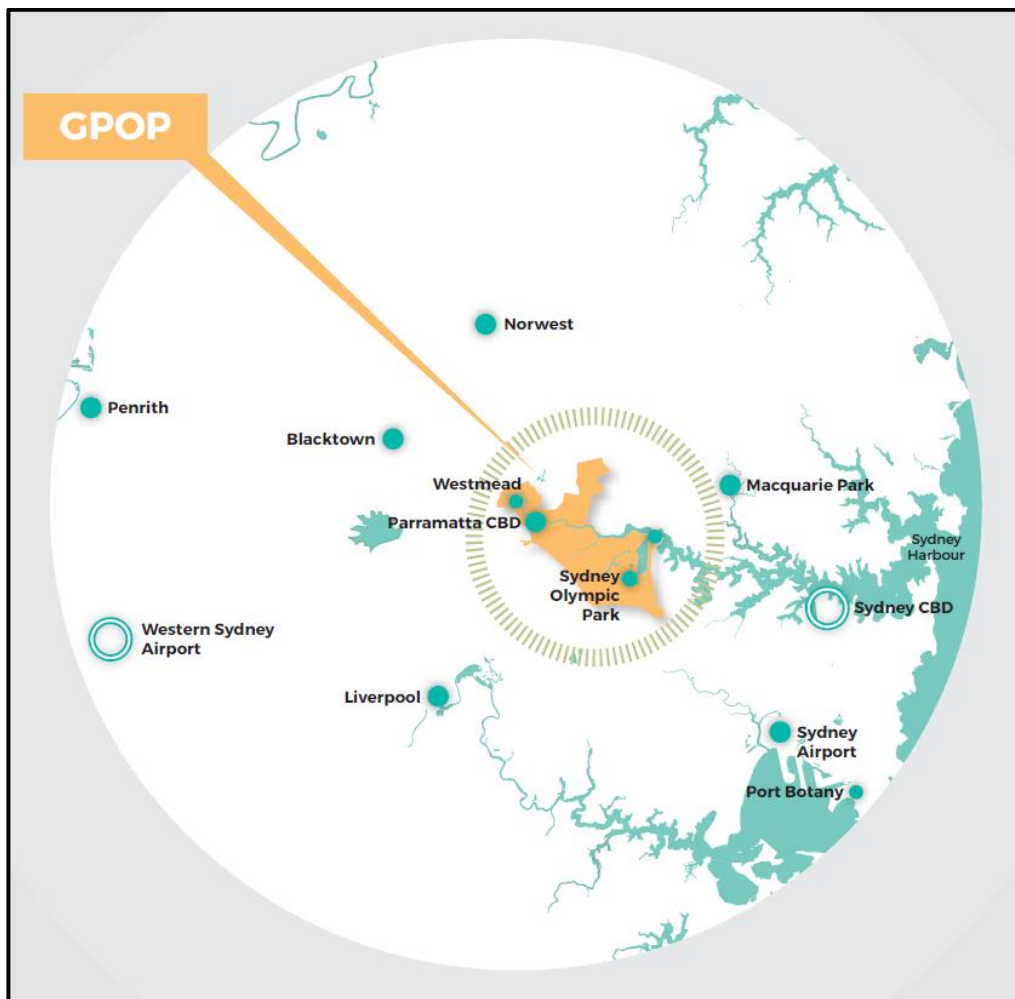**Kane Pham**

The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:
The case of Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula, Sydney

Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building
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Ph.D (Built Environment)

2023

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Acknowledgements

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The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, Kane Pham, declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Institute for Public Policy and Governance at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Preface

In the years prior and during the earlier stages of the PhD, I had worked in a university research consultancy with clients across all levels of government and the private sector. Some of the work involved supporting NSW Government agencies. During the later stages of the PhD, I was in direct employment by the NSW Government. I was initially employed within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in 2021. Following a Machinery of Government (MOG) change shortly after joining led to the remit of the department changing to the Department of Planning and Environment – the same name and broad responsibility as prior to the 2019 MOG. Within a few months after the MOG, an internal restructure led to my move to Transport for NSW in short shrift. Since then, I have had the opportunity to work in the Department of Customer Service, and at the time of completion of this thesis, I am employed by the Greater Cities Commission (formerly Greater Sydney Commission).

These later experiences have somewhat added to the research experience, and to a small extent the research methodology which included some tacitly experienced autoethnographic research. These observations and informal conversations in the workplace (even the remote workplace) have confirmed some of the interview findings and allowed access to information not normally realised if my change in employ had not occurred. These fortunate circumstances need to be prefaced with another challenging situation and disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In early 2020, the murmuring of a global health crisis was emerging. The subsequent lockdowns and limits to face-to-face engagement severely impeded on my interview program that was to begin shortly after. With all the optimism of a researcher in training, and stubborn desire to conduct the interviews in person, together with my supervisory team, I decided to delay the field work to the end of the pandemic, or when it was safe to conduct interviews in person. Fortunately, enough leeway was built into the program of work, that the interviews could then begin in early 2021. While the timeframe was extended, this also allowed what I think was additional time for reflexive thinking. It is unclear whether on balance it was a positive or negative contributor, but it was a duly pragmatic decision that has allowed the completion of this manuscript.

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Abstract

This research aims to understand the relationship between place-based strategies and the delivery of metropolitan growth priorities. While the contextual challenges of planning in Australia is unique globally, Australian planners have regularly drawn inspiration from abroad. These planning solutions take the form of policy ideals that are decontextualized from their point of import. As they are recontextualized, they are materialized into a spatial form known as spatial imaginaries. The implementation of spatial imaginaries target investment in particular places and provide levers for private sector investment.

Spatial imaginaries can act as both rhetorical devices to influence spatial strategies, as well as providing an interface to communicate complex planning and policy visions. While the impact and significance of spatial imaginaries have been observed internationally, little attention has focused on examples in Australia. This thesis explores the outcomes of spatial imaginaries in the Australian context.

Recent metropolitan strategies have identified the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) as integral to the vision of a 'metropolis of three cities' and the Central River City in improving equity and opportunity in the Sydney metropolitan region. The Sydney metropolitan region plan also suggests that a place-based approach to planning and collaboration across State and local governments, businesses and the community is at the heart of the strategy. The implementation of this ambition has wide ranging implications both within the GPOP and the Sydney metropolitan region more broadly. As this case study is situated at the intersection of multiple spatial scales and stakeholder groups, a multispatial metagovernance approach is used to integrate these stakeholder perspectives and address the challenges of balancing power and spatial interests.

To understand how the GPOP delivers on the metropolitan vision, the research has focused on the perceptions of professional planners, policy-makers, developers, and peak industry bodies directly involved in shaping and delivering strategic plans and policy frameworks. A theoretical framework was designed by drawing inspiration from the interrelated literatures of place-based planning, spatial imaginaries, border studies and multispatial metagovernance. This theoretical framework was guided by the literature review and grey literature to provide a foundation for interpreting the data. An interpretive policy analysis framework has been

adopted through the review and analysis of key literature with fourteen semi-structured interviews conducted.

Given this context, the research examined different stakeholder perspectives of the GPOP, to understand how spatial imaginaries influence spatial policy-making and delivery at different spatial scales – that is – from the local through metropolitan scales of governance. Over the course of the research both the political and spatial environment governing the GPOP had shifted. While the GPOP and associated spatial strategy has evolved since its introduction, its influence has been variable in achieving its designed function. Given this dynamism, further changes to both the GPOP and its relationship to metropolitan spatial planning should be expected.

The research makes a contribution to the planning profession by engaging in in-depth research of a contemporary planning challenge in a strategically significant planning space of the GPOP. The contribution is two-fold – the development of a novel theoretical framework that can be used to examine the relationship of place-based strategies and the delivery of metropolitan growth priorities generally, and more specifically identifying the enablers of place-based development in the GPOP. While the GPOP has made advances in promoting place-based collaboration, further spatial strategic development innovations will be required to address emergent challenges.

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Chapter 1   Introduction

Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) within Greater Sydney's metropolis of three cities (GSC 2019, p. 2)

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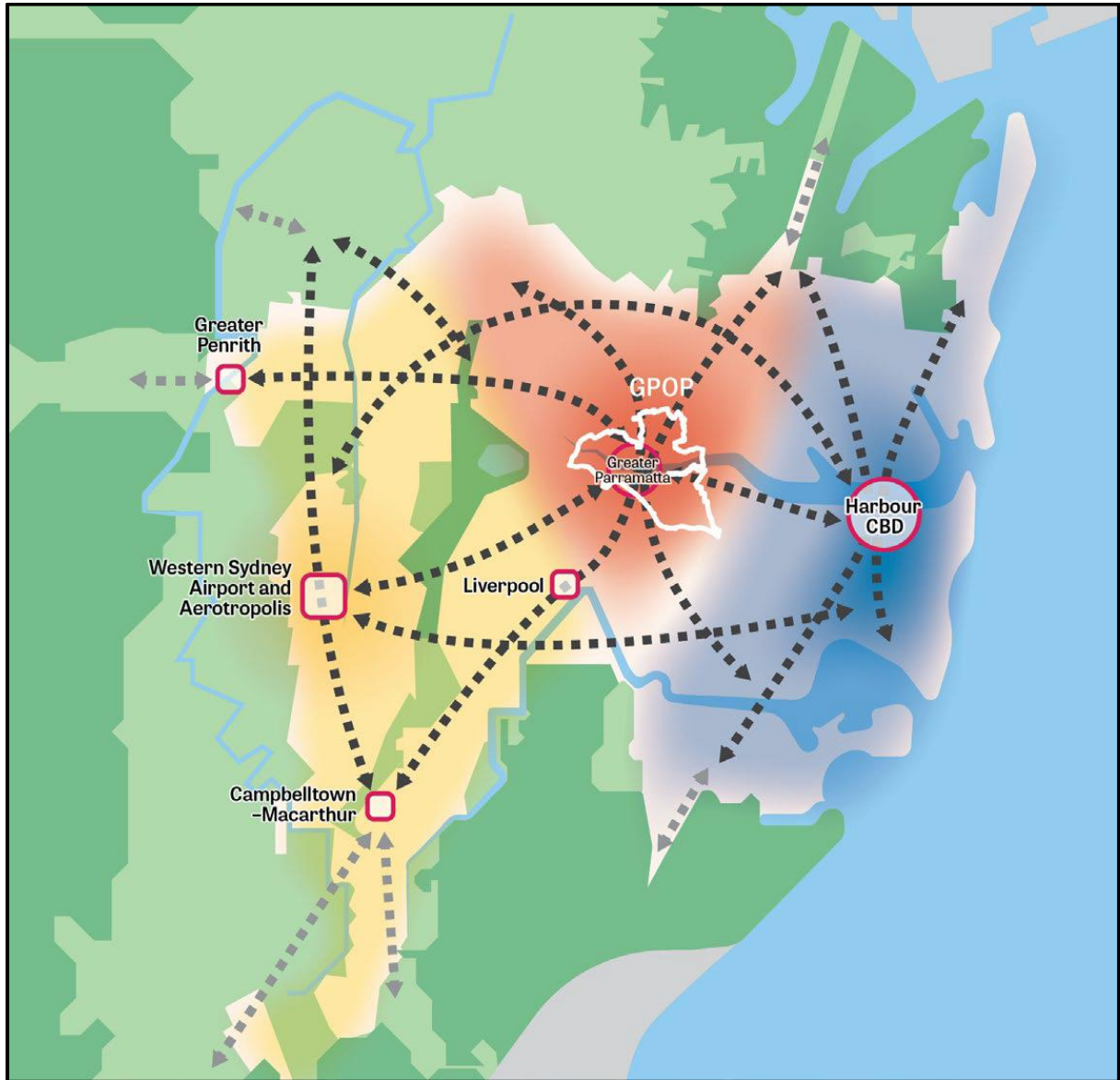*Spatial imaginaries [...] are about rather more than just superficial representations. They can determine where government investment is channelled and into what kinds of policies.*

(Hincks, Deas & Haughton 2017, p. 655)

1.1 Rationale for the research

Increasingly, place-based policymaking is being undertaken by governments to address uneven spatial development in cities and regions. These inequalities vary widely from infrastructure provision, access to transport and jobs, and amenities and place-making in local areas. However, there is a research gap in exploring and understanding the implications of these interventions in Sydney in particular, and Australia in general.

In the Sydney metropolitan region, there is a wide gap in spatial equity between an amenity rich Eastern City, and amenity poor Central and Western Cities. The NSW Government has attempted to address these inequalities through the delivery of place-based policies. The development of place-based policies often starts with the form of a spatial imaginary. Spatial imaginaries are rhetorical tools used to shift the attention of policy-makers, urban decision-makers and investors to focus on development within certain places. They are also used to draw attention to the global economic competitiveness of an area, allow for comparison to international peers, and to justify intensified development (Searle 2013). The Sydney 'Global Arc' (2005) is a contemporary example of this intervention highlighting Sydney's proposition as a business and professional services centre.

Until recently, spatial imaginaries such as the 'Global Arc' have remained in a non-statutory space, and their spatial depiction kept abstract as a gestural and fuzzy outline. However, more recently these gestures have made the transition towards concrete spatial strategies. This research then seeks to explore the impact of a spatial imaginary when it takes a statutory form. When a spatial imaginary takes a statutory form, it intervenes in plan making at local, regional, and metropolitan scales, and requires bespoke governance arrangements to manage the impacts of its development. It is at this point that the implications of multiple overlapping planning spaces are realized, and require the coordination and collaboration of governments,

communities and developers to maintain orderly growth in the region. The focus of this research is centred on the spatial imaginary of the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) and explores the impact it has on stakeholders and policy-makers working in this space as this planning space evolves from an abstract idea to planning reality.

In response to these dynamics, the research explores the relationships between place-based strategies and the delivery of metropolitan growth priorities; how they affect policy-making; and their challenges and opportunities. A research scaffold was assembled through several complementary theoretical concepts to identify the enabling or hindering factors to the development and implementation of place-based strategies in the GPOP, Sydney.

1.2   Background and research aim/objectives

The ambitions and ideals of metropolitan strategies often contend with emergent social and spatial realities. This ongoing tension poses a challenge for planners, policy-makers and the constituencies they affect. New spaces of planning, spatial policies and governmental priorities are invented to intervene in these challenges, addressing enduring 'wicked issues' and calling for action at all levels of government (APSC 2007; Walsh 2016). To this end, there has been a renewed focus on the role of places and their broader social and spatial impacts. In short, the strategic development of (certain) places are integral to the success of metropolitan regions.

The successful development and growth of strategic places in metropolitan regions appropriately balance local issues with macro political and economic drivers. Metropolitan spatial policies are multiscalar, that is, while specific policies focus on particular places, they also respond to policy drivers developed at larger spatial scales. The multiscalar quality of metropolitan spatial policy entails a metagovernance approach to coordinate between diverse stakeholder groups across government, business and communities. These processes bring together a range of plans and actors, both strategic and statutory planning instruments across government departments and hierarchies thus introducing interesting conditions that shape policy frameworks.

The aim of this research was to understand how place-based strategies perform to support metropolitan growth priorities. This is examined in the context of increasing interest of place-

based development policies, and interrelationships across government sectors, and levels of government. These interrelationships also provided a view of the key stakeholders involved in the development of spatial policies in the GPOP including the NSW Government, councils, developers, planning consultancies and peak business bodies. The objective of the research was to apply a theoretical framework developed from several complementary theoretical concepts to identify the enabling or hindering factors to the development and implementation of place-based strategies in the GPOP, Sydney. Through the course of this thesis, a theoretical framework was developed and was used to interpret the desktop data review and interview findings.

Place-based strategies often begin as a 'spatial imaginary' – that is – a spatial representation about specific places and spaces (Watkins 2015). These spatial imaginaries guide discourses around places and serve to influence stakeholders and steer policy-making. The focus of this study is on a particular strategic spatial imaginary, the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula (GPOP), located in the centre of Figure 1.1. The GPOP was invented to counter dominant path-dependencies of metropolitan development and growth that prioritised access and advantage to the metropolitan east, centred on the Sydney or the Harbour CBD located on the right of Figure 1.1.
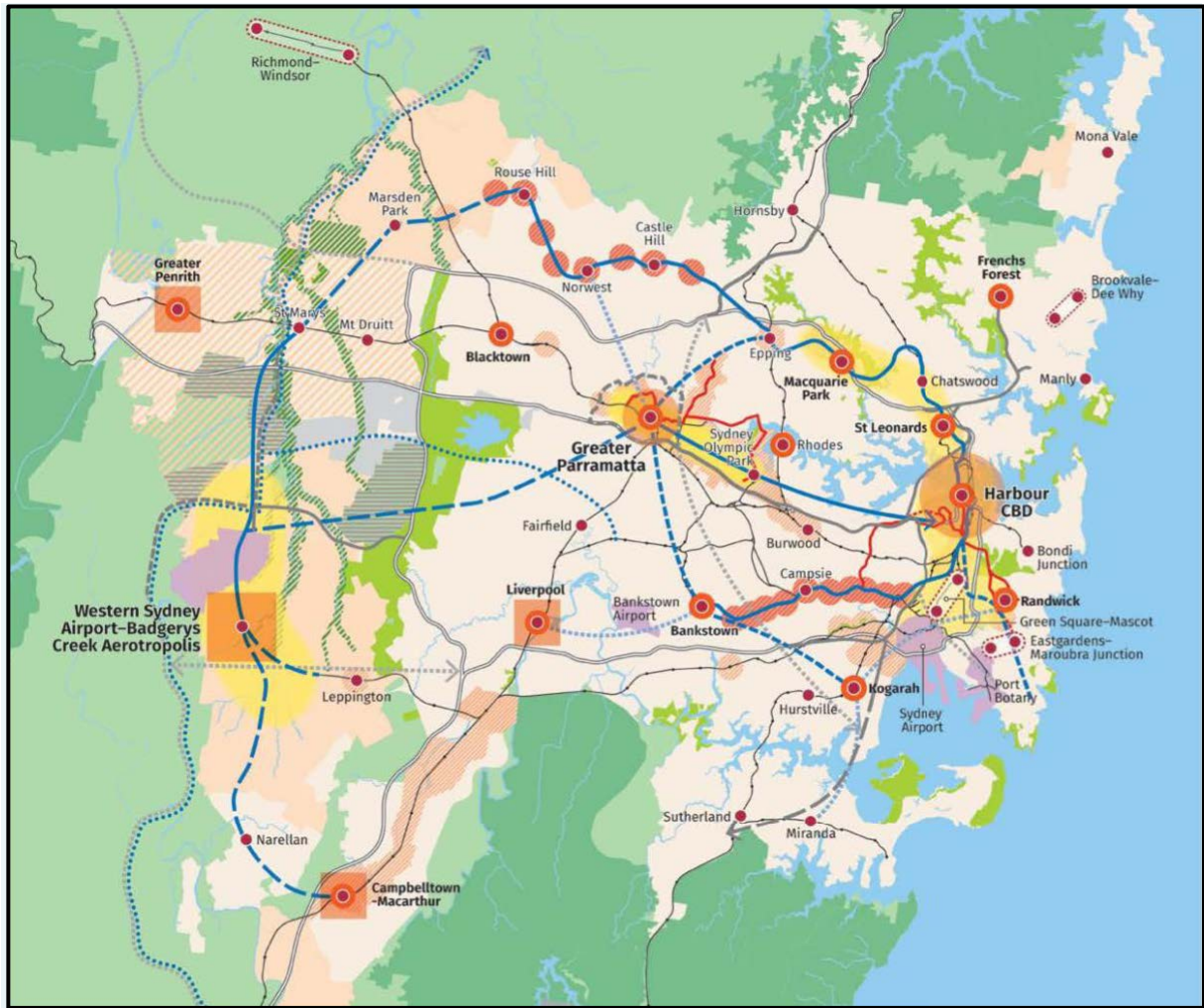
Figure 1.1 Sydney Metropolitan Region - Significant urban centres.
Source: GSC 2018a, p. 15.

Since the 1980s, the Sydney CBD has dominated in capturing flows of capital both relative to the metropolitan region and nationally to become Australia's 'global' city (Hu 2012). The area centred on the GPOP has struggled to attract similar fortunes. The eastern metropolis, located along the Pacific Ocean is also endowed with a more attractive climate. Western Sydney lacks these amenities and along with lower urban tree canopy has led to less liveable environments that add to the challenges of improving liveability. Thus, metropolitan policies and place-based strategies are required to address long-standing spatial inequalities as governments, business and civil society contend with future challenges.

While the success of the GPOP could be measured solely by its performance as a bounded place, it is not an isolated place but integrated within existing urban systems. The GPOP is conceptualised and imagined within a metropolitan strategic spatial hierarchy that sits on top

of existing local government area (LGA) boundaries and spaces, and responds to overarching metropolitan growth priorities. Thus, this study seeks to understand these spatial and strategic relationships through the perception of professional stakeholders involved in shaping and delivering these plans and strategies.

In contemporary planning policy, there is a growing utilisation and emphasis on place-based strategies, thus it is important to develop an improved understanding of the interrelationship between place and metropolitan policy. Implementing this knowledge will be critical for the development of urban professionals and delivering better planned outcomes for their communities. More broadly, the results of this study will be an important resource for practitioners, policy-makers and the education of planners and policy-makers by identifying tensions realised in practice and pathways for improving planning outcomes.

1.3   Contextual background

Imaginaries of places serve as powerful devices that shape metropolitan strategies by supporting decision-making around where development ought to occur. In Sydney, spatial imaginaries such as the 'green belt', an imported policy taken from the UK, indicated where land should be preserved from development. Although the intention was to preserve land from development, it also lacked a contextual consideration of existing geographies and development practices. In the context of Sydney's geography and existing development, these challenges compromised growth management priorities with locational preferences at the time (c.f. Spearritt and Demarco 1988). These corridors "avoided precise boundaries but used existing transport routes as spines and existing towns as nodes of growth" (Morison 2000, p. 126). And while corridors can encompass a range of scales (local to supranational), functions (ecological, transportation, economic) and disciplinary perspectives (geography, spatial policy, economic) they generally refer to the "development of macro-scale development structures" (Albrechts and Tasan-Kok 2009, p. 298).

Since the mid 20th century, pressures of population growth have tested the ability of a green belt around Sydney to limit outward expansion around the metropolitan periphery. During this period of post war growth, Sydney's first statutory metropolitan plan, the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme (CCPS) (1948) was adopted. It imported the spatially blind strategies of green belts and satellite towns from Patrick Abercrombie's Greater London Plan

(1944). This period of accelerated growth should be seen in the context of a post-war reconstruction that was happening globally, and while conventional wisdom mostly advocated for the satellite town concept (Freestone & Pullan 2021) its endorsement was not universal. Criticisms pointed to the costs of implementing these new town programs, as well as inefficiencies and waste of network infrastructure that was built in the space between existing and planned settlements.

The County of Cumberland Council (CCC), a metropolitan planning authority was also Australia's first metropolitan governance actor, positioned between local and state tiers of government. This authority sought to emulate British town and country planning practice by balancing "between centralisation, planned dispersal and satellite development, [and] the expectation was that orderly suburbanisation of population and industry would accommodate growth to the early 1970s with longer term expansion absorbed by a ring of satellite towns in the outer rural area" (Freestone & Pullan 2021, p. 8). The CCPS also implemented the orderly preservation of land corridors reserving space for public utilities. Interestingly, these corridors are early indications of the imaginaries of megaregional corridors connecting the centres of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. Population growth however exceeded expectation leading to the green belt switching roles from a girdle to a placeholder for the creation of new suburbs (Freestone 1992).

This inelasticity and subsequent lack of integrity of the green belt imaginary capitulated to a "succession of ad hoc amendments" (Freestone & Pullan 2021, p. 9) demonstrated by the enlargement of municipalities such as Penrith subsuming the nearby town of St Marys. A temporary coalition of actors including the CCC, Commonwealth Government, NSW Government and Penrith Municipal Council was formed to coordinate growth around this enlarged precinct. However, the complexity of this project, and the inexperience and lack of expertise of its membership in responding to planning challenges stalled the pace of progress. A refusal to provide promised funding by the federal government increased the cost burden to the municipality. While at this stage a coalition of support was present, the lack of know-how and fiscal envelope constrained the realisation of the scheme.

These pressures of growth led to the eventual dissolution of the CCC, and it was replaced with the State Planning Authority (SPA), legislated under the *State Planning Authority Act 1963*. Under the stewardship of the SPA, metropolitan planning took a more ordered

expansion along railway and utilities corridors. A new plan was introduced, *Sydney Region Outline Plan (SROP) (1968)* which diverged from the green belt and satellite town model. The lack of expertise, governance and financing were seen as causes of the failure to respond to greater than expected levels of population growth (Freestone & Pullan 2021).

At this point it is pertinent to highlight the intersecting role of spatial planning and the private sector. Campbelltown was another contentious satellite town indicated within the CCPS. Tensions flared between the SPA, Campbelltown Council, and private property developer, Frank Wolstenholme. Wolstenholme, a former Mayor of Kogarah municipality lobbied for a change in land use from rural uses to land zoned for housing. Exemplifying Sandercock's (1979) observation of the Australian pastime of land speculation and planning decision-making, Wolstenholme wanted land north of Campbelltown to be included under expansion plans. This was despite being informed by the CCC that expansion was likely to move in a different direction, south-west towards Camden (Freestone & Pullan 2021).

This relationship between planning, infrastructure delivery and development decision-making has remained complex, with an unresolved critical missing link that has persisted. Corridor plans advocated by the SPA continue to influence urban expansion and consolidation with both real (e.g. Parramatta Road corridor) and imagined (e.g. Global Arc) corridors shaping strategic spatial planning. This continues with the most recent iteration of the 2018 metropolitan plans. And it is coordinating development and growth between these real and imagined spaces that tests the ability of spatial policy-makers to avoid reinforcing existing spatial inequality in the distribution and delivery of more even spatial outcomes.

In observing the development and conflicts emerging within metropolitan regions, rather than changing, reconfiguring, or adjusting borderlines, it is often (politically, and practically) an easier task to draw new boundaries with their own independent functional logics. In the creation of these spatial imaginaries, new functional logics are drawn together forming their own distinct, spatially-wedded interests. The development of spatial imaginaries responds to enduring urban governance challenges of coordinating land-use planning, infrastructure provision and integrated development. They are invented to draw together and mediate relations between contentious political actors (Hincks, Deas and Haughton 2017). In Sydney, the spatial imaginary of the GPOP, centred on the Parramatta CBD attempts to address these challenges.

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The Parramatta CBD is the second largest metropolitan centre outside of the Sydney CBD. It is located 20km west and when compared to the City of Sydney, the City of Parramatta has a significantly lower economic profile measured by median household income ($2,046 vs $2,310) (Profile.ID n.d.). The Central City Region centred on Parramatta has a similar population to the Eastern City Region centred on Sydney (1,834,311 vs 1,895,427) but a significantly lower number of jobs (774,038 vs 1,572,476). Parramatta also has a lower level of university qualification (44% vs 53%) and lower utilisation of taking public transport to work (36% vs 44%) though is more multicultural with a majority speaking a language other than English at home (56% vs 35%).[1] It is these inequalities that the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) has attempted to address through the delivery of a GPOP place-based strategy.

The GSC is an independent statutory agency charged with delivering strategic planning and governance coordination for the greater Sydney metropolitan region. The formation of the GSC was precipitated by the Liberal-National coalition government retaining power in March 2015. The *Greater Sydney Commission bill 2015* was introduced by then Minister for Planning Rob Stokes determining the structure, responsibility, and membership of the GSC, and passed cabinet in November 2015 (Stokes 2015). The bill references numerous historical precedents that have investigated the question of constituting a greater Sydney governance agency including the 1913 NSW Royal Commission Inquiry, and the County of Cumberland Council established in 1945 (Stokes 2015). The bill mandates six responsibilities of the GSC – (1) lead metropolitan planning for the greater Sydney region, (2) promote orderly development in the greater Sydney region, integrating social, economic and environmental considerations, (3) integrate government infrastructure decision-making with land use planning, (4) promote the supply of housing, including affordable housing, (5) encourage development that is resilient and takes into account natural hazards, (6) support ongoing improvement in productivity, liveability and environmental quality (Stokes 2015).

With the Liberal-National coalition government elected for a second term, this led to a strengthened ambition for planning reform and in part a desire for efficiency and consolidation of local government. This ambition was also applied to integrate land use and infrastructure planning and to "streamline the way the NSW Government's infrastructure and

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[1] Figures are current to 2021 and compiled from Profile.ID community profile population highlights and GCC 2022.

urban planning priorities are delivered" (Griffith 2015, p. 1). Legislative reforms in 2017 updating the Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) added local strategic planning statements (LSPSs) to the hierarchy of strategic planning instruments that councils are required to complete, and the GSC are responsible for endorsing (Montoya 2019). In 2018, the GSC had shifted reporting lines from the Minister for Planning and the Department of Planning and Environment, to report directly to the NSW Premier and more "effectively collaborate across Government agencies and ensure the Government's vision becomes a reality" (GSC 2018c). With this change, a new set of priorities were agreed including responsibility of the GSC to lead the delivery of the vision for Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula (GPOP).

The spatial imaginary of the GPOP was defined around its geographic position as the centre of the Sydney metropolitan region, under a 2036 vision to become "Greater Sydney's true centre – the connected, unifying heart" (GSC 2016, p. 6). Given its longstanding position as Sydney's second city, it is a sensible decision to call out the GPOP as a metropolitan opportunity. The accompanying strategy draws comparison to the infrastructure and urban service assets in the Sydney CBD, foregrounding future infrastructure investment and stating governments vision for the four precincts linked by future infrastructure, namely the Parramatta Light Rail. These four precincts are: (1) Parramatta CBD and Westmead health and education super precinct; (2) Next generation living from Camellia to Carlingford; (3) Essential urban services, advanced technology and knowledge sectors; (4) Olympic Park lifestyle super precinct.

The GPOP is the economic core of the Central River City. To address the anticipated growth in infrastructure requirements, development intensity and community growth, the GSC have developed a new strategic planning model for its management. This new model called the GPOP place-based infrastructure compact (PIC) intends to "look holistically at a place to better align growth with the provision of infrastructure" (GSC 2019, p. 7). This model aims to manage the hard administrative boundaries of local government areas to support the orderly governance, coordination and planning around the Parramatta CBD core.

While Parramatta CBD, forming part of the GPOP, has long been recognised as a regional centre in metropolitan Sydney, the spatial imaginary of the GPOP can be envisaged as a product of previous imaginaries, predominantly shaped by infrastructural and transport

corridors. For example, the GPOP intersects with other spatial imaginaries including the Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy (PRCUTS) framing a transport corridor between Granville and Camperdown.

The GPOP is central to achieving the vision of the 2018 metropolitan strategic plan, 'A metropolis of three cities,' and the first metropolitan strategy in 50-years to be produced by a statutory metropolitan authority. Produced by the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC), a metropolitan governance actor responsible for strategic spatial planning for metropolitan Sydney, it sets the framework for a 20-year plan, and a 40-year vision to rebalance the metropolis. This spatial imaginary signifies the importance of place-based policies, their development, and highlights the importance of some places over others. This creation of new spaces of opportunity both within the GPOP and in relation to the metropolis attempts to rebalance opportunity from the Sydney CBD, towards the GPOP. The implication of this spatial strategy creates interesting spatial conditions, but also generates tension between actors through the implementation of new planning spaces and reconfiguring policy priorities.

1.4   Theoretical brief and conceptual framework

Spatial imaginaries are strategic devices couched in rhetoric that provide idealised visions of existing realities (Watkins 2015). In the context of this thesis, spatial imaginaries are used as tools to shape political decision-making and influence spatial planning discourse. The narrative strength of spatial imaginaries can create and advance new functional spatial logics to shape development pathways (Allen & Cochrane 2007). As ideas shaping social and spatial realities, the impact of spatial imaginaries on place-based policies can often be blurred. This interrelationship between policy, place and strategy involves processes of territorialisation and deterritorialization presenting an idealised spatial narrative. While inherently taking a spatial form, the productive power of spatial imaginaries needs to be highlighted as a mobilising force that is strategically central and often implicit in the delivery of metropolitan policies.

This thesis is informed by theory developed primarily from international authors and case studies. These theories and cases identify how spatial imaginaries shape regions and are central to regional strategies. Spatial imaginaries provide idealised visions of existing

realities, often drawing a distinction between the 'soft' spatial imaginaries, and 'hard' territorial spaces (Haughton and Allmendinger 2015). Soft spatial imaginaries are readily utilised, and increasingly so, paired with policies and strategic content to steer metropolitan growth priorities. In addition to their practical potential, spatial imaginaries are attractive to policy-makers due to their interpretive breadth (Hincks, Deas and Haughton 2017). This is not to say that spatial imaginaries are inaccurate in determining or complementing the spatial extent of a given policy, but as they can be seen and understood from a range of different perspectives there is significant flexibility in their interpretation. However, this fuzzy interpretive frame requires cooperation and collaboration with a range of spatial actors including various levels of government, government departments, institutional actors and communities to support and carry out area-based strategies (Haughton and Allmendinger 2017).

Given the complex spatial landscape and multiple stakeholders acting at different spatial scales there is also a need to utilise a governance framework to integrate these stakeholder perspectives and interests. A multispatial metagovernance (MSMG) approach incorporates this scalar complexity and attends to the institutional relationships both horizontally and vertically (Jessop 2016). This approach is different from business-as-usual by addressing the dual issues of power differences and spatial equity that is present in contemporary planning practice (Rydin 2020).

Spatial imaginaries have a real and imagined dimension. While they represent imagined ideals, they are also used to shape policy, thereby influencing the real. Thus, spatial imaginaries and their performativity are tied to how they are perceived, interpreted and used. Understanding where and how spatial imaginaries are drawn is also important. While considering the extent and performance of spatial imaginaries, we may consider them both bounded and boundless, thus necessitating engagement with a theory of the border.

Borders are shaped by macroscopic drivers such as globalisation, and more locally in response to area-based development priorities. This dialectic tension between universal and particular must be considered when adopting and adapting a theory of borders (Paasi 2009). Spatial imaginaries are often invented as abstract spaces without a clear physical point of attachment. However, the case of the GPOP serves both a strategic function and is given a spatial limitation. This is particularly interesting as policy-makers must balance the

development of strategy and its wider impact or externalities. This is important as other stakeholders are required to deliver the strategies. It is during this time that conflicts emerge as the strategies become realised. The fuzzy outline of a policy-space is hardened to give authority where development must conform. This multiple condition of the GPOP as real and imagined, and strategic and statutory constitutes a unique case drawing together competing discourses to be mediated in practice.

Spatial imaginaries are situated on a fluid scale between concepts and ideas on the one hand, and political artefacts on the other. Modelled in Figure 1.2, the spatial imaginary of the GPOP can be seen both as shaping strategic direction, and more directly shaping development constraints through its statutory authority. At their inception, spatial imaginaries may only exist in a constellation of ideas that may be inferred from multiple strategic documents or informed by the concentration of stakeholders clustered together to form a coherent spatial identity. They can form bottom-up and develop over time, or emerge as top-down initiatives to meet a certain political or policy positions. However, the flexibility of spatial imaginaries often means that they change shape and function over time, developing from a primarily strategic spatial idea towards becoming materialised in a strategic document. Given this fluidity, spatial imaginaries are useful political and rhetorical tools. They can signal an intention from the state government of greater interest in directly shaping how places are constructed. Local governments may also find then useful given their recent statutory remit to develop greater strategic responsibilities in managing land-use to meet their long-term plans.

Places & Precincts (space)	Spatial Imaginaries – act as a connective tissue (continuum) between the delivery of places and production of strategies	Metropolitan (strategy & policy)
Statutory	Statutory space GPOP Strategic space	Strategy
Towards greater materialisation of strategy		Towards greater abstraction of strategy
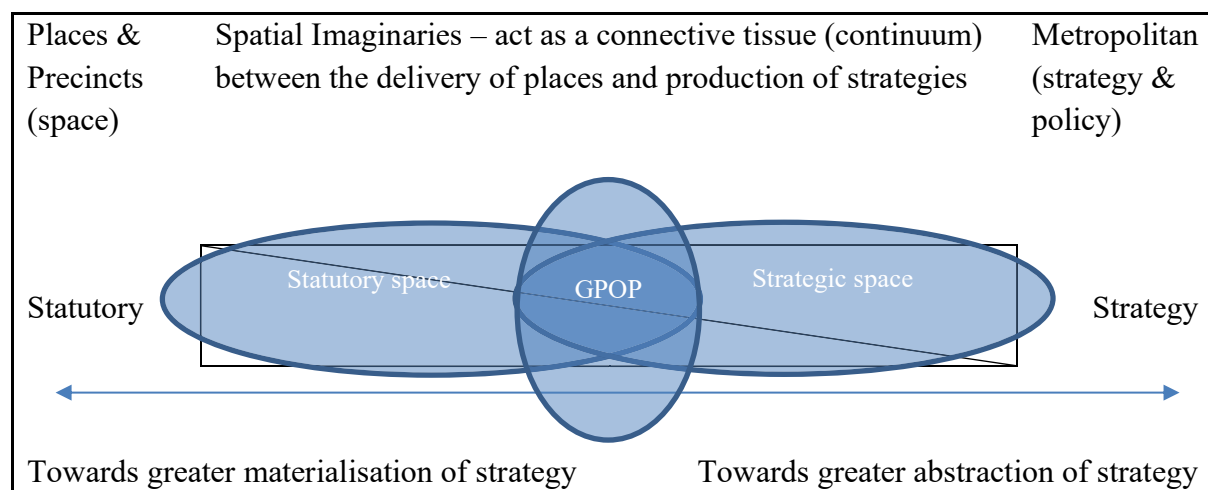
Figure 1.2. Identifying the 'in-between' space of the GPOP (second step in formalising the conceptual model)

1.5   Research questions

The central aim of this thesis is to identify the relationship between place-based policies, in particular, the spatial imaginary, and their relationship with metropolitan growth priorities. Focusing on the strategically significant spatial imaginary of the GPOP draws attention to how they work across scale, time, and their ability to influence actors and coalitions to shape processes of metropolitanisation. Through this process a review of the strategic spatial imaginaries formulated in the Sydney metropolis since the 1960s, will help identify their role in shaping metropolitan realities. Given this context, the thesis will identify the critical factors that support or hinder the advancement of place-based strategies. To support the identification of these factors, the research questions asked are:

1. How do urban actors advance their interests within the GPOP?
2. How does the GSC, a metropolitan planning organization, support or hinder place-based strategies?
3. What role do spatial imaginaries play in the development of priority precincts in the GPOP?

