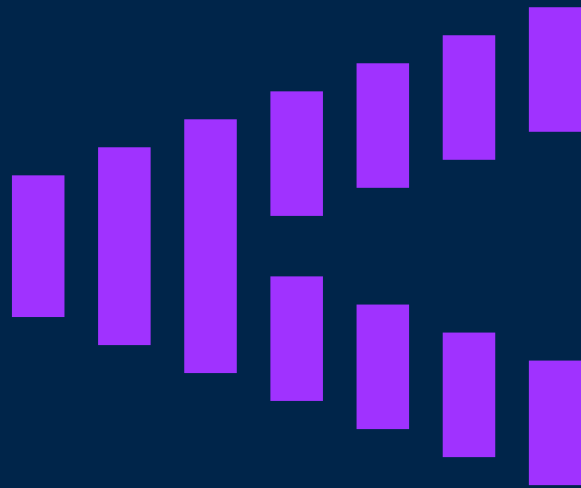




# AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

EXPANDING THE  
PARRAMATTA LEGAL  
AND JUSTICE PRECINCT



| PARRAMATTA





## MESSAGE FROM THE LORD MAYOR

The City of Parramatta has an untapped opportunity to expand our presence as a legal centre.

Currently our City is the second-largest legal centre in NSW however the reality is that we only have 5% of Greater Sydney's legal jobs.

In 2021 the City of Parramatta convened the industry-led Parramatta Legal & Justice Coalition to advocate for the relocation of legal services to Parramatta, the geographical centre of Greater Sydney.

The benefits of this are multi-pronged. Western Sydney is absorbing the bulk of Greater Sydney's population growth, so enticing the suite of justice services closer to the people has many benefits. It is good for equity and accessibility reasons. Attracting more barristers, solicitors, judges and judicial officers to our city will also aid job growth and stimulate our professional services sector.

Many legal professionals already live here or are primed to move here soon. Between 2016 and 2036, the number of legal services professionals living within 30 minutes of Parramatta will nearly double. This is why our Coalition partners are advocating for an expanded Parramatta Justice Precinct, including a greater Supreme Court presence.

We are also focused on collaborating with universities and industry to build the connections to incubate local talent, including investigating the potential for a law school in Parramatta.

Our advocacy aims to ensure our legal and court services meet the needs of our growing community, enabling greater access to talent, infrastructure and justice.

City of Parramatta Lord Mayor,  
Donna Davis



## ADDRESS FROM THE CHAIR

The Parramatta Legal and Justice Coalition was established as an initiative of City of Parramatta Council in 2021 to promote access to justice in Western Sydney and particularly Parramatta.

The Coalition's members include politicians, barristers, solicitors, academics, business group leaders and City of Parramatta Council.

The Coalition has strong support from the Law Society of NSW and Regional Law Societies not only in Parramatta but also throughout Western Sydney and country NSW.

Together, we are championing an expansion of the Justice Precinct in the Parramatta CBD and advocating for a permanent Supreme Court of New South Wales presence at Parramatta.

There are significant opportunities that can be leveraged through working together. Through research, advocacy and partnerships, the Coalition seeks to fulfil Parramatta's potential to become one of Australia's key legal hubs. To discuss how you can contribute to the Coalition's activities and promote access to justice in and around Parramatta, please get in touch with us.

Stephen McAuley  
Chair, Parramatta Legal and Justice Coalition



# GROWING PARRAMATTA'S LEGAL AND JUSTICE PRECINCT

NSW Government has shown a strong commitment to support the growth of Parramatta and Western Sydney. However, despite existing court infrastructure in Parramatta and the precinct's capacity for growth, the majority of legal services remain anchored in the Sydney CBD.

## PARRAMATTA LEGAL & JUSTICE COALITION

In August 2021, the Parramatta Legal & Justice Coalition was formed to advocate and promote an expanded legal and justice precinct in Parramatta to transform the CBD into one of Australia's key legal hubs.

Along with a permanent Supreme Court presence, the Parramatta Legal and Justice Coalition is advocating for a new law school and more jobs in the Parramatta CBD.

It is estimated that an expanded Parramatta Legal and Justice Precinct could attract 2,200 more jobs by 2036 with further investment while attracting more than \$350 million a year to the local economy, further cementing Parramatta's position as the geographic heart of Sydney.

