

Attachment B

**Deputy Lord Mayor's Presentation and
Speech at the Global Innovation and
Entrepreneurship Fair**

CHENGDU FORUM – ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION

Thank you, [MC], hello, everyone. I'm honoured to represent the City of Sydney at this meeting and to talk about some of what we are doing to equip our city for the 21st century.

Everyone at this forum is well aware of the issues facing cities – the pressures of increasing population, pollution, transport issues, waste reduction, the loss of green space.

For us, they all came together in a strategy we call Sustainable Sydney 2030.

After the Independent team which continues to run the city was first elected in 2004, work was begun on a long-term plan for Sydney – one which was robust enough to take us forward no matter who was in government.

It was formulated after the most extensive consultations ever held across our city, involving residents, business both large and small, visitors, other levels of government, educational and cultural institutions.

Overwhelmingly, people told us they wanted a city that was environmentally and socially sustainable, which would be resilient and able to adapt and meet the challenges of this century. Ninety-seven per cent of those we spoke to identified climate change as the most important issue facing us.

By 2008, this collective vision was embodied in the Sustainable Sydney 2030 strategy, which set us ambitious targets for water conservation, climate adaptation, waste reduction, improved transport and to green the city,

It was important that these be more than aspirational targets, and so we developed a suite of plans to take us to our goals, and a system of regular monitoring to make sure we are on track to meet them.

We have been carbon neutral since 2008 – despite strong growth in residents and business numbers.

But at the C40 meeting in Mexico in December 2016, we learnt that the following three years would be critical if the world is to survive climate change, that we needed to achieve more in less time. The good news was that committed action by major world cities could go a long way to achieving the more stringent targets.

As a wealthy city, we felt it was incumbent upon us to accelerate our actions over the next five years.

So our staff looked at ways to fast-track our efforts, with key initiatives covering energy efficiency, better utilities and waste management, amendments to our planning controls to improve the environmental performance of new buildings – including planning for net-zero buildings.

Other initiatives involve collecting data to better target environmental programs; improved sustainability programs for office tenants; energy “tune-up” programs for businesses and residential apartments and providing programs to encourage the uptake of renewable energy.

For the city’s own operations, our new targets include a 44 per cent reduction in greenhouse emissions by 2021; zero increase in potable water use; 70 per cent resource recovery and to plant 700 new street trees each year and 50,000 new trees and shrubs in City parks and street gardens each year until 2021.

For our local government area, we are working towards a 70 per cent reduction in greenhouse emissions by 2030, zero increase in potable water use; 70 per cent recycling and recovery of residential waste and 70 per cent in commercial and industrial waste by June 2021.

Although Sydney ranks highly in most international quality-of-urban-life surveys, we fall behind when it comes to transport. We are challenging Australians’ traditional car-dependency, aiming that by 2030, 33 per cent of city residents will be walking to work in the morning peak period; that 10 per cent of total trips in the city are by bicycle and that 80 per cent of morning peak period trips are on public transport by city residents and those travelling to the centre from elsewhere.

We are also aiming to have 30 per cent of city residents members of a car-sharing scheme by 2030, and have already seen good progress, following our provision of car-share spaces across the local government area.

For us, partnerships are the key to achieving the changes that a warming climate requires, and although governments in Australia are lethargic in their actions on climate change, we are finding that our city business leaders, their employees and our residents are very ready to face up to the challenge.

Since 2011, we’ve worked with the major owners in the commercial building sector through the Better Buildings Partnership. By last June, the partnership

had logged a 52 per cent reduction in carbon emissions on a 2006 baseline. And of course, the partnership members were also pleased with a saving in electricity costs of \$33 million collectively. They are now working with us towards net zero buildings.

We're now looking to work with Sydney's hotels, entertainment and business conference venues on a similar partnership which will raise environmental performances in those areas.

Residents from buildings involved in our Smart Green Apartments program are also enjoying the lower charges stemming from lower energy and water consumption and better waste management. Since 75 per cent of our residents are apartment dwellers, this has a significant environmental impact, while also giving them improved quality of life.

At our Alexandria depot, we have partnered with Transgrid, the network operator, to install a 500 kWh Tesla Powerpack. Transgrid will use the Powerpack batteries to test the capability of battery technology to assist grid demand management, to relieve stress on the network at peak demand times.

This will allow us to save on electricity from the grid at this site and potentially make our depot carbon neutral.

We have fitted many of our own buildings and sports complexes with solar panels and water-saving devices and have upgraded all our own street lights to energy-efficient LEDs. And where we don't have direct control – as we don't over some street lights, for instance, we advocate for the owner – in this case, Ausgrid – to replace them.

Across the world, waste is now recognised as a major problem – one that for many countries like our own has become even more urgent as China – understandably – has closed its doors to imported waste.

But our new Leave Nothing to Waste strategy is the most comprehensive to tackle residential waste in Australia. It includes a trail of residential food waste collection which will be collected separately and converted into high-grade compost or energy.

Other initiatives include a communal waste bin for clothing and textiles in apartment buildings which will be collected for recycling; a weekly kerbside collection for electronic waste to allow recycling of precious materials and a community drop-off centre for "problem" waste like paints and chemicals.

Our aim is to have 90 per cent of our current annual total of 65,000 tonnes of residential waste diverted from landfill by 2030.

Our 2030 target is zero waste and so we are calling for an integrated waste strategy across metropolitan Sydney to develop facilities in partnership with the NSW State Government and other councils. And we are continuing to look for opportunities to develop waste-to-energy solutions in co-operation with them.

Sydney is a city which loves festivals and large community events, and so we are talking to the producers of these to urge them to turn away from plastic packaging, and we're looking to recycling soft plastics at our new Alexandra Canal depot.

Australia's multi-tiered levels of government, and segregated areas of responsibility unfortunately hamper many efforts to streamline our responses and equip Australia for the future.

In Sydney, the most obvious example is the massive Green Square renewal project. This city area – once home to light industry, tanneries and other such industries, is undergoing an extraordinary transformation.

With \$13 billion worth of private investment and a \$1.3 billion investment in infrastructure to provide homes for 61,000 residents and workplaces for 21,000 people, it is probably the biggest urban development in Australia.

The City has invested significantly in creating the parks, community facilities and open spaces that such densities demand and we planned to make it Australia's most sustainable urban renewal precinct by taking it off the coal-fired grid through district trigeneration.

But our plans stalled when the NABERS rules – which measure and compare environmental performance in buildings and tenancies – were changed in 2012.

NABERS is controlled by State and Federal regulation and the rule changes meant that a site in single ownership can score a higher star rating while an area like Green Square – split among multiple owners – cannot.

The City is nonetheless proceeding with trigeneration in our own facilities there, including a spectacular library and other community facilities. But it is a great opportunity lost.

We are also concerned that even while Sydney is in the midst of a boom in development, our planning controls need to be updated to ensure new buildings are “fit for the future” in a changing climate.

We have asked the State Government to speed up the review of our proposed new planning controls that will significantly improve the energy performance of buildings, above the bare minimum now required by the code.

We are also asking them to allow local government to establish stronger energy efficiency or renewable energy requirements that are at present required for new residential buildings.

The message we are repeating is that the challenges of climate change are so pervasive, so complex and so urgent that we all need to work together. In Australia, that means all levels of government in co-operation with each other, and with business and residents.

And internationally, it means we all need to work through forums like C40 and meetings such as this, to learn from each other, to generate new ideas and to take inspiration from other cities are doing.

And so I thank you sincerely for this opportunity to share some of Sydney’s experience and to learn from you.

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