1.6   Research method

This study investigates the relationship between place-based policies and metropolitan regional strategies. This multiscalar research also involves a range of metagovernance actors. The case study of the GPOP is situated around the narrative of a spatial imaginary. Beyond a superficial representation of reality, they are strategic devices which cannot be directly observed. Compared with the observation of reality, this proves challenging when selecting an appropriate methodological approach. To gain an understanding of the planning and policy-making process from these varied perspectives, an interpretive policy analysis approach is adopted (Yanow 2006a; 2007).

Interpretive policy analysis aligns closely with the complexity of policy formation, thus providing an understanding of "not only the substantive study of meaning(s) in a specific policy issue, but also the specification and development of methods for such analysis" (Yanow 2007, p. 111). The framing and engagement of policy in this regard represents a more democratic understanding of policy formation than traditional policy analytic

approaches which "resting on the technical-rational expertise of practitioners, deny not only agency but also local knowledge of their own circumstances to those for whom policies are being designed" (Yanow 2007, p. 112). The situational 'thickness' of this approach creates space to decipher and deliberate on the ambiguities which may arise and interpret their varied meanings. An interpretive policy analysis approach was selected over other methods of case study analysis such as Grounded Theory (Thornberg 2012). Because Grounded Theory emphasises theoretical sampling as a methodological approach, this was not appropriate given the primary data was gathered through interviews (Charmaz 2009).

The case of examining a phenomenon that both exists and is not directly observable requires a complex assemblage of techniques to examine its formation and wider sociospatial impact. Spatial imaginaries are heterogenous spatial concepts that bundle together incongruous functional areas to develop bespoke economic clusters such as the GPOP. Depending on its use and perspectival frame, spatial imaginaries can be situated between imaginary and reality. While situated on this continuum, the enactment and hardening of a spatial imaginary necessarily entails both the representation of a spatial form and the lived-in place-based realities which will need to be addressed. Thus the spatial imaginary links together broader disciplines not limited to policy formation and urban planning and their composite formative histories (Yanow 2007).

The research develops over three distinct stages notably: literature review and document analysis; interviews; and interview data analysis and synthesis. The process is informed by a hermeneutic circle (Yanow 2007) with a continuous engagement with the research framework to iterate between these four stages to increase the validity of the findings.

Case selection

The case study of the GPOP centers on the area of the Parramatta CBD. It is bounded by Westmead in the west, and towards Olympic Park in the east. While there are other strategically significant spatial imaginaries in the Sydney metropolis, for example, the Western Sydney Aerotropolis (WSA) or the existing Sydney CBD, the GPOP is arguably the most significant and important to achieve the metropolitan vision of a 'metropolis of three cities.'

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Sydney is often recognised as Australia's global city (McNeill et al. 2005), but it is also known for entrenched inequality which deepens as the provision of infrastructure and opportunity follow along lines of path-dependency (Vogel et al. 2018). Indeed, policy reform and innovation are often acknowledged goals of improving measures of equity and productivity (Farid Uddin & Piracha 2023). Addressing challenges of spatial path dependency is a key concern in the selection of this case study. In addition, the GPOP is also an area of predominately urban infill, a spatial condition that has greater transferability and relevance for place-based development at a local, national and international context.

Gap in the research and contribution

This thesis was initiated from observing the growing role and significance of places and place-based policy within metropolitan regions. The use and complexity of spatial imaginaries has also increased within metropolitan planning and policy-making. Although these things are not necessarily new, at least since the 1960s in Sydney, their incidence and complexity has grown. Spatial imaginaries are complex objects attracting political attention through their inherent flexibility that affords policymakers a wide interpretive frame for how they may be used. This study provides the first extended investigation of spatial imaginaries of places in relation to metropolitan planning and policy-making in Sydney. By studying the application of the GPOP spatial imaginary that prioritises and elevates the status of some places over others, guidance can be provided to authors of future spatial imaginaries. This pertains particularly to the role of social actors who are embedded and influence the framing and adoption of spatial policy (Mayer 2008). Stakeholder coordination and alignment is key to reach consensus horizontally across NSW Government agencies, and vertically with councils and delivery stakeholders. The creation of new spaces such as the GPOP will inherently create tensions such as prioritising existing spaces of advantage within the spatial imaginary, but at a regional scale, it creates opportunities through greater attention from government agencies and investors to address longstanding challenges of redistributing opportunity across the metropolitan region. This thesis also advances methodological approaches to interpretive policy analysis research which is extended in Chapter 2 and develops a novel theoretical framework bespoke to the case study of the GPOP that can be more broadly applicable.

Empirically, this research gives a voice to practitioners and policy-makers shaping metropolitan strategies and spatial imaginaries. The findings may be significant to researchers and practitioners alike as the thesis draws a literature-practice bridge that explores the effect of spatial imaginaries and how it shapes future spatial planning initiatives.

1.7   Delimitations

While the ambition of the thesis aimed to identify the critical factors that support and hinder the advancement of place-based planning strategies, there are clearly limits and constraints that should be understood in the delivery of a PhD within limited time and resource boundaries. It was not possible to consider all stakeholder perspectives within the large strategically significant spatial imaginary of the GPOP.

From examination of the literature, contextual information and from my professional experience, there was a decision to limit interview participants. The focus of this thesis was on policy-making and implementation of place-based policies thereby focussing attention to gaining the perspectives of government stakeholders, planning consultants, developers and business leaders. Had the focus of the PhD addressed factors of public participation and engagement, or the perspective of residents, the interview cohort would have included community groups.

A practical decision was made to limit the inclusion of grey literature and policy documents to June 2021. As the field work was conducted in early 2021, this date was a natural end point to allow time for data synthesis and final write up.

1.8   Structure of thesis

Chapter 2 details the research methodology. It draws on an interpretive policy analysis approach to examine the relationship between spatial imaginaries and metropolitan policy and an interview method and data analysis approach is explained. Informed by the hermeneutic circle, the chapter also develops a novel methodological approach for future investigations on spatial imaginaries and complementary research agendas.

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Chapter 3 introduces a range of complementary spatial theories to position spatial imaginaries and place-based policies within the governance of metropolitan regions. It identifies the role of place, defines what a spatial imaginary is and how they are used, the role of borders and a framework of multispatial metagovernance to provide a framework to understand and shape metropolitan realities.

Chapter 4 traces the emergence of spatial imaginaries in metropolitan Sydney. The chapter is contextualised from Sydney's early metropolitan plans and spatial imaginaries since the 1960s. A greater emphasis is placed on the period since 2005, with consideration of how spatial imaginaries are integrated within metropolitan strategy. The chapter also explores the increasing sophistication and complexity of spatial imaginaries in the Sydney context, from monofunctional business parks evolving to integrated place-based strategies such as the GPOP.

Chapter 5 develops the perspectives from the interview data. This is shaped around three key precincts within the GPOP, the Westmead Health and Innovation District, Parramatta CBD, and Camellia-Rydalmere precinct. The chapter identifies key challenges associated with the development of the GPOP PIC and discusses some of the pronounced challenges associated with each precinct.

Chapter 6 develops further the key themes of transport, collaboration and integrated planning that have emerged through the interview findings. In particular, the chapter distils the challenges that centre around precinct development, infrastructure delivery to support growth, and collaboration challenges inherent in the implementation of the GPOP.

Chapter 7 synthesises the findings presented in Chapters 5 & 6. This is developed through the thematic areas of joined-up planning, place-based planning and the alignment of stakeholder interests. Key conclusions circle around providing a clear and coherent spatial terminology to bring stakeholders together and provide both internal and external coherence, effectively collaborating to depart on the right assumptions to guide the place-based strategy, and developing an effective multispatial metagovernance approach that integrates horizontally and vertically to align the interests and place-based outcomes of all significant stakeholders.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis discussing the contribution of the thesis theoretically, the case study in particular, the major thesis findings, a reflection of the process, limitations and avenues for further research.

Chapter 2   Methodology
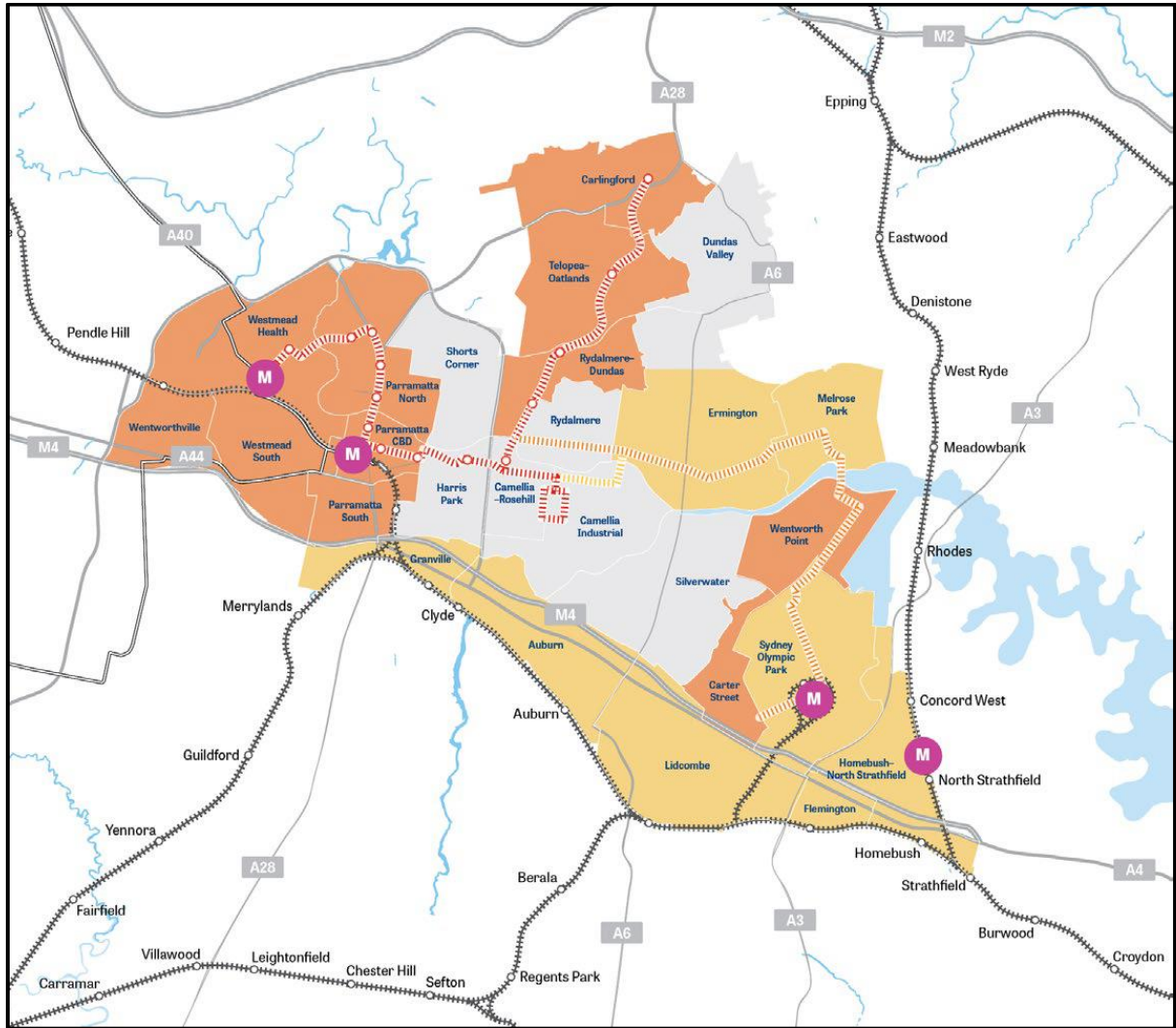
GPOP Proposed high-level sequencing plan (GSC 2019, p. 11)

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2.1   Introduction

Spatial imaginaries are closely tied to social imaginaries, and researchers often evaluate their interconnection. The difference between a spatial and social imaginary is a spatial imaginary's meanings are related to spatiality, while a social imaginary's need not be.

Watkins 2015, p. 510

Spaces, then, may be constructed in different ways by different people, through power struggles and conflicts of interest. This idea that spaces are socially constructed, and that many spaces may co-exist within the same physical space is an important one. It suggests the need to analyse how discourses and strategies of inclusion and exclusion are connected with particular spaces.

Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 1998, pp. 9–10

Studying – indeed, accepting the social reality of – something that is not "directly observable" is, perhaps, the ultimate challenge to objectivity as it is commonly used, whereas interpretive research treats it as part of the social realities it seeks to understand and analyze.

Yanow 2006b, p. 81

The focus of this thesis aims to investigate how spatial imaginaries and place-based planning support the governance of metropolitan growth priorities. In order to examine these processes, this thesis primarily adopts an interpretative policy analysis approach (Yanow 2000, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2014; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2012). Interpretive policy analysis "entails not only the substantive study of meaning(s) in a specific policy issue (expressed, for example, in policy-relevant events and documents), but also the specification and development of methods for such analysis" (Yanow 2007, p. 111).

While this thesis attempts to document the practices of governance in a particular place and time (c.f. Healey 2007), it also accepts that while policy issues are applied in context, they are often globally inspired (Marston et al. 2005; Paasi 2009). This requires a broad understanding of the policy-making process, and also an understanding of the context, thus

sensitive to processes of "policy adoption – adaptation – implementation...[and] the positioning of experiments, failures, and alternative within an understanding of the wider patterning of policy transformation" (Peck & Theodore 2012, p. 28). The contexts of policy analysis are also not hermetically sealed, where the "researcher-analyst is increasingly seen as also participating in generating the data which are then subjected to analysis" (Murdoch 2005, p. 116).

The case of examining a phenomenon such as spatial imaginaries require a complex assemblage of techniques to examine its formation and wider sociospatial impact. Referring to the three epigraphs at the start of this chapter, the position adopted in this thesis suggests that spatial imaginaries lie somewhere between imaginary and reality. While they are situated on this continuum, the enactment and hardening of a spatial imaginary necessarily entails both the representation of a spatial form and the lived-in place-based realities which will need to be addressed. Thus, the spatial imaginary links together broader disciplines not limited to policy formation and urban planning and their composite formative histories (Yanow 2007). This history is not inert. Their interpretation depends on varying perspectival lenses and an interpretive framework. This point also alludes to a more contentious position among researchers: the distinction between the supposedly impartial and scientifically rigorous objective and biased partiality of the subjective. While objectivity remains a goal of many researchers, I follow the perspective that in social scientific research, "objectivity is not possible…as situational sense-making draws on prior knowledge and builds on intersubjective understanding" (Yanow 2006a, p. 407).

This chapter continues in Section Two, introducing the interpretive policy analysis approach used in this research. Section Three justifies the case study selection highlighting the specificity of the GPOP in relation to other strategic imaginaries in the Sydney metropolis. Section Four introduces the framework shaping the research approach. Section Five identifies the interview design and approach. Section Six details the approach to data analysis. Section Seven includes ethics details and consideration of methodological issues. Section Eight concludes the chapter.

2.2   Interpretive policy analysis

Interpretive policy analysis aligns closely with the complexity of policy formation. The framing and engagement of policy in this regard represents a more democratic understanding of policy formation than traditional policy analytic approaches which "resting on the technical-rational expertise of practitioners, deny not only agency but also local knowledge of their own circumstances to those for whom policies are being designed" (Yanow 2007, p. 112).

While more representative of the field and impact of policy, this wider scoping of the policy process in utilising interpretive methodologies call for "heightened degrees of reflexivity on the part of the researcher" (Yanow 2006a, p. 408). While the call for greater reflexivity can be more onerous, it is a hallmark of interpretive research commensurate with a rigorous approach to make sense of the messiness of urban research (Yanow 2006a).

Although not necessarily adhering to the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methodologies, interpretive research methods are generally understood as a qualitative research method. Within this understanding, Yanow suggests that data can be generated through: observing, interviewing and reading (Yanow 2006, p. 409). This thesis draws primarily on reading (academic literature, policies and legislation, strategic plans, visual information including maps and plans, media) and interviewing (senior leaders, strategic planners, peak bodies, councils, industry).

While objective research may be considered more scientific, it is not appropriate in all types of research nor is it possible under qualitative social research conditions where both the subject and research material cannot be limited to a single variable. For example, prior education and training of the researcher will impart existing knowledges that shape their approach and understanding of literature and data. This inseparability of researcher and participant involves 'mutual knowledge', where knowledge is "shared by observer and participants whose action constitutes and reconstitutes the social world" (Giddens 1982, p. 15). This highlights a weakness of an interpretive approach as a methodology – namely that there are tensions between interpretation and subjectivity, and the need to account for unconscious bias. Given the primary form of data collection is conducting and analysing semi-structured interviews rather than, for example, analysing survey results, an interpretive approach was chosen to account for the richness of perspectives gathered from a range of

senior stakeholders, and flexible enough to incorporate insights not anticipated in the interview design.

Table 2.1. Interpretive methodology – research and design

Interpretive Methodology

Research orientation	• meaning-making • contextuality (in regards to knowledge) • hermeneutic–phenomenological sensibility: explanatory description (answering "why?") • constitutive causality
Design attitude	• abductive logic of inquiry: iterative, recursive, starting from surprise/ puzzle/tension deriving from expectations vs. lived experiences • prior knowledge, expectations (experiential, theoretical) • dynamic flexibility in implementation of design as learning occurs • participants = agents with valued local knowledge; researchers as experts in processes of inquiry • research as "world-making"
Getting going	• educated provisional sense-making; start with prior knowledge > the hermeneutic circle-spiral • investigating • access questions; choices: of settings, actors, archives, documents, . . . (relational turn in field research; ethical and power dimensions; active learning in the field)
In the field or archives	• mapping for exposure and intertextuality • bottom-up, *in situ* concept development (learning) • exploration of concepts in ordinary operationalization of concepts language, local knowledge terms • revise design as needed
Analysis of evidence	• hermeneutic sensibility: coherence, logic of argumentation
Evaluative standards	• validity • systematicity • reflexivity, transparency; engagement with positionality

Source. Adapted from Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2012, p. 113

Interpretive policy analysis begins by orientating the start of the research through contextualising the meaning-making process (see Table 1). This follows an abductive form of inquiry resolving problems or tensions in the research which is situated within particular contexts or environments. While quantitative forms of enquiry often follow from developing a hypothesis and proving its validity, interpretive methodologies begin with a 'hunch', which begins the line of enquiry towards making sense of the concept which can be explained with a logical line of argumentation (Yanow 2006; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2013). From this point in research orientation, a hermeneutic-phenomenological sensibility is established beginning an exploratory approach seeking to identify the causal links between research question and context. It should be noted that engaging with interpretive research challenges both *within* and having perspective *of* a research setting demands greater reflexivity on the researcher. The interpretive researcher challenges the idea that developing an external position from the research is even possible (Yanow 2006a). This perspective can also be applied to relatively mundane objects such as physical databases or written histories where "even those forms of research done at some-thing of a physical remove from their topics of study—historical or database analysis—rely, at one point or another, on human understanding to get 'inside' the research subject" (Yanow 2006b, p. 75).

An interpretive methodological approach understands research objects as "not merely describing the social and political worlds they present, but actually creating them for the reader through the judicious selection of words and phrases" (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2013, p. 39). From the perspective of interpretive methodologies, acknowledging the relationship between researcher and research objects is critical in developing robust bottom-up narratives and concepts situated in the data. This approach also lends itself to an iterative approach. Rather than following a strict linear or step-wise process, the approach adopted in this thesis emphasizes the importance of meaning-making within the context of places, and the strengthening of meaningful contribution towards improved methodologies for further research (Yanow 2007). Thus, rather than a procedural progression from document analysis towards interview data analysis and interpretation, the methodological approach will continuously verify questions and inconsistencies arising from the documents, synthesising and validating the interview data across the participants, and against the contents of documents. This process is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below, and developed in this chapter. As will be expanded in this chapter, the research begins at 'Orientation – Hermeneutic circle'

cycling through stages of literature review, document analysis and presenting the findings. Once sufficient explanatory depth has been achieved, the 'Sense-making – In the field' phase is entered beginning with interview data collection, analysis and presenting the findings. Once sufficient coherence has been achieved, the findings will be written up and ready for examination.

Document
analysis

Data
analysis

Orientation   Sense-making

Present
findings

Hermeneutic circle   In the field

Literature

Data
collection

Submit
thesis
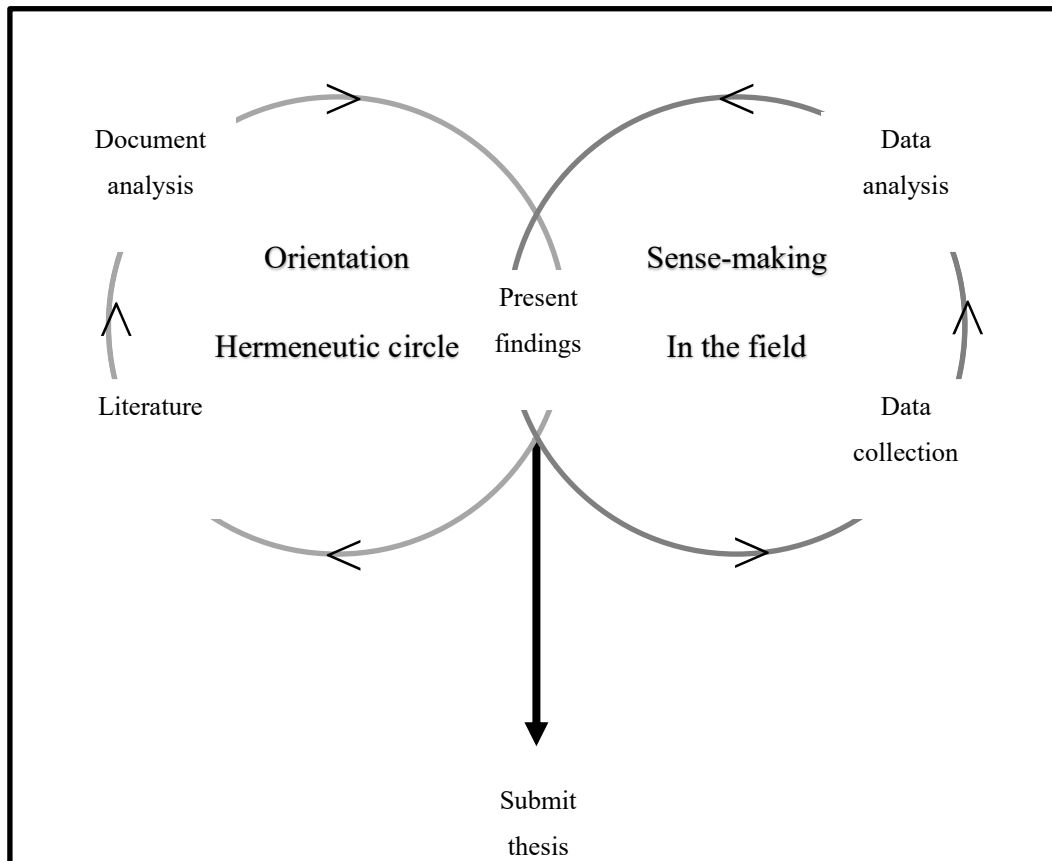
Figure 2.1. Methodological model

2.3   Case study selection

Case study research develops an empirical line of enquiry, "investigat[ing] a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and addresses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 1993, p. 59). While case study research allows one flexibility in experimental design, it also requires increased reflexiveness of the researcher given the expansive parameters in which to operate (Meyer 2001).

It is important for this thesis to address a case study whose findings are meaningful to both the authors shaping policy development and planning practices, and the actors who deliver the strategies, thus requiring a wider understanding of its implication and impact. Given these criteria, it was necessary to trace the sociospatial maturity of a case which provided a lens towards the "deeply situated and contingent way[s] in which governance practices evolve" (Healey 2007, p. 291). Given my interests in tracing the development of 'live' case studies,

the GPOP was an ideal subject as it drew both public and professional attention through its ambition to reshape metropolitan spatial relationships.

The focus on spatial imaginaries attends to a broader academic identification and excavation of its development and increased utility more recently (Allmendinger & Haughton 2017; Hincks, Deas & Haughton 2017). Spatial imaginaries have the ability to reshape spatial relationships from the intralocal through supraregional scales. This thesis sits between these spatial scales, addressing a spatial imaginary central to achieving a metropolitan strategic vision, and responding to metropolitan growth priorities. While soft spatial imaginaries are influential and provide actor-spaces that implicitly shape development pathways, there are limits to their application. The process of soft spaces hardening, that is, gaining legitimacy across decision-makers and developing a statutory form that legislates for policy action, indicates that government is prepared to take a more active role in steering the management of metropolitan growth priorities.

The case study of the GPOP was selected because:

- It is a spatial imaginary of strategic importance to achieve the metropolitan vision of a 'metropolis of three cities.'
- It is a particularly contentious space situated at the point of intersection of multiple statutory spaces within built up urban areas requiring greater mediation and consideration of socio-political impacts. The precincts within the GPOP have markedly different character, socioeconomic profiles, dominant industries, historical development underspend and heritage challenges.
- Spatially, it is a pivot point of regional centrality and focus to rebalance the metropolis

While two other strategically significant spatial imaginaries exist, the Global arc in eastern Sydney, and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis in the west, they do not fulfil all three criteria.

As an emerging strategically significant space, the GPOP has presented opportunities to identify new knowledge in regards to both the performance of spatial imaginaries in the Sydney metropolis and can be termed a 'paradigmatic case.' This case study is strategically important as it could identify and addressing public policy challenges through "develop[ing]

a metaphor or establish a school for the domain that the case concerns" (Flyvberg 2006, p. 230).

Extending on the selection of the GPOP spatial imaginary, the GPOP presents opportunities to examine:

- The relationship between place-based and metropolitan strategies to social, economic, and governance issues
- The relationship between urban governance actors
- Understanding of the spaces, boundaries, and identities of spatial imaginaries
- How spatial imaginaries impact at the local scale (e.g. land-use conflicts)
- How spatial imaginaries impact at the regional scale (e.g. responding to regional rebalancing challenges)

Together, exploring these opportunities allows the research project to examine how place-based strategies impact the delivery of metropolitan growth priorities. Given the depth of research to explore this challenge, it was identified that a single case study was suitable and provided a feasible approach to navigate this complex urban issue. The decision to investigate a single case is important as

> *First, it is important for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behavior cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process and in much theory. Second, cases are important for researchers' own learning processes in developing the skills needed to do good research.*
>
> *Flyvberg 2006, p. 223*

The single case study of the GPOP adopts Flyvberg's classification of single cases identified as both 'critical' and 'paradigmatic'. Critical cases are notable where "theory can be developed from the data, while informed by previous studies, literature and theoretical approaches" (Flyvberg 2006, p. 226) while paradigmatic cases "highlight more general characteristics of the societies in question" (Flyvberg 2006, p. 232). The tracing of the

development of the GPOP spatial imaginary is intended to compare the experiences of international theory grounded with emergent research in the Australian context. Thus, this is a critical case by comparison with an existing field of knowledge, while the emergence of context-specific case study findings highlight specific insights relevant for practitioners which may be utilised and leveraged to shape future policy development. Single case studies are valuable contributions to urban studies research because of the potential to delve into the 'context of context' to address the local impact of macroscopic processes (Peck 2015) and grapple with the "multiple in most research efforts because ideas and evidence may be linked in many different ways" (Ragin in Flyvberg 2006, p. 235).

2.4   Building a framework through theory (ideal) and policy (real) and making sense of spatial imaginaries through the hermeneutic circle

The research was developed through a cyclical approach. Preliminary research involved the sampling of literature and document analysis, then presenting the findings through conference papers, book chapters and journal articles. This was repeated several times to distil the primary focus, aims and objectives and identifying the primary issue to be addressed – that is – the management of metropolitan growth priorities through spatial imaginaries.

While each step was repeated multiple times, the research can be understood in three distinct stages:

- Literature review and document analysis including:
    - Strategies and policy, legislation, grey literature, archival documents, interlinkages between documents
- Interviews with planning and policy professionals acting in the GPOP including:
    - GSC, NSW Government, Local Government, Peak bodies,
- Data analysis, synthesis and research findings

This process is informed by the idea of the 'hermeneutic circle' (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic 2010; Yanow 2007) responding to its double meaning of an "iterative meaning-making process rather than a stepwise one" (Yanow 2007, p. 116) and an "interpretive community or a community of meaning" (Yanow 2007, p. 115). The iterative crafting of this research is

embedded in the process of examining a contextualised issue rather than following a prescribed methodology. The research framework is iterated through continuous engagement with academic literature, policy documents and synthesising these findings and testing these findings with researchers and practitioners working in the field more broadly.

For example, spatial imaginaries set out visions and are enacted through (statutory) land-use planning which plays a key role in ordering space (Law & Urry 2004; Murdoch 2005). Thus it is necessary to test the emergent findings against a community of meaning-making. It is important because this research exists 'within' a context and needs to make-sense to maintain utility for and by the community. Thus the research contextualises the meaning-making where "the quality or value of contextualized knowledge (theory) is to be assessed by users, whether academic or other, who decide themselves the extent to which that knowledge fits their circumstances and purposes, i.e., whether it works in context" (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2013, p. 48).

2.5   Interviews

Fourteen semi-structured interviews were used to gather contextualised data on the relationship between spatial imaginaries and metropolitan growth priorities. These interviews verified and validated desktop research and contextual information and provided insights to the impact of the GPOP PIC. While interviews were the primary data gathering device, processes of interviewing and participant observation are guided and shaped to gather the best data possible, they are not controlled environments. There will be limits to curating these processes, but it is in fact beneficial to provide space for dialogue to flow rather than curate a response as Peck & Theodore explain:

> When they work well, interviews should be interactive, dynamic encounters, not merely extractive, fact/opinion-gathering exercises; they entail dialogue as much as digging. Depth interviews enable researchers to probe contending accounts and evaluate proto-explanations amongst a range of knowing interlocutors; they provide opportunities to excavate the social and political context of decision making, to delve into the `reasons for reasons', and to hand back circulating narratives and proto-explanations for verification, qualification, or rejection. In other words, interviews enable the purposeful coproduction of social data, at the

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nexus of interviewee worldviews and the evolving bundle of questions actively pursued by the researcher.

Peck & Theodore 2012, p. 26

The interviews were intended to generate thick descriptions to draw out rich narratives corroborating the perspectives of interviewees and information generated from the orientation phase. This interpretive approach took multiple passes of verifying information together with repeated reviews of literature and policy analysis.

2.5.1 Identification

Interview participants were initially identified through the document analysis that highlighted the various departments, roles and communities who both shape and are affected by policy and planning. Following this initial list of participants, interviewees were further identified through their position shaping policies and urban strategies, and impacted by the geographic scope of the GPOP. Recommendations were also made through personal networks providing access to high-level decision makers.

Interviewees were categorised by 'state government department', 'local government, 'professional services', 'peak body/advocacy'. They were further broken down by role including 'senior leadership', 'planner', 'policy-maker'. This interview program enabled a diverse range of perspectives not limited to 'corner office' views but also engaging with street-level relations (Peck & Theodore 2012). A snowball sampling approach was used to gather expert interviewees. While there were limitations to this approach including the potential for a narrow range of perspectives, it was balanced by access to highly experienced interviewees with very strong ability to respond to the research questions.

2.5.2 Interview design

The interview process is intended to be conversational and exploratory rather than prescribed. A semi-structured interview format provides a 'best fit' to undertake an interpretive policy approach that provides guidance around interview themes while enabling participants to

express their perspectives (Byrne 2012). Taking a semi-structured interview approach using an interview guide as a point of reference allows for greater flexibility and adaptability to the participant (Littig and Pöchhacker 2014). This approach also allows participants to respond to information not mentioned directly in the interview guide, though requiring the interviewer to steer conversation back to the topic when straying too far (Corbin & Strauss 2014).

The introductory questions were intended to open a dialogue around the participants' role in regard to policy challenges and its development, while the later questions ask more specifically the participants' perspective of the GPOP. Questions were asked from the following six thematic areas:

- Influencing/supporting metropolitan growth priorities
- GPOP – as a mobilising force
- The importance of spatial imaginaries – Attractiveness/value of the GPOP
- Role of different actors in the GPOP
- Role of the GSC in enabling precinct development
- The link between place-based interventions and metropolitan strategies

A series of probes and exploratory questions were developed for each thematic area. It is not expected that all thematic areas will be developed through each interview, but collectively, a rich, palette of descriptive material enabled an interpretative analysis of the data to address the research questions (see Appendix A2 for the full interview guide).

2.5.3 Interview delivery

The interview questions were tested with a pilot study to gauge if the questions stimulated conversations with effective responses and if the mode of interviewing contributed to a positive conversation flow. This pilot phase from September to October 2019 also enabled the researcher to modify or add questions which may not have been considered allowing for a more useful data to be collected. The pilot study was primarily tested with officer level staff. The data collected with these stakeholders did not sufficiently respond to the research questions and it became clear that interviews with senior leaders with greater oversight of the relationship between strategic planning and place was required.

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The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the field work delivery, delaying the planned data collection. The main round of interviews was conducted between February and April 2021.

While taking a semi-structured approach to the delivery of the interviews, there was a degree of uncertainty regarding if, or to what extent the interview responses would respond to the research questions. It was perhaps fortunate to have a longer period of time between testing the pilot and engaging with the main round of interviews. This time was useful to reflect on the fit-for-purpose nature of the questions and probes to generate useful data.

At the inception of the research, there was no clear guidance on the quantity of interviews to conduct. Conversations with senior Professors and during thesis assessment gates indicated that a range of eight to twenty may be sufficient to reach saturation. Smaller sample sizes have been qualified in previous research (Francis et al. 2010). While at fourteen, the sample size of interviews was relatively low, the perspectives from the stakeholders were rich and detailed, and it was at the end of this round of interviews that saturation was reached. Triangulation of responses revealed sufficient overlap of responses to answer the research questions. There were a limited number of senior leaders with direct insight to the GPOP case limiting the pool of potential interviewees. Only one potential interviewee declined – a senior leader from a peak body – and only on the basis that they were in the process of moving to a different organisation. The detailed responses from the interviewees were not unexpected given the experience and position of the stakeholders, some who led their organisations and were able to speak from multiple perspectives (many had experience at the executive level in the NSW Government). The iteration of interview design development following the pilot phase allowed me to sharpen the focus of the interview engagements, questions asked and lines of inquiry. This accelerated the point of saturation of interview data to respond to the research questions.

The coded interview participants are detailed below.

Code	Role	Date
G_1	GSC Director	1-2021
G_2	GSC Director	2-2021
S_1	DPIE Senior Planner	9-2019
S_2	DPIE Executive Director	1-2020
L_1	LG Director, ex-DPIE Director	3-2021
L_2	LG Manager	3-2021

L_3	LG Transport Planner	3-2021
D_1	Development Developer	3-2021
D_2	Senior Urban Designer, ex-DPIE Director	3-2021
C_1	Consultant	9-2019
C_2	Consultant Planning Director	2-2021
U_1	University acting Partnership and Precincts Director	10-2019
U_2	University Development Director	4-2021
B_1	Business Peak Body Executive Director	2-2021

2.6   Data analysis

Interview data were thematically organised through the research findings rather than utilising prefigured categories. While general themes observed in the literature will provide guidance, thematic categories will be derived from the interview findings. Interviewing continued until sufficient correlation between respondents and theoretical saturation was reached. Although interview categories were deduced from the data, the researcher was particularly aware of conflicts between stakeholders, changing relationships at key strategic points in time (e.g. legislative changes, introduction of new policies), scalar differences, conflicting perspectives and drivers shaping policies and development decisions.

The researcher acknowledges that personal experience may colour the findings to some extent. Precautions were made to limit the impact of my professional experience to the research findings. This cautious approach has also been taken into account during the synthesis of the data. Themes were identified which generated partial perspectives of the research field (Gee 2011). These themes were assembled to create a cohesive narrative that made sense of the data, while maintaining awareness of inconsistencies and contradictions in the data.

While data from document analysis is often used as a starting point for inquiry, they are also useful for corroborating or refuting interview data (Yanow 2006a). Through analysing the interview data, discourse analysis was the primary form of analysis to create meaning from the data. Discourse analysis is "an interpretive process that relies on close study of texts, and therefore does not lend itself to hard-and-fast 'rules' of method" (Tonkiss 2012, p. 412). This approach was also leveraged with the view taken from Yin that "the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (2013, p. 107). Thus,

a wide range of documentary sources was utilised including consultancy reports, media articles, maps and spatial documents, and statistical data. This approach follows the methodological model presented in Figure 2.1, where cycles of corroboration and synthesis of information gradually distilled the analysis to reach the key findings to "to develop strong, plausible, and fair arguments that are supported by the data" (Yin 2013, p. 167).