Coalition members include representatives from City of Parramatta Council, top law firms, universities and business groups.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COALITION

- Advocacy**  
Meetings with the Supreme Court of NSW, Federal and State Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers and Shadow Cabinet Ministers.
- Research**  
Survey conducted of legal practitioners regarding likely usage of permanent sitting of Supreme Court of NSW at Parramatta. Case analysis conducted by Western Sydney University Justice Clinic showing number of solicitor firms from Western Sydney that file proceedings in the Sydney CBD.
- Partnerships**  
Working with Coalition members, including City of Parramatta Council, Property Council of Australia and Business Western Sydney to promote our advocacy through a variety of channels.



# BEYOND POLICY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND TALENT: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The location and growth of legal and justice precincts touches on something fundamental to our legal system and society.

Approximately 50 per cent of people experience one or more legal problems in a 12-month period and 28% report that these problems had a moderate or severe impact on their lives\*, highlighting a fundamental tenet to the rule of law: the need for legal and court services to be accessible to most of the population.

## MOVING JUSTICE CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE

More than two million people call Western Sydney home. Over the next 20 years, that's set to rise by another one million. In that time, Parramatta's population is forecast to double from 287,289 in 2022 to 487,731 in 2041.

As Sydney's population growth continues to move west, equitable access to justice services becomes critical to the region's liveability and prosperity.

## BARRIERS TO CHANGE

In December 2019, the City of Parramatta commissioned SGS Economics & Planning to prepare a report into the scale, composition and economic contribution of the legal and justice services sector in Parramatta.

The Parramatta Legal and Justice Sector Report helps us to understand the sector better and identify opportunities for expansion - breaking the cycle that inhibits growth and access to justice.

Various factors have contributed to this cycle that keeps the bulk of law - and legal talent - in Sydney's CBD, such as the resourcing of Parramatta courts and the perception that the Sydney CBD is more prestigious.

\*Parramatta Legal and Justice Sector, December 2019.



# LEGAL AND JUSTICE PRECINCTS IN NSW

There is currently no publicly available policy or strategy governing where NSW courts are located or how justice infrastructure and facilities are managed in the long term.

However, broader government and justice sector policy suggests there's an opportunity to grow Parramatta Legal and Justice Precinct:

## Six cities vision

Several NSW State strategies identify Parramatta and the Central City District, as a primary location for services and knowledge jobs in Greater Sydney.

## Government office re-location

Sydney Water, the Greater Sydney Commission, Departments of Education and Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW Industrial Relations Commission, NSW Police Headquarters and most of the Department of Justice are already located in Parramatta.

## PARRAMATTA VS SYDNEY CBD

Parramatta is home to the second largest legal and justice precinct in Greater Sydney, behind the Sydney CBD. There is a significant gap in the number of courts and legal services jobs. This gap in resourcing, including the number of judges, is a constant strain on growth and capacity to serve.

	PARRAMATTA	SYDNEY
Courts	5	10
Legal Service Jobs	1,000	16,000
Barrister location	6%	80%
Legal professionals earning over \$90K	65%	40%



