

INQUIRY INTO WESTERN SYDNEY SCIENCE PARK AND AEROTROPOLIS DEVELOPMENTS

Organisation: Celestino
Date Received: 2 August 2024

Ms Abigail Boyd MLC
Chair, Public Accountability and Works Committee
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

2 August 2024

Lodged via the Committee's website.

Dear Ms Boyd,

Inquiry into Western Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments

I refer to the Committee's email to Celestino on 1 July 2024 inviting us to make a submission in relation to this Inquiry. Thank you for this invitation. I have outlined below some key facts and figures about Celestino and Sydney Science Park for the Committee's information.

1. About Celestino

- (a) Celestino is the owner and developer of Sydney Science Park (SSP).
- (b) Celestino is an Australian owned family business focused on delivering high quality, sustainable urban developments across Australia. Celestino is part of the Baiada Group, the poultry processor that owns brands such as Steggles and Lilydale, founded in Western Sydney by Celestino Baiada in 1916.
- (c) Celestino works with key stakeholders, including local councils and their communities and State Governments on the visioning, master-planning, rezoning and development of projects in areas including Western Sydney and South East Queensland. The major development it has delivered to date is The Gables, located in the Gables suburb in North West Sydney.

2. About Sydney Science Park

- (a) Celestino has a long association with the Luddenham area due to it being part of the Baiada Group. There are several poultry farms located in the area. In 2010, Celestino was able to secure ownership of a rural site, which has since become the location for the future SSP.
- (b) Planning for SSP commenced around 2011, and in August 2013 Celestino lodged a Planning Proposal with Penrith City Council seeking an amendment to the Penrith LEP 2010 to support the following proposal:
 - 340,000sqm of research and development floor space;
 - 100,000sqm of educational floor area and associated student accommodation;
 - Town centre comprising up to 30,000sqm of retail space;
 - 3,400 dwellings;
 - Primary school site;
 - New roads and infrastructure; and
 - Landscaping, open space, sporting fields, and parks.

- (c) The proposal was subsequently forwarded by Council to the Minister for Planning. Gateway approval to proceed was received on 18 June 2014, with a further revised Gateway approval on 9 July 2015 which proposed to rezone the land from RU2 Rural Landscape to a mix of B4 Mixed Use, B7 Business Park, and RE1 Public Recreation.
- (d) SSP has long been envisioned as a world-class community, complete with open spaces, housing, and knowledge-based employment in retail, health, education, and research. This vision was ultimately supported and adopted into the Penrith LEP 2010 via Amendment 8 on 28 October 2016. The land to which the planning proposal applied is shown at Figure 1 below.

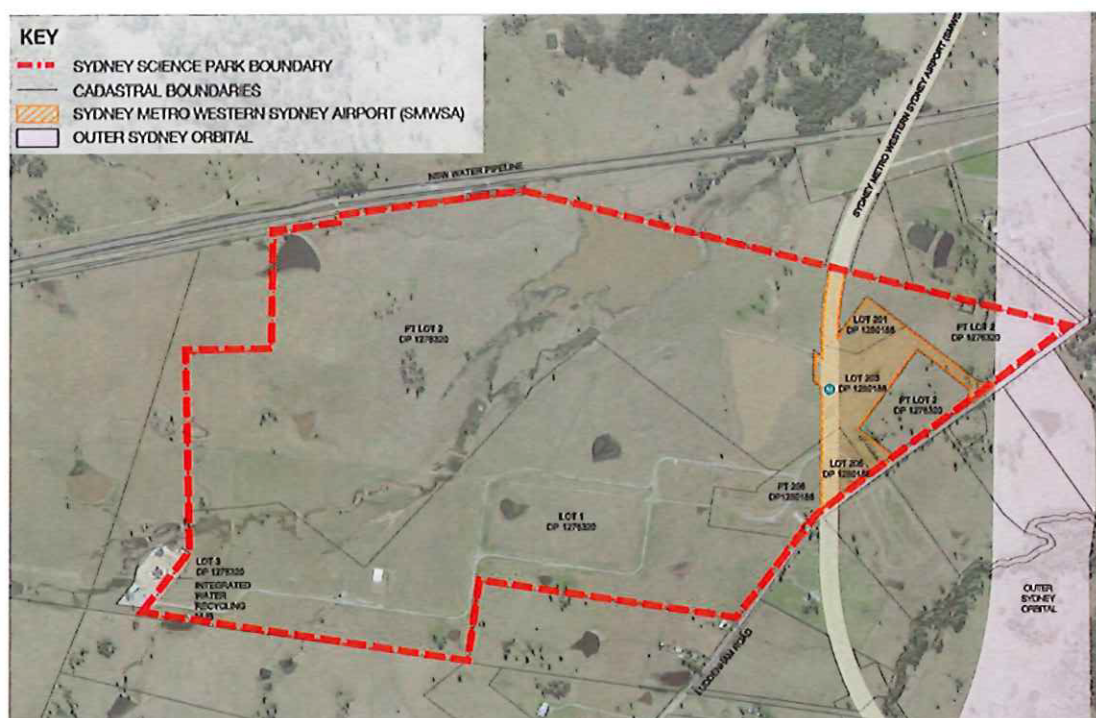


Figure 1. Sydney Science Park Land.

