

Sydney's Innovation Corridor – Linking its Two CBDs

Bob Meyer AM

Cox Richardson Architects and Planners

The Greater Sydney Commission's (GSC) concept of dividing the Sydney Region into three "cities" will be a game changer for Parramatta as centre of the proposed Central "city" giving it a clear role in the Sydney region as its dual CBD, particularly if the Commission's recommendation that the State's public service and the NSW Parliament are established in Parramatta.

The biggest challenge facing Sydney is to build up a strong innovation sector with emphasis on a recognisable precinct which has equal access from Sydney's districts and eventually regional NSW. The Brookings Institute of Washington defines this as a conglomeration precinct with character, age, density, proximity to CBDs, access by public and active transport and characterised by conglomeration and clustering.

The corridor between the dual CBDs would fill this role admirably with the characteristics, identified by the Brookings Institute, contains six of Sydney's major hospitals, five of Sydney's key universities as well as the Olympic Park.

The corridor has the widest mix of housing, ranging from inner city terraces to the Federation period "garden suburb" bungalows to 20th century apartment dwellings and with Sydney's highest population densities.

The recently announced new underground Metro railway will provide a direct connection between the CBDs of Parramatta and Sydney. This key initiative cuts the travel time to say 15 minutes. The government's role in implementing this transport link will be critical to providing, arguably Sydney's most important innovation initiative this century.