

Submission
No 25

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL RACECOURSE

Organisation: Centre for Western Sydney

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SUBMISSION |

Proposal to Develop Rosehill Racecourse

Introduction

The Centre for Western Sydney welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the NSW Legislative Council's Select Committee inquiry on the proposal to redevelop Rosehill Racecourse.

We support redeveloping the Rosehill Racecourse site as an important step towards rejuvenating the Rosehill-Camellia precinct. The Centre sees this as part of a broader vision to establish Parramatta as a dynamic global city in its own right, rather than Sydney's second city.

The proposal to build up to 25,000 new dwellings in the centre of Western Sydney close to established and world-class services would help ease housing shortages in one of the nation's fastest growing regions. The Centre's *Home Truths* report on the state's accommodation crisis states that Western Sydney will accommodate nearly two-third of Greater Sydney's population over the next two decades.ⁱ

To ensure the racecourse redevelopment is in the best interests of the people of New South Wales, the Centre puts forward three key recommendations.

Recommendation 1: A proportion of the proposed 25,000 new dwellings on the racecourse site be comprised of affordable and social housing to help ease western Sydney's acute housing affordability crisis.

Recommendation 2: The NSW Government fast-tracks the feasibility and development of a metro station at Rosehill to deliver reliable, integrated and affordable transport for new residents, better connect new housing to services in greater Parramatta, and ease road congestion.

Recommendation 3: The development be compatible with the broader objectives of the Parramatta City Council to establish Parramatta as global city

and the catalytic role of Western Sydney University in the economic and social transformation of the region.

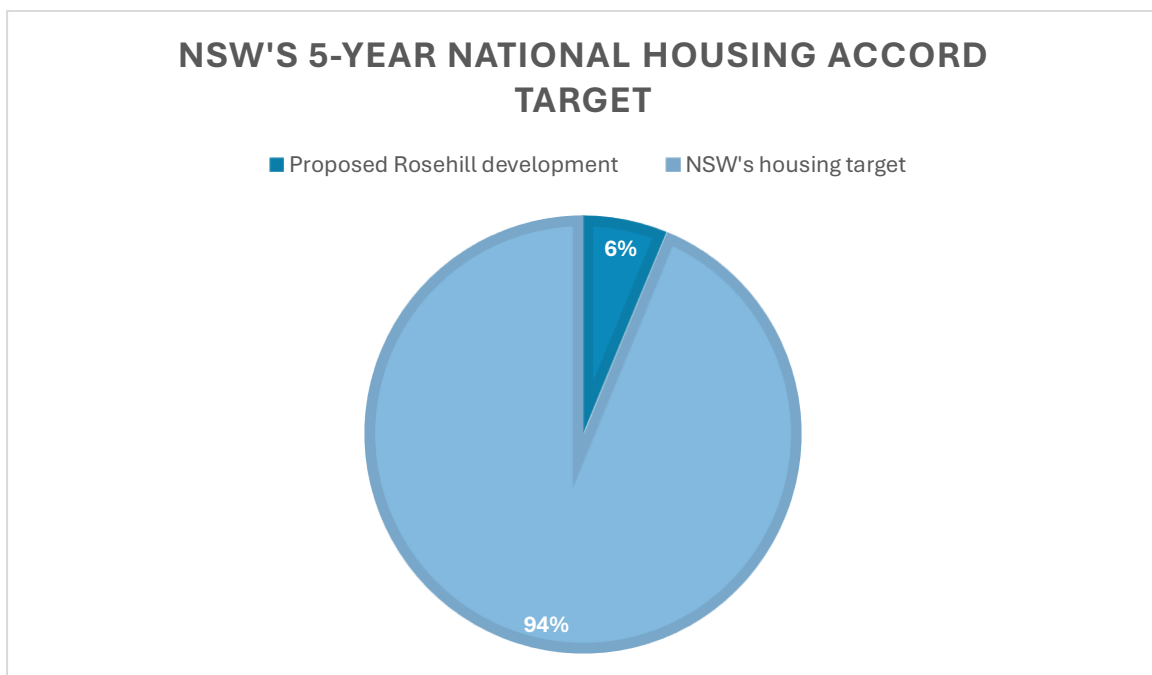
As a result, the Centre’s submission deals only with part c of the terms of reference (the role of the proposal in meeting housing targets) and part h (other related matters.)

Meeting housing targets

Under the 2023 National Housing Accord, the NSW Government agreed to deliver 377,000 new well-located homes across the state by 2029. The Parramatta Local Government area is expected to deliver 19,500 additional homes over this period.ⁱⁱ

The proposed Rosehill racecourse redevelopment of up to 25,000 new dwellings would contribute towards meeting this target combined with future dwellings across potential sites adjacent.

Given its proximity to frontline services in Parramatta and the Westmead Precinct, the development can also play a key role in providing housing for essential and key workers. This could limit the time they spend commuting to work in Western Sydney.



Social housing

The Centre also suggests that a proportion of new homes at the site be designated as social and affordable housing. The NSW Government’s 2024-25 Budget invested \$5.1 million in 8,400 new social homes plus repairs to 33,500 homes.

Despite these efforts, there is a deficit of suitable accommodation. Social housing waiting list data shows there are 58,942 households on the waiting list, with 9,142 needing priority.ⁱⁱⁱ

Home Truths, the Centre's report on the state's housing crisis released in November 2024, found that the current social and affordable housing stock in Western Sydney only meets 44 per cent of demand.