2.7   Ethics and methodological issues

This research has been approved through the UTS Human Research Ethics Council (ETH19-4535). In addition to obtaining clearance to proceed with data collection, ethics approval is important in the reflexive process for the researcher to engage with risks associated with interviewing. Awareness of risks (including reputational) and their mitigation also works to build trust between the researcher and participant.

2.8   Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the methodological approach utilised in this thesis. A review of similar case studies and the methodological literature proposes that an interpretive approach is suitable to generate a rich understanding of the thickness of policies and policy-making to support the aim of understanding how place-based strategies perform to support metropolitan growth priorities. While positioning the researcher as 'within' the research supposes a co-constitution of the data, while also requiring a high degree of reflexivity of the researcher. The researcher is not merely collecting data, but works to make sense of the data which can be useful for a wider epistemic community.

This chapter has also introduced a methodological framework to bind theory and policy through the hermeneutic circle (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic 2010; Yanow 2007). The hermeneutic circle as an iterative process of meaning-making supports the validation of knowledge produced in the research process through interview data. This iterative approach works to refine the desktop data review and interview findings against the theoretical framework. Interviews were designed to be semi-structured and an analytical approach that corroborated evidence from multiple sources was used to make sense of the data. The thematic findings were assembled to create a cohesive narrative relevant for both practice and

academic communities. The next chapter develops a theoretical framework centred around interrelated theories of place-based planning, spatial imaginaries, border theory and multispatial metagovernance.

Chapter 3   Understanding the interface between place-based planning, spatial imaginaries, and multilevel governance
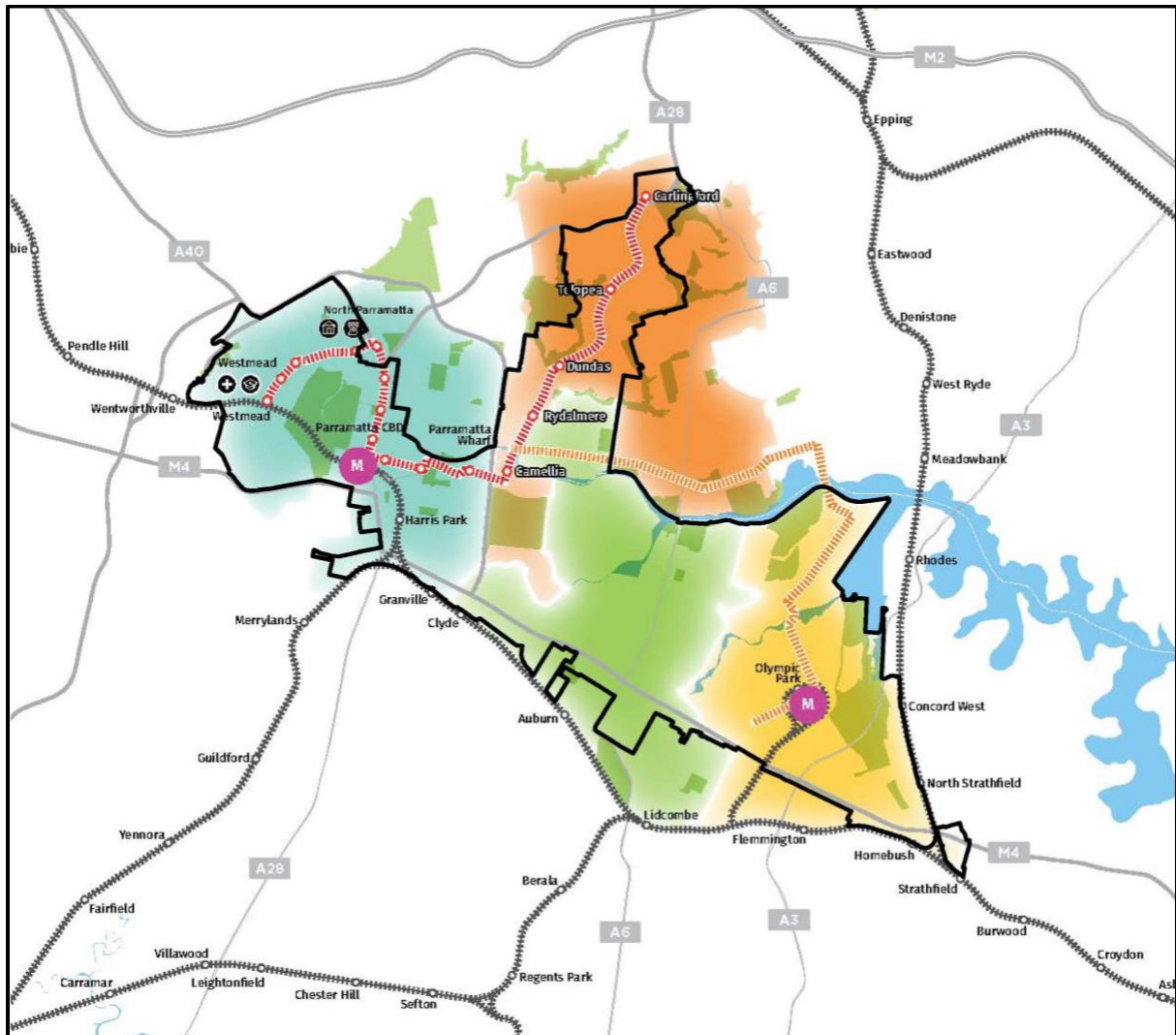
Overlay of the draft Greater Parramatta Priority Growth Area Precinct Boundary over the fuzzy outlines of the four super precincts of the GPOP (original composition)

The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:
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3.1   Introduction

This chapter develops a theoretical framework to interpret the dynamics emerging from the development of the GPOP, from changes in spatial policies to actor coalitions associated with reconfiguring urban spatial relationships. This novel approach synthesises the complementary theories and interpretive lens of place-based planning, spatial imaginaries, multispatial metagovernance and border theories. Each individual theory has been developed by multiple authors through single and comparative case studies both locally and globally to identify tensions and disentangle the different perspectives that are apparent when contending with spatial strategy, particularly through brownfield development. By bringing these theories together, this thesis attempts to find a new way of seeing and responding to place-based interventions within metropolitan strategies.

In the context of contemporary planning policy, the GPOP is particularly interesting as it proposes to shift and refocus the locus of development to the geographic centre of the Sydney metropolitan region. This represents a significant shift from a dominant east-coast centrism that has dominated contemporary spatial development; it redistributes economic activity away from the Sydney CBD. These actions are particularly relevant for an interpretive lens of place-based planning, and for alternative imaginations of what the future of the Sydney metropolitan region, and greater Parramatta might look like. Through the lens of spatial imaginaries this thesis aims to understand how place-based strategies support and bring together coalitions of actors to form place-based partnerships. Place-based partnerships work across multiple spatial scales and a diverse range of actors. These multiple actors working across different spaces, and different levels of government are inherently complex relationships. This thesis proposes the development and adoption of an emerging multispatial metagovernance theory to be used to interpret how these actors interact, and prioritise different spatial scales and at different times. Finally, as this case study engages with multiple planning systems, both strategic and statutory, and at different scales, a border theory is useful to disentangle how these spatial relationships interact. It also supports mapping how spatial layers may transition over time, often evolving from strategic intent to statutory direction. This theoretical construction will be used to interpret the empirical data, and to draw out the themes developed from the interviews.

This chapter continues in Section Two by underscoring the importance and relevance of place-based planning theories. Section Three introduces the concept of a spatial imaginary

and its use in contemporary policy-making. Section Four unpacks ideas of multispatial metagovernance, focusing on the roles of different actors and their changing relationships. Section Five overlays these strategies and relationships with a border theory, explaining how 'lines in the sand' act, change, and wash away. Section Six pieces these interrelated theories together, and closes the chapter in Section Seven, discussing how this framework may be used in the context of the GPOP.

3.2   Urban governance and place-based planning

While metropolitan strategic plans set an overarching vision for the spatial development of a region, the role of place is equally important to achieve these broader goals. Globally, competition between large urban agglomerations demands greater coordination between sub-national spatial units to prioritise development, to promote investment and drive innovation. David Harvey's (1989) observations of the shift from government to governance, and the complementary shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism, articulated the key trends that have shaped cities globally. In Europe, an ongoing tension of 'growth through competitiveness' is displacing socioeconomic and territorial cohesion among EU member states (Avdikos & Chardas 2016). These same decisions face political leaders in the Australian context, as they manage population growth, land-use and infrastructure planning, as demonstrated through the establishment of a metropolitan governance authority, the GSC, and promotion of the GPOP vision. These experiences have led an independent Federal advisory body, Infrastructure Australia (2018), to recommend that "governments improve planning and delivery processes to accommodate growth, particularly through integration and coordination in delivering strategic metropolitan plans."

The landmark Barca Report examined the importance of spatially focussed development policies in the EU and placed a strong focus of 'place-based' approaches to improve on the economic potential of cities and regions to support national development (Barca 2009). Beyond supporting local and regional economic development, these policies should also promote greater growth and reduce inequality in lagging and peripheral areas (Tomaney 2010). A key point made by the Barca report is the importance of local knowledge, and policies that make explicit a specific territorial focus (Barca 2009, p. vii). Setting the policy model and rationale are key to establishing what the place-based policy ought to be, and

suggests that place-based policies should be a "long-term strategy aimed at tackling persistent underutilisation of potential and reducing persistent social exclusion in specific places through external interventions and multilevel governance. It promotes the supply of integrated goods and services tailored to contexts, and it triggers institutional changes." (Barca 2009, p. vii).

In relation to metropolitan strategies, place-based plans provide a counterpoint to place-neutral approaches (Rodrigues-Pose 2018). By denoting strategically significant spatial areas important for generating and catalysing wider area development, place-based policies also signal a marker for prioritising development of specific places over others, thus denoting a spatial hierarchy, at least over their immediate catchment. Balancing growth in specific places is in perpetual tension with promoting growth and development over whole regions.

Responding to these policy priorities, Barca et al. (2012, p. 139) distil two fundamental aspects required to achieve place-based policies, arguing that a "place-based approach assumes that geographical context really matters, whereby context here is understood in terms of its social, cultural, and institutional characteristics" and second, a "place-based approach also focuses on the issue of knowledge in policy intervention. Who knows what to do where and when?" The first point speaks to the requirement of place-based policies to sufficiently understand the problem to be solved, with a holistic assessment of place including its geography, enablers, disadvantages, and local institutions operating in this environment. The second point speaks to the ability of institutions to intervene, a deficit flagged as early as the County of Cumberland Council's attempt to implement the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme (see Section 1.2).

This fluidity between international networks and global positioning and situating metropolitan strategies around focused development in places speak to the relational construction of space (Massey 2011). Indeed, the management of spatial, economic, and political conflicts act out in places as "state intervention is articulated through the constructions of spaces (scales, levels, horizons, etc.) of intervention, the fixing of borders, the stabilisation of places, and, in short, attempts are being continually made to produce and reproduce a territorially coherent and functioning socioeconomic landscape" (Jones 2019, p. 20). This is seen in the GPOP, as it is a product of state intervention, a spatial imaginary of

fluid boundaries held together by a functional spatial logic that attempts to cohere with other spatial levels.

The state rescaling process, seen in the spatial imaginary of the GPOP, can also be seen as a political strategy (Brenner 2009). Rather than more effectively managing the development of regions and places, these processes often lead to dysfunctional outcomes (Brenner 2009). These processes are complex and are usefully captured as "urbanization under capitalism is always a historically and geographically variegated process: it is mediated through historically and geographically specific institutions, representations, strategies and struggles that are, in turn, conflictually articulated to the cyclical rhythms of worldwide capital accumulation and their associated social, political and environmental contradictions" (Brenner & Schmid 2015, p. 165). These processes are representative of the GPOP in the Sydney metropolitan region as a multiscalar approach is required to understand how it impedes, coheres or interacts with other spatial scales, layers and actors. These scales and spaces are often in states of flux and may be presented as polymorphic (Burridge et al. 2017). As they are in states of flux with fluid boundaries, spaces such as the GPOP are contested spaces, but also arenas where place-based interventions may be observed.

A place-based approach also allows policymakers to tailor discrete approaches to create the right size and mix of institutions aligned to a specific geographical boundary (Barca et al. 2012, p. 140). Further, evidence suggests that countries with institutional devolution are more likely to support endogenous growth in place-based interventions (e.g. Ireland), while other countries (e.g. Greece) without this are more likely to experience problems in the alignment of local economic agendas with higher order governmental development priorities (Avdikos & Chardas 2016, p. 110).

However, the implementation of place-based interventions can also be seen as the promotion of place on the global stage (Brenner 2009). The elevation of the GPOP in the Sydney metropolitan region underpins this rescaling process. It allows policymakers to simultaneously improve the global positioning and competitiveness of sub-regional spaces, while at a regional level reconfigure territorial relationships, that is centring the GPOP within the Sydney metropolitan region.

In lieu of institutional devolution, institutional design supporting multilevel governance systems can ease implementation challenges. It is important to draw on this multiscalar

institutional structure, and take a relational approach to thinking about spatiality, that is identifying the role of places in regions, and to understand the temporal dimension, that is the changing role of place over time (cf. Graham & Healey 1999). Taking a relational approach to thinking about the role of places within larger spatial units adds to the messiness of place-based thinking and introduces another layer of a complex web of actors advocating for their own interests. In the Australian context, these coalitions of interests may be formed by non-government actors including business groups and private developers, or even groups of local government authorities to form regional organisation of councils for example. The next section introduces the concept of a spatial imaginary and discusses the powerful rhetorical role of prospective spatial narratives.

3.3   Spatial imaginaries

Spatial imaginaries are representational and performative discourses that provide idealised visions of existing realities (Davoudi et al. 2018; Watkins 2015). These imaginaries advocate for particular planning and development outcomes and work to integrate political, economic and social processes with spatial policies and strategies. Spatial imaginaries are often produced by dominant political actors to present selective understandings of particular places and spaces, and work to build consensus around spatial strategies (Allmendinger & Haughton 2010). They can also be used to isolate competitive features of spatially selective areas for comparison on a global stage (Baker & Ruming 2015). The GPOP is representative of both qualities being produced by a metropolitan governance actor, building support for concentrating development and investment in the GPOP and drawing comparisons to the Sydney CBD as a proxy for global competitiveness.

A distinction can also be drawn between 'soft' spatial imaginaries and 'hard' territorial spaces (Haughton & Allmendinger 2015). Although distinct, they coexist as "complex, contingent hybrids, with new initiatives layered on top of previous ones" (Haughton & Allmendinger 2015, p. 859). A rather curious and influential example of this are the contrasting imaginaries of the 'Blue Banana' which was imagined as the connective backbone of Europe and marker for monocentric development and the 'Bunch of Grapes' as a model for polycentric development in Europe (Faludi 2015). These duelling metaphors promote ideals of centralisation and polycentrism that influence spatial policy-making, and

have endured as spatial imaginaries. These conflicting ideals also provide grounds for challenging these metaphors given the range of interpretive freedom which can be inferred from these imaginaries. Polycentricity as a spatial imaginary has also gained currency in spatial plans in city-regional development (Granqvist et al. 2019). Written from the context of restructuring local government boundaries in the UK, Haughton & Allmendinger (2015) note that these processes are often politically charged. While observing the changing developmental priorities and conflicts emerging within metropolitan regions, rather than changing, reconfiguring or adjusting borderlines, it is often politically, and practically an easier task to draw new boundaries that introduce their own independent functional logics. The GPOP also introduces new spatial layers on top of existing statutory areas such as LGAs, for which boundary changes are indeed very difficult (and politically charged).

In the creation of these spatial imaginaries, new functional logics are drawn together to form distinct, spatially-wedded interests where intended spatial development pathways lead to conflicts of their own (Allen & Cochrane 2007). As these spaces are socially produced, conflicts inevitably emerge as stakeholders with different cultural identities, political affiliation, or economic capacity contend to promote their agenda. However, regardless of these socially produced differences, spatial divisions enacted through planning are usually defined through the administrative-political hard spaces, rather than functional, strategic, and often more temporally sensitive soft spaces (Haughton & Allmendinger 2015). The relatively hard administrative planning spaces have a lower tendency towards transformation than softer functional planning spaces (Zimmerbauer & Paasi 2019). Although no less contested, hard spaces of planning are more clearly understood thus this section will give greater attention to the formation of functional soft spaces of planning.

Spatial imaginaries can be both bounded and boundless (Deas & Lord 2006). These spaces can be produced across a range of scales and proliferate through functional delineations of space (Haughton & Allmendinger 2017). Spatial imaginaries are situated between new and existing spatial boundaries, thus requiring bespoke governance actors to mediate tensions generated at their edges where ambiguities and uncertainties will need to be addressed. These antagonisms are not new, and have been identified at a variety of scales, including the sub-regional scale (Allmendinger & Haughton 2009) and the supra-regional or international scale (Metzger & Schmitt 2012). As spatial imaginaries move between territorial and relational

perspectives of the planning and governance of these spaces, they can engender conflicts as they may be perceived in different ways by different actors (Paasi 2009).

The multiple drivers of metropolitan development have introduced overlapping soft spaces of strategy acting as new spatial fixes. Spatial fixes provide temporary solutions to spatial policy making and are developed both alongside and on top of existing, and enduring scales of planning (Jessop 2016). These spatial fixes have the capacity to integrate fragmented approaches to spatial planning and governance of metropolitan areas, although they are not without limits and deficiencies. Haughton & Allmendinger suggest that these spatial fixes "emerge together seeking, to greater or lesser degrees, to provide new fixes that suture the 'open' and 'closed' necessity of planning, or that shift the focus of planning towards facilitating growth and development" (2017, p. 77).

There is a need to involve multiple actors across different scales and sectors, moving past singular or parochial territorial boundaries limiting problem definition and actor participation, and seeing the borders of spatial imaginaries as a cross-disciplinary and fuzzy concept (Haselsberger 2014). Applying these themes to the challenge of rebalancing a metropolitan region through spatial imaginaries suggests that as a starting point, the response should not be designed and driven by a single institution or actor prescribing the dominance of a particular scale. Responses to these challenges are context-dependent and may not align across the continuum of actor perspectives, diluting the path-dependency of metropolitan development processes (Paasi & Zimmerbauer 2015). The development of governance practices and policies should ideally match sociospatial processes. The hybrid theoretical approach argued for here may shape responses which more closely correspond to emerging challenges. To take an actor-based perspective of spatial imaginaries, "it is never the spatial form that acts, but rather social actors who, embedded in particular (multidimensional) spatial forms and make use of particular (multidimensional) forms, act. The relevance of a particular spatial form ... can be measured only from the perspective of the engaged actors" (Mayer 2008, p. 416). While Mayer argues that it is not the spatial form that acts, there is an interdependence between actor and space shaping spatial development pathways. The following section elaborates on the range and roles of planning spaces.

3.3.1 Planning spaces

The proliferation of different types of planning spaces, and their multiplicity can be seen as a response to the chaotic and diverse nature of urbanisation. It is suggested that

> *there is a divide opening up between different aspects of planning practice, specifically between the 'visible', open and statutory duties and processes of land-use management and public involvement, and the informal, less-visible, facilitative, trans-boundary and multi-disciplinary forms of planning and regeneration ... rather than being contradictory, there is a symbiotic and deliberately fuzzy relationship in these parallel forms of reformulating systems for planning and regeneration.*
>
> Haughton & Allmendinger 2017, p. 73

The quotation points to the emergent conflicts in metropolitan regions, and tensions between levels of government and the plans that are produced. The reasons for this are multiple and identified through relationships between levels of government, sectoral silos and loss of legitimacy of special purpose governance bodies designed to act at new spatial scales, i.e., the GSC with the GPOP (Haughton & Allmendinger 2017). Over the last 50-years or more, alternative spaces of planning or spatial imaginaries have been introduced by a range of actors at a variety of scales and scalar extensiveness from the neighbourhood level through area regeneration initiatives, and at supra-national levels encouraging cooperation across continents such as the EU cross-border regions. Two examples are introduced below.

Innovative spatial imaginaries, orchestrated by state and non-state actors have been well documented internationally. A particularly novel case is the Atlantic Gateway linking Manchester and Liverpool in the UK, launched by The Peel Group, a property development company in 2008 (Feiertag et al. 2020; Harrison 2013). Peel was explicit in using the Atlantic Gateway as motivation to create a special purpose planning vehicle to overcome local government objections to their plans (Feiertag et al. 2020). Thus, this provides an example of a privately-led spatial imaginary being using as a strategic device for regional development.

Spatial imaginaries have also been used for regional integration across international borders. The Baltic Sea Region (BSR) is a macroregional strategy developed by the European Union.

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As a tool to strengthen transnational cooperation around the Baltic Sea, the BSR strategy materialises from a soft space, by coordinating a range of actors in a practice of territorial metagovernance (Metzger & Schmitt 2012), gradually hardening towards a more permanent space through the alignment and stabilisation of regional identity. This hardening process occurs over time to develop a coalition of support from various actors. Metzger and Schmitt find that in this case, the primary driver for regional stabilisation was the role of a regional spokesperson/s and their ability to align "multiple existing and partially connecting or conflicting versions of a region into a common, coherent vision" (Metzger & Schmitt 2012, p. 269). This legitimisation of the region is interesting as through this strategy, there is no additional legislation, political instrument or bespoke institution needed to coordinate these arrangements. Thus, the emphasis and importance of a metagovernance actor who can both strengthen a particular vision and align the perspectives of a broad spectrum of stakeholders may "contribute to generating a consensus among actors as to what constitutes the essence, the scope, and the boundaries of a specific spatial entity" (Metzger & Schmitt 2012, p. 277), which in this case is the BSR.

Within metropolitan areas, these spaces have emerged because of the challenges of governing single administrative areas that are limited and constrained by path-dependent parochial boundaries such as local government areas. Functional spaces that more effectively address the economic geography of the area are often more fit-for-purpose in addressing spatially situated policy challenges. Governance actors who are not limited by territorial boundaries, or the integration of governance actors working across siloed organisations and across a hierarchy of governance spaces, are most likely to be effective. The GSC could fit this role. Demonstrating their proliferation in the UK at a variety of scales, Haughton & Allmendinger organise key alternative (or soft) planning spaces in Figure 3.1 below. The synthesis of these alternative planning spaces finds that both the geographic scale and quanta of soft spatial imaginaries have increased markedly since the 2000s. In the 1960s, alternative planning spaces were shaped around environmentally defined spaces. However, more recently imaginaries have been developed around economic development goals and improving the economic competitiveness of certain spaces. In Sydney, the GPOP has clearly been imbued with these characteristics in the advancement of key precincts to be regionally and globally competitive. The next section delves into the nuance and impact of borders shaping social, political and economic processes.
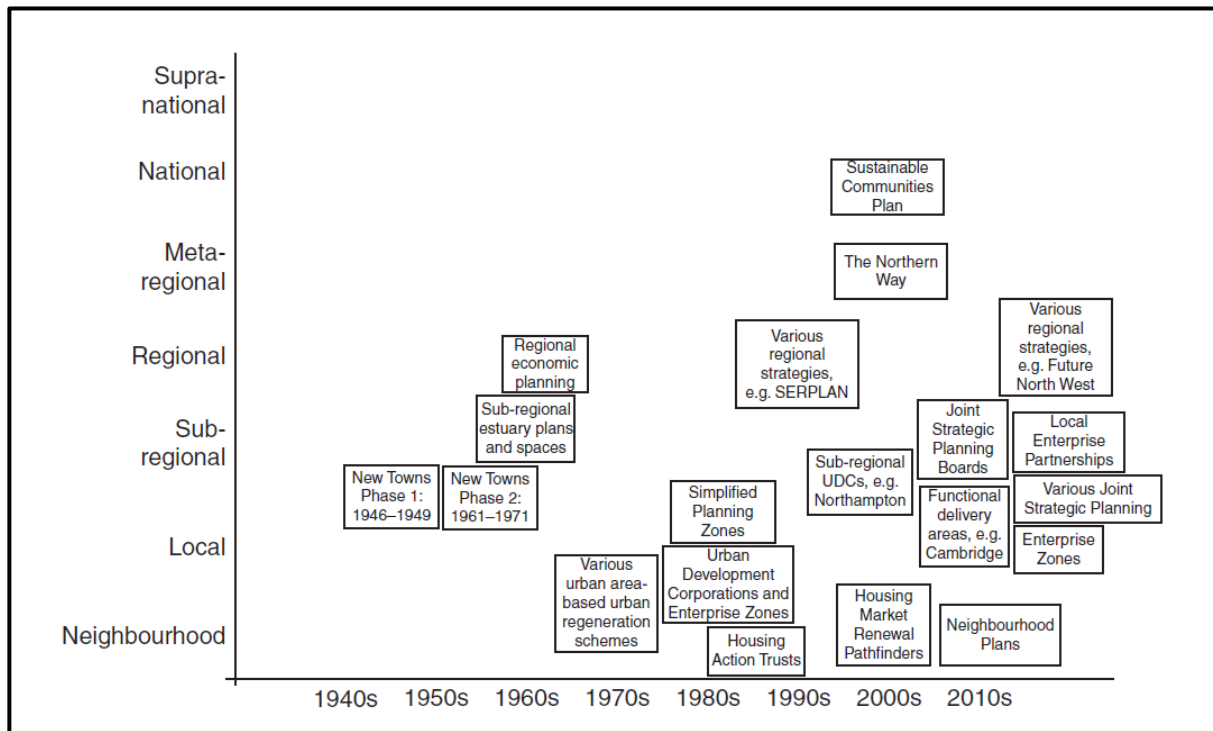
Figure 3.1. Key alternative space of planning from the 1940s onwards

Source: Haughton & Allmendinger 2017, p. 79.

3.4 Borders

Spatial imaginaries provide a general framework to examine territorial and relational dimensions of planning. More explicit attention to expressions of borders can provide a better understanding of the implication, impact, and utility of spatial imaginaries. Borders and boundaries are socially produced and consensus is formed through legislation or other forms of agreement. Although borders defined by administrative boundaries are relatively hard and resistant to political and functional spatial changes, they can still be considered a form of spatial imaginary – that is – demarcated by a functional criteria that is sociospatially defined. These administrative boundaries are temporally constructed, but through dominant path dependencies shaped by governmental hierarchies, they are relatively enduring. Thus, demarcated as a jurisdiction, they can also be governed territorially, such as LGAs, and nested in larger sets of government such as regional and state governments.

Borders, quite simply, are tools used to order and understand social relations (Kolossov 2005). Borders are complex and contested phenomena (Haselsberger 2014), where their

definitions and meaning can change depending on the interrelationships of space, time, context and actor. Although more parochially describing relations between territories, states, and their social, political and economic processes (Kolossov & Scott 2013), borders also draw lines defining communities (Anderson 2006). However, more recently, concepts developed from border studies have been adopted and employed to understand territorial processes at the metropolitan scale (Fricke 2015; Sohn 2014). These trends mirror the increasing importance of borders, at the metropolitan scale, as it is the meso scale between local and national governance, where the impact of strategic acts and statutory plans come together (Brenner 2004).

The shift in focus from borders as territorial dividing lines that institutionalise geopolitical relations has also supported the understanding of borderlines as a product of socio-cultural and discursive processes and practices (Brambilla 2015). This shift can help us understand conflicts and competencies around different perspectives of metropolitan reform (Liao, Breitun & Wehrhahn 2018). Although the signification of borders generally pertain to divisions between groups, they can also support consensus by aligning strategic goals and developing actor coalitions around these goals, leading to the recognition of the legal aspects of statutory boundaries. This is key to understanding the impact of statutory and land use planning, of particular importance to the overlap of multiple hard planning spaces, and the role border studies can play contributing to a better understanding of conflict in these contested spaces.

Drawn on a map, a mutual understanding of borderlines enables relative agreement on the division of territory. Because borders may be interpreted differently by different actors, maps as visual aids may help to gain consensus between different actor perspectives as they may be understood in a variety of ways (Balibar 2002, p. 81). Thinking the border as a process of, and construction of sociospatial relationships, develops wider implications and understandings of how and why borders act, and their ability to take multiple (and at times conflicting) forms and meanings (Metzger & Schmitt 2012). As the drawing of contemporary borders has greater implications for connecting local places with global relations, the construction and placement of sub-national borders have a greater embedded geopolitical agency. This spatial prioritisation also increases the scope of decision-making and affects the spatial relations of places.

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A spatial reading of bordering tends towards the physical implications of borderlines, how actors and objects come together or apart, where relations of social and symbolic capital emerge (Lamont & Molnar 2002), or contestation where borderlines re/appear. A relational reading of bordering may highlight a competitive perspective, tangential to forming and facilitating functional economic areas and supra-regional partnerships that may also cross national borderlines. This multiplicity of borders instantiate and bring together diverse understandings of territorial and functional spaces of governance to develop plural understandings of how and why borders may not exactly 'fit' (Haselsberger 2014).

Although borders already implicitly suggest multiple layerings of spatial information, there has been a recent move to explicitly address borders as a lens enabling multiple perspectives of space (Paasi & Zimmerbauer 2015). Recent theorisations have produced explorations to engage with borders that are open to multiple understandings and attempt to make sense of these incongruences. Two examples include the multiperspectival border (Rumford 2012), and penumbral borders (Paasi & Zimmerbauer 2015). Both these theories begin from the point that a parochial view of borders is only seen through particular frames, where a single frame privileges certain perspectives and only tells a single story. In response, these theorisations of the border seek to mediate multiple perspectives of the border that take into account not only hegemonic and a hierarchically determinate view, but also considering alternate, and 'quiet' voices that can lead to more effective policy outcomes.

The polymorphic nature of urban spatial relations aligns with the interaction of a variety of bounded and unbounded spaces, and actors participating in these spaces (Burridge et al. 2017; Hincks, Deas & Haughton 2017). These complex relations thus require the mediation of multiple, and often conflicting perspectives reflective of the sociospatial diversity shaping metropolitan space (Paasi & Zimmerbauer 2015). Statutory plans defining administrative boundaries, are useful in ordering sectoral policies. However, there are limits to what can be achieved on their own as "the planning system can achieve only a small part of what is now expected of it through statutory planning" (Haughton & Allmendinger 2017, p. 73). Thus, a border theory may be combined with a more flexible, functional dimension such as spatial imaginaries to address these emerging urban conflicts.

Spatial imaginaries, as soft spaces of governance, can lead to the creation of new spatial partnerships, or require the cooperation and collaboration of existing institutions,

governments and private partners to carry out area-based strategies (Haughton & Allmendinger 2017). The alignment of borders may ignore political administrative territories, conflicting with existing spaces of government, planning and development. In a similar vein, Haselsberger takes borders as a concept of "multifaceted, multilevel and interdisciplinary institutions and processes transecting spaces in not only administrative and geopolitical but also cultural, economic and social terms" (Haselsberger 2014, p. 505). The border categories of geopolitical, sociocultural, economic and biophysical intimate a border 'studies', to develop a framework of borders as a thoroughly cross-disciplinary project. This interweaving of hard, administrative, and geopolitical spaces, and softer, cultural, economic and social spaces highlights the importance of considering a multidimensional approach that may more appropriately consider their alignment and divergence.

Haselsberger develops this framework that decodes borders, towards bordering practices, and towards their role in decoding relational geographies. This draws attention to the "spatial impacts of boundaries on human and environmental activities and *vice versa*" (Haselsberger 2014, p. 517). These overlapping boundaries are not inert. They are unstable and often have contradictory functions. Continually produced and reproduced, they are interpreted and understood in different ways, thus she suggests we should "think and work within multiple hard, soft and fuzzy spaces in parallel. The territorial expansion of these different spaces is not identical." (Haselsberger 2014, p. 523). This border framework is illustrated in Figure 3.2 below.
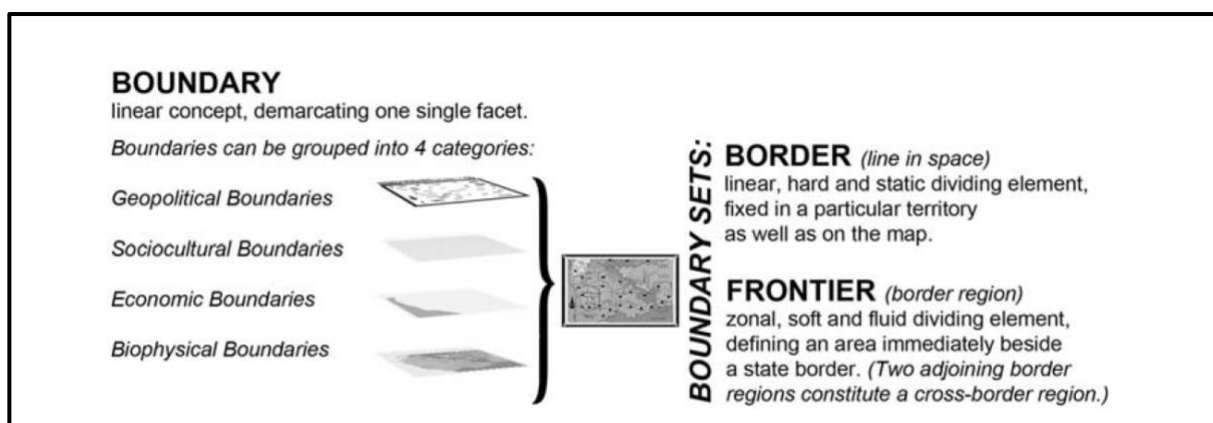
Figure 3.2. Interrelationship of the border, boundary and frontier edge concepts

Source: Haselsberger 2014, p. 509.

However, merely enacting or invoking new soft spaces is not necessarily a solution to integrating spaces of planning or resolving territorial conflicts. The earlier examples from Manchester in North-West England (Harrison 2013) and the cross-boundary Baltic Sea Region (Metzger & Schmitt 2012) show that territorial integration through soft space imaginaries do not automatically shift the path-dependent hegemonic development trajectories. Instead, of merely replacing existing institutions and territorial practices, "to achieve a synthesis between them and any new ones… other metageographies need to be factored in. Imagining them is a new and challenging task in which planners might want to excel" (Faludi 2012, p. 308). Thus, the context of new spaces of planning interacting with existing planning spaces must be considered, including the intended effects associated with the creation of new planning spaces, as well as the negative externalities that may materialise. As these new spaces are created and multiplied, the delineation and demarcation of these spaces often modify or transform a variety of borders and borderspaces. Thus, acknowledging the borders of spatial imaginaries as a transitional and always changing space, they may be conceptualised as 'polymorphic', or "taking on a multiplicity of mutually non-exclusive forms at the same time" (Burridge et al. 2017, p. 239). The reality that these borderspaces are non-exclusive assumes a level of overlap between spatial boundary and perspectival difference. Thus, a dialectic of the border can highlight these differences and provide a platform to address them.

3.5 Multilevel governance, metagovernance and multispatial metagovernance

Given the sociospatial challenges raised by the planning discipline, a theoretical framework addressing spatial rebalancing of metropolitan regions should explicitly address the territorial dimension. It can also be argued that governance coordination within metropolitan regions should accommodate a commensurably diverse range of actors, as "centralized government is not well suited to accommodate diversity… multi-level governance allows decision makers to adjust the scale of governance to reflect heterogeneity" (Hooghe & Marks 2003, p. 236). In the process of mapping policy and government responsibilities to the right level of governance, there is a preference to decentralise and devolve to the lowest appropriate level (Hooghe & Marks 2016). While there is a logic to map specific policies to each level of government and governance, the overlap of governance spaces is unavoidable. Different

stakeholders have different spatial interests, and the design and delivery of government decisions impact on specific places and region. Local spatial realities thus impact and can influence decisions made at higher levels of governance. This speaks to the inherent spatial nature of multilevel governance.

Multilevel governance (MLG) theorises an alternative to hierarchical forms of governance giving weight to the diffusion of authority rather than nested and formal institutions of government (Peters & Pierre 1998; Hooghe & Marks 2003). This concept suggests a "system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers" (Marks 1993, p. 392) that accounts for prioritising a broader transformation considering institutions of government, and towards a relational understanding of governance (Stephenson 2013). This 'unravelling' of the state (Hooghe & Marks 2003) gives rise to new forms of governance and conceptualisations of what actors can be involved. Leading from this ambition to steer the governance of multiple actors, an understanding of metagovernance of institutions and actors is also required (Sorensen & Torfing 2009).

Contextual specificity relates not just to spaces of implementation, but also to concepts themselves. While metagovernance may be understood as the governance of governance – what type of governance is shaping this definition? Meuleman (2018) adduces through an extended treatise for the trialectic of hierarchical, network and market governance, and the need to coordinate between these priorities, thus specifying his definition of metagovernance as a "means by which to produce some degree of coordinated governance, by designing and managing sound combinations of hierarchical, market and network governance, to achieve the best possible outcomes." (Meuleman 2018, p. 74). Given this flexibility of defining metagovernance, contextual factors that prioritise any of these forms or combinations of governance will be dependent on particular cases.

