of important public assets that can be further developed to enhance development prospects. A number of State and/or Council initiatives are designed to support the revitalisation of Penrith as a regional city. Actions for the city centre are listed below.

## ACTION 1

**Promote office development in the commercial core.**

### Rationale

The NSW Government, through the Department of State and Regional Development and in conjunction with Penrith City Council will lead an investigation into the potential for finance and business firms to relocate in Penrith. Office development will be encouraged by creating an intensity of development within the commercial core zone in the area between the railway station and Henry Street and east from Station Street. The lifestyle and accessibility benefits of locating businesses in Penrith city centre will be promoted. In addition opportunities for partnerships between Council and business will be investigated by the State Government and Council.

## ACTION 2

**Promote Government office accommodation options for the city centre.**

### Rationale

The Commonwealth Government already has a major presence in Penrith with the Australian Taxation Office and Centrelink. The NSW government has submitted a Development Application for a seven storey NSW government office building in the city centre. This will consolidate government office activities in a central location and lift the quality of office accommodation in the city. Continuing the location of government administration buildings within the city centre will reinforce the regional status of the city centre. Opportunities to expand Penrith as an administrative centre for the region will be investigated by the state government and Council.

## ACTION 3

**Develop Strategies, involving TAFE and the University of Western Sydney to add to educational facilities within the city centre.**

### Rationale

A stronger presence of education and learning activities is needed to add diversity and capacity to the centre's economy, but also to bring greater life and activity. Improved integration of the University of Western Sydney with the city is required. Opportunities exist for the relocation or consolidation of TAFE and a presence of UWS in the city centre, or possibly on the north Penrith urban land. The regional city status of the centre gives it favourable consideration for further developments. A steering committee of TAFE, University of Western Sydney (UWS), Department of Planning and Penrith Council will investigate options.

# 11. Future actions

## ACTION 4

Investigate options for the development of a city park.

### Rationale

The development of a city park will be a key driver in the revitalization of the city centre. The city centre and its future growth and development will greatly benefit from the development of a central civic open space and park that will give relief from the surrounding built form and provide amenity and recreational space for the city workforce and future residents. The Allen Place site is a central accessible location that provides the perfect opportunity to develop a central park and civic space (a green heart) surrounded by streets and active building uses in the city centre. Council will negotiate with the private land owners the most suitable location for the city square adjacent to the new City Park.

## ACTION 5

Prepare design and feasibility analysis of options to enhance the links between the city centre and the river.

### Rationale

Developing the link between the city centre and the river is fundamental to the regional city vision for Penrith.

The open space could be developed as a combination of formal gardens, active recreation areas and paths and trails – financially supported by providing for new developments such as reception centres and restaurants in landscape settings. The development of a pedestrian and cycle crossing over the Nepean River and the integration of a bridge with an adjoining network of footpaths and cycle paths will enhance the existing connections. Council will undertake design analysis and develop options, including funding options, for feasibility testing.

## ACTION 6

Develop improved forecourt at Penrith Railway Station.

### Rationale

The Railway Station will continue as a major entry point to the city centre and play a critical role in the future functioning of the centre. Council will work with RailCorp to improve the Railway forecourt as a gateway to the city and to improve the amenity of the area for pedestrians. Pedestrian linkages between the northern and southern side of the railway line will be created through better connections. Development prospects on rail land consistent with the centre plan, to fund works should be investigated.

There are a number of under-utilised sites in close proximity to the railway station. These sites will provide a pivotal role to the operation of the city in the future, providing iconic buildings and employment opportunities in close proximity to the railway. The plan emphasises commercial development opportunities around the city centre.

## ACTION 7

Establish a working group to provide strategies to improve bus usage including a shuttle bus within the city centre and to adjoining residential areas and major facilities.

### Rationale

Bus usage within the city centre can be improved and will alleviate pressures to provide additional car parking within the city centre. Options for shuttle buses within the city centre and for community transport and 'last minute' services utilising technology will be investigated. An Integrated Land Use and Transport Study will inform possible future directions. Council will work with bus companies, community groups and relevant State Government authorities to improve bus usage, particularly within the region.

## ACTION 8

Investigate options to improve access, car parking and traffic management within the city centre.

### Rationale

A well designed city centre incorporates efficient traffic networks, provides adequate car parking and creates an environment to encourage walking. Council will undertake an Integrated Traffic and Land Use survey to investigate options for future traffic management.

Work on the Jane Street by-pass funded through interagency agreements will proceed, alleviating a congested section of the city and providing a direct route through to the river crossing. Funding options to deliver improved intersection performance at the Parker Street intersection at the eastern end of the city will be investigated. The delivery of new consolidated decked parking stations within the city centre will alleviate demands on individual developments to deliver on-site parking. Options to improve short stay car parking and accessibility to services within the city centre will be considered within the Integrated Transport Land Use Study.

## ACTION 9

Establish Penrith as a centre of excellence for sustainable buildings within the city centre.

### Rationale

Council, in consultation with the State Government, will develop best practice sustainability principles for design, construction and operation of new buildings within the city centre. These should aim for a net reduction in energy and water consumption as development proceeds which implies the development of systems of water re-use and internal and shared renewable energy systems.

## ACTION 10

Encourage increased residential densities within the city centre and in key locations adjoining the city, and investigate affordable housing opportunities.

### Rationale

Housing and mixed-use development is vital to achieve a vibrant, attractive and interesting city centre which operates and is safe at all hours. There are areas within the city centre adjoining the core business areas which have characteristics that would suit residential style development, particularly within the north eastern parts of the city where larger allotments and northern aspects are available. Housing densities will be increased within the city centre in accordance with the plans. Council and key stakeholders will investigate affordable housing opportunities within and around the city centre.

