

Premier consolidates control over big-picture vision of Sydney

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NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian will take greater responsibility for the big-picture vision for Sydney by elevating another key planning agency to report directly to her department.



Gladys Berejiklian says her government is committed to the vision of Greater Sydney as a connected metropolis of three cities. *Photo: Brook Mitchell*

The Greater Sydney Commission, the independent body responsible for championing the vision of Sydney as three 30-minute cities, will begin reporting to the Premier from July 1.

Until now, the commission has been responsible to the planning minister, a portfolio held by Lane Cove MP Anthony Roberts since January 2017.

It is the second planning agency to be hived off from the planning minister's portfolio by the premier, after the government's development agency, [UrbanGrowth, was split into two last year](#).

Ms Berejiklian said the restructure reflected her government's priority of implementing the commission's three-city strategy, which includes planning for an emerging "aerotropolis" around the forthcoming western Sydney Airport.

"We are turning the vision of Greater Sydney as a connected metropolis of three cities into a reality," Ms Berejiklian said.

"Reporting directly to the premier will ensure the commission is front and centre of government decision-making."

The move also further consolidates Ms Berejiklian's control over one of the most contentious areas of government policy – planning for rampant growth across Sydney over the coming decades, while [managing an electorate increasingly hostile to perceived overdevelopment and congestion](#).

Led by chief commissioner Lucy Turnbull, the commission has spearheaded a [40-year vision to decentralise Sydney into three, interconnected cities](#) – a harbour-side city in the east, a central river city pivoting around Parramatta, and parkland city west of the M7 which would centre on the second airport.

Ms Turnbull welcomed the move, describing it as a "natural evolution for the commission."

"By reporting to the premier we will effectively collaborate across government agencies and ensure the government's vision becomes a reality."

As part of its strategy, the commission has mandated that Sydney councils find a way to provide almost 200,000 more dwellings by 2021 in order to maintain pace with the estimated need of 725,000 extra dwellings in Sydney over the next 20 years.

It has divided Sydney five districts – East, Central, West, North and South – and drafted separate strategies for each district, with tailored planning and development priorities.

By assigning every Sydney council five-year housing targets, the district plans give shape to size and growth of local government areas, with western Sydney expected to bear the brunt of the growth.

For example, the central city district, which pivots around the Parramatta and Blacktown centres, is expected to absorb the largest number of new homes with a

target of an additional 53,500 dwellings by 2021. Of these, 21,650 must be provided in the Parramatta area.



Greater Sydney Commission chief Lucy Turnbull welcomed the move, describing it as a "natural evolution for the commission". Photo: AAP

The Berejiklian government has endorsed the commission's vision as complementing its own 40-year transport planning strategy, which it claims will enable 70 per cent of Sydneysiders to live and work within 30 minutes of their jobs by 2056.

As a result of the split, UrbanGrowth Development Corporation, which is responsible for large-scale inner-city housing and development such as Central to Eveleigh rail corridor, now reports directly to the premier.

Mr Roberts retained control over Landcom, the land release agency that had been re-branded as UrbanGrowth, which was [reassigned to focus primarily on delivering affordable housing.](#)

The government said the commission's new role will be similar to that of Infrastructure NSW, which oversees the delivery of major infrastructure projects across the state and also provides advice directly to the premier.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/premier-consolidates-control-over-big-picture-vision-of-sydney-20180625-p4znlg.html>