This model and definition are shaped, in particular around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While SDGs are developed and agreed by national and supranational bodies, they are highly relevant and utilised by sub-national governments to address challenges of spatial equity. Thus, the selection and mix of these types of governance should address the global challenges decided upon by these SDGs, but within the contexts in which they are applied. Meuleman suggests that this is a 'second-order' metagovernance, where 'first-order' metagovernance "handles…governance of one governance style"

(Meuleman 2018, p. 77). With this concept in mind, Meuleman imagines a model of metagovernance as lying on a spectrum through the mediation of hierarchical, network and market governance, adapted towards addressed SDGs within contexts. This is illustrated in Figure 3.3 below.
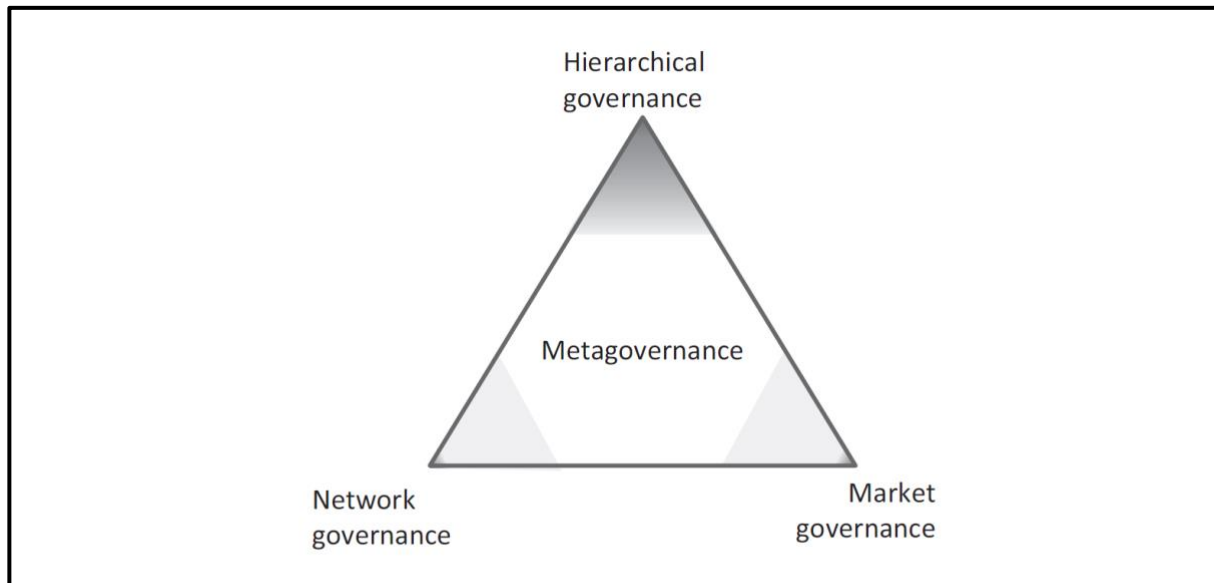
Figure 3.3. Metagovernance as coordination of hierarchical, network and market governance
Source: Meuleman 2018, p. 75.

If governance can be understood as cooperation or collaboration between actors, metagovernance can be understood as the management of these processes and relationships, while also requiring the need to manage complexity and incorporate the multiple perspectives of diverse actors (Meuleman 2018). This necessitates the repurposing of the context of MLG to be framed from different disciplines and scalar interests.

As the metagovernance of spatial relations involves a collection of heterogeneous actors, it is often the case that resistance towards coordination and cohesion may be present between actors with different interests. This is clearly seen in this thesis where the GSC advances the case for the GPOP and find resistance as the interests of other stakeholders, particularly councils and developers advocate for their own positions. Two points should be made to this conflict. Firstly, there is an imperative to more explicitly acknowledge the spatial component of MLG and metagovernance. Just as there are a variety of spaces of governance, there are

multiple spaces of various scales in which government and governance act. Second, MLG, as a concept has conceptual baggage, with its roots in state theory and public administration. This theoretical lens has been adapted with a more explicit spatial component in its framework. Jessop has termed this multispatial metagovernance (MSMG) (Jessop 2016). Thus, with metagovernance as the point of attachment and theoretical departure, there is an explicit acknowledgement of multiple spaces in regard to scale, spatiality, and the different types of spaces which are shaped and affected.

MSMG extends on theories of MLG (c.f. Marks 1993; Hooghe & Marks 2003; Jessop 2007; Piattoni 2010). While MLG looks more closely at the institutional relationships horizontally and vertically, MSMG more explicitly attends to the spatial component of this relationship. This is not to say the MLG does not give consideration to the spatial (for example, see Stephenson 2013 for a reflection on the literature), but the nested authority of political hierarchy tends to neglect other sociospatial structuring principles (Jessop 2016).

While it has the potential to capture, more closely, the complexity of interactions in space, the concept can also be condensed with perhaps too much complexity, becoming too thick and difficult to navigate. These are valid concerns. Given the emergence of new spaces of planning, and a range of spatial innovations responding to the challenges emerging and materialising in places, there is a need for a robust and comprehensive theoretical framework that captures the evolving governance relationships, the spaces in which they act, and can describe the conflicts materialising in places.

Jessop suggests the notion of MSMG is useful as an approach to addressing issues of "governing social relations marked by complex reciprocal interdependence across several spatio-temporal social fields" (Jessop 2016, p. 30), with the potential advantages, over other forms of governance including:

1. it affirms the irreducible plurality of territorial area, social scales, networks, and places that must be addressed in attempts at governance. In other words, it notes the complex interrelations between territorial organization, multiple scalar divisions of labour (and other practices), networked forms of social interaction, and the importance of place as a meeting point of functional operations and the conduct of personal life.

2. it recognizes the complex, tangled, and interwoven nature of the relevant political relations, which include important horizontal and transversal linkages – indicated in notions such as 'network state' or 'network polity'– as well as the vertical linkages implied in multilevel government and/or governance.

3. in contrast to a one-sided emphasis on heterarchic coordination, it introduces metagovernance as the reflexive art of balancing government and other forms of governance to create requisite variety, flexibility, and adaptability in coordinated policy-formulation, policy-making, and implementation.

4. it insists on the plurality and, indeed, heterogeneity of actors potentially involved in such institutions and practices, which stretch well beyond different tiers of government and well beyond the confines of any given administrative, political, or economic space.

(Jessop 2016, p. 30)

With this developing framework, Jessop addresses the weaknesses of MLG where it "ignores many other ways of approaching governance and other kinds of sociospatial governance problems, especially those generated by the specificity of place and space of flows rather than by issues of territoriality or scale" (Jessop 2016, p. 29). Although aiming to integrate "multiple stakeholders across several scales of state territorial organization" (Jessop 2016, p. 17), this working framework, shows potential to work at the metropolitan scale and in relation to place-based partnerships.

In an earlier theorisation of polymorphic sociospatial relations, Jessop and colleagues sought to develop a framework which addresses the "geographies of contention" and bring out dialogues of struggle from below against the hegemonies of capitalism and the state (Jessop, Brenner & Jones 2008). This resulted in a schema combining territory, place, scale and network (TPSN). However, there have also been criticisms raised in association with the TPSN schema that include "the growing disjuncture between 'fixed' national territory and global flows; destabilization due to increasing uneven spatial development among places and their role in political-economic crisis generation; the increasing significance of sub- and supra-national scales of political economic organization; and the proliferation of networks that are neither co-extensive nor isomorphic to national territories" (Jessop 2016, p. 22).

Thus, the proposal of a MSMG approach seeks to address these issues, and related others that mark the "complex reciprocal interdependence across several spatio-temporal social fields" (Jessop 2016, p. 23).

Drawing on the notion of spatiotemporal fixes (STFs) to highlight the spatiotemporal dimension acknowledges the "evolving role of borders, boundaries, and frontiers; and the changing intranational geographies of the state's territorial organization and internal administrative differentiation" (Jessop 2016, p. 30). Acknowledging the role of borders and boundaries on the changing geographies within the state, opens the door for further interrogation of meso-scale border work, and the multispatial metagovernance of these processes. This theorisation provides a strong claim to respond to the changing nature of urban conflicts.

3.6   Spatial imaginaries, spaces of policy and policy spaces

Rhetorical constructions of space as spatial imaginaries are characterised by their relationality, ability for ambiguity, flexibility from a policy perspective (Hincks, Deas & Haughton 2017) and the 'fleet-of-foot' nature of these new spatial governance configurations (Pugalis, Townsend & Johnston, 2014). But there are limits to the flexibility of imaginary spatial demarcations. This often occurs when soft spaces harden, that is, when strategy takes statutory form (Metzger & Schmitt 2012). These fuzzy boundaries are often used as place-holders before spatial strategies are formed. During this phase, place-based coalitions transform spatial imaginaries through materialized alliances and by gaining cross-sectional support. Support can be garnered, for example, through strengthening alliances within networks to legitimise global connectivity, assembling influential actors to advocate for reconciling potential conflicts, and promoting spatial imaginaries as idealized territorial and relational outcomes (Deas & Lord 2006). This phase was particularly pertinent in the case of the GPOP as the GSC sought feedback and collaboration from a wide range of stakeholders in the foundational stages of the GPOP, and where the boundary was still shifting in response to these conversations (GSC 2016). These multiple ideal and real logics cohere, supporting the planning and development of metropolitan regional development.

Just as these models and frameworks of metagovernance and borders are useful as an operational framework to develop an approach to address their integration in place, it is

useful to see how they may be utilised within policy systems and sub-systems. Varone et al. link the theoretical approaches of boundary-spanning regimes, territorial institutionalism and multi-level governance to develop a concept of a functional regulatory space (FRS) as characteristic of the political rescaling process emerging in contemporary urban spaces (Varone et al. 2013, p. 319). They suggest these theoretical approaches are interdependent and their integration is necessary to address the (super) wicked problems which are territorially boundless, require sectoral integration, and cannot be addressed by a single level of government. This approach may be effective when attempting to reconcile contradictions that become apparent when merging various sectoral policies to deliver an integrated policy approach (Tosun & Lang 2017). Varone et al. temper the imaginary of a FRS as a "'socio-political field' within the boundaries of which the (super) wicked problem is politically recognized by public and private stakeholders, who agree on the necessity of specific State intervention in order to solve it" (Varone et al. 2013, p. 320). Through reference to expansive territories of transboundary river catchments and functional airspace blocks which obviously extend beyond the remit of any single government sector or governance actor, they both extend beyond any single institution, functioning beyond their boundaries. They also require the integration and competency of multiple levels of government, thus the FRS acts as a container integrating a range of policy subsystems.

Conceptualising equitable spatial distribution of resources and development as a similarly wicked issue, this framework exemplifies the territorial and governance integration response that is needed in the GPOP. This relationship is visualised in Figure 3.4 below.
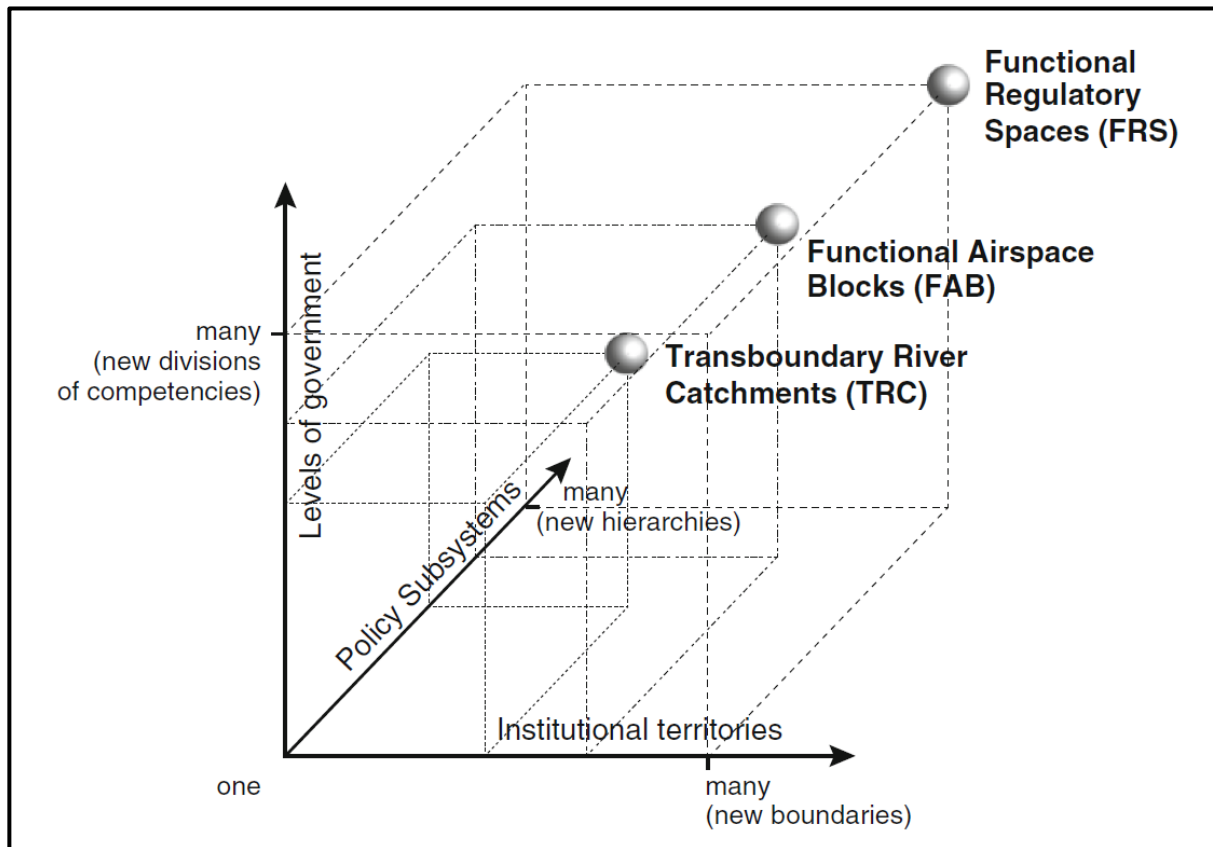
Figure 3.4. Three-dimensional comparison between an FRS ideal-type and two potential FRS

Source: Varone et al. 2013, p. 329.

This framework addresses environmental challenges, proposing new institutions and policy relationships to address these systemic problems. Applied to the context of competing imaginaries of metropolitan regional and sub-regional spaces, the FRS model is useful to draw together the condition of multiple (overlapping) boundaries that are present in the case of existing LGA and statutory spatial imaginaries. The multiple layers of government and the competencies that are required to be shared take place over a multitude of sectors including, but not limited to infrastructure, land use and transport planning. The FRS can also conceptualise conflicts in an urban space where spatial interventions to address challenges, for example, spatial inequality, can be resolved through new governance arrangements (Fuller & Geddes 2008). In the Sydney context, this may be realised through the establishment of the GSC and the implementation of the GPOP.

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Until recently, this combination of overlapping strategic (soft) and statutory (hard) planning rarely came into conflict because of the different roles attributed to each, that is, the (softer) guidance which strategic planning offers, and the (harder) development constraints and certainty, which statutory planning affords. Nevertheless, between these two forms of planning there are some exceptions. In the Australian context, for example, additional development provisions and spot rezoning offer landowners the potential to develop beyond statutory provisions (Gurran & Ruming 2016). However, these decisions have been made within a single statutory planning space.

Coordination can be achieved transversally, to resolve conflicts that limit policy integration across both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Conflicts may appear when multiple actors contend with different priorities within the same jurisdiction, requiring another party to deliberate instead of ad-hoc decision-making by governmental hierarchy. Within a policy-making perspective, acknowledgement of the temporal dimension may be more challenging due to the unsettled spatial boundaries and policy position of the spatial imaginary. Although antagonisms exist, these boundaries are relatively uncontested, and in ideal circumstances, the responsibility for service delivery can be efficiently devolved to the lowest level of government (Sandford 2019). Although devolution is a marked trend in many affluent countries, it has not been as readily accepted in Australia (Tomlinson & Spiller 2018). Putting debates surrounding the ideal scale and function of government to one side, there is a parallel discussion in regard to the appropriate governance arrangements, the constitution of institutions, actors and partnerships, and of course, the distribution of power and decision-making.

Although borders act, and can be seen in a multitude of ways, where they are drawn are experienced in place. The theoretical and ontological unbounding of space (Hillier 2013) has expanded conceptions and understandings of bordered space. Place-dynamics also impact on the assemblage of translocal and transcalar linkages to, for example, global networks and events (McFarlane 2009). Materially, these global events act in places, where, for example, policies may transfer, change and be applied 'in situ', although the translation may not form contextually specific responses to local issues, where policies materialise 'in place', rather than 'for place' (Cochrane & Ward 2012, p. 7). Contextually blind solutions packaged as 'best practice' can be significant causes of antagonism as their effects materialise in actual places.

These responses to contextual specificity and the need for place-based development have the benefit of developing solutions that are specific to the places where issues emerge and materialise, while also having the potential to build capacity within communities (Heinelt & Kubler 2004). Places, however, bring together a range of actors, with their own particularities that affect how borders perform. Borders, as jurisdictional boundaries, also mark territories of inclusion and exclusion that can also limit the inclusion of particular problems thus limiting the remit of spatial interventions (Mezzadra & Neilson 2012). At the geopolitical boundary, this may concern citizenship and access to other states, but at the sub-national level, jurisdictional exclusion may be felt unevenly, thus affecting translocal processes such as limits of service provision due to prioritising more visible or vanity projects (Pham & Grant 2017).

Breaking down physical boundaries and borders that divide space can also function to bridge perceptual differences (Agnew 2008). The purposive benefit of thinking about border spaces emerges through creating spaces of discussion that lead towards deliberation and generating practical solutions to the myriad 'wicked' issues that exist. As a space develops to temper these concerns, thinking about borders through spaces, can lead to relational understandings of space, as a product of sociospatial processes.

3.7   Conclusion

This chapter synthesised a theoretical framework guided by the literature of place-based planning, spatial imaginaries, border theory and multispatial metagovernance. This responds to the thesis aim by aligning the various 'place' inputs towards overarching metropolitan strategies. On their own, each theoretical lens or approach affords the reader a particular perspective in understanding the role of place in a metropolitan regional context. Combined, the theories bring together a unique frame to understand the interrelationship of various actors, spaces, borders and governance spaces linking place and region.

Place-based planning prioritises particular places over others, and as representational and performative discourses, spatial imaginaries provide selective understandings of particular places to build consensus for planning and development outcomes. Spatial imaginaries often sit on top of existing planning spaces and introduce their own bespoke functional logics that reshape sociospatial relations across a broad range of scales, from the local to the

supranational. While usually framed around imprecise, fuzzy boundaries, more recently they have been defined through hard boundaries determining land-use constraints. Although gaining a statutory outline can legitimise and give precision to this planning space, as it sits on top of existing spaces such as LGAs, land-use conflicts will need to be mediated.

Spatial imaginaries can be produced by a range of state and non-state actors. An example of a spatial imaginary orchestrated by a non-state actor was given with the case of the Atlantic Gateway with the motivation to create a special purpose planning authority as a strategic device for regional development. An example of a supranational imaginary was demonstrated by the Baltic Sea Region orchestrated by the European Union. This space, while beginning as a soft spatial imaginary, gradually hardened among supraregional cooperation to align multiple partially connecting and conflicting identities into a common, coherent vision. To achieve this vision, it is also necessary to capture a broad range of actors and their perspectives rather than rely on a priori hegemonic framing of sociospatial conditions.

This chapter has also blended a theory of the border with MSMG. While distinct, spatial imaginaries, borders and MSMG are interlinked. Borders, as tools to understand social relations are also contested in practice. By describing relations between social, political and economic processes, they support the understanding of different perspectives around metropolitan reform, and restructuring processes. A MSMG approach gives consideration to the intersection of various scalar perspectives within the spatial imaginary. By considering institutional relationships and the multiple scales and spaces of government in which they are situated, MSMG gives attention to the plurality of the policy-making process and describes the conflicts that materialise in places.

The penultimate thematic developed in this chapter was the relationship between spatial imaginaries and spaces of policy. Supported by the example of a FRS incorporating the multiple competencies of multiple levels of government, territorial expansiveness and policy subsystems, this example space aligns at the metropolitan level with, for example the incorporation of multiple government silos and working across levels of government. In particular the concept of a FRS resonates with the transcalar space of the GPOP that acts across multi policy spaces. This three-dimensional model adapts well to the challenges of using spatial imaginaries to shape metropolitan growth priorities.

Finally, this chapter identified some practical challenges involved in the adaptation of spatial imaginaries in metropolitan areas including the Atlantic Gateway in the UK, and the Baltic Sea Region. Putting this together, a contextually specific response to place-based development is needed to address the challenges of path-dependent processes of urbanisation.

Chapter 4   Spatial imaginaries in Sydney metropolitan planning
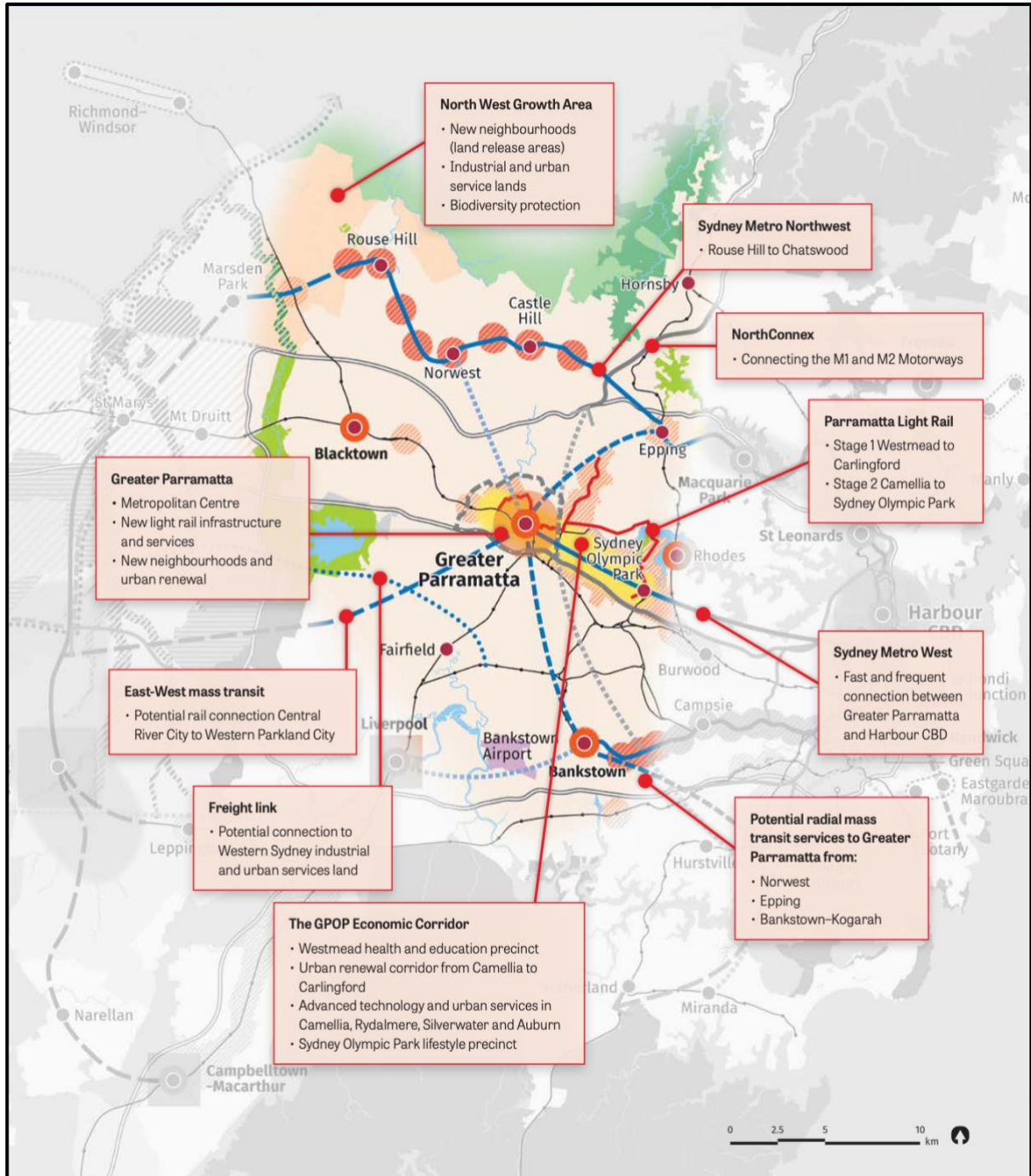
Central River City Vision (GSC 2018b, p. 19)

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter traces the emergence of spatial imaginaries in metropolitan Sydney. As a colonial outpost, Australia has a strong connection to England and its planning tradition. These connections have in large part shaped the trajectory and development of planning practice in Sydney. This chapter begins by pulling together the ideas that have influenced post-war planning strategies. Examinations of place-based influences and coalitions of actors are then situated against early experiments with precinct development. The chapter concludes by exploring the role and development of spatial imaginaries used in planning strategies

Planning and the development of planning practice in Australia is a relatively new tradition. Since the mid 19th century, governments have grappled with areas such as public administration, but addressing urban challenges were nascent issues (Freestone 2006). Heavy spending on infrastructure – railways, water supply and ports – encouraged growth, however development outcomes were disorderly. It was clear that some form of structured settlement planning was required to ensure orderly development outcomes. The observation of these conditions triggered a slow transition towards the formal development of planning emerging through the 20th century.

In NSW, the development of strategic planning, both from a local and regional level lagged behind other States and Territories (Hamnett & Freestone 2000, p. 78). It wasn't until the NSW Government's Royal Commission into the Improvement of Sydney and its Suburbs in 1908–9 initiated conversation, and pathways forwards to addressing matters including housing, traffic congestion, metropolitan government and city improvement (Freestone 2006). While Royal Commissions and related inquiries were popular mechanisms to encourage debate around a range of issues, there is no statutory requirement to implement their findings. A Royal Commission to the Constitution of Greater Sydney was conducted as far back as 1913, but it was not until 1945 that the *Local Government (Town and Country Planning) Amendment Act, 1945* allowed for the preparation and implementation of local planning schemes by municipalities and shires, and subsequently the formation of a metropolitan government (Selmon 2020).

Following the Second World War, a general global phase of recovery shifted attention towards reconstruction of cities and urban areas. A Royal Commission into the Boundaries of

Local Government Areas in the County of Cumberland 1945-6 was established. The terms of reference for this Royal Commission were to

> *investigate whether the present local government boundaries (in the County of Cumberland) particularly for the City of Sydney were suitable for the efficient operation of the local government functions, and if not what alterations where necessary to 'secure, promote or facilitate proper, economical and efficient local government throughout the said county.'... The Commission found it impracticable to delineate wards boundaries in any other area than the City of Sydney, and suggested that another body perform this task*

(ARDC, n.d.)

This role subsequently fell to the County of Cumberland Council, Sydney's first metropolitan authority. Since the dissolution of the CCC in 1963, there was no metropolitan governance arrangement for Sydney until the establishment of the GSC in 2015 (Selmon 2020).

Politics and planning are also inextricably linked. More recently, changes in government, Premier, or even Minister of Planning have led to changes in planning policy and metropolitan strategies for the Sydney region. The nearly constant state of planning reform from the 2005-2015 period, is seen in Figure 4.1. Since the last significant phase of contentious Local Government amalgamations beginning in 2013, the pace of reform has slowed. While council amalgamations have halted, planning reforms continued with significant overhaul to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 2018 that has recently come into effect. As this thesis is written, a replacement of Liberal Premiers, and subsequent ministerial changes have led to a repeal of a significant Design and Place State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) less than one month following the end of public exhibition, "vowing to cut red tape to address the state's housing supply crisis" (Kelly 2022).

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Premier	Planning Minister	Planning Reforms	Key Budget Changes	Infrastructure & Transport Strategies	Strategic Plans	Creation of Development Corporations	
Morris Iemma	Frank Sartor	EP&A Amendment (Infrastructure & Other Planning Reform) Act / State Planning Policy (Major Development)			City of Cities		2005
		EP&A Amendment Act	Allocations for 2005 Plan	Infrastructure Strategy / Urban Transport Statement			2006
☆ Election							2007
LABOR							
Nathan Rees	Kristina Keneally	EP&A Amendment Act	GFC Mini Budget				2008
	Tony Kelly	SEPP (Affordable Rental Housing)				Barangaroo Delivery Authority	2009
Kristina Keneally				Metro Transport Plan: Connecting the City of Cities	Metro Plan for Sydney 2036	Sydney Metro Development Authority	2010
☆ Election							
Barry O'Farrell	Brad Hazzard	EP&A Amendment (Part 3A Repeal) Act					2011
COALITION		Green Paper on Planning Reform		Long Term Transport-Master Plan / Sydney's Rail Future / State Infrastructure Strategy		UrbanGrowth NSW	2012
		White Paper on Planning Reform / Planning Bill & Planning Admin Bill					2013
Mike Baird	Pru Goward	Planning reform bills lapse		Rebuilding NSW: State Infrastructure Strategy / State Infrastructure Strategy Update	Plan for Growing Sydney		2014
☆ Election	Rob Stokes	Greater Sydney Commission Act	$20B as per SISU 2014				2015

Figure 4.1. Sydney planning policy landscape

Source: Bunker et al. 2017, p. 5.

The next section identifies the actors, and actor coalitions, who are temporally aligned around common place-based interests. In some cases, these place-based interests have developed into spatial imaginaries built around economic development narratives. Long standing economic development narratives can be traced across several iterations of metropolitan plans. The chapter comes full circle to analyse the most recent strategically significant spatial imaginary – The GPOP – which is the focal point of the GSC's goal of a 'metropolis of three cities.'

4.2　Policy transfer, international experience, global drivers, local challenges

The preferred metropolitan form became the corridor plan, providing for continuous urban expansion between wedges of green, thus avoiding the inflexibility and servicing difficulties of the green belt-satellite town concept.

Evans & Freestone 2010, p. 237.

This section introduces drivers, both global and local, that have influenced the development of planning in Australia. Australia's colonial history as an English settlement guided the influence of spatial development policies learned from English planners. While the imaginary of the garden city stemming from Ebenezer Howard's work in the early 20th century shaped the thinking around spatial development ideals, Patrick Abercrombie was a key contributor to guiding development pathways. As the sophistication of place-based planning strategies and the imaginaries used to build support has increased, their primary role remains to coordinate the delivery of infrastructure and maintenance of orderly development. These strategies were positioned as idealised spatial imaginaries that were more difficult to realise in the Australian context. However, visionary spatial strategies were needed for coordinated development and delivery of housing which was exacerbated at the end of the Second World War. Australia exhibited a national housing shortage of 200,000 homes, of which Sydney required 35,000 (Spearritt & DeMarco 1988: 14). This problem was made worse by the requirement that 19,000 inner city slum dwellings to be demolished.

In the post war period, Ebenezer Howard's satellite town model was the dominant spatial development model in the Anglophone world (Freestone & Pullan 2021). Despite the success

of some Australian interpretations of the satellite town model such as the town of Elizabeth north of Adelaide, the translation of a high-level model faced considerable challenges in Australia. In 1948, shortly after the CCPS was put on exhibition, Patrick Abercrombie made a grand Australian tour to gain an impression of the state of urban development and planning in Australia, and to promote his ideas, further influencing the development of planning in Australia. As metropolitan and capital city masterplans were in the early stages of development, there was great interest in the perspective of Abercrombie on the ability of statutory arrangements to implement these plans and how best to translate these plans into practice (Amati & Freestone 2009).

The spatial imaginaries and idealised models of Howard and Abercrombie's vision are pervasive and relatively enduring. Indeed, both the satellite town model and Abercrombie's spatial strategy can be understood as spatial imaginaries influencing policy-making through idealised models of spatial development. The path-dependency of 'visionary' and influential plans are more easily digestible by decision-makers, while simplified concepts and ideas such as the garden city more easily travel across different places. However, the geographical context of Australian spatial planning is a significant departure from that of England.

The vastness of the Australian continent and distance between capital cities speaks to this contextual difference. The scale of satellite towns between NSW and England are also very different. English satellite towns in the early 20th century were designed for populations of less than 30,000 inhabitants, while those in the Sydney region were planned for upwards of 200,000 (Freestone & Pullan 2020). Both the tyranny of distance and ambition for larger settlements pose challenges for planners and policy-makers which were only likely to be realised after their implementation (Hamnett & Freestone 2018).

The post-war period of the 1950s and 1960s signalled changes in both endogenous and exogenous factors. The growth of manufacturing for domestic markets led to growth and revitalisation of urban areas in Sydney's western suburbs. The general global geopolitical stability also allowed expanding industrial estates in the western suburbs, growing areas such as Blacktown and Liverpool (Freestone 2000, p. 126). By the 1970s, internationalisation of trade and bourgeoning demand of global capital investment led to intensification of regional competition, both domestically and across the Asia Pacific region (Capling, Crozier & Considine 1998).

These changes led to a revision of priorities. The internationalisation of trade and growth of Sydney as a financial and professional services centre had a significant impact on the development and prosperity of Sydney's middle ring suburbs including Parramatta, Auburn and Bankstown (Fagan 2000). Major hurdles to growth continued to mount, especially for the manufacturing and industrial heartlands. The recession of 1982 supported the implementation of aspatial policies intended to attract international investment and tourism (Searle & Cardew 2000). The Bicentenary celebrations in 1988 likely accelerated these activities leading to significant rehabilitation and investment along the Sydney CBD waterfront (Pham 2018). In 1982 the NSW Labor Government had commissioned academic Pat Troy to report and improve on planning policies. Troy's report to cabinet recommended relocation of 7,000 government white collar jobs to bolster western Sydney's workforce, which was implemented by the end of the decade (Searle 2002).

While measures from the Wran government to increase economic development in western Sydney were significant (Searle 2002), the severity of the recession was such that these actions were not sufficient to address the economic downturn, especially affecting manufacturing and industrial employment that was dominant in western Sydney. Australia joined a global orthodoxy of neoliberal policymaking that favoured competition between larger agglomerations of cities and regions, both nationally and internationally, in place of spatially targeted industrial policy. As Sydney was an emerging global city, there was a natural priority placed on strengthening professional service and financial industries, that centred around the Sydney CBD.

In addition to a deficit of employment and industrial opportunities, there was also a challenge of improving access to higher education for western Sydney's residents. At the time, universities were concentrated in the eastern half of Sydney, while technical colleges were available in the west. As early as the 1968 metropolitan strategy, Werrington, near St Marys, was flagged as a site for a western Sydney university. In 1987, NSW Premier Barry Unsworth and Prime Minister Bob Hawke formally announce Chifley University (now Western Sydney University) with major campuses at Penrith, Parramatta, Blacktown and Liverpool.[2]

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[2] https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/30years/timeline

Other proposals by non-government organisations including the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC), Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union (AMFSU), and academics Robert Fagan and Ed Blakely were put forward to stimulate manufacturing in western Sydney (Searle 2002). This included financing for small business, establishment of a Western Sydney Development Agency, and additional infrastructure servicing and investment. In the lead up to the 1988 Sydney metropolitan regional plan, the NSW Government commissioned Fagan and Blakely to provide options to increase employment in the outer metropolitan suburbs. Many were included in the final strategy, predominately around connections between sub-regional centres, promoting employment growth and character of Parramatta and other sub-regional centres, and the development of local economic plans by councils (Searle 2002). However, the proposal to establish a new economic development agency was not included, likely due to the performance of recent development corporations at Bathurst-Orange and Macarthur that accumulated debts of $300M (Searle 2002). These past failures narrowed the ambition of policy-makers to deliver more ambitious spatially targeted development strategies in the following years.

These outcomes demonstrate that the embedded and continuing spatial inequality that persists is not merely an outcome of neoliberal policies, but also a product of spatial reconfiguration that alters over time (McGuirk 2005). This observation highlights the path-dependent nature of urban policy and development and the challenges of shifting the course of historical development patterns to address spatial equity in the Sydney metropolitan region. The connectedness with international capital flows, and national and international competition requires an entrepreneurial response to maintain economic competitiveness. Entrepreneurial responses impact on policy mechanisms, governance practices, and planning strategies (McGuirk 2005). The development of spatial planning policies inherited from the English tradition has been modified partially through contextual challenges, and partly due to the growing globalisation of trade. The invention and implementation of spatial imaginaries have been attractive vehicles in response to local conditions and global ambitions.

By the middle of the 2000s, global aspirations of capital cities, both locally and abroad, aimed to differentiate themselves by developing a distinct identity. This imaginary projected their global ambitions. In the case of Sustainable Sydney 2030 Strategy (City of Sydney 2008), the message was that Sydney is Green, Global and Connected, a message that is retained at the time of writing. This narrative aligned with the 'global economic corridor'

from the 2005 metropolitan plan. This narrative has also been supported by the alignment of various actors including the Committee for Sydney, Sydney Business Chamber, and aforementioned actors (Wetzstein 2013). A coalition of actors temporarily mobilised to support the promotion of this spatial narrative.

Necessarily, these alignments not only deliver winners, but the scarcity of attention will mean that losers miss out on the place promotion, investment opportunities and the potential for spatial advancement. Beyond the Sydney CBD, much of the rest of the metropolitan area, especially western Sydney falls into this category. The next section explores some of the tensions that emerge as spatial development policies negotiate the interests of various government and non-government actors, and the place-based coalitions that emerge around temporarily aligned interests.

4.3 Politics and place – strength of local coalitions

This section introduces some of the influences and challenges of implementing place-based policies and precinct development that have led towards the incarnation of the GPOP. The previous section traced key events and transitions shaping Sydney's planning context since the 1950s. What has become clear, is that the planning of cities and regions is not merely a technical exercises, but a political project (Acuto 2012). Particularly for global cities, they are products of "politically driven dialectic conjugation of a complex twofold dynamic of centralization and spatial dispersion through which metropolises seek to assert their role in the networked texture of the present world-system" (Acuto 2012, p. 382).