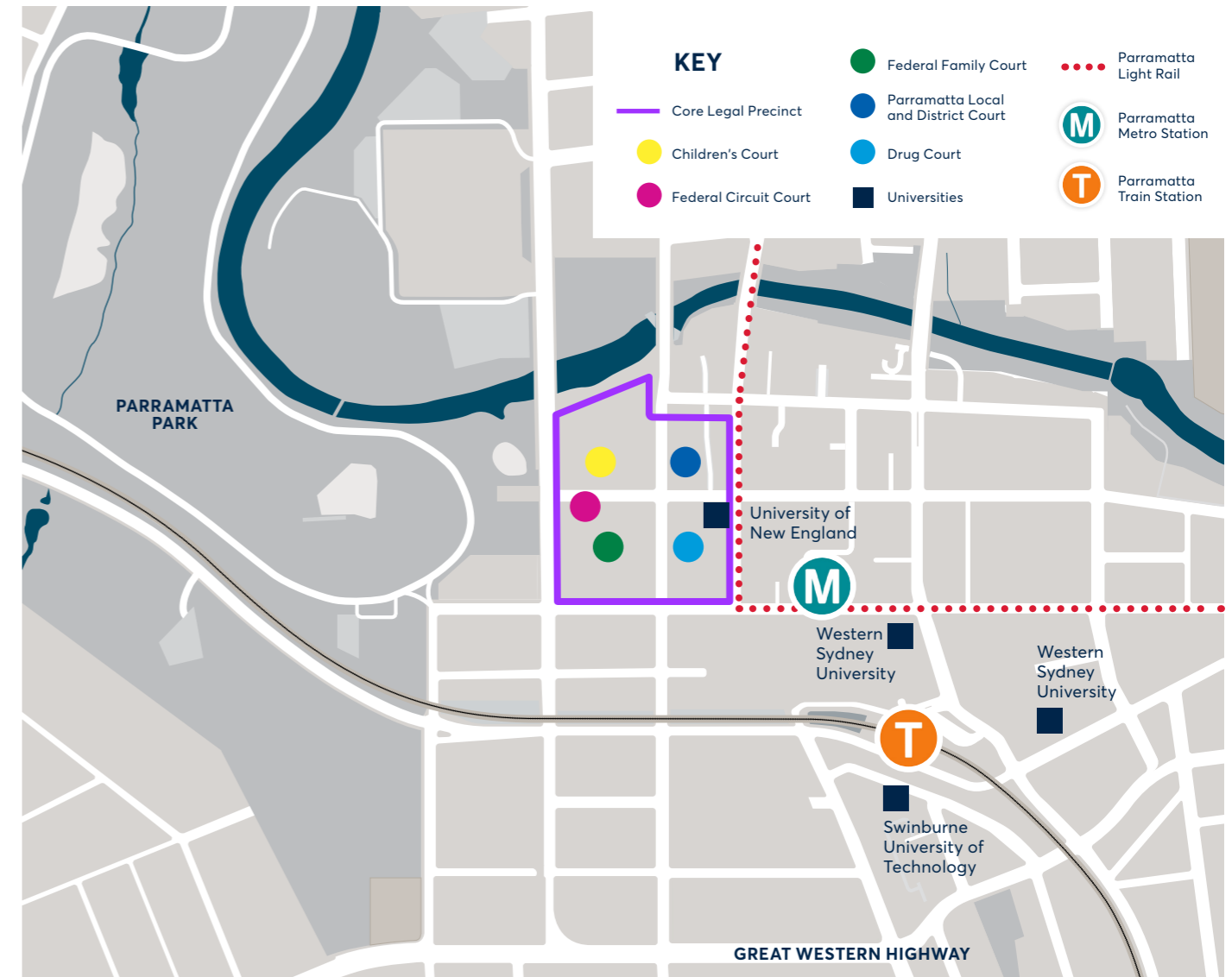
## ATTRACTING LEGAL MINDS

Universities are an integral part of the legal and justice ecosystem.

Parramatta is home to five universities, creating a pool of diverse and emerging talent right at the doorstep of law firms and the Legal & Justice Precinct.

As the population of Greater Western Sydney grows, the number of legal services professionals living within 30 minutes of Parramatta will nearly double.

# EXISTING LEGAL AND JUSTICE PRECINCT



## LOCATION AND ACCESS

The Parramatta Legal and Justice Precinct is located in the midst of Western Sydney's two-million strong population. The Precinct is accessible to the Sydney CBD, Western Sydney, and key centres like Parramatta North and Westmead, via the Parramatta Train Station and the new Parramatta Light Rail. Access to transport will only be improved with the addition of Sydney Metro West and Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2.

## WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

Parramatta is the second largest legal precinct in Greater Sydney, but attracts only 5% of Greater Sydney's legal jobs compared to 71% in Sydney CBD.

However, these core legal jobs in Parramatta are supported and integrated with a range of other jobs, sitting within a broader ecosystem of more than 40,000 jobs – one third of Parramatta's total local jobs.

## COURT CAPACITY CHALLENGES

Despite the potential, stakeholder consultation highlighted these trends in court capacity in Parramatta:

- Increase in family law matters and demand for Family Court hearings
- Backlog of cases in the Family Court
- Shortage of Judges who are willing to work permanently in Parramatta
- District Court is under-resourced, driving lawyers to the reliability and consistency of Sydney CBD's courts.



