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Dear Coordinator,

***Feedback on the Draft A City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision***

1. The New South Wales Bar Association (the **Association**) thanks the City of Sydney for the opportunity to provide feedback on the 'Draft: A City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision' (the **Strategy**).

**Introduction**

2. The Association's comments focus on one aspect of the Strategy: the need to ensure that Courts and Tribunals within the City of Sydney Local Government Area (**LGA**) are, and remain, accessible to all, including to those with disability who live and work in the City of Sydney. Addressing these needs in the Strategy would promote both domestic and international obligations to take appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures to promote the human rights of people with disability, as reflected in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth).
3. The preparation of the Strategy provides a valuable opportunity to consider improved accessibility to the buildings in which Courts and Tribunals sit. The Association considers it is important to ensure that the Strategy, once finalised, does not remove or impact adversely on current accessibility to Courts and Tribunals.

**Visitors and Users of the Courts and Tribunals within the City of Sydney LGA**

4. A list of the Courts and Tribunals within the City of Sydney LGA is **annexed** to this submission.
5. Visitors to and users of the Courts and Tribunals within the City of Sydney LGA include:
  - a) Judges, Magistrates and Tribunal members;
  - b) Court and Tribunal staff;
  - c) legal representatives, their assistants and staff;



- d) parties, witnesses and support persons;
  - e) journalists; and
  - f) observers and other members of the community.
6. Members of any of these groups may have various disabilities, including mobility disabilities.
7. Parking capacity at most buildings which house the Courts and Tribunals within the LGA is limited. It is common for judges and some staff to have access to parking, but other visitors and users generally need to access the building itself by walking.<sup>1</sup>
8. For people with mobility disabilities who cannot walk far, access to Court or Tribunal premises can be limited by one or more of the following factors:
- a) the unavailability, or limited number, of disability parking spaces near the entrance to the relevant building;
  - b) the unavailability, or limitations on, appropriate drop-off spaces near the relevant entrance; and
  - c) the distance between public transport stops and the relevant entrance.
9. These factors may be exacerbated by some of the proposals in the draft Strategy relating to road closures, for example, if any of the proposed road closures were to be near or around the entrances of Court and Tribunal premises. By way of illustration: were Phillip Street and the part of King Street between Elizabeth and Phillip Streets to be closed to traffic, this would eliminate disability parking near the entrance to the Law Courts Building at Queens Square, and reduce the number of safe drop-off areas near that entrance and the entrance to the King Street Courts.

#### **Disability parking spaces and drop-off areas**

10. In relation to disability parking spaces and drop-off areas, the Association requests that the City of Sydney:
- a) consider increasing the numbers of such spaces near the Courts and Tribunals identified in the Annexure; and
  - b) consider whether some aspects of the Strategy may reduce the number of disability parking spaces or safe drop-off areas near the Courts and Tribunals identified in the Annexure, or whether the Strategy will otherwise adversely impact upon access to those areas (for example, by making the driving routes to those areas more difficult, or more likely to be affected by congestion).
11. The Association requests that particular consideration be given to adding disability parking spaces and/or clearly marked safe drop-off zones in the following locations:
- a) In the streets around the Downing Centre/John Maddison Tower complex (that is, the block formed by Liverpool, Castlereagh, Goulburn and Elizabeth Streets). These buildings house the NSW Local Court, District Court, Civil and Administrative Tribunal and Dust Diseases Tribunal and experience high volumes of users. There are, however, no disability parking spaces in this block and limited safe drop-off capacity; and

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<sup>1</sup> “Walking” refers to the expanded definition of this term in the Strategy.



- b) On Clarence Street, between Erskine Street and Margaret Street, in order to serve 83 Clarence Street. This building houses the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, which deals with a significant number of matters involving persons with disabilities (including mobility disabilities). There are no disability parking spaces or safe drop-off zones on this stretch of Clarence Street.