It estimates a shortfall of nearly 76,000 dwellings, and warns that without action, this gap will widened to more than 160,000 homes by 2041. To meet projected demand, more than 8,500 extra dwellings need to be made available each year until 2041.^{iv}

Recommendation 1: A proportion of the proposed 25,000 new dwellings on the racecourse site be comprised of affordable and social housing to help ease western Sydney's acute housing affordability crisis.

Other related matters

Infrastructure now, not later

The Centre supports NSW Premier, the Hon Chris Minns MP's commitment to rebalance housing growth in the state to focus on well-located homes close to transport, jobs and existing infrastructure. This is essential for liveability and transport connectivity.

To deliver on this, we argue the NSW Government needs to fast-track the feasibility and development of a metro station at Rosehill to deliver reliable, integrated and affordable transport for new residents, better connect new housing to services in greater Parramatta, and ease road congestion.

The new station should be opened by the time the development of housing has been completed.

The NSW Budget 2024-25 stresses: "For decades, the (Western Sydney) region has borne the brunt of the State's housing growth, without the adequate infrastructure needed to keep up with a growing population."^v This development is another opportunity to reverse those historic failings.

Any delay in putting the right transport infrastructure in place in Rosehill would add to congestion on James Ruse Drive and other major arterial roads which are already struggling beyond capacity during peak times.

A metro station at Rosehill would also enhance connectivity in western Sydney, reinforcing Parramatta's central role in both the region and the state's economy.

Recommendation 2: The NSW Government fast-tracks the feasibility and development of a metro station at Rosehill to deliver reliable, integrated, and

affordable transport for new residents, better connect new housing to services in greater Parramatta, and ease road congestion.

Part of a model city

As Vice-Chancellor of Western Sydney University, Professor Barney Glover AO led the development of *Parramatta 2035*, which urged a fresh approach to the city to make it vibrant, sustainable, and global.

Delivered with the Centre and the University, the report highlighted the mismatch between the accelerated development and investment in Parramatta compared to the “comparative neglect” of areas such as Camellia and the Rosehill racecourse.^{vi}

The Centre agrees with Parramatta City Council’s vision to develop Camellia-Rosehill as a model city, which is outlined in its Draft Parramatta 2050 strategic plan.^{vii}

We support the concept of positioning the area as leader in environmental remediation, green infrastructure, the circular economy, and green jobs.

This complements Western Sydney University’s broader ambitions for the Parramatta region, which is the geographic centre of our operations.

The Parramatta South and Parramatta CBD are major employers and generate substantial economic activity for the local community. The University’s innovative placemaking model – which works with industry, community and governments to breathe new life into city centres – also serves as a key economic and social catalyst in Western Sydney.

The region is also undergoing a once-in-a-generation transformation with the new Western Sydney International Airport and the Aerotropolis. In Parramatta, the light rail, Metro West and the Parramatta Powerhouse have driven the city’s evolution.

The Centre argues the proposed development of Rosehill Racecourse has the potential to further add to the revitalisation of Parramatta and should complement the overarching vision for the city.

The Centre’s *Unlimited Potential: Western Sydney’s Economic Plan*, released in February 2024, put forward a blueprint to establish Western Sydney as an internationally competitive industrial powerhouse.

To achieve this, Western Sydney needs to make the leap to global edge of innovation, technology, new skills, and the development of new industries.

Any redevelopment of Camellia-Rosehill can position the precinct to capture some of the key global markets in emerging industries. Advances in manufacturing mean these future industries can be located close to a mix of residential and commercial developments.

The Bradfield City Centre, one of the nation’s largest economic development projects, will combine innovation, education and skills development.

As Chair of the Bradfield Development Authority, Professor Jennifer Westacott AO said during a recent speech: “What we are trying to at Bradfield is turn around what’s happened with housing in Western Sydney for so long – which is houses first, and jobs and infrastructure way too late or not at all.”

Recommendation 3: The Rosehill racecourse development be compatible with the broader objectives of the Parramatta City Council to establish Parramatta as global city and the catalytic role of Western Sydney University in the economic and social transformation of the region.

Conclusion

The Centre strongly believes that the Rosehill racecourse development needs to deliver benefit for the people of NSW. To achieve this, the development needs to align with the overarching vision for Parramatta and Western Sydney. Importantly, it must ensure adequate community services, including infrastructure, are in place before the first residents move into their new homes.

ⁱ Home Truths, the Centre for Western Sydney, November 2024. Page 11.
www.westernsydney.edu.au/content/dam/digital/images/centre-for-western-sydney/Home_Truths_FINAL.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/housing/housing-targets/parramatta-councils-housing-snapshot>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/social-housing-waiting-list-data>

^{iv} Home Truths, the Centre for Western Sydney, November 2024. Page 11.
www.westernsydney.edu.au/content/dam/digital/images/centre-for-western-sydney/Home_Truths_FINAL.pdf

^v NSW Budget 2024-25, Western Sydney glossy. Page 9.

<https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-06/NSW-Budget-2024-25-Western-Sydney-glossy-accessible.pdf>

^{vi} Parramatta 2035, Western Sydney University and the Centre for Western Sydney, 2022. Page 7

^{vii} <https://participate.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/2050>