Since the 1950s, governments have developed spatial imaginaries influenced by international cases. They have also been devised to set growth boundaries for urban settlements in the Sydney metropolitan region. However, the indiscriminate importation of spatial policies did not have the intended effect of controlling urban sprawl, requiring a contextually sensitive approach. Over the latter half of the 20th century, governments, non-government organisations and planning consultants provided proposals to improve spatial equity. Globally, there has been a preference to develop new functional spatial layers to reorganise the social construction of space (Allmendinger & Haughton 2010). These spaces often sit on top of statutory regional or local area boundaries that lead towards processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation. A 'politics of scale' is engaged that speaks to the

political, economic and governance hierarchy (Swyngedouw 2004). In the context of spatial planning in Sydney, global (exogenous) drivers have predominantly shaped the strategic and developmental priorities that tend to ingrain and exacerbate spatial inequality.

The internationalisation of contemporary planning practice and policy-making bring the assemblage of spatial policy to the fore (Farias 2010). As comparisons of global exemplars becomes common, the counterpoint of globalising spaces is the localisation of spatial practice learnt from abroad. This mobility of policy calls attention to the social construction of spatial relations, and consequent interactions and jostling of power to shape urban dynamics (Ward & McCann 2011). Globalisation of spatial practice often leads to benchmarking as a form of comparison, further shaping competitive factors within metropolitan regions. The narrative of the GPOP as the centre of the Sydney metropolitan region takes a double meaning beyond the geography, emphasising competitive factors that support the redistribution of opportunity away from the amenity rich eastern city, and suggesting specific precincts within the GPOP where this can occur. The role of the GPOP spatial imaginary contributes to this conversation and highlights the role of place in dialogues around policy mobility.

When spatial policies and place-based strategies intervene to reshape the function and interrelationship of places, debates and conflicts inevitably arise regarding how, what, and to what extent interventions should steer the trajectory of development. Precinct plans and strategic spaces are defined by functional criteria, rather than strictly following statutory boundaries such as LGAs. These overlapping strategic and statutory spaces sometimes deviate from business-as-usual planning approaches. This deviation thus requires coordination with affected stakeholders (predominately State and Local Government, as well as major landholders) regarding the implication of implementing these alternative planning spaces within existing urban areas.

In a (metropolitan) regional context, there are longstanding debates and conflicts that are mobilised to determine the 'right' scale of place-based interventions and associated governance mechanisms. Historically, jurisdictional conflicts in Australia that impact on local government area (LGA) boundaries are politicised, often justified through increased fiscal savings associated with service delivery improvement and administrative efficiencies (Dollery, Grant & Kortt 2013). As these interventions impact on the development of places, there are often multiple and opposing actor interests that are affected.

The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:
The case of Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula, Sydney

Since the turn of the century, planning, plans and the planning system have been in a constant state of change. In 2011, the election of a Liberal-National government replacing a former Labor government in NSW signalled planning reform as an election promise. The newly elected government promised to deliver significant planning reform to depoliticise the planning system. A year later, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) reform council conducted a review of capital city planning systems. A significant finding was the impact of political contestation on the resilience of a long-term strategic direction and coherence of a strategic planning system (COAG Reform Council 2012, p.28). Enduring challenges facing the planning system that are explicitly called out in the review include debates over what infrastructure should be built and where, the quantity, form and location of housing, and the lack of stability or endurance of strategic plans that constrain investment decisions by business and individuals.

Impasse is particularly acute when opposing governments are in office across State and Federal Governments as jostling, bargaining and deal making are required to secure funding for infrastructure. Vertical fiscal imbalance stemming from Australia's taxation system has led to a situation where the states, and to an increasing degree, local governments are reliant on the Federal Government for disbursement and funding distribution. This context of interjurisdictional and interlocal competition sets the foreground for understanding the importance of aligning spatial projects to political priorities of the day.

In the context of advancing urban policy agendas, timing remains an important consideration for planning the strategic development of cities and regions (Tomlinson & Spiller 2018; Hamnett & Freestone 2017). The development of sophisticated governance frameworks is an outcome of both strong political leadership and advocates for spatial development, in particular within strategically significant places. In addition to the longstanding Australian pastime of land speculation, NIMBYism and YIMBYism are practical concerns that affect the design of both place-based policies and broader metropolitan strategies. Across the governing mandates of State and Local Government, it is often difficult to balance the 'right' scale of government and governance to manage growth in metropolitan regions. The frequent recommendations of a metropolitan level government to advocate for regional interests come as a response to these challenges (Acuto 2012; Tomlinson & Spiller 2018).

Given that certain trade-offs are required to advance policy agendas, there are also several different mechanisms that can be utilised including regulation, legislation, planning policies and tinkering with new and existing boundary spaces. In the case of the latter mechanism, when economic development narratives are constructed around specific areas, the evolving spatial envelope and accompanying policy intervention can be understood as a spatial imaginary. In the context of jurisdictional conflicts resulting from re-aligning local government area boundaries (Dollery, Grant & Kortt 2013), it can be often more appetising to develop new spatial boundaries that sit on top of existing statutory planning spaces. These spatial imaginaries evolve over time and gradually exert their strategic intent. Spatial imaginaries require a critical mass of actors, or actor coalitions to normalise emergent ideas that become realised in practice. Within the Sydney metropolitan region, two spatial imaginaries with the potential for addressing spatial equity have recently been put in motion, the Western Sydney Aerotropolis, and the focus of this thesis, the GPOP. Figure 4.2 below shows the location of these spatial imaginaries in the Sydney metropolitan region.
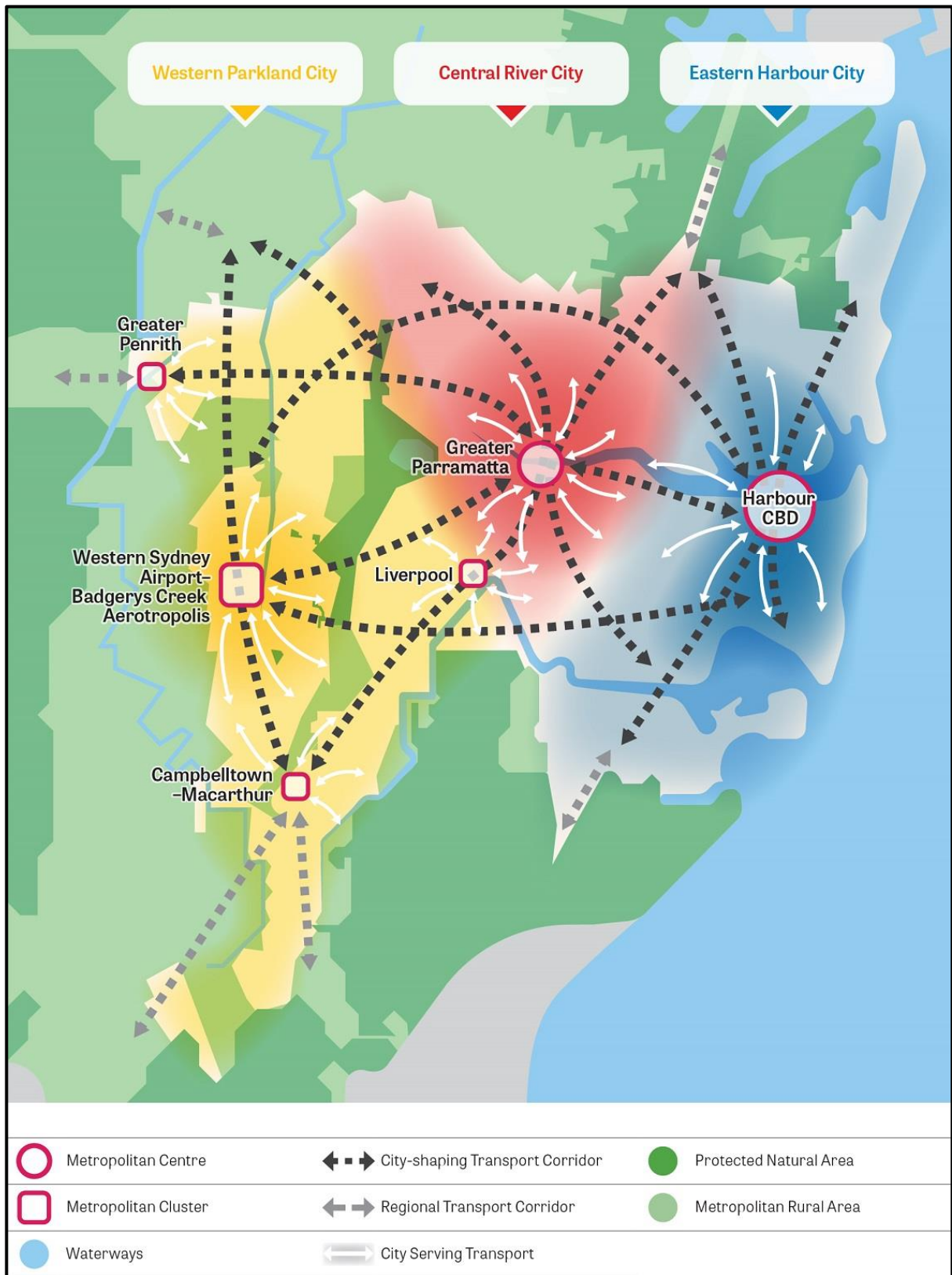
Figure 4.2. Spatial relationships of imaginaries in the Sydney Metropolitan Region.

Source GSC 2018, p. 7.

While less sophisticated models of place-based interventions led to the development of Australia's first business park in Sydney's outer suburbs, the Norwest business park (1983), these programs were monocultural, and intended to create employment zones. The Norwest business park was only accessible by car. It took until 2019 to be connected by high-frequency metro services. Later incarnations, including the Australian Technology Park (ATP) (1995) in Sydney's inner suburb of Eveleigh were occupied by higher-value businesses and had the benefit of being established with proximity to public transport networks. The ATP was also established in partnership by the NSW Government and three surrounding universities, UTS, USYD and UNSW.

Research into the establishment of the ATP was conducted through an overseas study tour of 15 science parks in the USA, UK, Japan and Sweden. The outcome is a successful example of a precinct scale urban intervention delivered in partnership with government and non-government stakeholders. The model was considered an exemplar for the development of innovation precincts in Brisbane, Victoria and New Zealand. The ATP provides an environment supporting collaboration across university, finance, technology and venture capital firms, and through investment in development the ATP, also allowed for the restoration of the heritage railway workshops and improved landscaping and place-making outcomes (Tan 2019).

However, the ATP was still a relatively monofunctional spatial intervention, primarily supporting economic development in the knowledge sector. It is a self-contained precinct and saw opposition from the Department of State Development and Department of Planning regarding the interaction and integration of the ATP with the City West Regional Environmental Plan for the Eveleigh precinct. This type of development, although commercially successful, is related to global networks rather than local connections.

Following the election of a Liberal-National government in 2011, the new government intended to make its mark, and fulfil election promises. The controversial Part 3A legislation that allowed the Barangaroo development to be accepted was repealed, and other planning reforms and amendments to the EP&A Act were enacted (Pham 2018). But the most contentious decision by the incoming government was to pursue compulsory local government amalgamations under the guise of improving administrative efficiencies through

larger councils (Grant & Drew 2017). The success of this relationship between politics and place has a strong relationship to the outcomes of spatial policy-making and ambition of the GPOP.

Running from 2014 – 2017, the Fit For The Future (FFTF) programme intended to reduce the number of councils from 41 to just 15-18. The result, by the end of the program came to 33 councils (Donaldson 2019; Waterford 2018). Not only did the programme fail to consolidate the councils to the intended target, the process taken including withholding of essential information from both councils and from the Land and Environment Court raising questions including procedural fairness, and fundamentally, the suitability of the reform (Blayden 2017).

While there may be grounds for maintaining cabinet in confidence and limiting access to sensitive information, this makes it difficult, if not impossible to question the accuracy or integrity of claimed administrative efficiencies and public value benefits to the merger programme (Dollery 2018). The relationship between the NSW Government and councils, as demonstrated by this aside shows the antagonism present when the State attempts to intervene into areas impacting on the operation of council. While there can be advantages to larger councils, the NSW Government is required to find a balance between intervention and legitimising contentious reforms including addressing the political and legal challenges of top-down amalgamation processes. It was during this conflict that the Greater Sydney Commission was first introduced via press release in July 2014, and formally in the next iteration of the metropolitan plan released in December 2014 (Selmon 2020). Given the apex of this antagonistic relationship, it would prove challenging for the operation of the GSC in achieving their remit of integrated metropolitan governance.

Early proposals for the operational arrangements of the GSC were based on the Greater London Commission, and indeed, the legislation was also influenced by their constitution. The 2014 metropolitan plan provided broad brushstrokes of the schematic structure of the GSC. In 2015, the Liberal-National government were re-elected, and with this retained incumbency put more pressure on the program of council amalgamation (Selmon 2020). Given the comments of inaugural Chief Commissioner of the GSC Lucy Turnbull stating that the ideal of reducing the number of councils from 41 to 6 – essentially conforming to the sub-regions in the regional plan – councils were right to be wary of the potential impacts to their

operation. Though the GSC legislation enables the GSC to undertake strategic planning, it does not have power to force council amalgamations. While in subsequent iterations of the metropolitan plan, the sub-regions were condensed from 6 to 5, there was no immediate impact on reshaping council boundaries.

In the following year, a new policy document was introduced, 'Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula - Our true centre: the connected, unifying heart' (GSC 2016). The 2014 metropolitan plan signalled the importance of Parramatta and set a direction to 'Establish a new Priority Growth Area– Greater Parramatta to the Olympic Peninsula' (NSW Department of Planning 2014, p. 33). The spatial extent of this priority growth area closely aligns with the western part of the PRCUTS catchment. At a high-level, the policy document proposes dividing the GPOP into four distinct quadrants and signals the potential of a light rail service connecting the centres of these quadrants. The GPOP is compared to the area connecting the Sydney CBD to the Sydney airport to highlighting the potential of the GPOP and setting aspirational goals for its future direction.

In 2017, an 'Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan' was produced by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, and at the time of writing, has not been finalised. The 2018 metropolitan plan provided more detail about the implementation of the GPOP through a 'Growth Infrastructure Compact', although this was quickly superseded and replaced in 2019 by a draft 'Place-based Infrastructure Compact' (PIC). While the new strategy emphasises 'place', there is no material change to the strategic intent of the compact.

This is important, especially given the aim to deliver a "strategic planning model that looks holistically at a place to better align growth with the provision of infrastructure" (GSC 2019, p. 7). Given the reception of planning reform and the program of forced amalgamation in the years prior, this ideal of aligning growth and infrastructure delivery would be welcomed if effectively planned and delivered. However, there are two notable strands to unravel from this document and submissions commenting on it.

Firstly, on the matter of collaboration. The extent of collaboration was particularly uneven in the development of the GPOP PIC model. The strategy document states, "the Commission, with more than 20 NSW Government partners, has created a new collaborative model: the Place-based Infrastructure Compact", while "collaboration is at the heart of everything we do at the Commission. Over the coming weeks we will be consulting with the community,

councils and industry on the new PIC model and the Pilot in GPOP through this draft Paper" (GSC 2019, p. 3). It may have been a pragmatic decision to limit participation to State government stakeholders to design the PIC model, but to stakeholders outside the NSW Government it can be interpreted as a business-as-usual approach to achieve desired policy outcomes.

Secondly, and following from the previous point, without effective co-design, or at least collaboration in developing the PIC model, it was likely difficult to ascertain the capacity and extent of local infrastructure. While State significant infrastructure function to support higher level activities, local infrastructure act to fill in the gaps, and provide functions which state infrastructure do not address. Incorporating these functionally different types of service provision in a cohesive manner would be, at least in principle, essential for the delivery of a place-based strategy.

The 2018 metropolitan plan identified three 'cities' within the metropolis. In addition to the GPOP, this included the established eastern city centred on the Sydney CBD, and the emergent Western Sydney Aerotropolis (WSA). The WSA is a strategically significant precinct that is predominately greenfield land and will serve a different purpose to the GPOP. However, its status as the western city placed it in direct competition for funding, political priority, and governance hierarchy.

The WSA was designed to be delivered under a different governance arrangement, through a city deal framework that required cooperation across all three levels of government. It is designed as a partnership model with significant federal government funding. However, the ambitious scale of the GPOP spatial intervention may require similar governance innovations as the WSA to identify and provide funding to deliver the GPOP.

4.4 Spatial imaginaries and economic development narratives – the 'global arc'

The previous section discussed the challenges and political sensitivities of deploying place-based interventions in the Sydney metropolitan region since the 1950s. This section expands on some of the critical spatial imaginaries that have persisted and continue to compete for attention in the 21st century. In the field of urban and regional planning, spatial imaginaries

involve the invention and use of non-standard, or functionally derived planning spaces (Haughton & Allmendinger 2017; Metzger & Schmitt 2012). The GPOP is an example of this as it is not derived from any statutorily defined planning space. It also differs from statutory local government areas in that it is designed to reshape spatial and socio-economic relationships within the Sydney metropolitan region. The principal function is to improve spatial equity outcomes for the wider GPOP area in relation to the metropolitan region and reconceptualise the GPOP as the centre of the metropolitan region. Redefining the GPOP as the centre of the metropolitan region rather than a peripheral or relatively under-developed sub-region is of crucial ideological significance to advance the spatial imaginary of the GPOP.

Corridors are useful metaphors to ascribe meaning to conceptual spaces such as the GPOP. Since the 1960s, corridors have been used in Sydney's strategic planning. They have been useful to preserve avenues for infrastructure both underground and for major transport arteries. However, into the 20th century, imaginaries have evolved to denote metaphysical as well as physical spaces. In the 2005 metropolitan regional plan, the 'global arc' was drawn to connect the major infrastructure port of Sydney Airport, through Australia's global capital economic capital, the Sydney CBD, terminating at the emerging business park, Macquarie business park situated north west of the Sydney CBD. While the global arc is relatively inoffensive, as "the non-statutory nature of the Global Arc means that it does not override state or local government planning decision-making, it has nevertheless been used as a justification by both levels of government for intensified development along the Arc" (Searle 2013, p. 374). This quality of flexibility allows different actors to ascribe meaning to spatial imaginaries. These meanings and interpretations can change depending on their purpose. Political and business elite in particular favor its utility in reference to a 'global arc' that legitimizes the role of the city in a global political discourse (McNeill, Dowling & Fagan 2005). The influence of the 'global arc' increased political and economic attention to the Sydney CBD as a center of global capital, to consolidate Sydney's position in the Asia Pacific region. Implicitly, this policy move has disproportionately benefitted the Sydney CBD through its concentration of cultural, social, and physical infrastructural assets compared to the broader 'non-global' metropolitan region.

However, while this imaginary of a 'global arc' is imbued with rhetorical strength and influence, it lacks a statutory mechanism to compel spatial change in the Sydney

metropolitan region. A different approach will be required to shift the needle in the distribution of spatial equity. Iteratively evolving over successive metropolitan strategic plans, the global arc extends and expands. In the 2010 plan, essentially a revision of the 2005 plan, the global arc was extended from Macquarie Park with an indicative extension to Parramatta (NSW Government 2010). This imaginary was also envisaged as the primary economic corridor supported the NSW Government's justification of the development of Barangaroo, a contentious new precinct in the Sydney CBD (Searle 2013). The 2014 metropolitan plan was the first for the incoming pro-growth Liberal-National government. Through this updated strategy, the global arc spatial imaginary continues to be refined, and a precinct approach to spatial development is utilized further.

The 2014 metropolitan plan can be conceptualized as a pivot in strategy that builds on the promotion of corridors emanating from the Sydney CBD, to develop a precinct strategy across the region. The 2014 plan loses subsidiary corridors identified in the 2010 plan, and instead highlights a series of precincts. Western Sydney is claimed as the "key to Sydney's success" (NSW Government 2014, p. 16) while also advancing the western growth centres, and more significantly, reviving the abandoned idea of a Western Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek. The 2014 plan also introduces the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) as the delivery authority for future metropolitan strategy making.

In the 2018 metropolitan structure plan prepared by the GSC, a three cities triumvirate emerges to elevate the GPOP and WSA on even standing to the Sydney CBD, now called the Harbour CBD. The 2018 planning strategy is also integrated for the first time with the *State Infrastructure Strategy 2038*, and the *Future Transport Strategy 2056* plans, both covering the entire state. The GSC plan provides strategies with 20-year horizons, and 40-year visions. On paper, this is promising given the interleaving of strategic planning, transport and infrastructure planning.

The title of the metropolitan plan, 'a metropolis of three cities' reorientates the overarching shape dividing what has historically been a region carved into eastern and western halves of Eastern Sydney and Western Sydney. The spatial structure adds a third Western Parkland City centred on the Western Sydney airport (WSA) that supplements the Central River City centred on the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) and the Eastern Harbour City centred on the Sydney CBD. Within these 'city' centres, the WSA has only recently

come into existence and is undergoing significant work. Established through a City Deal[3], the planning and development of WSA involves a partnership of Federal government, State government through the GSC, and eight councils.

A Growth Infrastructure Compact (GIC) has been introduced as a new mechanism for aligning infrastructure investment and development. The compact is a mix of spatial development directions and economic development narratives to provide an identity to each of the precincts within the GPOP. The GPOP has gradually grown through strategic land-use focus on precincts surrounding the Parramatta Road Corridor – a revitalisation project connecting Parramatta and the Sydney CBD. The GPOP roughly follows the core of this area with extensions primarily to the north, accommodating residential 'super-precincts.'

When analysing the border of the GPOP, there is strong correlation between the placement of land-use boundaries and existing transport planning corridors. This pattern has been visible since the earlier metropolitan plans, for example with the SROP 1968. This also highlights the endurance of hard infrastructure spaces in relation to the strategic land-use spaces, and metaphors promoted by metropolitan governance actors over the last 70-years. Even within this latest spatial strategy, the Sydney CBD continues its role as a global gateway and major public transport improvements funnelling through the CBD are the key projects shaping the central city.

The outcomes of previous spatial strategies and imaginaries have clearly influenced the direction of the GPOP and the remit of its authors, the GSC. The path dependency of past spatial development strategies and infrastructure investment has also led to challenges that the GPOP must overcome. The GPOP is a strategically important growth centre and thus an opportune space to test new and innovative mechanisms encouraging balanced regional development.

One of the strengths of spatial imaginaries is their ability to transect across multiple scales (Haughton and Allmendinger 2017). This trans-scalar quality presupposes the spatial imaginaries to contribute (positively) to both state significant and local actors, and to metropolitan visions and place-based demands. The functional planning space of the GPOP has become increasingly prominent in Sydney's urban governance. The prioritisation of

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[3] Australian City Deals are inherited policies, transferred from the U.K.

strategically significant functional planning spaces is a trend that has been globally practiced (Allmendinger & Haughton 2009; Metzger & Schmitt 2012). In the case of the GPOP, longstanding spatial inequality has necessitated the implementation of an area or place-based intervention to alleviate growth challenges of the greater Parramatta area.

Through the delivery of better designed spatial strategies, the ambition is to deliver on its aim of aligning infrastructure provision and growth outcomes. Given the dearth of case study research specific to the Australian context, the examination of the GPOP is pertinent and timely.

4.5   Conclusion

This chapter has provided a historical background to spatial development in Sydney and a critical context to the development of spatial imaginaries in the Sydney metropolitan region. It has drawn out insights derived from the historical experience of policy, politics, and place with spatial imaginary interventions, aligned to the thesis aim. Given its position as a youthful colonial outpost, the Australian tradition of urban and town planning was shaped by the strong influence of the English experience. Sydney's first metropolitan government, the CCC was short lived, as was its principal guiding strategy, the CCPS. In the lead up to their foundation, a housing shortage that followed WWII required a visionary spatial strategy and coordinated development to address this shortfall. The direct importation of Howard's satellite towns and Abercrombie's green belt did not account for the contextual difference of an extended geography of large distances between settlements. Australia's three tiers of government also differs to England's two.

During the immediate post-war period of the 1950s and 1960s, the growth of manufacturing led to the revitalisation of Sydney's western suburbs as industrial heartlands. However, by the 1970s increasing internationalisation, growth of international investment and intensification of regional and global competition led to Sydney's growth as a financial and professional services centre. These exogenous factors led to a reversion of priorities that contributed to reduced prioritisation of outer suburban development, and implementation of aspatial priorities to attract international investment and tourism.

These temporal shifts of policy priorities have incrementally increased the spatial inequity that continues to persist. Into the 21st century, spatial development narratives have shifted towards reshaping planning policies to capitalise on a narrative of global connectivity and capital. The City of Sydney's 'green, global and connected' strategy aligned with the NSW Government in linking with a common global discourse. However, the outcome was a preference towards aspatial policies that worked to increase the disparity of equity across the metropolitan region.

Explorations into place-based interventions emerged in the 1980s with monocultural business parks. This matured in the 1990s with technology parks functioning to capture higher-value industries, while collaboration with university and industry partners experimented with maturing the industry-government interface and tapping into global networks and expertise.

It wasn't until 2014 that holistic precinct-scale interventions emerged with greater Parramatta and the GPOP highlighted in the 2014 metropolitan plan. Aligning with the western part of the PRCUTS, the GPOP was the first practical proposal to provide a counterpoint to the dominant economic centre of the Sydney CBD. The GSC, a metropolitan governance actor, provided remarkable leadership for a holistic plan, guiding spatial development in the Sydney metropolitan region. It was hoped that this could be achieved while providing opportunities for less developed areas west of the Sydney CBD.

The 2018 metropolitan plan provided greater clarity to a vision of a metropolis of three cities. While a broad structure plan laid the foundations to provide strategic direction for overarching 20 and 40-year goals, the mechanisms to achieve this were less concrete. The GPOP GIC and subsequent PIC were designed primarily with NSW Government stakeholders. This governance framework was designed around collaboration with State government stakeholders that also shut out local government actors, in which many of these strategies will impact. The spatial imaginary of the GPOP is a product of historical strategic plans and development outcomes. In a corollary view, future spatial interventions will need to adapt to the outcomes of the GPOP PIC. The next chapter builds on this context to discern the perspectives of different stakeholders acting within the GPOP, examining the tensions that emerge in its design and implementation. This extends on the historical challenges of collaboration and building support around place-based strategies and complexities in scaling the spatial imaginary.

Chapter 5   Precinct development and place-based partnerships in the GPOP

Figure 5: Central City District social infrastructure

Social infrastructure includes facilities such as community and neighbourhood hubs, sportsfields, clubs and courts, men's sheds, pools and leisure centres

Figure 6: Central City District shared places

Shared places include community gardens, co-working spaces and car sharing

Figure 7: Central City District learning

Learning spaces include education facilities like child care, schools, TAFEs and universities as well as libraries

Figure 8: Central City District street life

Street life and meeting places include live music venues, farmers' markets, high streets and eat streets.

Central City District social connectors (GSC 2018b, p. 35)

The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:
The case of Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula, Sydney

5.1   Introduction

This chapter builds on the literature review, theoretical framework, and contextual background developed in the preceding chapters and synthesises perspectives around developing key sites of the GPOP. The major themes are guided by the development narrative of three key precincts within the GPOP: Parramatta CBD, Westmead, and Camellia-Rydalmere. The precincts are at different stages of development, have different spatial priorities and are promoted by different coalitions of actors. Parramatta CBD is the most advanced precinct by measures of density, development interest, industry maturity and quanta of place-based partnerships. Precinct development in Westmead takes advantage of longstanding health-centred relationships that have been built across government and non-government partners. Camellia-Rydalmere is the least developed precinct and a lack of consensus across governments and industry has led to stalled development. A common theme across the broader GPOP is a longstanding backlog of hard and soft infrastructure that was evident prior to the elevation of Greater Parramatta as a metropolitan centre intended to be comparable to the Sydney CBD. To attain the ambition of a sustainable Central River City, changes will need to be made in collaborative processes and infrastructure provision to avoid limiting its growth potential.

Seen at the metropolitan scale, there is a clear discrepancy in the orientation and distribution of resources in the Eastern City compared to the Central and Western Cities, and attention is given to accelerate the development of several priority precincts within the GPOP. However, a holistic approach has rarely been adopted in considering work already undertaken by prior strategic plans by both State and Local Government, and the perspectives of developers and community stakeholders. Tensions emerge when inconsistencies develop over plans, critical information is not shared, and siloed governance obstructs the achievement of an overarching vision resulting in missed opportunities to deliver place-based infrastructure outcomes. Broader outcomes of these tensions have led to a negative impact on precinct development and collaborative practice.

Implementing the GPOP PIC requires focussing development of existing local strategic centres to elevate the GPOP to become a comparable metropolitan economic corridor to the Sydney CBD. There has been a broad ambition to elevate Parramatta to a second CBD since the 1980s. Plans to achieve this vision were announced in the 2014 Sydney metropolitan plan, seeking to extend greater Parramatta's catchment by establishing the GPOP (NSW

Government 2014, pp. 30-35; Pham 2020). In particular, the growth of three strategic centres are critical in supporting the GPOP. They are central to its positioning as an economic corridor: Parramatta CBD, Westmead Health Precinct, and Camellia-Rydalmere mixed-use areas.

In 2019, the NSW DPIE announced a 'new approach to precincts' to provide 'certainty and a way forward for precincts' (NSW DPE n.d.) Under the precinct pathways, the GPOP falls under the state-led strategic planning pathway, where the DPIE will lead early investigations and high-level strategic planning work to inform future rezoning processes. Historically, the development of precincts has been mis-aligned with the delivery of supporting infrastructure. In some cases, infrastructure has been delivered too early, with land release lagging behind (for example, in Wilton, south-west Sydney), but often infrastructure has not kept up with the pace of development and community demands.

It is interesting to note that several areas within the GPOP are denoted as precincts independently, including Westmead, Camellia, Rhodes, North Westmead, South Westmead, and to a lesser extent, Burwood, Strathfield and Homebush. The various Westmead precincts have been subsumed in a draft Westmead Place Strategy which will be aligned to the GPOP PIC (NSW DPE n.d.2). A place strategy is also planned for Camellia-Rosehill in 'recognition of this precinct's economic potential and the need to resolve its environmental issues' (NSW DPE n.d.3).

Precincts – a new approach

NSW GOVERNMENT

Strategic Planning

Early work by the Department, councils, State agencies and communities in the development of places and the planning frameworks that support them.

Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek
Western Sydney Employment Area
South West Growth Area
St Leonards - Crows Nest
Macquarie Park
Westmead
Sydenham to Bankstown
Greater Macarthur
North West Growth Area
Greater Parramatta to Olympic Park

Collaborative Planning

Bringing councils, State agencies and the community together to resolve complex issues and drive quality place outcomes.

Wilton South
South Creek West Precincts 2 and 5
Leppington Precinct Stage 2 and 5
Lowes Creek Maryland
Pondicherry
North Gilead
Wilton West
Camellia
Cattai Creek West
Seven Hills
Burwood Strathfield Homebush
Bays West
North Westmead
South Westmead
Pyrmont

State-led Rezoning

Implementing planning frameworks, on behalf of the State, in collaboration with councils and communities.

Glenfield
Wilton Town Centre
Crows Nest
Rhodes
Central Station SSP
Ingleside
Marsden Park North
West Schofields
Frenchs Forest
Cherrybrook
Bays Market District
North Eveleigh

Council-led Rezoning

Providing councils and communities with the support they need as they lead the planning for their areas.

Elizabeth Street Redfern
South Eveleigh
Waterloo Estate
Leppington Town Centre
Horsley Park
Riverstone West
Schofields Town Centre
Marsden Park Town Centre
Riverwood
Franklyn Street Glebe
Cowper Street Glebe

Figure 5.1. Precincts – a new approach; Source: DPIE 2020

In addition to this complex mix of ownership and leadership of precinct plans, the GSC are also leading the development of key precincts with the "greatest opportunity to accelerate economic recovery for Greater Sydney" (GCC n.d.). Within the GPOP, this includes the Westmead Health and Innovation District (WHID). Ignoring the breadth and responsibility of other aspects of the planning system, large scale changes imposed on the planning and delivery of precincts in the Sydney metropolitan region have significant implications for councils and developers to align strategic land-use and development planning. Recent plans to transform Parramatta Road indicate the significant impact to development feasibility when plans change, and forecast growth is whittled away (Urban Taskforce 2021). The WHID precinct is critical to the success of the 'metropolis of three cities.' Considering the quanta of investment required for infrastructure and land-use development in the GPOP, the apportionment of infrastructure and costs should be clarified before detailed strategic and land-use planning (Infrastructure Australia 2016). These uncertainties get at the heart of the planning-governance nexus so important to the processes and practices of metropolitan

governance (Schmitt and Danielzyk 2018) that can be interrogated through functional spaces such as the GPOP.

Beyond the changes to precinct planning, there are other path dependencies that need to be considered including the capacity of urban stakeholders to deliver on planning strategies. This was highlighted by a City Strategy executive at Parramatta City Council

> *we've been through amalgamation, we've been through some leadership changes, it's been quite a disruptive time ... in that context of significant increase in population and so much work happening in the city, it's quite disruptive ... this is what happens when planning doesn't resolve the issues before you build the density in Epping, you've got this and Wentworth Point as well, a good example where you've got high density, poor access…and then you've got a fractured organisation that's trying to turn from a suburban council into a city council. At the same time, as you 'ave restricted revenue, the revenues gone down…in that context, we need all the help we can get and at the same time as we're trying to realise all of the possibilities of places like Westmead and Rydalmere, and Camellia and the CBD, [it's] a big complicated, wicked problem (L_1)*

The City of Parramatta Council was formed in 2016 taking in parts of the existing Parramatta City Council, Auburn City Council, Hornsby Shire, Holroyd and The Hills Shire. This program was highly contentious, and the process was shown to be skewed where the "empirical evidence has been deliberately weighted towards the policy objectives of the paymaster NSW Government" (Dollery 2018, p. 361). More general criticisms covering the program of forced amalgamations include the suitability of means used to make the case for reform, transparency and openness of government, and following procedural fairness and statutory process (Blayden 2017). One final point to make regarding the amalgamation process is the implicit political effect of redrawing municipal boundaries. Claims of gerrymandering are supported, where based on voting patterns from prior elections, the new Parramatta Council would grow its preferred vote from 50.3 to 54% at the federal level. The amalgamation program also ignored recommendation from the Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP) to form a much larger council, resulting in a safe Liberal seat in the "second-most important CBD in the city" (Munro 2017). While the reform

program claims to result in cost savings and efficiency benefits, the outcome does not appear to increase the economic sustainability of local government (see below).

As a result of the amalgamation process, a land-use planning harmonisation program has been in effect to align the Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) of the merged LGAs. In addition to the resources councils must provide to harmonise land use plans, councils must also contend with rate pegging – limiting their capacity to raise funds to pay for infrastructure backlogs and an expansive pipeline of infrastructure projects required to meet the ambition of elevating Parramatta to a city council status. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal general caps the amount that councils can increase rates. In 2021 the cap was 2.6%, though was as low of 1.5% in 2017 (NSW Productivity Commission 2020). While this generally aligns with the rate of inflation, it also limits the provision of infrastructure to meet population growth. Speaking to the issue of responding to the need to fund capital intensive projects, a Planning Manager at Parramatta City Council comments

> *working with all these state agencies, I'm just letting you know that the conversation and narrative must start earlier because these councils do not have the funds available, these councils are not clocked on to the scale of growth and development and intensity… I don't think a lot of the people doing the work on the ground understand that. (L_2)*

This perspective highlights the need for the NSW Government to understand councils' resourcing requirements, and what needs to happen if Parramatta is to become the Central City, and also share this knowledge with the community. There is a disconnect between the assumptions taken forward by state agencies in the development of precinct plans, including the GPOP PIC.

> *there's this huge awareness piece that needed to happen with councils to get them across these changes in local infrastructure. You're not delivering the same suburban and local infrastructure, you're delivering a different kind of local infrastructure and it took me a couple of years to compute and understand that. You know, to deliver when you're talking about this stuff as anchor buildings, it's not your little 200 square metre hall or 100 square metre hall. I just don't think some of those councils, certainly at Western Sydney really understand the depth*

*of that. I won't say we were ahead of the growth, but we'd realised we had a
problem. And we were trying to work out how to solve it. (L_2)*

While Parramatta Council are closest to functioning as a metropolitan centre outside of the
Eastern City, they are short on experience and expertise in adapting to the GSC vision of
transforming Parramatta CBD to a metropolitan centre. The ambition to promote higher
levels of development led by the NSW Government has not been well telegraphed to local
government, particularly around their capacity to understand the requirements on local
infrastructure, and the nexus between state and local infrastructure. An example of local
infrastructure affected by a change in function from a growing to a metropolitan centre would
be the case of a library servicing a larger spatial catchment. This would then require higher
design standards and floor space requirements. The flow on impacts of this would require
higher levels of funding, and the identification of funding sources. While this will be
expanded in Section 5.4, the challenge of collecting money and implementing development
contributions plans compromises the quality of infrastructure that can be provided, and does
not adequately support population growth

*When I left the department [of planning], it (s7.11 plan)[4] was going to be done by
Christmas, I think that was about 2016. The point is all they're doing is pushing,
kicking the can down the road. And then as a (Council planner) and I discovered,
sometimes having a plan means that people kind of ignore the problem. And the
problem becomes real, quantifiable, and then becomes its own risk. In some
respects, we've come under a bit of pressure to not have a plan, because then you
have to actually admit where you can and can't afford. Planning is threatening if
it identifies need and, and demand and risk and solutions ... planning brings the
opportunity cost, and the risks of development to the front of mind. And that isn't
a very welcome message. So, it's not the PICs fault. Really, the PIC is just a
symptom of a broader government approach to making allocations and saving
and planning for the future. And the long term is not a safe space, because you
can't just push it off to the next government (L_1)*

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[4] Section 7.11 of the EP&A Act 1979 enable consent authorities, usually councils, to levy for developer
contributions where there is a nexus between development and infrastructure delivery. This levy is often used to
fund local infrastructure including local roads, footpaths, stormwater drainage, parks and community facilities.

