

29 March 2017

Ms Alison Frame
Dep Secretary Planning, Policy, Strategy and Governance
Planning Legislation Updates 2017
NSW Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Ms Frame,

RE: THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH IN ANY REVIEW OF THE NSW PLANNING SYSTEM

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the review of the NSW planning system, and specifically the public consultation draft *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2017* (the Bill). Cancer Council NSW is interested in the impact of the built environment on health outcomes, due to the link between increased physical activity and a reduced risk of cancer.

Cancer Council NSW strongly endorses explicit reference to 'health and well-being' in the Objects of the Act in recognition that:

- There is growing awareness of the key role that the planning system can play in supporting the health and wellbeing of the community;
- Precedents for this measure exist in other jurisdictions such as Tasmania, South Australia and from July 2017 Queensland; and that
- Reference to the importance of health and well being already exists in many strategic planning documents in NSW including the State's Regional Plans and the current draft Greater Sydney District Plans.

Cancer Council NSW supports the submission prepared by The Healthy Planning Expert Working Group which is an independent NSW expert group comprising healthy planning experts from the academic, planning, health, local and state government sectors. We concur with their view that the built environment can have a substantial influence on individual and community health, particularly in regard to how the planning system can:

- Address the social determinants of health;
- Promote physical activity to reduce obesity and risk of chronic health conditions like heart disease, cancer and diabetes;
- Connect and strengthen communities to encourage social interaction to reduce the risk of mental illness; and
- Provide equitable access to healthy food to reduce obesity, risk of heart disease, some types of cancer, and other chronic conditions.

We also believe this current review provides the NSW Government with a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to demonstrate how planning decisions can support the Government's broader objectives to improve the health, social and economic outcomes for every person in NSW.

As a consequence Cancer Council NSW makes the following recommendations:

- **Ensure 'Health and wellbeing is explicitly identified' as an object in the Bill**, thereby embedding it as a strategic planning outcome and setting the context for future decision making.

The Healthy Planning Expert Working Group has suggested the phrasing "*To promote the health and wellbeing of all communities across NSW*" and we agree with their suggestion.

- To support this Object, the World Health Organisation definition of health should be adopted to ensure a consistent and shared understanding of the desired outcomes: "*Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*".

We support the work of the NSW Department of Planning & Environment to create a more integrated, dynamic and engaging vision for the future of planning in NSW. For further information regarding this submission, please feel free to contact me at kathyc@nswcc.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Kathy Chapman
Director, Cancer Programs