## ACTION 11

Cultivate cultural and entertainment precincts within the city centre.

### Rationale

There are extensive possibilities to enhance and expand the existing cultural facilities and opportunities for entertainment precincts with the Penrith city centre. The quality of life and economic diversity can be significantly improved through the promotion of arts and cultural events which attract people and play a critical role in creating an inclusive, distinctive and vibrant city centre. Council will continue to work with the Penrith Visual and Performing Arts Limited Board and other key partners such as Penrith Panthers and on key projects to deliver these principles. Council will consider appointing a Cultural Development Officer to facilitate the development of cultural and entertainment precincts, public art and quality public domain within the city centre in line with the level of expectation of a metropolitan city. A greater presence for the Regional Art Gallery in the city centre in the future should be considered.

# 11. Future actions

## ACTION 12

Ensure North Penrith Urban Area develops consistent with the City Centre vision.

### Rationale

The Commonwealth Government currently owns and has called for expressions of interest to develop the North Penrith Urban Area.

The site presents a significant opportunity to develop education, research and technology based activities, complementing, rather than competing with, development envisaged for the City Centre commercial core. Residential development should also be part of the mix.

The form, character and density of future land uses should reinforce the opportunity this site presents for a strong transit focused development presented by its location adjacent to the Penrith Railway Station. Nevertheless, a medium to long-term perspective, remembering the timeframes over which sites such as Norwest and Macquarie Park have developed, is required.

Council and the Department of Planning will continue to work closely, and with the preferred development group, to ensure compatibility with the vision for the Regional City.

## ACTION 13

Progress planning for new community facilities and develop a schedule of works.

### Rationale

Council currently provides a range of community facilities within the Penrith city centre which enable residents to access many of the social, recreation and related services they require to support and build social capacity. To ensure that the city centre continues to be a place for all residents, Council will provide leadership to deliver new multi-purpose community facilities with the flexibility to meet a broad range of needs. Other levels of government also have a responsibility to contribute to the funding of these facilities as some of the services are funded by other government agencies.

## ACTION 14

Investigate funding options to ensure the provision of infrastructure and urban domain improvements in the city centre.

### Rationale

The Penrith city centre Civic Improvement Plan proposes a new Section 94 plan to contribute to the funding of key infrastructure and public domain improvements in the city centre.

Further funds however, will be required to ensure civic improvements (including the under grounding of transmission lines along key streets within the city centre) occur and therefore encourage further investment. A steering committee of Council, the Penrith city centre Association and the Penrith Valley Economic Development Community and the Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders should investigate business improvement district levies and other methods of generating funds to support the city revitalisation program.

## ACTION 15

Support the proposed Development Plans for the Penrith Panthers Precinct.

### Rationale

The Penrith Panthers club is currently reviewing their extensive landholdings and assets to the south west of the city centre. Further development of the entertainment facilities is anticipated, with associated retail and accommodation. Retail at this location should be compatible with plans for the city centre, nevertheless this can become a destination with nationwide appeal, adding to the stock of regional tourist and visitor options that currently include Penrith Lakes Olympic regatta facilities, the performing arts facilities and museums and *regional galleries*. *Planning for this area should also consider the future role of neighbouring areas such as the Showgrounds and Riverlink.* Council and the Department of Planning will work with the Panthers club in developing their plans.

## ACTION 16

Develop detailed procedures for architectural competitions.

### Rationale:

The Local Environmental Plan provides for certain building sites to have an architectural competition for new developments. The process for conducting the competition is to be in accordance with procedures approved by the Director General of Planning. The Department of Planning in conjunction with Penrith City Council should develop detailed procedures for the Director General's approval.

- working with UWS and WSI TAFE on future use and disposal of their lands and encouraging a city centre presence for both UWS and WSI TAFE (consistent with the above action).

## ACTION 17

Prepare a 'Knowledge Corridor' Strategy.

### Rationale

Penrith has a unique collection of assets in and around the regional city. A strategy for the development of these assets to boost Penrith as a knowledge city will be prepared. A 'knowledge corridor' strategy would be prepared jointly by Council and State Government for the corridor. The strategy will build on the unique collection of assets – Nepean River, north Penrith urban area, CBD, Penrith Lakes nearby, Nepean Hospital and UWS/WSITAFE.

The strategy would look at:

- facilitating business and economic development for the land south of the Penrith Lakes town centre;
- connecting Penrith Lakes town centre with Penrith city centre;
- establishing a development framework for north Penrith urban area (consistent with the above action);
- creating connections to the river (consistent with the options development discussed above);
- providing higher density development and links to the river from the north Penrith light industrial area;
- integrating existing strategic bus corridors with the proposed "knowledge corridor";
- promoting and developing cultural, education, entertainment activities in and around Penrith city centre;

## ACTION 18

Investigate the feasibility of establishing a Penrith city centre Design Review Panel.

### Rationale

To facilitate efficient decision-making and to improve design outcomes, a Penrith city centre Design Review Panel could be established to advise on major projects including a role with architectural competitions.

## ACTION 19

Progress design options for the Penrith Civic Square.

### Rationale

The area bound by the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Council headquarters and library and Westfield – Penrith Plaza provides a pedestrian oriented and protected civic environment that is currently underutilised and under performing. Council has commenced design options for this area and will continue to work with the Performing Arts Centre and Westfield Penrith Plaza to deliver a high quality civic square that is pleasant and active.

## ACTION 20:

Work collaboratively with Westfield, Centro and Parkview to develop an urban design framework, structure plan and implementation process for the future re-development of these sites.

### Rationale:

Westfield, Centro and Parkview form a key component of the structure and function of the city centre. Council will be working with these landowners collaboratively to enhance the urban design elements of the building and the contribution it makes to the functioning of the city.

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