The insight that pointed to identifying and quantifying risk is very interesting. The intent of the GPOP PIC is to support greater infrastructure investment and development in the GPOP. However, the state government also has fiscal constraints. By not considering the full scale of infrastructure that is required to appropriately service an area, there would be a lower burden on the state government when costing these policies. Placing challenges to fund infrastructure to one side, another significant challenge to deliver the vision of the GPOP PIC centres around developing functional economic and spatial relationships between the priority precincts, in particular, Westmead, Parramatta and Camellia, and improving the public domain and cultural infrastructure. A senior executive of a Western Sydney peak body comments on these challenges, the potential of transport infrastructure to better connect these centres and …

> *Westmead and Parramatta are very adjacent, there's only two kilometres separating them and a park. And I think in the past Westmead has had a very poor relationship with Parramatta city centre. The centres haven't truly interacted. People that work in Westmead don't particularly use the city centre they, don't shop here, the hotels and offices aren't related to what's happening in Westmead and vice versa. But I think there's got to be a potential to sort of marry the city and with Westmead together and you know, Metro West will do that will help to bring the two places closer, as will Parramatta light rail stage one. Olympic Park and Parramatta are further apart, Metro West will certainly help those two centres to interact a lot more, you can imagine they'd be looking at major events in Olympic Park or Parramatta and you could stay in either place and access that within five minutes or so … I mean,[Parramatta] has good bones. And there's a lot of work that's being done to try and improve that including the Powerhouse Museum improving access to culture in the arts in Western Sydney*
>
> *(B_1)*

The longstanding deficiency in infrastructure investment has stymied intra-urban connectivity between the two biggest centres of the GPOP. Given the complementary functions of Parramatta and Westmead, there are promising synergies that could be leveraged if these barriers are addressed. The next section continues to explore the challenges and opportunities facing development in the Parramatta CBD, Westmead and Camellia-Rydalmere areas.

5.2   Parramatta CBD – an emerging centre

This section develops the narrative incorporating the interview perspectives around the development and growth of Parramatta CBD. Strategies and spatial policies promoting the transformation of the Parramatta CBD to compete with the Sydney CBD have been around since the 1988 metropolitan plan. State intervention encouraged by the relocation of State government offices to Parramatta intended to accelerate this process. However, over 30-years have passed with Parramatta continuing to lag behind the development of the Sydney CBD. This section addresses the longstanding challenges facing the elevation of Parramatta CBD to become a metropolitan centre, and the characteristics that can support this transition.

While the NSW Government has succeeded in relocating multiple government offices to Parramatta, this has not stimulated private investment to follow. One issue, which is problematic across the GPOP, is the quality of public domain and associated place-making challenges

> *I think one thing that the GPOP could lead on is working with councils to improve their city centres and to attract employment. That role of placemaking is something that we need to more education and training…I think placemaking is a really important thing for Western Sydney because the town centres could attract more jobs and people can use their centres more and feel proud of them. There are great places to go, but many of them look rundown, unsafe, confusing, and not particularly nice places to be. We need to fix that. And I think the commission can play a role in trying to elevate that as a priority. (B_1)*

While Parramatta is now going through significant development, the quality of the public domain is lacking. A comparative analysis was made with Brussels and Montpellier in the 2016 Strategic Framework. These comparisons show the potential for Parramatta in its transition from regional to metropolitan centre to service large conurbations with high quality pedestrian amenity, though much is still needed to reach a comparable stage of development (INSW 2016, p. 50). From observing the intensification of development in the Parramatta CBD over the last 10-years, there is a clear transition taking place in response to drivers of metropolitan growth. However, it may be the fact that the acceleration of recent development overshadows the lack of investment over the prior decades

we haven't invested for a long, long time, we don't have new buildings, apart from Wentworth Point that was recently built two years ago, we haven't got a new building for like 45 years. We have a long way to catch up. So at the moment, the cost for our community hubs that we need to build to meet the population our libraries, they're really under servicing. It's a lot of money (L_2)

The significant lag between ambition to grow and providing infrastructure to support growth is an unaccounted risk. Acknowledging that this backlog places them on the backfoot, staff at Parramatta City Council raise an interesting point about the need to steer a dialogue of growth with other stakeholders, over an extended period of time to plant the idea for planning and delivering future infrastructure. Mixing explicit policy direction through strategic planning, and soft influence to initiate a conversation, can start to address infrastructure under provision (particularly cultural and social infrastructure), shorten the funding gap to accelerate infrastructure delivery, and identify the right scale of infrastructure for planned growth. The 2018 metropolitan plan intends for greater Parramatta to grow from a regional centre towards a metropolitan centre

(the Museum of Art and Applied Sciences) MAAS, a lot of the things that are being built now are as the result of council advocacy, [we] in a very subtle way try and convince the state that it's their idea. So, if you said to me, you know, the concept of a State Library in Parramatta, you know, we would go about that in a in a very subtle way (L_1)

The community infrastructure strategy, built on a narrative of growth needs to be responded to in an organised fashion. So, the narrative is about dealing with growth… insert that into state government thinking that the central city needs 'x,' the central city needs 'y,' rather than try and insert it just at the stage when you're doing the hard yards on who pays for what. It's for an established need and you need a clear narrative about why and gather evidence for it. And then when you come to talk about the funding, you'll find that it might be 55% roads and 45% community infrastructure. But if you wait for the plan that identifies the funding to start the conversation, then you've lost the game (L_1)

Leading from a position of council advocacy has allowed Parramatta City Council to plan for a range of scenarios to accommodate the longer decision-making timescale of state

government. Parramatta City Council have also learned this approach can be taken with developers to signal an intent to deliver infrastructure, raise the level of conversation towards a more productive interaction and establish a clear narrative for how funding will be used

> *The more I've gone on with this, [it is important to] be… able to very clearly [and] simply identify the need, or what the problem is you're trying to solve. You need to have your narrative, and explain what the rationale is very clearly, very simply with evidence that is both quantitative and qualitative. To tell that becomes a story. And that's essentially what we've done with a range of infrastructure teasers. The more I'm able to say it, the developers actually do stop and listen to you, they will stop and listen to me now, as soon as this Community Infrastructure Strategy document came out. They're like, 'are you serious, that's actually what you mean, that's what you want?' And I've been clear, concise, and consistent. They don't like it, but they are starting at a higher level in the discussion (L_2)*

This is an important point made by the council planning manager. Just as the NSW Government communicates their strategic intent to council, council are also required to communicate the strategic intent to delivery stakeholders such as developers. They have done this by incorporating evidence and a compelling story to shift the growth narrative and gain support. This softer, partnership approach has also been useful in supporting the development of a business precinct in the Parramatta CBD to compete with the Sydney CBD. The Parramatta Square development is the cornerstone project to deliver place-making outcomes through 6,000 sqm of public domain improvements and 290,000 sqm of premium grade office space connected to the Parramatta heavy rail station.

The perspective from council and business peak body leaders have spoken to the need to deliver both hard and soft infrastructure particularly around funding liveability improvements. Given the quanta of public domain and cultural infrastructure that is required to service the Central City, there is opportunity for greater alignment across different levels of government and with delivery partners. The adjacency to the train station and relative affordability to office rents in the Sydney CBD have the potential to delivery strong commercial outcomes.

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> *I think Parramatta has got a strong commercial potential ... Sydney is an expensive city for commercial offices. That rate in Sydney CBD can range from $1,400 to $2,000 if you're at Barangaroo, Parramatta can do the same sort of quality A-grade building for $700 a square metre (B_1)*

While the rates for commercial space are offered at a significant discount to similar space in the Sydney CBD, it is not the only factor influencing the relocation of private capital. While place-making clearly needs to improve, some larger organisations are investing to make a foothold, e.g. NAB in the future 3 Parramatta Square site.[5] An interesting outcome of the Parramatta Square development is the diversity of industry-mix in the development. Western Sydney University (WSU) were able to capitalise on this potential to expand out of their predominately suburban campus style facilities, address growth challenges, and develop a new identify, through a strategic decision to have a foothold in the Parramatta CBD. A Planning and Strategy Director from WSU comments

> *We had some challenges around the capacity to grow. Because of some constraints on that campus, the University started to think about whether we would take a new direction, and that's where we made the investment decision and the strategic decision to go in and open a campus in the centre of Parramatta CBD, which opened in 2017. And that was a real step change for the university and was really what was the precursor to our Western growth strategy, because it opened up that greater opportunity for a highly accessible location, right at the heart of the Parramatta city centre, capacity to be able to engage with industry and business and community. So there was an activation opportunity by virtue of being in there (U_2)*

> *On the back of the university business case and strategic decision to go into the CBD, we actually went through a process of engaging with the market to decide what were the opportunities available for us to take up and create a kind of a vertical campus within an existing development. For us, this was a very new model because we were shifting from owning our assets, which is essentially what we have at Parramatta South or Rydalmere. It's a campus that we own the buildings. We were shifting into this new model where we would actually occupy*

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[5] https://www.psq.com.au/commercial/

space within a building. We would design it according to our need. It will be a long-term lease arrangement. So that initial step for us was about engaging with the market and we had an opportunity to essentially take up a lease in that building… so in a way we secured our tenancy arrangement for the whole building, we took up most of the floors, but then the floors that we didn't take up, we have leased them, so we've leased them to tenants, then we have built a kind of a partnership arrangement with including PwC and NSW Water, and our School of businesses is located in the campus (U_2)

While universities are large corporations, their remit is primarily education and research. This perspective from the WSU Director suggests that the operating model of universities is changing, and universities can become influential players in the property market, and taking this approach provides opportunities to develop new partnerships. The movement of universities into CBD locations also speaks to their growing relevance in real estate markets. The need for space and thus competition with traditional property developers for strategically positioned land also requires greater integration with metropolitan property markets and advocacy across government. Including universities in the structural planning of city centres can provide opportunity for greater spatial and economic complexity in these strategically significant markets. At a local level this can mean servicing education and employment in the Central City, and a regional level, for example, addressing knowledge gaps across priority and emerging sectors.

WSU identified challenges to growing as a traditional university campus and took an entrepreneurial approach to investigate other development typologies and partnerships in a CBD location. On the back of their ability to secure a large tenancy, they were able to expand into a CBD campus and build partnerships with other stakeholders on their terms. This mix of university, industry and government agencies in a single building provides a useful model for co-habitation of diverse sectors to test the potential of partnership and collaboration, while also providing a pathway to connect schools, university and industry.

We have opportunities around student placement. And that's something that is coordinated between the School of Business and PwC, opportunities for research projects, and partnerships. But then there's also other kind of colocation opportunities … So I think there is capacity to be co located and enjoy the

benefits of the facility, as well as of course, that kind of education and research partnership opportunity… we have a lot of school students from Arthur Philip High School across the road, for example, they will come over and they'll actually spend time in our building (L_2)

there's been plans for Parramatta to be the second CBD, Sydney for a long time. And, I think to actually really do that you've got to create high quality jobs in Parramatta. And to do that, I think connectivity is really the big thing (G_2)

Beyond commercial and development opportunities, these quotations indicate the linkages between growing a talent pool and providing the stimulus for creating high value jobs. The Parramatta Square development provides opportunities for industry connectivity. A light rail under construction will provide connectivity across the GPOP and a funded metro provides connections to the Sydney CBD. However, this increase in connectivity may be relative to the existing transport endowments. Investment in the eastern city, and western city may overshadow commitments in the GPOP, comments a Property Developer development director

It's transportation rich in the Eastern city. Then you go to the Western city, and you say look, building an airport, building a new Metro, building $10 billion worth of new roads, that sort of thing. So it's getting all the attention and they've formed a new agency to manage that. But the central city, Parramatta, which is supposed to take the lion's share of the load for housing and employment over the next decade, is not getting any attention in terms of infrastructure at all. Parramatta light rail. That isn't getting stage two. It's getting one metro station. It's got one heavy rail station. There's five new metro stations in Sydney city. So the eastern city is getting the attention, the western city, and [former Department of Planning Secretary] puts it, We've inadvertently leapfrogged the central city, poor old Parramatta, GPOP, that's a [former Department of Planning Secretary] quotation (D_1)

While there is unprecedented development within the GPOP, the scale of infrastructural investment in the central city is not commensurate to support population projections from the 2018 metropolitan plan. Given the historical infrastructure deficit and future housing and employment growth projections, there is a need to better integrate infrastructure and growth.

Tying proportional infrastructural spending with housing growth may better align the delivery of infrastructure where it is most needed.

District	0–5 year housing supply target: 2016–2021	20-year strategic housing target: 2016–2036
Central City	53,500	207,500
Eastern City	46,550	157,500
North	25,950	92,000
South	23,250	83,500
Western City	39,850	184,500
Greater Sydney	189,100	725,000

Figure 5.2. Sydney metropolitan region housing targets 2016-2036; Source: GSC 2018a, p. 62.

While there has been a longstanding policy of relocating NSW public service jobs to Parramatta, there has not been a critical mass to successfully drive Parramatta as a comparable centre to the Sydney CBD. Instead, there is a growing thematic linking health and education that has gathered pace through the location of institutions across the GPOP, and developing collaborative partnerships across multiple government agencies, universities, and health research centres. This will be expanded on in the next section.

5.3   Westmead – experimenting with industry partnerships

> *Westmead is a really good example of where over many years, there's been a very strong precinct partnership approach. So Western Sydney University, University of Sydney, together with the Local Health District, all of the key research institutes with Westmead, together with some of the other important stakeholders have been engaging for a very long time and what we're seeing is how we all need to work together to shape that (L_2)*

Westmead, with its first hospital opening in 1978 has a long history guiding its development as a strategically significant health cluster. However, this has been driven primarily by government. A partnership approach has emerged with stakeholders from universities, local government and the private sector (GSC 2018b, p. 60). This section identifies how

collaboration between these stakeholders has supported the development of this health precinct, the opportunities they present and their broader contribution to GPOP.

Outside of the Parramatta CBD, Westmead has the most developed ecosystem of strategic partnerships, high-value employment clusters and public transport investment pipeline within the GPOP. Westmead is also the largest health and biomedical precinct in Australia (City of Parramatta Council n.d.). It hosts four hospitals, two universities, two large research institutes, NSW's largest pathology service and multiple health centres. It is located 2km from Parramatta CBD, situated on a heavy rail line with a metro and light rail service under construction to connect with the GPOP economic corridor. In September 2020, Sydney Metro presented an indicative alignment, or aspirational plan to situate Westmead as the Central Cities' connection to the Western Sydney Airport (Sydney Metro 2020). However, Westmead has only recently been recognised as a specialised cluster of strategic importance:

- The 2010 Sydney metropolitan plan acknowledged Westmead as a strategic centre supporting Parramatta as Sydney's second CBD (NSW DPE 2010, p. 32).
- In 2013, the Westmead Alliance (formerly Westmead precinct partnership), in recognition of the growth potential that Westmead offered, entered into an MOU to advocate for the growth of the precinct (Westmead Alliance n.d.).
- The 2014 Sydney metropolitan plan identified further actions including (action 1.2.1) to integrate Parramatta CBD, Westmead, Parramatta North, Rydalmere and Camellia and (action 1.2.2) grow the specialised health and education precincts of Westmead and Rydalmere (NSW DPE, p. 30).
- The 2018 Sydney metropolitan plan continues the elevation of Westmead as a strategic centre capable of creating an 'innovation cluster', becoming an "internationally significant health and education precinct" (GSC 2018a, p. 104).

Since 2010, the value of Westmead from its place-based contribution towards becoming an area of regional strategic importance has shaped, and indeed elevated its place in a hierarchy of centres and in the metropolis. The events between 2014 and 2018 have accelerated its position as a specialised centre and potential 'innovation cluster,' in the rhetoric about globally significant urban areas. In 2016, a series of consultancy reports were commissioned including the Deloitte 'Westmead Innovation District: Building Western Sydney's job engine', and PWC 'Parramatta 2021 Unlocking the potential of a new economy' that

collectively contribute to building credibility for the precinct strategy. This collection of studies have brought increased attention to a fledgling urban area that has historically been a supporting economic and health servicing area to the Parramatta CBD. This has developed into an imaginary of the Westmead Innovation District where the supporting material also function to provide an evidence-base for decision-makers and give confidence to investors.

The idea of 'innovation clusters' is drawn from research by the Brookings Institution. Their development requires the involvement of three key stakeholders: Governments, Academia and Industry, and requiring governance arrangements for their strategic development and delivery (GSC 2018a, p. 115). Based on this criterion, the Westmead Alliance, may satisfy these requirements. Counting as partners include:

- Western Sydney Local Health District,
- The Children's Hospital at Westmead,
- Westmead Private,
- Westmead Institute for Medical Research,
- The Children's Medical Research Institute,
- The University of Sydney,
- Western Sydney University,
- City of Parramatta Council,
- Cumberland Council,
- Sydney Business Chamber (City of Parramatta Council n.d.1).

Beyond the place-based partnerships that have formed, further support is given by Investment NSW, with the NSW Government endorsing the Westmead Health and Innovation Precinct as a 'lighthouse precinct' (NSW Government 2019, p. 14). One of only five across the state of NSW, lighthouse precincts acknowledge the potential of a precinct to be "globally significant and create the greatest economic impact for NSW" (NSW Government 2019, p. 14). Perhaps because of this branding exercise, development in Westmead is accelerating regardless.[6] B_1 agreed that Westmead offers significant opportunities for development and growth,

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[6] The City of Parramatta Council has launched a 'Where its AT' brand to promote investment and growth in the LGA, see https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/about-parramatta/news/media-release/where-its-at-parramatta-launches-new-city-brand-and-alliance

Westmead is an area where we've targeted as the Chamber. The potential for Westmead to shift the needle on jobs in Western Sydney, which means a very large precinct comprised of multiple hospitals, medical research institutes, and so on. Westmead has the potential to do so much more if it can truly become an innovation precinct by attracting large private sector partners, and also start-up companies. It probably hasn't had a good track record in that, [Westmead] is known for very good quality health care, but it hasn't really led to a strong enough focus, I think, on commercialization. And everyone's aware of that now. I think in Westmead, part of the infrastructure question, and the planning question is really about trying to find the jobs for Western Sydney as Westmead has the potential to do that (B_1)

B_1 highlights that while Westmead has a critical mass of health infrastructure, it also needs commercialisation of knowledge assets and the ability to attract large commercial partners. Only then can it truly contribute towards generating employment for Western Sydney. Supporting the development of future facing industries in the GPOP also contributes to reducing the equity gap between the Central and Eastern cities. U_2 also highlights the opportunities that Westmead could provide to deliver benefits to the immediate area,

I think that the strategic drivers for while we were at Westmead, was probably in the early stages more about being just part of a Parramatta location. But over time, we started to realise the enormous opportunity around what we could do at Westmead, given what Westmead, was becoming. There is significant capacity to develop as a health and education precinct. So that really informed the direction of our campus plans there. It opened up an opportunity around significant development of a campus redevelopment plan and programme for us at Westmead. (U_2)

It is interesting to note that U_2 initially regarded the close proximity to Parramatta as a key development driver, but the growth of health infrastructure and services at Westmead provided opportunities to grow around that health thematic. This recognition aligns with the function of the Westmead Alliance, growing place-based partnerships. She also identifies the levels of collaboration taking place, and the growing recognition of the precinct by the NSW Government conferring the title of a 'lighthouse precinct.'

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I've been very involved in a lot of the masterplan process that the Local Health District and government has undertaken over the last couple of years, and particularly talked about the interface between our campus site, the hospital and the Health Core. So yes, there's been that good collaboration, I think at the ground level. And then I think more recently, government have identified Westmead, as a lighthouse precinct, which gives it a new significant status in terms of health and education precincts or strategic precincts across Sydney. It's one of only a few, so I think with that comes with greater levels of opportunity for further coordination in planning and investment. (U_2)

Lighthouse precincts are part of a Global NSW plan to encourage growth and investment in selected areas. Global NSW, a recently established investment arm of the NSW Government, advocates for targeted investment for the GPOP (Investment NSW 2019). While lighthouse precincts are not defined by any qualitative or quantitative assessment, they are instead designed to promote specific places for international investment in priority sectors, including medical technology. Local governments have also developed an entrepreneurial flair, with the City of Parramatta Council pursuing similar agendas to promote place-based partnerships. The 'Where its AT' branding has been leveraged to an 'EducateAT Parramatta Alliance' bringing together the WSLHD and five universities:

- Western Sydney University,
- University of Sydney,
- UNSW Sydney,
- University of New England,
- Swinburne University of Technology (City of Parramatta Council n.d.2).

While Westmead is the centre of a health and education precinct, it is interesting to note that the WSLHD is also included in the education alliance, which is clustered around Parramatta (City of Parramatta Council 2021). While the charter aligns a strategic vision of a "a world class destination for education," physical assets and joint facilities including the Engineering Innovation Hub in Parramatta provides a space to implement the vision (City of Parramatta Council 2021). This facility is a partnership between UNSW and WSU, providing spaces to deliver shared degree programs (University of NSW 2021).

While there is the possibility of diffusing the specialisation across the broader economic corridor, involving the WSLHD in the EducateAT Parramatta Alliance might respond to another challenge, and criticism of spatial economic development in the GPOP. With health and education providing major stimuli for economic development, there may be opportunities through mining this resource.

> *We probably don't think enough about the sort of economic connections between the precincts either, Westmead and Parramatta have the potential to be much more connected. (B_1)*

This quotation highlights the need for extensive economic connectivity to bolster intensive spatial development. Indeed, relocating NSW Government departments to Parramatta has failed to promote the attractiveness of Parramatta for other businesses to invest. Connections need to be made on a strategic partnership level, and supported by infrastructure investment, in particular, public transport links. There are opportunities for government decision-makers to bolster the existing commitment and transition of government employees to Parramatta with the commissioned studies that shift attention to the Westmead Innovation District through the lens of internationally recognised research on the economic agglomeration effects of innovation precincts through the Brookings Institute (Katz & Wagner 2014). As is seen through these different elements, there is collectively broad support for accelerating economic development of Westmead, greater coordination is required to achieve this outcome.

As mentioned by B_1 above, the Metro West and Parramatta light rail projects will provide greater accessibility between Westmead and Parramatta. For individual institutions with significant presence in the GPOP, this is an essential component to support their development strategies. U_2 speaks from the WSU perspective, and value of public transport to connect their campuses:

> *On the Parramatta light rail, I think we did engage with TfNSW to talk about the benefits of the connection of our three campuses across greater Parramatta. Because I think, for us, it was about the importance of local connection between those different locations. It's almost like there's a broader Metropolitan or regional kind of transport network... for us, it was really exciting to get that outcome to get the Parramatta light rail commitment, in terms of setting it up as a*

project and delivering it. And I think for us, just that idea that we'll have a seven day per week turn up and go service, it's a very frequent service. I think it's going to change things, for us, it'll raise the bar in terms of that connectivity (U_2)

Western Sydney has long been lacking a critical mass of development to stimulate employment growth. WSU, with multiple campuses surrounding the GPOP core in Westmead, Rydalmere and Parramatta CBD could be a critical actor to draw further investment to the GPOP. This focus on employment was a strong driver for the Western Sydney Business Chamber (WSBC). As a peak body for business advocacy in the region (from Olympic Park, and west towards the future Western Sydney Aerotropolis) their comment on the value of innovation jobs was important in driving further benefits for the community

all jobs have multipliers. So that's the great thing and a place like Westmead, innovation jobs apparently create more other jobs than, say, traditional manufacturing jobs. I think that strong economic multipliers in smart jobs and innovation jobs and where government seem to be really supporting precincts like Westmead and Parramatta CBD to occur, I think there should be wider benefits to the community of Western Sydney. Not everyone's going to be working as a scientist in medical research in Hawkesbury Road, but there are still coffees that need to be made. And yeah, a whole lot of jobs with the connected to support those precincts. I think there are a lot of benefits for the community. But I think it is a very different area that requires the time and deliberate strategy to turn the needle on jobs. (B_1)

5.4   Camellia and Rydalmere – not 'and' but 'or'

This section develops the challenges that have emerged in gaining a critical mass of support to promote development in the Camellia-Rydalmere area. Located approximately 1.5km from Parramatta, Camellia and Rydalmere are industrial suburbs straddling opposite sides of the Parramatta River. The Camellia precinct was once home to a James Hardie asbestos factory, but the current dominant commercial function is the Rosehill Racecourse and Australian Turf Club, a major horseracing venue. The Rydalmere precinct is primarily composed of industrial landholdings, though the WSU North and South Parramatta campuses located diagonally opposite one another on James Ruse Drive is the major economic driver in the area.

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Both these precincts lag behind Westmead and Parramatta in terms of amenity, investment and infrastructure. Camellia has additional challenges of land contamination as a result of its former industrial land uses and conflicts between planning strategies, made clear in the GPOP PIC. However, a silver lining is in the offing with the Parramatta light rail stage 1, and potentially stage 2, with committed funding for stage 2 planning ($50 million) in the 2021 NSW State Budget. This would provide a further 10-12 light rail stops running east towards Sydney Olympic Park.

> *Camellia is really a peninsula ringed by rivers. It was just a shame many years back, it was decided that it would be a place for some of the heaviest industries and the most polluting industries on the site. I mean, the site, it did have a hey[day], it did have an employment heyday in the 1970s. I think there were 20,000 people employed, there were a huge number of people employed in manufacturing 30 years ago. There are very few people employed there now. It's probably lost more jobs than any other precinct in Sydney (B_1)*

Camellia's heritage as an industrial centre in the mid 20th century, and its location close to the geographic centre of metropolitan Sydney has shaped the dialogue from the GSC to maintain the employment lands in the precinct. Given the pace of development and densification across the metropolitan region broadly, it is perhaps understandable to reserve this land for future urban service activity. However, there is no clear timeframe for how long it would need to be preserved, and in the meantime, it would remain unproductive land. In Camellia, D_1, a development director for a large property developer comments on the barriers to development

> *Camellia is former industrial land, its former employment land, four decades of decline under this government's watch, and [GSC Chief Commissioner] and the GPOP PIC said preserve the existing employment uses, don't do anything for a generation. Yeah, it's a contaminated wasteland (D_1)*
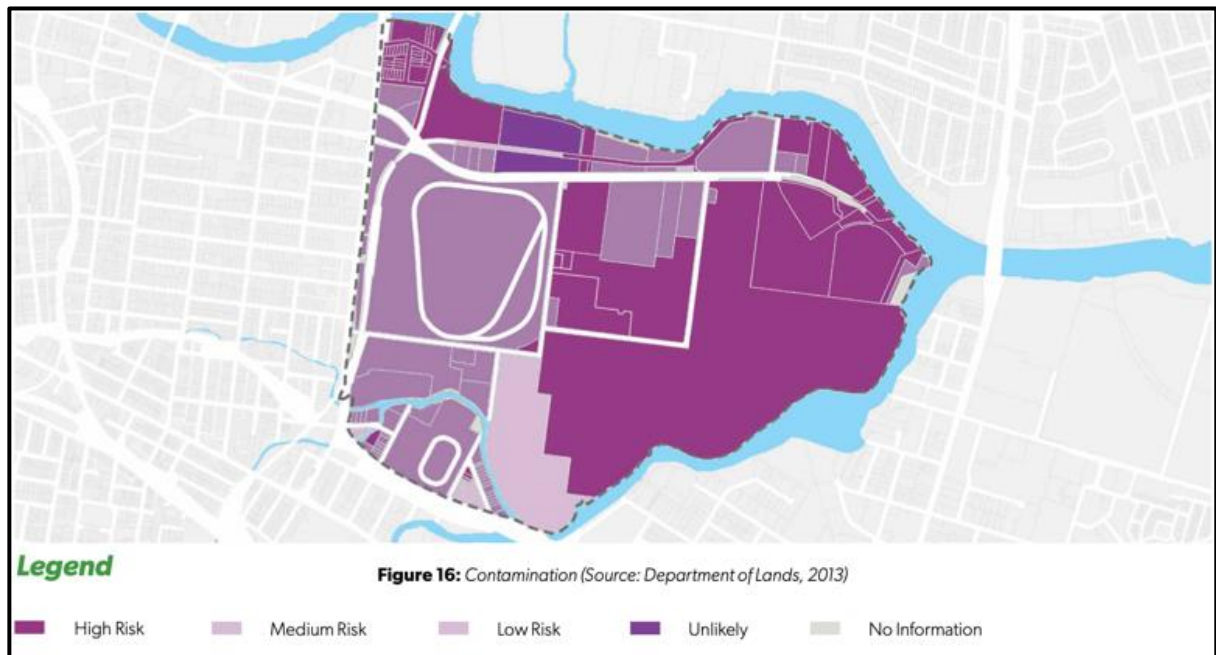
Figure 5.3. Camellia Contamination; Source: NSW DPE 2018a, p. 44.

As seen in Figure 5.3 above, nearly the entire precinct is likely to have some level of contamination. This is especially interesting as the following chain of events in regard to the Parramatta light rail and sale of land unravels.

- 2 June 2014, NSW Premier announces Parramatta Light Rail feasibility study

- 27 October 2014, Four short-listed route corridors announced by government

- March 2015, Akzo Nobel Pty Ltd (the then owner of 4–6 Grand Avenue, Camellia) launches an Expression of Interest process managed by CBRE for the public sale of the site

- 9 April 2015, TfNSW's Finance and Investment Committee (FIC) approves $30.0 million plus GST to purchase the 4–6 Grand Avenue site in the EOI process, as well as authorising $250,000 to be expended on due diligence activities. The request for approval was accompanied by a risk management plan that advised of an intention to not accept responsibility for existing contamination of the property as part of any acquisition

- 20 April 2015, TfNSW's feasibility study addendum provides specific assessment of suitability of 4–6 Grand Avenue as a site for a stabling and maintenance facility

- 23 April 2015, TfNSW makes first conditional offer in the EOI process, for $19.84 million. The offer is conditional to the vendor accepting responsibility for remediating the site

- 11 August 2015, TfNSW makes revised conditional offer in the EOI process, for $28.25 million plus GST, noting gaps in certain environmental information. The offer is conditional to the vendor accepting responsibility for remediating the contaminated site

- 25 November 2015, Akzo Nobel finalises contract for sale of 4–6 Grand Avenue with Grand 4 Investments Pty Ltd. The sale was made based on an unconditional offer of $38.15 million

- 8 December 2015, Government announced the route of the Parramatta Light Rail

- 29 April 2016, Acting Deputy Secretary Infrastructure and Services approves the acquisition of 4–6 Grand Avenue site for $53.5 million, purchasing the site 'as is' with TfNSW to undertake remediation to decontaminate the site

- 11 May 2016, TfNSW submits payment authorisation for $5.35 million as payment of ten per cent deposit

- 15 June 2016, Settlement date for the acquisition - TfNSW paid $48.15 million (as balance of funds) to Grand 4 Investments for the acquisition of 4–6 Grand Avenue site

- 15 June 2016, TfNSW engages Colliers to conduct a formal valuation of 4–6 Grand Avenue

- 23 November 2016, Colliers provides final formal valuation report to TfNSW. The report uses 8 July 2016 as the date of valuation. The report values the 'as is' value at $25.0 million and a 'speculative redevelopment potential value' of $52.0 million. The valuation specifically excludes analysis and financial impact of costs and liability to remediate the contaminated site (Audit Office of NSW 2021, pp. 13-14).

The 2021 NSW Auditor General report reporting on this acquisition has identified significant gaps in TfNSW's probity practices (Audit Office of NSW 2021, pp. 13-14). While not having the approval to offer Grand 4 Investments (a business entity by the owners of Bilbergia) the $53.5 million, it is of note that the initial offer of $19.84 million with the vendor accepting responsibility for remediation has grown to a current incurred cost of $105.9 million to date for land acquisition and remediation (Audit Office of NSW 2021, p. 6).

Several points need raising at this stage. Firstly, the GSC contend that the costs of servicing the Camellia-Rosehill precinct are higher than in the Camellia Industrial precinct. Given the higher flooding risk and transport amenity to the industrial area, the existing publicly available information contradicts this finding. Additionally, the GPOP PIC contends that "Initial attention should be focused on the areas of GPOP that already have infrastructure committed to them and are more cost-effective to grow. These will deliver the greatest benefit to the community relative to the cost" (GSC 2019, p. 43). All stage one light rail stops are committed, thus should be included in this strategic development phase. Secondly, with the Camellia light rail station already determined, it is unclear whether the benefits attributed to a TOD at Camellia would be outweighed by servicing costs. Thirdly, the argument for retaining urban services land discounts the value of both the productiveness if the precinct were activated, nor presents an alternative future of urban services land (Ethos Urban 2020). Fourth, the broad alignment of the Sydney Metro West takes an unconventional detour to include Rydalmere, instead of passing through the Camellia area, which offers a more direct path. The efficiency of the route can be questioned. The 2019 draft alignment places the potential Rydalmere stop very close to the WSU Parramatta North and South campuses. A response from RG, a developer with large land holdings in Camellia, has proposed that landholders would pay for the station box development had the metro shifted there instead of Rydalmere.

Figure 5.4 below shows the proposed alignment of the metro in 2019. Between the confirmed stations of Parramatta and Sydney Olympic Park, there is a 7km stretch without a station. The next largest span without a station is between Five Dock and The Bays Precinct (a transit-rich location), roughly 4km. Considering the shortage of transport links and infrastructure around the Camellia-Rydalmere areas, and the quanta of forecast population growth in the GPOP, supporting a station between Rosehill and Silverwater might be argued to be essential to support both urban densification and meeting the population growth targets.

Figure 5.4. Draft alignment and LGA locations; Source: NSW Government 2019b, p. 68.
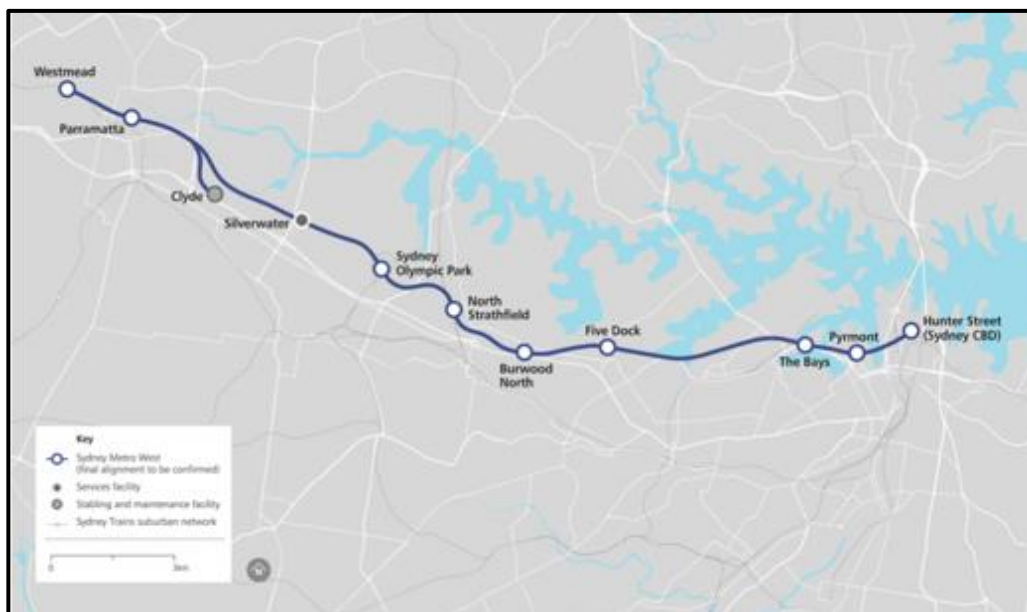

Figure 5.5. Sydney Metro West approved concept; Source: NSW Government 2021, p. 3.

Seen in Figure 5.5 above, the evolution from draft alignment to approved concept has seen

potential stations being realised in the eastern city, while stations in the central city were not

approved, furthering the gap in infrastructural assets. The approved concept preferred to deliver additional stations in infrastructure rich areas of the eastern city.