- (e) SSP has been recognised within numerous strategic planning policies that have applied to the site and the wider Western Sydney region since Gateway approval in 2014. This has included:
- The Greater Sydney Commission's (GSC) *Towards our Greater Sydney 2056* (2016);
 - *Greater Sydney Region Plan* (2018); and
 - *Western City District Plan* (2018).
- (f) In August 2018, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment publicly commenced planning of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis by releasing the Stage 1 Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan for comment. Following a 25-month period of consultation and planning, in September 2020 the following strategic documents were released by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment:
- Draft Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan;
 - Draft Aerotropolis Development Control Plan - Phase 1;
 - Finalisation Report and Master Planning Guidelines; and
 - The *State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Aerotropolis) 2020* (now *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Western Parkland City) 2021*), which rezoned the initial precincts within the Aerotropolis commencing on 11 September 2020. SSP was included in this initial rezoning but on the condition that the commencement of the rezoning was

deferred until the Precinct Plan relating the land was made.

- (g) The Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan established the planning framework for the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and the ten precincts it comprises. In this document, SSP was identified as being within the Northern Gateway Precinct, an initial precinct that was designated to create skilled employment and business opportunities as well as housing, all in alignment with the original vision for SSP.
- (h) As noted above, the initial precincts of the Aerotropolis were rezoned in September 2020. Provisions within the SEPP stated that until such time as a Precinct Plan was approved by the Minister, the existing planning controls applicable to SSP that existed under the Penrith LEP 2010 (as amended on the 28 October 2016) would remain in place.
- (i) In October 2021, the Explanation of Intended Effect (EIE) that foreshadowed an amendment to Environmental Planning Instruments in relation to the Aerotropolis was released. The EIE suggested that to support the logical and orderly development of land in the Northern Gateway, single dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, and dual occupancies within the SSP were to be made permissible in the Mixed-Use (MU1) zone outside of a 1.2km radius of the Sydney Metro Station.
- (j) The final Aerotropolis planning package and supporting technical studies for the initial precincts were finalised on 25 March 2022. This included amendments to the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Western Parkland City) 2021*, and the Precinct Plan. However, the finalisation and adoption of the Precinct Plan introduced several new controls in relation to residential development that expanded planning constraints for housing typologies within the SSP site. In 2022, Celestino applied to the NSW Government for a change in these planning controls to bring them back into line with the controls that were approved in 2016. This application was approved in 2023.
- (k) In June 2020, the NSW Government announced a Metro station would be located at Luddenham, within SSP. On 25 March 2022, Sydney Metro compulsorily acquired 15 hectares of land from Celestino for this purpose.
- (l) There have been many changes in the legislative planning framework since the land was initially rezoned and these changes have taken time to resolve, which has delayed Celestino's development timeline. Notwithstanding this, Celestino has managed to progress the aspects of the development that are not impacted by these planning changes. Celestino is reasonably well positioned to commence development in the near-term (subject to obtaining the necessary development approvals). In particular, during the period the planning framework was being finalised, Celestino progressed the following essential infrastructure for the site:
 - funding construction of a wastewater treatment plant. This is an "out of sequence" development by Sydney Water that resulted from strategic planning work with Sydney Water to bring sewer services to an area that was otherwise not scheduled to receive Sydney Water services for a number of years. Celestino has funded the design and construction of this plant, as is standard when Sydney Water undertakes out of sequence works. The plant will ultimately provide recycled wastewater for use in toilets, washing machines and the like and will reduce the burden on the region's drinking water supply;
 - installation of the lead-in works that will bring potable water to the site;
 - arrangements with nbn Co for telco servicing of the development;
 - upgrading the electricity supply; and
 - lodgement of a development application for a signalised intersection on Luddenham Road to access SSP (DA 9/2024 lodged 15 January 2024).
- (m) Celestino expects to commence physical development works for the first precinct of SSP, which is located primarily within the south-western portion of the site, in 2026. Celestino is in the process of applying for State Significant Development Approval for the following works (which

relate mainly to Precinct 1 but also other areas of the site as relevant):

- Subdivision of super lots;
 - Clearing, bulk and detailed earthworks, including cut/fill, grading, and benching;
 - Construction of structural support, including retaining walls and batters;
 - Civil and infrastructure works, including temporary works associated with roadworks and Integrated Water Cycle Management;
 - Landscaping and streetscape;
 - Connecting to Country strategy;
 - Provision and augmentation of services (potable water, sewer, recycled water, electricity, and telecommunications);
 - Associated environmental management works, including erosion and sediment control;
 - Earthworks, stormwater and other related civil work;
 - Public domain work such as the provision of footpaths from Precinct 1 to the Metro Station and associated signage; and
 - Internal reticulation of services and utilities, including connections to and from the existing Sydney Water Sewage Treatment Plant.
- (n) Celestino expects to develop approximately 250 homes and up to 10,000 sqm of non-residential floor space (commercial, retail or education) in Precinct 1. Celestino is in confidential and commercially sensitive discussions with business partners to relocate to, or expand their operations at, SSP. Celestino is also discussing the potential for a non-public school in Precinct 1.
- (o) Celestino remains committed to the vision for SSP that has existed since the site was first rezoned in 2016. Celestino has spent significant time and money to bring SSP to the point it is at today. Celestino will deliver a community in Western Sydney and contribute to the area that has long been a base for Celestino and the Baiada Group.

Celestino looks forward to working with all levels of Government to deliver our project.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Scard
Chief Executive Officer