# FORECASTING FUTURE SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

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**IN 2021, 15% OF SUPREME COURT OF NSW MATTERS AND NSW COURT OF APPEALS MATTERS WERE REPRESENTED BY LAW FIRMS BASED IN GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY.**

High-level forecasting analysis, based on per-capita rates of the number of matters by the three main state court jurisdictions, shows an increased demand for court services coupled with a rising number of legal professionals practising in Western Sydney.

## DEMAND FOR COURT SERVICES

Between 2016 and 2036 there will be the following additional matters heard across NSW:

- 3,400** → Supreme Court matters
- 4,700** → District Court matters
- 115,700** → Local Court matters

The court infrastructure within Parramatta Legal and Justice Precinct is there, and able to cater to existing and future demand. However, investment in the resourcing of the courts is required.

## GROWTH IN LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

The number of legal professionals practising within 30 minutes of Parramatta is predicted to almost double between 2016 and 2036.

This growth is driven by improved public transport links to the Sydney CBD and continued development in Parramatta and to Western Sydney.

# CASE FOR EXPANDING PARRAMATTA'S LEGAL & JUSTICE PRECINCT

Parramatta is the centre of Global Sydney. Its Legal and Justice Precinct is well-positioned to support and accommodate growth, with existing infrastructure, increasing accessibility to talent and customers, high quality amenities, growing transport networks and premium office space availability.

The 25,000 Local, District and Supreme Court matters heard across the Parramatta CBD legal precinct could potentially double, or even triple if Parramatta was to take a metropolitan role – including hearing 30 per cent of Supreme Court cases and an increased share of District and Local matters.

## INCREASING CAPACITY ACROSS GREATER SYDNEY

There is potential demand for up to 4,000 additional Supreme Court matters to be held in Parramatta CBD annually if a permanent judge was present. Given the scale of growth, there is an opportunity to spatially disperse matters to better align with Sydney's overall population distribution.

## IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Co-location of justice services and courts in justice precincts increases the efficiency of service delivery. It also provides the opportunity for improved access to justice through integrated and holistic service delivery.

## POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Adding between 700 and 1,400 new legal jobs within the Parramatta CBD is possible with investment by the NSW Government to increase the service capacity of the Parramatta Legal & Justice Precinct – representing between \$36 million and \$350 million in value added to the local economy. The economic impact of this expansion is not limited just to the creation of new legal jobs. It also includes the flow-on growth as new firms and employees spend money in the local economy.



**THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LEGAL AND BUSINESS SECTORS IN PARRAMATTA ARE ALREADY BEGINNING TO BE REALISED.**

**THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SMALL TO MEDIUM LEGAL FIRMS ESTABLISHING IN PARRAMATTA AND THREE OF THE BIG FOUR ACCOUNTING FIRMS HAVE A PARRAMATTA PRESENCE.**



# MOVING JUSTICE CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE: A CALL TO ACTION

The economic, social and practical benefits of Parramatta Justice Precinct's expansion are waiting. Moving justice closer to the people requires commitment from many stakeholders.

## GOVERNMENT

**Making an investment** to grow the Parramatta Legal and Justice Precinct and provide more local employment opportunities for a growing talent pool.

## COUNCIL

**Advocating** for the expansion of the Parramatta Legal and Justice Precinct, including a greater Supreme Court of NSW presence. Working directly with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to build the case for expansion.

**Strengthening partnerships** with local legal firms, universities and the NSW Law Society. Facilitating collaboration between university and industry to build the connections and opportunities that incubate local legal talent.

## PRIVATE SECTOR

**Believing** in the area's potential. The perceived prestige of Parramatta is growing, and will continue to grow with substantial investment in development and infrastructure.

**Joining the conversation.** Through collaboration and partnerships, Parramatta's potential to become one of Australia's key legal hubs can be fulfilled.



WE'VE GROWN UP WITH WESTERN SYDNEY; LIKE THE CITY, WE'VE CHANGED AND EVOLVED FROM A TRADITIONAL FIRM. I THINK OUR GROWTH HAS ALIGNED WITH PARRAMATTA AND THE REGION. WE HAVE SEEN THE OPPORTUNITY, AND KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT IF YOU GIVE TO THE REGION, THE REGION WILL GIVE BACK TO YOU.

Warrick McLean, Former Chief Executive Officer Executive Officer, Coleman Greig (Sydney's largest commercial law firm outside the Sydney CBD)







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