Figure 9   100 yr ARI Flood Extent and Levels Overall – Landfill Strategy
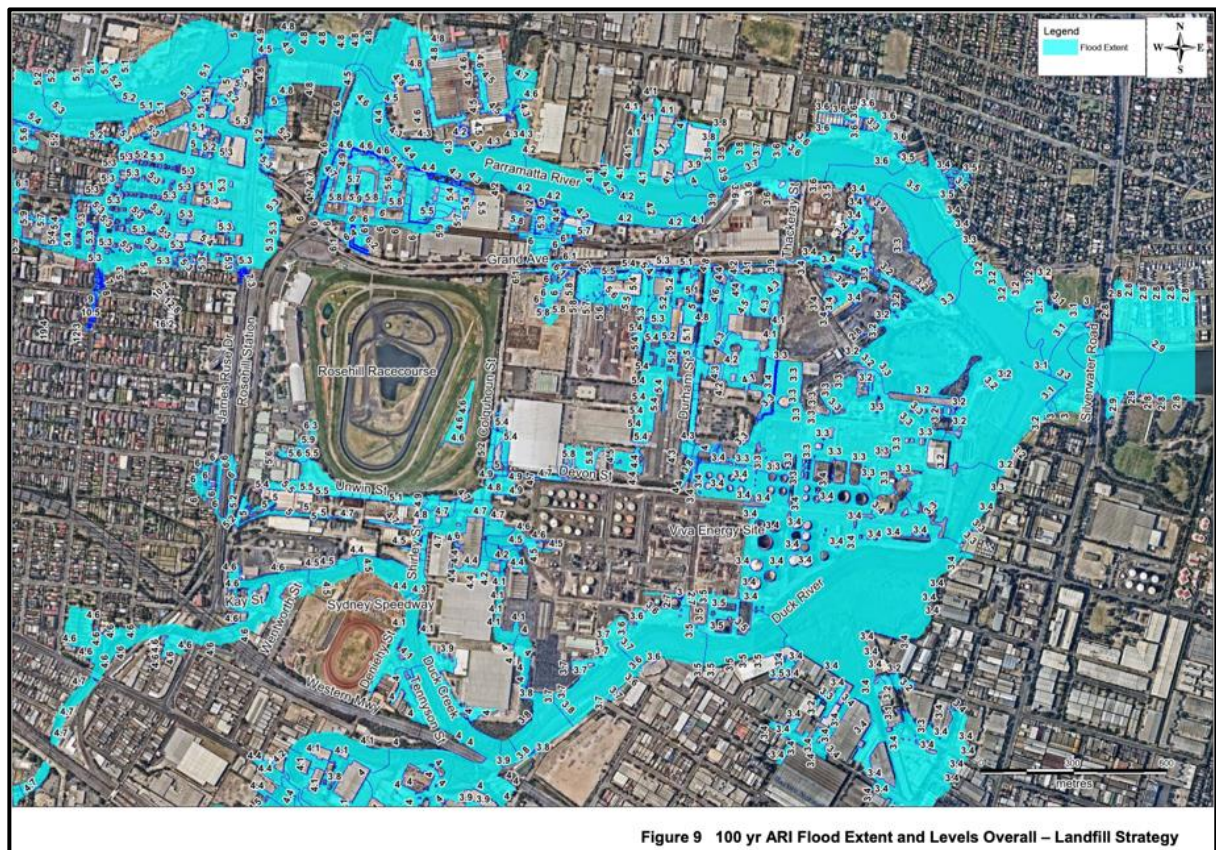
Figure 5.6. 100 year Camellia flooding risks; NSW DPE, p. 47.

Flooding is also an issue raised in the GPOP PIC, as shown in Figure 5.6 above. While it is understandable that remediation costs within the Camellia Town Centre will be high, risk is similar across the whole Camellia precinct including the industrial areas, perhaps more so in the industrial areas in the east. There has been significant feedback to the GPOP PIC about the inconsistencies of the GPOP PIC with previous draft masterplans made by the DPIE and Parramatta Council, but little evidence is provided in the justification: "This proposal has resulted from extensive new analysis developed in the PIC Pilot and not available at the time the District Plan was prepared" (GSC 2019, p. 48).

> *I think the GSC literally fucked things up there. To be frank. There were always*
> *plans for Camellia to be that 10,000 dwellings and for it to be like a proper kind*
> *of like, Green Square, like green square is for the city. That was kind of what the*

vision was. And then the GSC came in and said oh no there needs to be services there. There was definitely the ability for those to coexist with the early services being further east, and Camellia focussed around the metro, but TfNSW want quick trains and quick Trains means you don't have stations. That's transport being the lead by default planning agency. And because they have the funding, they can kind of do that and ride roughshod over planning agencies. And so transport were supported by GSC in that. And as a result, we didn't get a metro station at Camellia or Rydalmere the other potential spot. It just seems funny that there's a 10 kilometre gap between north Concord or west Concord or wherever the stations are (D_2)

Camellia is a very big area, it's big enough to do a number of things. It's a number of kilometres between James Ruse Drive to Silverwater. Not all that can be residential, not all of it could be jobs. And even the nature of the types of jobs who would likely change as you move through the process (B_1)

These comments from ex-DPIE staff and the business peak body leader indicate the expansive size of the Camellia precinct to accommodate both land preservation for future urban services and to activate and develop a Camellia town centre with the Sydney metro. There is also the lack of planning integration across departments and with TfNSW as the lead agency to deliver the metro to prioritise a 20-minute connection between Parramatta and Sydney in lieu of the benefits of a TOD in Camellia or any other potential site in between.

Rydalmere is also a challenging space to activate because of the significant infrastructure investment that is required to enable development. Fortunately, WSU provides access to a broader health and education network. In the context of prioritising either Rydalmere or Camellia, both have merits and deficits that have impacted on their inclusion of a metro stop to service the precinct. While Rydalmere is advantaged by the satellite WSU campus, there is little advocacy for promoting the area. Camellia lacks a coalition of institutional and educational stakeholders but is represented by a relatively concentrated group of actors holding large parcels of land (seen in Figure 5.7 below), and developers willing to contribute to the infrastructure requirements of activating the area. Camellia is also faced with a large land remediation bill to support development. The issue of land contamination has long been a sticking point to renewal of the post-industrial land at Camellia.

So Rydalmere is it's quite a challenging space to work in because in a way, we're sitting outside of the city centre. There's a whole range of different land uses sitting together, that aren't necessarily fully connected and engaged and engaged or complementing one another in a way (U_2)

While WSU, in partnership with other organisations in the Westmead health and education precinct, were able to advocate for a light rail connection at Westmead, the level of industry maturity and private investment in Rydalmere may not support a metro stop there. But while the potential of a metro stop in the Camellia-Rydalmere area may be warranted, interview responses from D_2 indicate the decision to not include a stop may be due to both TfNSW being the lead agency to deliver the project, and the GSC in support, curtailing the potential town centre renewal at Camellia.
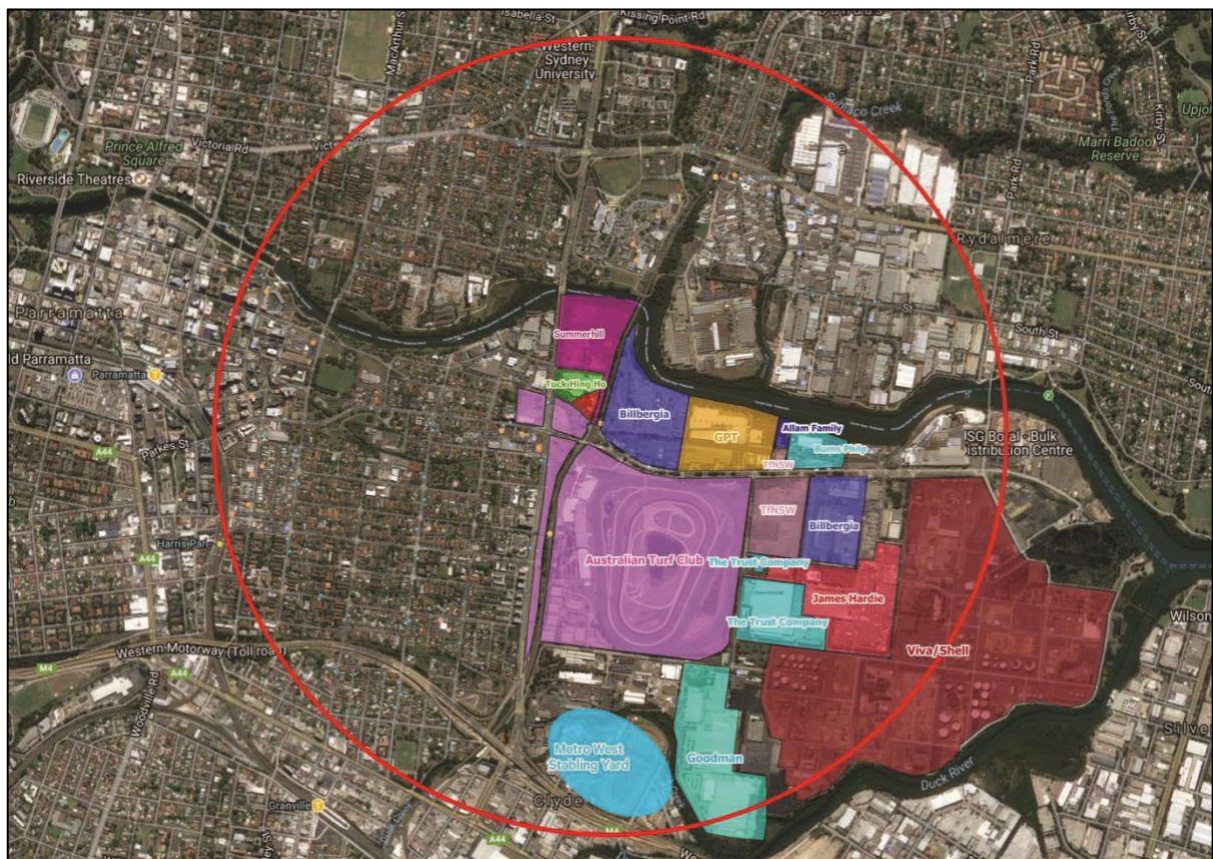

Figure 5.7. Camellia Landholdings; Source: CLA 2019, p.14

While acknowledging that land remediation is a significant challenge to post-industrial transformation, it is not a death knell to redevelopment elsewhere. The revitalisation of Green

Square is testament to this. Green Square is a partly real, and partly imagined space (Karskens 2004). The area of Green Square was at one stage, the largest industrial municipality in Australia (White 2014). However, Green Square experienced decline alongside other industrial areas in Sydney's middle ring neighbourhoods. Attributed to its industrial past, Green Square faced heavy contamination as well as flooding issues that needed to be rectified, as does Camellia.

However, the centrality of Green Square between Sydney Airport and the Sydney CBD, and the ability of the City of Sydney to support its revitalisation unlocked political support, infrastructure investment and innovative funding mechanisms to support the land remediation and subsequent urban renewal. Green Square also benefitted from advantageous timing, with the forthcoming 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. The success of Green Square as a large-scale urban regeneration project demonstrates that transitioning contaminated post-industrial land to vibrant mixed-use areas can be achieved.

In the Camellia-Rydalmere area, the entrepreneurial approach taken by developers and landowners have sought to influence government to enable development. There has been consistent commentary across interviewed stakeholders of the need for infrastructure to service future development. This division between the NSW Government and other stakeholders particularly delivery partners, highlights the contribution of institutional thickness, that is, greater trust, participation and alignment of stakeholders to deliver in a bounded area (Pike, Rodriguez-Pose & Tomaney 2017). And while the success of recent cases including Green Square set precedence for government taking the lead in remediating land, this hasn't been the case at Camellia, nor has there been commitment to deliver enabling infrastructure, notwithstanding developers offering to contribute to the development of a metro station.

5.5   Conclusion

> *Theory is when you understand everything, but nothing works. Practice is when everything works. And no one understands why (D_2)*

This chapter has drawn on the interview findings to develop some of the key challenges associated with the strategic development and delivery of the GPOP PIC. This responds to

the thesis aim by drawing out some of the experiences by stakeholders within the GPOP and has been guided by the development narratives of three key precincts within the GPOP: Parramatta CBD, Westmead, and Camellia-Rydalmere. While there are other strategic areas in the GPOP, namely Carlingford and Olympic Park, they were not called out in the interview responses nor particular attention identified in the literature review. The data has also highlighted longstanding issues which the GSC have attempted to resolve. This includes collaboration with stakeholders outside the NSW Government, and advancing development and infrastructure delivery within the GPOP.

The key precincts of Parramatta CBD, Westmead and Camellia in the GPOP are each at different levels of maturity in their development. There are significant resources directed to the Parramatta CBD that have accelerated the Parramatta Square development. A significant stakeholder that has emerged in this precinct is the WSU. While they are fairly diminutive as a development body, their extensive presence across the GPOP has provided a useful perspective in the potential role of a cross-cutting stakeholder in various functional economic areas.

Stakeholders have also identified that significant economic potential could be realised by strengthening the connections between key centres, for example, Parramatta and Westmead. This lack of connectivity is linked to deficits in place-making that are also concerns for the stakeholders interviewed. These stakeholders, on their own have developed place-based partnerships that have effectively advocated for their interests within the GPOP, including the development of mass transit infrastructure, for example at Westmead.

Stakeholders have compared the potential of Camellia-Rydalmere with the effective renewal of Green Square in Sydney's east. These two precincts share similar characteristics including the need for land remediation and storm water infrastructure, yet Camellia-Rydalmere is lacking in government interest to kick start development. These tensions will be further unpacked in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6   Emerging tensions around the development of the GPOP
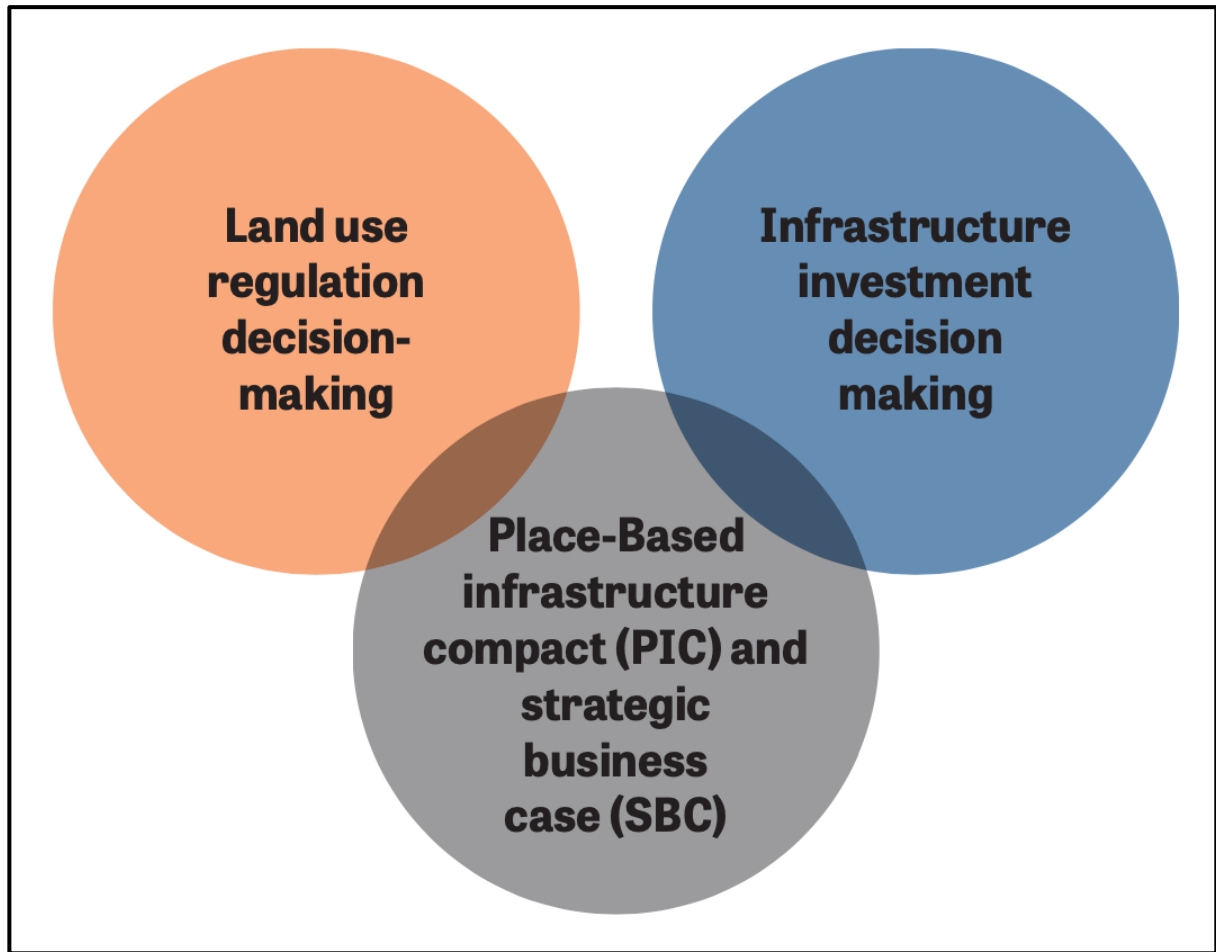
Linking land use and infrastructure decision-making of government through the PIC and Strategic Business Case (GSC 2019, p. 55)

The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:
The case of Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula, Sydney

This chapter delves deeper into the precinct analysis conducted in Chapter 5. Through the key themes of transport, collaboration, and integrated planning, this chapter synthesises the tensions that emerged from the expert interviews.

Since the 2014 metropolitan plan, there has been a clear strategic shift to reorientate and redistribute resources from the Eastern City towards the Central and Western Cities. By using targeted spatial interventions and place-based policies, attention is given to accelerate the development of several priority precincts within the GPOP. However, the approach undertaken has not sufficiently considered work that has already been undertaken by prior strategic plans by both State and Local Government, and the perspectives of developers and community stakeholders. Tensions emerge when inconsistencies develop over plans, critical information is not shared, and siloed governance obstructs the achievement of an overarching vision resulting in missed opportunities to deliver place-based infrastructure outcomes. Broader outcomes of these tensions have a negative impact on precinct development and collaborative practice.

This chapter presents the major tensions that emerged around precinct development and precinct connecting transport infrastructure (Section 6.1), tensions that frame relationality (Section 6.2) and power, shaping collaborative practice and tensions around infrastructure funding arrangements (Section 6.3). Significant challenges centre around (1) impediments to developing priority precincts, (2) challenges of delivering intra and inter-city transport infrastructure necessary to enable planned growth and collectively, (3) politics, process and confidentiality, and timing challenges that hinder collaboration and the efficient implementation of the GPOP.

6.1   Connecting the Central City – Enabling precinct development

Parramatta has long been on the radar of the NSW Government to become a major metropolitan centre. However, it has historically lacked the supporting infrastructure to attract private capital and investment. Within the GPOP, attention is focused on Parramatta and Westmead, with a critical mass of transformative and structural infrastructure committed in the GPOP supporting place-based partnerships to stimulate investment and development around the CBD core. But over the wider GPOP, there are risks stymying this transition. These include (1) coordination risks attributed to fragmented leadership, (2) financial

shortfalls hindering the full implementation of infrastructure delivery and (3) questions of legitimacy through questionable processes of land acquisition which also include withholding data and preventing public scrutiny of contentious policy reversals.

The two major pieces of transport infrastructure, the Sydney Metro West providing regional connections between the Central and Eastern Cities, and the Parramatta Light Rail providing local intra-city connections are key catalysts to stimulate development of the CBD core and develop supporting land uses. While precinct activation should not pose a challenge in the Parramatta CBD, as it is an established business district, and even Westmead has a strong commercial identity as a health precinct, it is inherently more difficult in the outer precincts, or more simply, anywhere else in the GPOP. These areas are generally low density and lacking in amenity. Given the deficit in infrastructural provision, there are opportunities left on the table, where the outcomes do not completely align with either regional planning strategies or transit-oriented development. In essence, while the Sydney Metro West and Parramatta Light Rail projects support, and even accelerate development in Parramatta CBD and Westmead, had a broader consideration of the benefits to the rest of the GPOP been given attention, greater outcomes could be derived to activate precincts and areas that are lacking in transport infrastructure and development attractiveness, thus supporting population and equity targets. They are less obvious but can be equally important beneficiaries of transport infrastructure investment and development. Delivering infrastructure can drive private investment in these areas that both stimulate jobs and housing growth contributing to a critical mass of development to support the Parramatta CBD core.

For the Metro, this brings into question its role within the GPOP. While the Metro West functions to increase public transport capacity between Parramatta and the Sydney CBD and decrease the point-to-point connection time, can it also offer other place-making and development attraction benefits at a similar cost to government? While in principle it is possible, there is a conflict between the dialectic of its 'city-shaping' function and its 'place-making' potential. Rather the spatial imaginary of the GPOP could be leveraged further to enhance the outcomes of these transformative infrastructure projects to benefit the GPOP holistically, not just already advantaged areas.

Similar scenarios were likely considered in the Metro Northwest, completed in 2019 and Metro City and Southwest due for completion in 2024. In these cases there was a

compromise between speed and cost on the one hand, and improving access for a broader geographic base of customers. In the case of Metro Northwest, there is a 6km spacing between the Cherrybrook and Epping stations as the crow flies. The distance between Parramatta and Olympic Park is even farther, around 7km. The International Association of Public Transport (IATP) reports that the average distance between metro stations globally is 1.25km, significantly shorter than the Sydney Metro, thus questioning comparability, and even categorisation as a metro (UITP 2018, p. 6). A second criticism raises the question of 'new' metro stations, where a significant proportion of stations have been upgraded rather than servicing new communities, in particular Metro Southwest. These challenges lead to some pertinent questions regarding whether planning is led by transport, or transport led by planning, to what extent is a TOD promoted as a planning principle, and what are the consequences of this for the goal of a metropolis of three 30-minute cities.

The Parramatta Light rail is similarly an enabler for precinct development, albeit one prioritising local rather than regional connectivity. With these tensions in mind, this section examines the narratives surrounding the development of the Parramatta Light Rail and Metro projects. In particular, this section discusses the opportunities missed in meeting the goal of a 20-minute connection between Parramatta and Sydney CBDs.

6.1.1   Transport led planning – 20-minutes to the city

This section focuses on the path-dependency of the Sydney Metro West project led-by TfNSW. The Sydney Metro West project aims to connect the Central and Eastern Cities, forming part of a larger metropolitan Metro network. While the project reduces commuting time and adds capacity to journeys between Parramatta and Sydney CBD, opportunities are missed to induce spatial development in less developed areas of the GPOP. The rhetoric of a 20-minute connection misses the potential to better connect the supporting precincts in the GPOP.

One of the key themes developed in Section 5.1 centred around advocacy for infrastructure development in the GPOP, and the role of infrastructure to stimulate place-making and attract private investment. Outside of the NSW Government, there is a broad coalition of actors who have advocated for a metro station between Parramatta and Olympic Park. This coalition

extends beyond landholders. This can be seen in joint submissions to the Metro West Stage 1 EIS, where there are shared interests between a wide range of stakeholders including:

- Property Council of Australia

- Urban Development Institute of Australia

- Urban Taskforce

- Western Sydney Business Chamber

- Billbergia

- City of Parramatta Council

This coalition of actors may be incentivised to advocate for a metro stop in Camellia, but as it stands today, Camellia is a site of dereliction and decay. Employment has fallen by 92% since its peak in 1976 to 1,600 jobs (SBC, UTF, UDIA & PCA 2020, p. 2). The Sydney Metro West provides a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to provide a catalyst for both population and job growth. While there may be long term advantages to maintaining industrial land, in the Central City, a metro station may be the most significant piece of infrastructure to shape the surrounding precincts, and provide guidance for future strategic and land use plans.

As of 2020, there were 194 metro's globally, with an average distance between stations of 1.19km.[7] The Sydney Metro North West is more than double that figure, at 2.77km between stations. Discounting the Sydney Metro South West, which is primarily an upgrade to existing stations, the Sydney Metro West, adds nine stations in 24km of rail for an average of 2.67km between stations, with larger gaps between western stations. Five of the nine stations are either co-located or within 100m of an existing station. A key promise of a 20-minute connection between greater Parramatta and the Sydney CBD (Sydney Metro 2021, p. 1) foreshadows the wider benefits that can be leveraged by transformational infrastructure projects such as a metro. INSW advises that "neither structural nor local infrastructure have a significant impact on relative accessibility to influence the shape of a city. It is only the strategic infrastructure which has this power" (INSW 2019, p. 2). Under this hierarchy of

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[7] Author's calculation from UITP 2018 data.

strategic, structural and local infrastructure, the Sydney Metro is considered strategic infrastructure, while the Parramatta Light Rail is considered structural infrastructure. Considering the transformative power of a Metro, and furthermore, the potential that a metro station can bring its catchment, there are open questions regarding the decision to leave the broader Camellia-Rydalmere precincts without access to a metro service.

Best practice suggests that the benefit of a metro service is not its point-to-point contribution to transport connectivity, but the place-making and development potential from activating less connected areas and providing a lever for inward investment (UITP 2021, p. 7). This will require "coordination between departments on strategic and detailed planning matters. Ideally, it means creating a unified authority with a comprehensive vision and the statutory power to put the mechanisms in place to achieve the vision" (UITP 2021, p. 7). The GSC fits the bill as a unifying authority in its role as a boundary-spanner to align the various interests in the aim of achieving the best outcomes for the Sydney metropolitan region (Nederhand, Martin & Van Twist 2019).

In the case of the Sydney Metro West, it is clearly a project of city-shaping significance. An initial delivery strategy was released in April 2018, with key project dates below (Infrastructure Pipeline n.d.):

- **2018, April.** The initial delivery strategy for Sydney Metro – West was released, comprising an initial packaging strategy with a range of options subject to further analysis and industry consultation.

- **2018, May.** The 2018-19 NSW Budget reserved $3 billion with $28.1 million allocated in FY2018-19 to progress planning and final business case development for Sydney Metro – West.

- **2018, July.** The Sydney Metro authority was established to deliver the Sydney Metro program of works.

- **2018, December.** Release of base case delivery strategy.

- **2019, March.** The NSW Government committed an additional $3.2 billion to Sydney Metro West during the 2019 State election campaign.

- **2019, June.** The 2019-20 NSW Budget allocated $6.4 billion over four years for Sydney Metro – West.

- **2020, April.** The first Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Sydney Metro – West went on exhibition on 30 April with the community able to provide feedback until 26 June. This is one of three EISs for the project due to its scale.

- **2020, October.** A refined packaging of Sydney Metro – West was released during Transport Infrastructure Pipeline 2025 industry briefing.

- **2020, November.** The 2020-21 NSW Budget allocated $10.4 billion over four years for Sydney Metro – West, including $2.1 billion in FY2020-21.

- **2021, March.** The NSW Government granted planning approvals for two components of the Sydney Metro – West project. The project concept for Sydney Metro – West, from Westmead to the Sydney CBD, was approved, as well as two sections of station excavation and tunnelling from Westmead to The Bays Precinct. This incorporates the Central Tunnelling Package (CTP) and the Western Tunnelling Package (WTP).

- **2021, March.** Sydney Metro called for tenders for planning approval services for the State Significant Development (SSD) Concept Development Applications for five over station developments on Sydney Metro West. Stations at Parramatta, Sydney Olympic Park, The Bays Precinct and Sydney CBD were confirmed to comprise over station developments in October 2020. The fifth identified over station development has not been publicly disclosed. However, a new station at Pyrmont was confirmed in December 2020, with its development and delivery type still being finalised.

- **2021, June.** The 2021-22 NSW Budget allocated $26.1 billion over the next four years for Sydney Metro. Of this, $12 billion was allocated for Sydney Metro – West, with $2.9 billion in FY2021-22.

> *I think there was a sort of a fetish that developed about the 20-minute commute*
> *time between Sydney and Parramatta. So 21 minutes is somehow unacceptable.*
> *This is a bizarre, bizarre thing. (B_1)*

Delivering large public infrastructure projects in brownfield areas is extremely capital intensive. According to the NSW 2021-2022 budget papers, expenditure attributed to the

Sydney Metro West has reached $2.9 billion from inception to June 2021. A further $12 billion is committed for the next four years, still well short of the internal estimate of $26.6 billion, which is still likely to be breached (O'Sullivan 2021). With the exception of the Sydney Metro Northwest, in Sydney, all large transport infrastructure projects since 2015 have gone overbudget. While on rare occasion, megaprojects can be delivered on time, and budget, as demonstrated by the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, megaprojects often conform to Flyvbjerg's 'iron law' of megaprojects, that is "over budget, over time, over and over again" (Flyvbjerg 2014, p. 11).

A 2016 NSW Auditor-General report found the Sydney Light Rail budget had increased from $1.6 billion to $2.1 billion while the benefits decreased from $4.0 billion to $3.0 billion which had an impact on its Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR), decreasing from 2.4 to 1.4 (Audit Office of NSW 2016, pp. 2-4). A major issue in public evaluation of the Sydney Metro has been the refusal of release of final business cases. Infrastructure NSW has provided an evaluation summary of the Sydney Metro West, but with very limited data. Moreover, the BCR is at 1.34 calculated with wider economic benefits. This drops to 1.04 without wider economic benefits considered (Investment NSW 2020, p. 18). The ATAP acknowledge that there are measurement difficulties when calculating wider economic benefits and they can add texture to decision-making process for certain initiatives (ATAP n.d.). One must consider how important the economic benefit of sticking to a 20-minute connection between greater Parramatta and the Sydney CBD was for internal government approval to support the Sydney Metro West in its current state.

There are several other criticisms which can be applied to the decision to restrict the quantity of stops with a city shaping project such as a Metro. As mentioned earlier, metros globally are more commonly associated with connecting and activating urban centres (UITP 2021, p. 6). The technologies associated with single level carriages, as opposed to the current dual level carriages of the current heavy rail line, are optimised for frequent stopping, accommodating a shorter distance between stations. Secondly, there is a strategic desire that areas such as Camellia "should be supported and allowed to evolve over time as they modernise into higher-value precincts, supporting local innovation, creativity and productivity" (GSC 2019, p. 48). Higher-value and innovation are synonymous with amenity. Transitional industrial areas such as Alexandria in Sydney's east demonstrate that smaller precincts offer these benefits, while locating in close proximity to desirable areas with

appropriate buffer zones (SGSEP 2017, p. 6). These areas provide guidance for alternative approaches to broad brush zoning to introduce additional uses, which also enable precinct activation (Ethos Urban 2021, pp. 13-21). The interviews speak to these conflicts, with a former DPIE Director quotation below

> *government strategic plans need to be supported by infrastructure, which is what the GPOP PIC was trying to accommodate, but because of the channel wrangling amongst all the different agencies, it's been harder than I think everyone thought it was going to be. This whole concept will suffer because government will get stuck in terms of how they fund everything, because now the focus is very much on enabling the aerotropolis. And you've got the M12, the outer Sydney orbital corridor, Northern rail upgrade, the north south Metro, all the significant pieces of infrastructure. All the agencies are focusing their attention on that, and I think the focus on GPOP has been lost. This means that agencies minds aren't focussed on delivering the required infrastructure to enable the visions that have been set by the GSC and Department of Planning. (D_2)*

This quotation is particularly pertinent to both the relationship between government silos, the need for coordination and alignment, and the need to balance the competing priorities of various projects across their portfolio. Given the remit of the GSC in delivering the metropolitan plan, and other place-based interventions such as the GPOP PIC, this can result in undesirable outcomes such as half-delivered projects. The entanglement of competing priorities makes it difficult to optimise outcomes. For instance, it is difficult to preserve industrial land from highly valued 'speculative' uses, take advantage of the opportunities presented by infrastructure projects such as the Sydney Metro West, and also deliver integrated station developments to reinvigorate areas such as Camellia. This seems to be the underlying concern in a thought leadership piece by the GSC (GSC 2018d, pp. 16-21). The article argues for exploring the potential of balancing present and future demands, which could be interpreted as indecision. The interview findings suggested that this indecision is evident across the range of strategies and supplemental papers. Because the GSC performs a shepherding role across government (G_1), it is perhaps inevitable that conflicts will result when leading agencies (in this case TfNSW) have different priorities from supporting agencies (in this case DPIE, and the GSC) about the integration of strategic and land use planning.

Beyond inconsistencies in the GSC's publications, position, and remit, TfNSW also exhibits a tendency to be inconsistent. The 2018 Future Transport Strategy states that current investments "are focused on city-shaping and radial connections to centres in the Eastern Harbour City. These support improved public transport, congestion management and urban renewal outcomes, unlocking capacity on existing road and rail corridors and supporting renewal and walkability by drawing traffic away from centres" (TfNSW 2018, p. 86) With metro stations at Parramatta and Olympic Park separated by 7km of track, and most of the proposed stations co-located with existing stations, there are missed opportunities to promote the urban renewal potential of the Sydney Metro West. This is affirmed by D_2 below

> *I think with the [Parramatta Light Rail] Stage One, good. Stage Two has been put on ice so that's kind of like a half-completed piece of infrastructure. You've got the East-West Metro but again, transport in their desire to have a quick trip from Parramatta or Westmead to get to the city, they didn't want to bloody put more stations in, so there needs to be additional stations there to have, to support increased density around those transport nodes that would further enable the development of Camellia (D_2)*

With the bulk of housing targets allocated to the Central City, it would allay fears of inequality if supporting infrastructural investment was planned and delivered to support this growth. While it is admirable, if not naïve to target a 20-minute connection between Parramatta and Sydney CBDs, the role of metro's is primarily to provide connectivity and stimulate development.

6.1.2 TODs without transport

Place-based infrastructure is a key message conveyed by the GPOP PIC policy. A lack of joined-up planning stymies the potential of delivering this promise. The development of transit oriented developments (TODs) could also leverage the spare capacity of industry to deliver infrastructure that the State Government either cannot afford or lacks the political willingness. In the post-industrial age, successful urban development is rarely disassociated with good access to public transport. A longstanding adversarial culture between NSW Government departments rarely optimises these relationships further hindering the likelihood of ideal urban outcomes. The arrival of the GSC, with their steering role, could potentially bring the capabilities of integrating transport and land use, corridor protection, advice on land

amalgamation and development prioritisation (Urban Growth NSW 2014). However, the NSW Government is a rather large ship, requiring significant resources and time to reverse these adverse relations. This coordination is especially important as the 2018 Central District Plan considers the entire GPOP as an urban renewal area (GSC 2018b, pp. 10-11).

6.2   Collaboration in practice – or not

This section examines the extent to which collaboration is practiced both between government agencies, and with Council and developers. Strategic partnerships and collaboration have been important themes evident through the interviews. This has been a particular trait of actor groups outside of the NSW Government. This section synthesises these perspectives in reference to strategic planning documents and media analysis, identifying place-based coalitions that have led to success and less positive outcomes. The GSC whose role is to lead metropolitan planning which it does, however, in meeting the direction for 'infrastructure and collaboration,' this is less clear (GSC 2018a, p. 32). This is made obvious in reviewing submissions to the GPOP PIC, and in the GSC response to the reviews feeding into the recommendations provided to the NSW DPIE (GSC 2020, pp. 4-5).

The GPOP PIC model presented in 2019, situated collaboration as a central component of the model, for example "the Commission, with more than 20 NSW Government partners, has created a new collaborative model: the Place-based Infrastructure Compact" and "Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do at the Commission" and "the PIC is a new collaborative model that looks holistically at a place to identify the most cost-effective sequencing for growth aligned with the provision of infrastructure" (GSC 2019, pp. 3, 10). However, when considering the response on reviews, this action does not appear to have been achieved in the development of the GPOP PIC. In particular, communication is a key deficit that is common in two major areas, that being, 'collaboration and transparency' and 'consistency in the hierarchy of plans.' The outcomes of the GPOP PIC appear that while the nature of the PIC would generate 'commercial in confidence' information, delivery stakeholders such as councils, landholders, and developers can act as soundboards to test even limited data to understand the impact on these stakeholders, and potentially avoid these conflicts.

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I was involved in the early stages of the PIC, but only from giving feedback around building. My view is because it disappeared into what I call the state government secrecy bucket, it's much less collaborative and consultative. You can't just say it's going to be collaborative and consultative and then sign all those agreements and have it disappear into the bowels of government and then pop out fully formed. (L_1)

At the interface between GSC and stakeholders outside of the NSW Government, collaboration is understood a little differently. This is evident from the experience of a planning Director at Parramatta Council seen above. This perspective is consistent with other interviewees and much of the feedback to the GPOP PIC. The 'state government secrecy bucket' is a particular bugbear of other stakeholders including peak bodies and landholders. The outcome of this limited interface leads to uncertainty. From the council perspective, local government plans are required to give effect to higher level plans. Beyond introducing new planning policies such as the GPOP PIC, greater uncertainties will be introduced if such significant departure from previous strategic planning were introduced without consultation. From the landholder perspective, business cases are developed for land acquisition and development that are responsive to land use and masterplanning. In the case of Camellia, several strategic documents have been produced including the Draft Camellia Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy (2015) and the Draft Camellia Town Centre Master Plan (2018). The GPOP PIC reverses course from these strategies and plans, signalling that this area be reserved for future urban services. This about face reversing direction from the previous planning strategies, reverses the market signal now suggesting that Camellia is not ripe for redevelopment.

This is not to suggest that there is any intention to obfuscate or mislead other stakeholders. It is the outcome of limited and delayed disclosure of information, that further undermines trust in the GSC and by extension, the NSW Government. The flow-on effect of this trust deficit undermines the credibility of infrastructure compacts, in this case, the GPOP PIC. The following sub-section explores the interface role of the GSC and its role as gatekeeper of information; the impact of longstanding friction between NSW Government agencies; and the limited involvement of local actors such as councils and developers, which has undermined achievement of the GPOP PIC's place-based goals.

6.2.1 Controlling the dialogue – GSC as gatekeeper, and Cabinet in confidence

The GSC are the authors of both the metropolitan plan and the GPOP PIC, thus acting as gatekeepers of information. Their role as an intermediary within the NSW Government governance hierarchy is also to "coordinate and align the planning that will shape the future of Greater Sydney" (GCC n.d.2.). However, perspectives on their performance are mixed. Distrust of other stakeholders and the nature of cabinet-in-confidence information restricts what the GSC can share. As with other NSW state agencies, limited disclosure and engagement erodes trust between stakeholders and hinders the achievement of collaborative planning outcomes.