### Public transport stops

12. The location of public transport stops is an important factor to consider in relation to access by people with mobility disabilities to Courts and Tribunals.
13. The Association notes that there is some variation in this regard at present. For example, the Darlinghurst Court House at 138 Oxford Street is immediately adjacent to a bus stop on the 333 route, which is a high frequency bus route. However, the Hospital Road Courthouse is approximately 300 m from each of the Martin Place and St James train stations, and even further from various bus stops (up to approximately 650 metres from the Castlereagh Street stops). These distances may be prohibitive for some people with mobility disabilities. The availability of disability parking spaces and drop-off areas is crucial for such individuals.
14. The Association recognises that the location of public transport stops is a matter outside the City of Sydney's direct control. However, the City of Sydney has identified in the Strategy its capacity to advocate for certain improvements in pursuance of the aims of the Strategy, including "Advocating for better public transport" in relation to Principle C3.<sup>2</sup> As part of that advocacy, the Association urges the City of Sydney to consider the potential impact on people with disability of the distance between public transport stops and entrances to Courts and Tribunals in the LGA. The Association also notes that road closures may increase the distance between public transport stops and entrances to Court and Tribunal premises.
15. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Strategy. Should you have any questions about our feedback, please contact in the first instance Laura Toren, Policy Lawyer at [ltoren@nswbar.asn.au](mailto:ltoren@nswbar.asn.au).

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ruth Higgins SC  
**President**

*Encl. Annexure: List of the Courts and Tribunals within the City of Sydney LGA*

Cc: Executive Director, Courts, Tribunal & Service Delivery, NSW Department of Community and Justice

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<sup>2</sup> Which provides that "We will work with Transport for NSW to reduce red tape and make it easier for our community to activate their streets via temporary or permanent closures, street painting and plantings."

## Annexure: Courts & Tribunals in the City of Sydney LGA

| <b>Sydney</b>  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Law Courts Building:</b><br>High Court of Australia<br>Federal Court of Australia<br>Supreme Court of NSW               | 184 Phillip Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000                             | 1300 679 272   |
| <b>Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia</b>   | Lionel Bowen Building<br>97-99 Goulburn Street<br>Sydney NSW 2001 | 1300 352 000   |
| <b>Hospital Road Courthouse:</b><br>Supreme Court of NSW   | 5010 Hospital Road<br>Sydney NSW 2000                             | n/a  |
| <b>King Street Courts:</b><br>Supreme Court of NSW   | Elizabeth St & King Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000                     | 1300 679 272   |
| <b>The Land and Environment Court of NSW</b>   | Level 4/225 Macquarie Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000                   | (02) 9113 8200   |
| <b>Downing Centre:</b><br>District Court of NSW<br>Local Court of NSW  | 143-147 Liverpool Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000                       | 1300 679 272   |
| <b>John Maddison Tower:</b><br>District Court of NSW<br>Dust Diseases Tribunal of NSW<br>Civil and Administrative Tribunal | 86-90 Goulburn Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000                          | 1300 679 272 (DC)<br>(02) 9377 5440 (DDT)<br>1300 006 228 (NCAT) |
| <b>Sydney Central Local Court</b>  | 98 Liverpool Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000                            | 1300 679 272   |
| <b>Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW</b>  | 2-24 Rawson Place<br>Sydney NSW 2000                              | (02) 9290 8400   |
| <b>Law Enforcement Conduct Commission</b>  | Level 3, 111 Elizabeth Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000                  | (02) 9321 6700   |
| <b>NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal</b>   | Level 14, Civic Tower<br>66 Goulburn Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000    | 1300 006 228   |
| <b>NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption</b>   | Level 7, 255 Elizabeth Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000                  | (02) 8281 5999   |
| <b>Darlinghurst</b>  |   |  |
| <b>Darlinghurst Courthouse:</b><br>Supreme Court of NSW  | 138 Oxford Street<br>Darlinghurst NSW 2010                        | 1300 679 272   |
| <b>Personal Injury Commission of NSW</b>   | 20/1 Oxford Street<br>Darlinghurst NSW 2010                       | 1800 742 679   |
| <b>Woolloomooloo</b>   |   |  |
| <b>William Street Complex</b><br>Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia<br>Fair Work Commission                     | Terrace Tower<br>80 William Street<br>Woolloomooloo NSW 2011      | 1300 720 980 (FCFCOA)<br>1300 799 675 (FWC)                      |
| <b>Newtown</b>   |   |  |
| <b>Newtown Court House</b>   | 222 Australia Street<br>Newtown NSW 2042                          | 1300 679 272   |
| <b>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</b>   | 83 Clarence Street<br>Sydney NSW 2000                             | (02) 9276 5000   |