

Summit – 20 June 2022 – ICC Sydney: Welcome to the conversation

The New Sydney Waterfront Company welcomed industry and government leaders to ICC Sydney on 20 June 2022 to discuss the unique and exciting opportunity for Sydney to create truly the World's Best Waterfront.

The Hon. Rob Stokes, MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport, joined Jace Tyrrell, CEO of London's New West End Company, Sydney's thought leaders and the Board of the New Sydney Waterfront Company to discuss the defining questions for Sydney's next signature precinct.

Read the Summit highlights and watch the presentations below.

BIDs and the New Sydney Waterfront: the story so far

Jace Tyrrell

CEO, New West End Company (London) and CEO Designate, New Sydney Waterfront Company

Geoff Parmenter

Chair, New Sydney Waterfront Company

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6lvfDLsEuo&t=2s>

Jace provided a brief history of Business Improvement Districts, and outlined some achievements of New West End Company that he has been leading in London. Geoff described the “moment in time” now available for Sydney through the New Sydney Waterfront Company.

Keynote: Why Sydney should and can have the world’s best waterfront

Hon. Rob Stokes MP

Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport

Minister Stokes talked about the importance of this venture, not just as a “raiser of all boats” for Greater Sydney, but also as a benchmark global waterfront city. The Minister highlighted governance as the key to success – being the enabler of good decision making – and welcomed the BID model as a governance breakthrough for public and private sector collaboration. The Minister committed to progressing planning for enabling legislation – firstly through a White Paper in the next couple of months.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KO9BM8OAr60>

Setting the scene/framing the questions:

- Insights
- Why does this matter?

Carol Mills

Director, Institute for Public Policy and Governance, UTS

Carol shared an overview of data and insights emerging from the New Sydney Waterfront's 2021 Data and Insights Pilot study. The insights prompt the "Big Questions" for the Precinct and the Summit.

[To access the slides, click here](#)

Unpacking the "Big Questions" – Panel #1: What will be the purpose/proposition of Sydney's New Waterfront?

- What will the Precinct be famous for once the remaining \$10bn of development is completed (that it is not famous for now)?
- Who will the New Sydney Waterfront be for?
- How can we reconcile the needs/desires of conflicting customer groups
 - Should different parts of the Precinct target different customers? Or will the whole Precinct be aimed at the same audience?
 - What role might a new Precinct brand play? How will the sub-Precincts support this?

Panel:

- *Jason de Sousa, Executive Director – Australia, Lendlease*
- *Andrew Tobin, Development Director – Mixed Use, Mirvac*
- *Kiersten Fishburn, Deputy Secretary, Cities & Active Transport, Transport for NSW*
- *Eamon Waterford, Chief Strategy Officer, Investment NSW*
- *Kate Meyrick, Director, Urbis*

Facilitated by John Moore, Director, Excalibre Insights

John facilitated a lively discussion amongst an experienced and passionate panel. They challenged us to raise the bar, to create a unique and extraordinary new place for Sydney and of Sydney. It was suggested that if we can't achieve that, with a harbour-front Precinct like this, with all it already has going for it, after another \$10bn is invested in it, we should be "lined up against a wall and shot"! The panel debated the most effective approach to this, addressing tensions between prioritising local and visitor attraction, hard and soft Precinct infrastructure, and "silver bullets" versus "strings of pearls". Synergies between the new Sydney brand, and the character of the Waterfront Precinct were highlighted, offering the opportunity for the Waterfront to provide a "new brand postcard for Sydney," 50 years after the Opera House was opened.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnTCEcySoro>

Unpacking the "Big Questions" – Panel #2: Reimagining the New Sydney Waterfront experience

- What would segmentation/targeting suggest in terms of the mix of product and experiences to be offered across the Precinct? More of the same, or something new?
- How many restaurants and bars would be too many? How would we know?
- How could it best support the 24 hour economy? The circular economy? The visitor economy? The cultural economy?

Panel:

- *Michael Rodrigues, 24-Hour Economy Commissioner (NSW), Investment NSW*
- *Susan Lee, COO, Placemaking NSW*
- *Paul Zahra, CEO, Australian Retailers Association*

- *Michael Hodgson, Co-CEO Entertainment Quarter and Food Tourism expert*
- *Laura Cochrane, Director of Operational Development, Foundation Theatre Group*

Facilitated by Jace Tyrrell, CEO Designate, New Sydney Waterfront Company

Having opened the session with some international inspiration, Jace challenged the panellists to suggest the experiences and offerings that could make this the “World’s Best Waterfront”. Their ideas included the opportunity to “own seafood” – not just at the new Fish Market, but in the Precinct’s laneways and parks; curated adjacencies for distinctive, vibrant retail; cultural placemaking to connect existing and new theatres and museums; contiguous experiences from daytime to evening to night; and preserving space for people and culture that can flex as the Precinct evolves over time. The panel agreed that there should be room for both a “fruit platter” and a “fruit salad” of offerings, as long as a clear vision provided alignment and direction.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9OZ8eb3FCE>

Wrap Up

Geoff Parmenter

Chair, New Sydney Waterfront Company

Geoff provided a brief summary of the day, and outlined the path forward from here to continue the conversation and collaboration.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NE5Z_qcmQVQ