Since its inception in 2015 the role and reporting line of the GSC has shifted. It is no longer responsible for statutory planning and now reports directly to the NSW Premier, instead of the Minister for Planning. The *Greater Sydney Commission Act (2015)* does not provide for local government participation in the strategic planning, infrastructure delivery or finance and governance committees. Further, the directive to move the GSC to the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) cluster speaks to the evolving executive role of the GSC.

> *One of the problems is that while government talks about collaboration, you can't show council things that are cabinet in confidence. To be honest, GPOP had very little council input. They came to some meetings, but they weren't shown everything. (G_1)*

It is understandable regarding the role of Cabinet confidentiality to protect sensitive information. However, blanket statements on confidentiality are likely to hinder collaboration. Further, 2018 amendments to the GIPA Act further restrict the disclosure of partially sensitive information, that there is an "overriding public interest against disclosure of that information" (IPC 2019, p. 18). While the GSC act as a gatekeeper limiting what council can see, there is further internal segregation, even at the executive level.

> *But even I in GSC see some parts of it, they wouldn't show me everything, which was really stupid. Because by the time they've done stuff or said I'm sorry, we've already made allocations for what should or shouldn't be in the precinct, well too bad. The ministers adopted it. Now, what do you want to do? (G_1)*

The quotation from a GSC Director above highlights the challenges of operating under an executive model requiring cabinet approval. Interestingly, a similar perspective was observed by council staff in their engagement with the GSC team.

> *When the GSC team were taking the GPOP through the cabinet process, watching the stress and the distress that that caused for staff was unpleasant to sit by and watch. It was absolutely intense. It was an absolute mammoth effort and from the observer's point of view, just very stressed. (L_2)*

The stress experienced by GSC staff was likely aligned to the role of the GSC as a boundary-spanner within government. To deliver the GPOP PIC would require bringing different NSW Government agencies together to get to the cabinet submission. As an intermediary, the GSC would need to balance the demands of each agency, while still being subject to ministerial demands and decision-making that could over-ride careful compromises. These perspectives highlight the compartmentalisation of the operating environment. In particular, the NSW Government approach to precinct planning was very centralised, leaving Councils with little authority over the development of strategically significant areas. However, State control over planning for strategically significant areas was not accompanied by the resourcing or expertise to manage the redevelopment process, or deliver place-based outcomes.

> *The planned precinct program that government was trying to deliver said they basically wrested a lot of the controls from Council and said, right, we're going to do all the planning, infrastructure coordination, places like GPOP ... all these existing growth areas, they said they got signed up on cabinet to say we're going to have a SIC in each of these areas and the relevant state regional infrastructure. (D_2)*

This perspective from an ex-NSW DPIE Planning Director presents the decision as planning by executive order. While strategically significant precincts are important to the performance of the metropolitan region, they are also places with existing strategies in play, where collaboration with a large group of stakeholders is required for their successful development. This perspective aligns with a similar view from an ex-NSW DPIE Planning Director now an executive at Parramatta council.

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I don't envy the people who are trying to make it work at the state level. And I think the GSC is trying to do the right thing ... From my point of view, the PIC suffered from the division between local and state, making sure it hit the spread of state regional facilities and dealing with the different agencies' capability to plan into the future. (GK, page 3)

This 'division between local and state' highlights the antagonistic relationship in the division of planning authority and the classification of infrastructural assets. This division of assets and responsibilities is particularly important for program planning (as inferred in the above quotation), but also shapes how funding can be allocated for asset delivery and maintenance. In the design of the GPOP PIC, delivering place-based infrastructure become quite challenging if local, social and population-serving infrastructure is not fully considered. This is particularly evident in the perspectives of a Planning Manager from Parramatta City Council

The GPOP team did engage with Council and saw us as a key stakeholder. I think they were quite fortunate in terms of working with Parramatta City Council, that we were quite progressed in a lot of our own thinking and analysis work. And I think they took a lot of that but [the GPOP PIC] doesn't land on local level infrastructure. So [the GSC] get an opportunity to plan for growth with the necessary infrastructure, but did they? Is that an appropriate plan for growth? (L_2)

This quotation makes clear the limitations of the design of the GPOP PIC as a means to address both the types of infrastructure required, and the level of detail required to deliver the appropriate types of infrastructure for a growing GPOP. As place-based planning policy tends to prioritise certain places over others, the spatial imaginary of the GPOP has the potential to cohere a range of planning strategies, in particular achieving consensus across local and state government actors. This deficit also raises the question of the role and function of the GPOP PIC itself. Several levels and types of infrastructure are needed to support significant growth. Given the scale, this would require a coordinated partnership approach to fund future infrastructure, as well as a tabled backlog of projects. This dissonance between council and the GSC is exemplified in the Council's efforts to deliver a regional scale public library to service the Central City.

I got contacted by the then social Commissioner, and [GCC Executive Director] for this meeting, to come in and talk about our Community Infrastructure Strategy, because it's gone on public exhibition as a draft at the time. And it was all around the time that they were starting to put together [the GPOP PIC] it was clear that they are getting some pointy ends of having to land on some recommendations ... if we're going to be the Central City, we actually want to see a regional level library to serve the broader Western Sydney community, so that people out at Campbelltown or Blacktown, or Parramatta, didn't have to travel into the State Library ... I realised I was being manhandled through that meeting, because it caused them a problem, I had said, and put a public document out for the GPOP that said, this community needs a regional level library of this much space. And they were trying to convince me that it wasn't a regional space that we needed, because they didn't want to own having to put that in the PIC. Now, they didn't say that. That's absolutely what they were doing. And I felt quite pressured through that process ... So they really were doing everything they could to minimise the cost (L_2)

Two key points can be taken from this extended quotation. Firstly, the meeting was less about collaboration and more about information that could reduce risk to (and resource demands on) the State. Beyond this, collaboration is very weak in both the level of engagement and bilateral flow of information. This engagement is clearly linked to a finite fiscal capacity to support growth, as suggested by proposed action 1, "Phase 1: Focus on precincts where growth can be aligned with already committed infrastructure to support job creation and new development," as the light rail stops at both Camellia and Rydalmere had been committed as this stage (GSC 2019, p. 10).

Secondly, Parramatta Council and the GSC are not aligned about the funding and development of cultural infrastructure such as libraries. Hesitancy to include reference to or funding for a regional scale library in an effort to minimize costs was perhaps partly abated by contributing to library expansions at Ermington and Telopea (GSC 2019, p. 13). However, this does not align with the GPOP PIC, as it was intended to "focus on state infrastructure. So, it was mostly looking at the catalytic infrastructure in here" (G_2). While the GSC was pragmatic in response to a constrained fiscal envelope for infrastructure delivery, there is a missing link when considering what is required for Parramatta, and the wider GPOP, to grow

into a metropolitan centre. The GSC have a strategic role to align infrastructural needs to meet future growth demands.

6.2.2   Antagonism between agencies – chipping away at the silos

While the GSC are an independent agency tasked with leading strategic planning and collaboration in government, in practice this has been difficult to achieve. State government agencies are notoriously siloed, each with separate agency plans and budgets. Change is accretive, but often glacially slow. While there is motivation for improving dialogue between agencies, a balance between political acceptance and organisational efficiency needs to be met.

The interviews revealed mixed perspectives on the level of engagement and collaboration between agencies. The GSC, while performing some level of interfacing between agencies, do not have an effective legislative mandate nor authorising environment to enable fit-for-purpose outcomes for local government infrastructure delivery. While the GSC deliver a coordination function between NSW government agencies, a gap still exists in the connection and contribution of local government.

Positive outcomes were observed in collaboration areas where they facilitated the bringing together of sectoral actors such as health and education to develop innovation clusters and precincts. However, these relationships were already in place, and under development for several years. The GSC could be seen to be adding value to these outcomes by drawing expertise from international experience, for example, innovation districts via the Brookings Institution, or already mature health clusters at Randwick and Camperdown. The GSC is "going to work with Treasury and look together to see what needs to be done" (G_1).

A Director at the GSC clearly points out that the regional plan provides broad targets while policies such as the GPOP PIC provide greater clarity about where, and how infrastructure and development be accommodated. In the case of the GPOP PIC, significant infrastructure investments had already been allocated, including Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1, and the Sydney Metro West. However, these projects are led by TfNSW. An integrated approach to the delivery of transformative infrastructure and land-use planning may alleviate some of these disjunctions and improve inter-agency collaboration.

In Section 5.4. a former Director at the NSW DPIE stated that "TfNSW want quick trains and quick Trains means you don't have stations" (D_2). This observation makes obvious the different priorities of each cluster within the NSW Government. However, given the transformational opportunities afforded by the Sydney Metro West, and to a lesser extent, the Parramatta Light Rail service, a place-based approach to their investment could deliver a larger impact and to a greater catchment of people by increasing travel time between Parramatta and the Sydney CBD by one or two additional minutes. It is interesting to note that health infrastructure is imagined as providing core services to a catchment and providing specialist services to a broader sub-region. In this regard, if stations on public transport networks were imagined in the same way, and if this was considered in the BCR of the transport infrastructure investment, the strategic direction of transport and place-based planning outcomes may be more aligned.

Success can be seen in the incremental formation of the Westmead health precinct and the strategic alignment and partnership between key stakeholders including local and state government agencies, universities, and private partners. By building these relationships and growing the role of Westmead Hospital as a principal referral hospital servicing the Western Sydney Local Health District catchment and providing specialist services to the metropolitan region, it becomes easy to promote the development and prioritisation of the Westmead Health and Innovation Precinct. Taking a perspective from the WSU, a partial success was achieved through the close location of mass transit services in Westmead. No such outcome was reached in close proximity to their Rydalmere campus. The Westmead Health and Innovation District (WHID) as a functional economic area thus demonstrates the potential of place-based partnerships developed around a core population serving function, i.e., health, and bringing together multiple sectoral actors with a key state government agency, i.e., the NSW Department of Health facilitating these relationships.

> *So doing collaboration areas where there's health and education, and then putting in resources, time, bringing the universities and hospitals together is a way of driving growth. That's a way of working more locally. Not just with the council, but with the agencies. If you don't have a Department of Health, and universities is talking to each other, nothing happens. So that's the way that they translate it. (G_1)*

6.2.3 Councils and developers – Arnstein's step-ladder

While the relationships between NSW Government clusters do not always support the delivery of integrated outcomes, there are even lower levels of cohesion with other major stakeholders and delivery partners. One of the drivers for the establishment of the GSC was to improve on these cultural deficits and support integrated and collaborative planning outcomes. From the interview responses from the GSC, NSW Government agencies and non-state government stakeholders, there is an ambition and intention to improve business-as-usual strategic planning processes, but there are also significant roadblocks that impede these outcomes.

In particular, there was a clear shift in messaging from around the time the GSC changed reporting lines from the Department of Planning, to the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The GPOP Growth Infrastructure Compact evolved into the GPOP Place Infrastructure Compact, while the function remained the same (G_1). Also evident is the reduction in engagement and collaboration with local councils in the development of the GPOP PIC. In discussing the Western Sydney Planning Partnership (WSPP), Morrison & van den Nouwelant describe engagement between members of the WSPP as a "veneer of consensus" (Morrison & van den Nouwelent 2020, p. 8). In the case of the GPOP PIC, no partnership was established with local government. Interestingly, while 'place' is emphasised strongly throughout the strategic document, and in the 2018 metropolitan plan, there are no territorial stakeholders with significant authority or authorised to collaborate in the design of the GPOP PIC. Seen in this light, the spatial imaginary of the GPOP may have evolved to function primarily as a rhetorical strategy with limited ambition. While there was a level of engagement outside of the NSW Government to avoid categorisation of the GPOP as achieving a 'veneer of consensus', the observed outcomes have tended to support regional interests, rather than places. The spatial imaginary of the GPOP has reinforced the location of development within the GPOP rather than achieving spatial redistribution across the GPOP.

In a similar project, Haughton & McManus find participation to be limited by design in the development of WestConnex, a contentious motorway project crossing Sydney. The contested outcomes of this project were partly the result of "what happens when public participation is used to finesse existing plans and policies rather than provide opportunities to

challenge them" (Haughton & McManus 2019, p. 323) and highlight the need to build wider 'coalitions of interest.' In the case of the GPOP PIC, the GSC, as a government broker, exercises horizontal and vertical channels of communication. At times it collaborates, but only with council and landholders effectively cutting off the ability for dissenting perspectives to be voiced prior to publication of the plan.

Across the interview perspectives external to the GSC, the importance of? collaboration was confirmed by all parties. However, it seems that the GPOP PIC was a notable exception to an otherwise positive role of the GSC as broker and neutral party.

> *Look, there's certainly been consultation ... [but] the place infrastructure compact, that was developed, there was very poor communication, constitution on that it was essentially a bubble of government talking to each other (B_1)*

The reference of this section to Arnstein's (1967) ladder of participation is relevant because of the decision to limit participation to NSW Government agencies. While the GSC are uniquely authorised to author strategic plans through collaboration with relevant stakeholders, it should be clear that local government have a role to play in the decision-making process of framing the type, quantity and extent of infrastructure that needs to be provided in their jurisdiction. More urgently, longstanding shortfalls in funding and infrastructure provision will impact on the sequencing of infrastructure delivery to support existing and future communities. A developer highlights the institutional flexibility within the NSW Government, and the difficulty in proceeding with the delivery of precinct-scale urban development and renewal.

> *You're talking about expert reports that no one has read, because the team changes and no one comes in and reads them, so the corporate memory is lost every time you change the team. After the 2017 exhibition, we did a debrief with [DPE Director Urban Renewal]. She was just brought in as the new person in 2017. Within six months, she was gone, there was a new team and in 2019, we welcomed team 7. And then last year we had team 8, in January, we sat down and said welcome to team 9. So in the response to the third exhibition, we spent a million dollars in consulting fees on all of the economic feasibility. (D_1)*

Between the heavy rotation of staff within the Department of Planning, machinery of government changes and the GSC interfacing between NSW Government agencies, the fragmented collaboration across their portfolio of programmes reflects the continuing organisational changes. In addition to changes within government, a 'perpetual reform' of the planning system is a frequently raised criticism among industry participants.

6.3   SICs, PICs & VPAs – Sticking to the plan

This section details the duplication of infrastructure contribution mechanisms, conflicts between the GSC and DPIE to apply timely infrastructure contributions policies, and the implications for Councils and developers.

Perhaps the most acrimonious policy issue that cuts across Local and State Government and landowners is the extent of infrastructure that needs to be provided and more importantly, the design of contribution policies to pay for it. Firstly, infrastructure needs to be classified as local or state. This determines who is required to fund different types of infrastructure. This can be contentious, for example, where roads may be classified as state or locally significant. While roads are contiguous pieces of infrastructure, their apportionment has a significant effect on the structure of funding, especially given the limited fiscal envelope that local governments operate.

However, this can be complicated by criteria defined by qualitative function and catchment, or the geographical extent of its benefit. For example, to what extent does a park or open space service a local area, and when does it become regional open space; or where does a local street begin and end, and is it more appropriate for it to be paid for by the State Government? Given these fuzzy boundaries, and the hierarchy of governance, guidance is needed from supra-local government agencies. However, there are many overlapping mechanisms that both function as blanket taxes, and negotiated contributions, or in-kind provisions.

While land taxes and rates are predominately allocated to general upkeep and operation of council areas, additional funding is needed to provide services to growing populations, especially in growth councils. In NSW, in addition to land taxes, other measures are utilised to extract benefits from landowners seeking to develop their landholdings. This primary

comes in the form of s7.11 and s7.12 contributions that are captured in Local Government planning, and Special Infrastructure Contributions (SICs), and Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPAs) that are administered at the State Government level. The GPOP PIC is complicated by the need for additional contributions sufficient to stimulate development uplift in the GPOP.

There are caps on how much money can be captured through contributions plans, generally $20,000 in brownfield areas and $30,000 in greenfield areas in metropolitan councils (UDIA 2020). However, this is a 'soft' cap, and real budgeted costs are higher in many cases. For example, in 2019, for most of the Marrickville LGA, the total levy for a 1-bedroom residential unit is $11,677.96, and a 4+ bedroom unit is $33,080.64 (Inner West Council 2022). Prior to 30 June 2020, a Local Infrastructure Growth Scheme (LIGS) could be applied to cover this difference, but only when contributions plans have been reviewed by the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), otherwise a funding gap would not be available (UDIA 2020).

Recent Productivity Commission findings on infrastructure contributions are positive steps in addressing the complex challenges related to infrastructure provision and funding. However, the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and short time given for legislation to be approved raises questions about the reform implementation and underlying impact.

> *The Minister has accepted all the findings of the report by the Productivity Commissioner. And the next steps are how it's going to be delivered. I was in a UDIA meeting this morning and the PIA conference yesterday. All of a sudden, there's a desire for reform. They want to get legislation in Parliament in six months, but you can't be too comprehensive because they want it to get through the upper house. The consultation period to actually get this right is going to be limited... I don't think it's going to be implemented well. It just sounds like it's going to be rushed. (D_2)*

In conjunction with broader planning system reform, constant organisational change makes it difficult for the GSC to simplify and streamline the NSW planning system. Criticisms raised by a head of a peak body representing Western Sydney business groups, "the GSC … haven't made the planning system easier and simpler. The documents that they produce, are almost impenetrable because they're so long" (B_1). A similar view was held by a consultancy

director (C_2). In addition to the increasing complexity of determining the apportionment of funding for infrastructure, and the identification of infrastructure needs that determines the staging of precinct pathways and development, there are administrative concerns regarding the design of the GPOP PIC. Although there is a clear need to consolidate infrastructure funding mechanisms, the outcomes resulting from the GPOP PIC lead to two pathways that deviate from the intended outcomes. Firstly, the GPOP PIC, with significant opacity regarding the content and workings shaping the sequencing outcomes of precincts within the GPOP, does not improve clarity regarding infrastructure funding provision. Instead, the GSC simply states that "delivering the right infrastructure at the right time will require coordinated funding from a range of sources" (GSC 2019, p. 39). Secondly, given the long-run acceleration of land value that has not reversed during the COVID-19 Pandemic, delaying the implementation of value capture mechanisms may increase the cost of infrastructure provision. This section expands on these two challenges associated with the funding and delivery of infrastructure.

6.3.1   Getting a plan to market

The overlap and duplication of plans and strategies, and changes in the machinery of government delay the timely release and implementation of infrastructure contribution plans and value capture mechanisms. While the intent of a GPOP PIC is to better align infrastructure needs in the growing functional economic area of the GPOP, there are adverse outcomes that result from this initiative. The experience of the NSW DPIE in delivering planned precincts has not gone according to plan, with ambition to implement reform stretching beyond its capacity to deliver. Beyond the stretched ambition, there are barriers to plan implementation due to siloed governance, uncertainty surrounding long-term planning, and duplication of funding mechanisms.

> *I was brought on board to do [the SIC]. But I had two people working on a $6 billion programme that I had to deliver, and hundreds of millions of dollars of grants as well. Government doesn't really understand, particularly in the Department of Planning, they don't understand the complexity and resource requirements to deliver on the promises (D_2)*

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The above quotation from a former NSW DPIE Planning Director highlights this disjuncture in the administrative capacity and the reality of delivering a $6 billion work program. By 2019, budget shortfalls led to reform of precinct delivery, with the NSW DPIE handing back responsibility to deliver some precincts to local government.[8] Building on this perspective, the response from a Parramatta City Council Planning Director below.

> *I worked on the SIC. This state infrastructure contribution from the Department of Planning and the PIC operating in tandem just confuses people, I'd say that theoretically, the city state infrastructure contribution plan done by the Department of Planning, which has never seen the light of day for four years, was meant to identify funding sources for state government infrastructure. And that was fine. But then the PIC came as well. And it was almost like we're doing the same thing in a different way. And it was never clear what the relationship between those two plans were or compacts were. I would argue that the two things should have been rolled together. One is about how you generate funding for this infrastructure. And the other one is how you get a decent list of infrastructure that's holistic. (L_1)*

Identifying funding for state infrastructure has been a longstanding challenge for the NSW DPIE. Rather than refining a single mechanism, the pathway to address infrastructure funding looks to reinvent the infrastructure contribution system. The GPOP PIC identifies proportional funding sources but no further detail. The NSW DPIE advises that in relation to the GPOP "the Strategic Plan will also be supported by a Special Infrastructure Contribution to be paid by developers to support infrastructure needs" (NSW DPE n.d.3.). This confuses messaging about the role of the GPOP PIC, highlighting the issue of duplication of the SIC and GPOP PIC. Communication should improve clarity around their overlapping and distinct functions, but closer collaboration is needed in addition.

In addition to the overlap of infrastructure contribution funding schemes, there are challenges defining the scale, type, and quanta of infrastructure requirements. The GPOP PIC should better define these place-based needs, however, ineffective engagement with local government and developers increases the difficulty of delivering the right infrastructure in the right places. In particular, councils are better placed to understand their constituencies, and

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[8] Informal correspondence from a former Executive Director in the NSW DPIE.

have knowledge of what is needed in their jurisdiction. But they often lack the strategic oversight at the precinct, sub-regional or metropolitan level of infrastructure planning. There are challenges not only with bringing local government into the mix, but also with reaching strategic alignment across NSW Government clusters. It is worth including the quotation below in full to highlight these challenges.

> *the real problem in trying to deliver these strategies was working with both the councillors and the agencies to identify their infrastructure needs in those high growth areas, because you're talking about a 20 to 30-year time horizon. A lot of the agencies and most likely, council don't have a good handle on what are the infrastructure needs over a 30-year time frame. As a result of that, getting any level of granularity around costs or scope was really nigh on impossible. So that's just in the scoping model and then trying to exhibit a document that delineated a billion dollars of infrastructure over 30 years, and the timing of that infrastructure, whether it's school or transport infrastructure, or open space, or roads, all of the agencies hated me doing that, because they felt that I was pigeonholing them into actually delivering the infrastructure at that particular time, and so they think capital programme has been thwarted by the department. The problem with government is that government doesn't work together (D_2)*

Planning for a 30-year horizon within 4-year political cycles poses clear challenges to alignment and implementation across NSW Government clusters. Most interesting in this passage is the unease which agencies outside of the NSW DPIE felt about the department attempting to deliver a precinct-wide infrastructure contribution system. This observation certainly affirms the value of the GSC as an executive agency tasked to integrate and align clusters in the NSW Government. While there is alignment of interest across some NSW Government agencies and clusters, for example, health, other areas such as transport do not experience the same alignment. On occasion there may be opportunities for shared program delivery between agencies where funding is shared to reduce delivery risk and improve outcomes. Further, while state infrastructure is important, and even transformational in the delivery of precincts, precincts really need the contribution and expertise of local government to deliver a place-based infrastructure compact. One planning consultant observes, "[the GPOP PIC] didn't deal with local infrastructure. I mean, it's not hard to bolt that on and deal with the whole thing" (C_2).

6.3.2   Time-sensitive outcomes

The analogy of the NSW Government as a big ship (C_2), where changing its course requires significant time is apt. In addition to this bureaucratic 'thickness,' machinery of government changes in addition to the regular invention and implementation of policy and reform inevitably cause delays at the point of development. The development environment is often time sensitive and as market actors, developers are acutely aware of these conditions. However, this urgency or immediacy to facilitate development or implement reform is not shared by government stakeholders. Staff turnover, and bureaucratic hurdles can lead to missed opportunities and rising costs, leading to projects failing, and development contributions drying up.

Part of the promise of the GPOP PIC is to deliver "the right infrastructure at the right time" (GSC 2019, p. 39), and for industry "greater certainty for investment" (GSC 2019, p. 3). If the GPOP PIC were implemented, this may occur, however delays in Cabinet approval may undermine viability for current and prospective projects. In the Camellia precinct, this has been the case with multiple town centre masterplans drawn and cast aside, with the GPOP PIC reversing course on these strategic plans.

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, there has been a push by the NSW DPIE to accelerate development, however, some developers highlight the challenges that continue for large renewal projects that have been halted due to the work of the GSC.

> *I feel the pain of developers, because people in government don't return emails, they don't return phone calls. Decisions are made without consultation with the organisations that are actually going to make all these plans happen. We can just make plans, but it's the development industry that actually delivers a lot of the infrastructure and obviously, all of the housing. A lot of what government is trying to achieve is not grounded in truth, industry has got their own power of push. But government needs to recalibrate what can be delivered, and what is possible, rather than what looks good on a map and a page. (D_2)*

This quotation from a former NSW DPIE Planning Director and now developer highlights the challenges for the development community. While the NSW DPIE are trying to deliver better

outcomes for communities in NSW, a Blackbox approach has repeatedly been flagged as a point of concern. In the construction of the GPOP PIC, more holistic consideration of the ecosystem of actors required to deliver on government policy would strengthen the spatial narrative, respond to unanticipated constraints and satisfy the need for resolution across inter and intra-agency silos. Better communication with other stakeholders will likely raise uneasy issues but may well prevent politically undesirable outcomes and policy about-faces.

6.4   Conclusion

This chapter has identified some of the key tensions that have emerged through analysis of the interview data. What was clear from the interviews was the need to develop holistic consideration of the need for the GPOP PIC, engage the appropriate actors and more clearly articulate the spatial imaginary narrative to align programs of infrastructure delivery and precinct development. While the interview participants attempted to advance their interests by engaging with the NSW Government, internal constraints particularly around inter-agency responsibility for program delivery and staff turnover are hindrances for the design and delivery of the GPOP PIC. The key tensions emerging in the GPOP have been elaborated into three themes:

- developing priority precincts,
- delivering enabling infrastructure, and
- collaborative challenges hindering the implementation of the GPOP.

Transport infrastructure and investment are key enablers of precinct development, and precincts without these public goods may not thrive. The dominant KPI of Sydney Metro West to reduce point-to-point transit times has hindered the potential of enabling transit oriented development opportunities and establishing new metro stations. The colocation or close proximity of existing stations does not fully benefit areas without current mass transit access.

There is a disconnect between the main NSW Government agencies charged with the integrated planning and development of infrastructure and land use – Transport for NSW and the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. However, collaborative challenges can delay transformative infrastructure delivery including mass transit investment.

The GPOP PIC model was intended to improve collaboration to sequence and align urban growth and infrastructure provision. While some level of collaboration was observed, this was limited to internal engagement with NSW Government stakeholders. Development intentions were inconsistently signalled to industry stakeholders.

An example of the inconsistent messaging to industry stakeholders was the reversal of the draft Camellia strategic plans from 2015-2018. This served to reinforce the loss of legitimacy the NSW Government experienced when implementing planning reforms. While councils and developers working with the NSW Government had expected continuity through the development of these plans with the GPOP PIC, the outcome was to stall further development. While the GPOP PIC had attempted to innovate in the processes of strategic integration and infrastructure delivery, it had not reflected the interests and priorities of other stakeholders to present a picture of local and state infrastructure needs. This 'division between local and state' challenges the PIC's role to present a picture of place-based infrastructure needs. This hinders integrated planning for future growth and necessary infrastructure investment.

In the narrative of continuous reform, the GPOP PIC emerges as another mechanism that operates in tandem to typical funding mechanisms. It is unclear how different the GPOP PIC and current Section 7.11 infrastructure contributions policy are. Part of this fuzziness is attributed to the PIC ignoring the range of local infrastructure and other supporting infrastructure that is needed to elevate Parramatta and the GPOP to become a metropolitan centre. If the GPOP PIC is to deliver the right infrastructure at the right time, local governments, as the level of government closest to communities and more able to listen to community requests, will need to have a bigger voice in the design and delivery of a PIC. The next section synthesises the findings of Chapter 5 and 6 and contextualises these findings against the literature review and theory.

Chapter 7   Spatial imaginaries as a tool of place-based planning
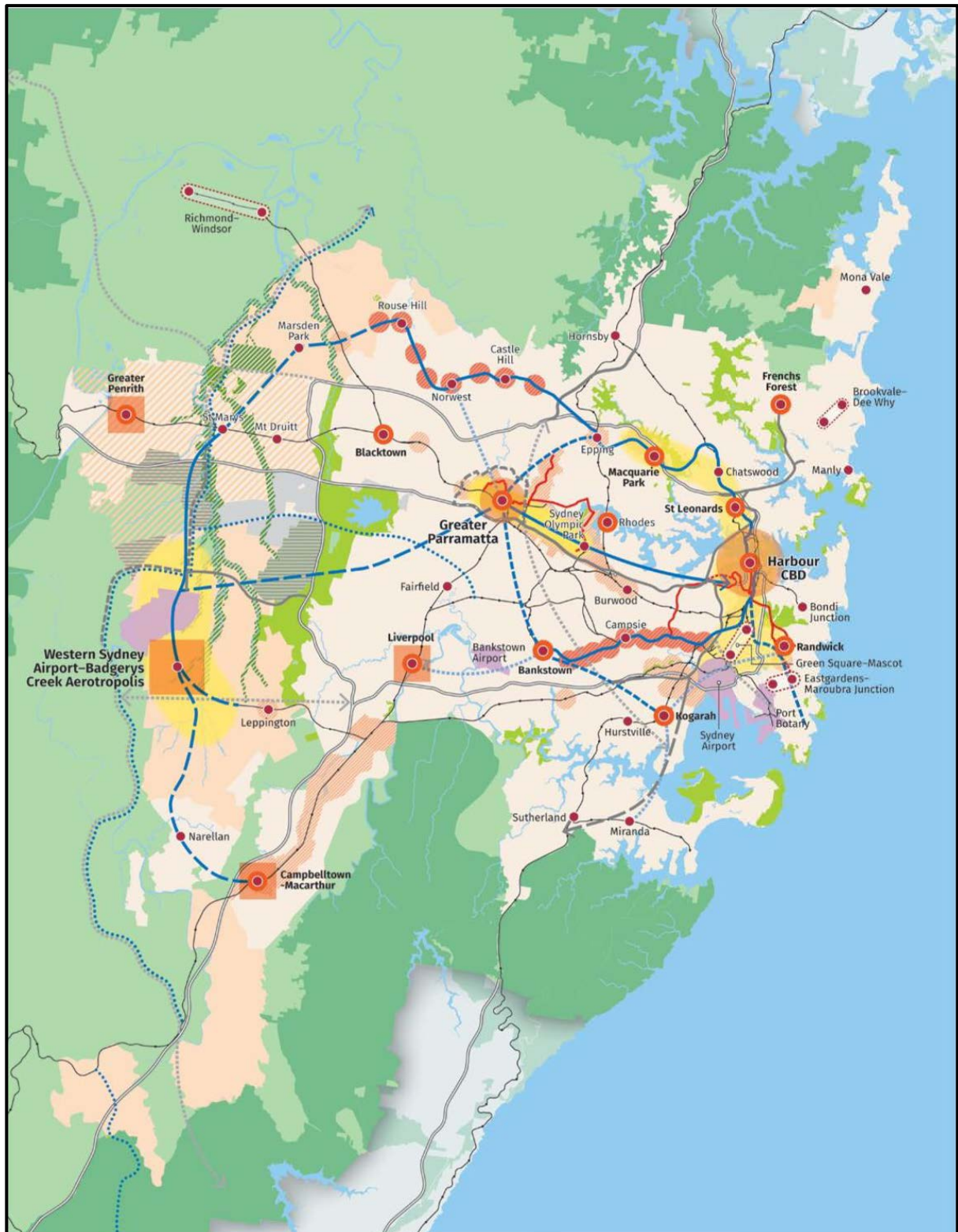
Economic corridors supporting a rebalanced Sydney metropolitan region (GSC 2019, p. 22)

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This chapter synthesises the findings presented in Chapters 5 & 6. Chapter 5 identified that the three key precincts of Parramatta CBD, Westmead, and Camellia-Rydalmere were of key importance to deliver the GPOP vision. There was consensus on their importance by all major stakeholders in the strategic planning and urban development process. However, tensions emerged very close to the surface, flagging conflicts of interest and priorities between key urban actors across areas of collaboration, strategic alignment, development potential and infrastructure funding. Chapter 6 identified three major tensions affecting development across these three precincts. These tensions were situated under the thematic categories of (1) leveraging transport to facilitate precinct development, (2) the extent to which collaboration was practiced, and with whom, and (3) challenges to implement infrastructure funding plans under market conditions. This chapter contextualises these findings against the literature review and theory introduced in Chapters 3 – 4. Three main themes were observed from the findings that cluster around (a) aligning joined-up planning priorities, (b) outcomes of place-based planning reform, and (c) opportunities to align stakeholder interests.

7.1   Outcomes of the spatial imaginaries on the precincts

This section synthesises the impacts and outcomes of the GPOP PIC on the three strategically significant precincts within the GPOP – Westmead, Parramatta, and Camellia-Rydalmere. The creation of functional economic areas often leads to new spatial relationships as non-statutory boundaries are drawn and spatial strategies are developed. While their utilisation is not new, as has been demonstrated both domestically and internationally, and historically in Sydney (Freestone & Pullan 2021), the GPOP PIC presents a meso-scale functional economic area which purportedly innovates in the sequencing of place-based infrastructure by looking "holistically at a place to identify the most cost-effective sequencing for growth aligned with the provision of infrastructure" (GSC 2019, p. 8). The third research question sought to explore the significance of a spatial imaginary to the broader scheme and vision of a metropolitan strategy. The findings point to the challenge of designing and implementing place-based strategies, and the conflicts that emerge as collaboration and engagement are attempted between government agencies, across governmental hierarchy, and with private-sector stakeholders. These challenges speak to the need to support the design and implementation of spatial imaginaries with a multi-spatial metagovernance approach to

integrate and align multiple stakeholders across several spatial scales (Jessop 2016; Haselsberger 2014).

While collaborative decision-making has long been a planning ideal, the holistic realisation and implementation of this vision has been a longstanding challenge (MacDonald 2015, p. 115). Siloed government and hierarchies of government often contribute to these challenges. As highlighted by the interview findings, there is a gap between the rhetoric or ambition of spatial policies, and the processes and outcomes that are actioned. This dissonance aligns with what Davoudi describes as a 'rhetoric-reality interface,' where the rhetoric of an idealised policy, can overshadow reality, that is the policy outcome (Davoudi 2006). The second research question sought to understand the effect of the GPOP as an idea, as both the statutory space and strategic direction that had hardened and evolved, moving from direction and guidance to becoming government policy. Once the boundary of the GPOP policy space was mapped and drafted in the GPOP PIC, and the phasing of priority precincts was established, stakeholders both within and external to the NSW government had opportunity to question the logic of where boundaries were drawn and how sequencing decisions were made. While the GPOP PIC model and strategic business case are maturing, indications from the interview data suggest that there was potential to take greater advantage of developing and delivering a place-based plan thereby producing a more coherent spatial plan (Jones 2019).

Academic literature has on numerous occasions attempted to conceptualise approaches to better engage with multiple stakeholders concurrently in multiple spatial scales including Jessop's multispatial metagovernance (MSMG) approach (Jessop 2016). While MSMG espouses the importance of considering a greater emphasis on spatiality, the approach also pushes for considering a greater range of actors and the governance process. The collaborative approach prompted by the GSC has made inroads to combatting business-as-usual processes of the development of precincts and places. However, the practical outcomes of the GPOP PIC do not completely align with the ideals of the MSMG theoretical framework. The practical 'real' space of strategic planning is fluid. At times, rhetoric shapes development priorities promoting the functional ideal of an economic space such as the GPOP. At other times, rhetoric is tested by the reality of policy implementation. This is usually where plans and strategies are presented to the public and in the case of the GPOP PIC, where state government ideals are tempered.

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The first research question sought to understand how actors advanced their interests in the GPOP. Within the GPOP, the interests and position of stakeholders with spatially-defined interests, including developers, peak bodies, and WSU, were not constrained by the administrative-political hard planning spaces such as LGAs. Key stakeholders including WSU and larger developers who have a physical presence at multiple sites within the GPOP had developed partnerships to advance their interests long before the GPOP PIC was introduced. Instead, the focus of the GPOP PIC provided additional catalysts such as increasing infrastructure provision and investment attraction which eased the barriers to development in some areas such as the Westmead Health and Innovation District. However, different spatial and developmental priorities were present in other areas such as Camellia-Rydalmere where the preferred outcome was to let the ex-industrial land lie fallow. While costs of land remediation and service provision were pointed to as the reason for the indefinite deferral of development, the outcomes of Green Square in Sydney's east demonstrate what can be achieved in a similar context. This shift in priority was driven by what the GSC call 'new data,' of which the details have not been made public. Given that engagement was limited to state government stakeholders, limited disclosure was unlikely to satisfy other stakeholders and delivery partners.

Comparing the outcomes of the GPOP PIC, and the approach taken in its development against the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 3, there are several areas where the GPOP PIC could improve on its outcomes. While place-based planning prioritises certain areas over others, even within the GPOP, a lack of integration hindered achieving this outcome. Greater integration between territorial and relational perspectives could be considered to counter conflicts between actors as they each may present perspectival differences (Paasi & Zimmerbauer 2015). The overlapping and nested hierarchies of spatial strategies, and their evolution over time had not been successfully addressed. Within the GPOP, the GSC did not appropriately engage or collaborate with stakeholders outside of the NSW Government. The complex interdependencies of spaces, actors, and governance arrangements could be more successfully met with greater alignment to a MSMG approach. However, the impact of the GPOP PIC was more likely to discourage landowners and delivery partners from investing where there was a lack of government support, and instead encourage them to choose other jurisdictions with more transparent planning policies and strategy pathways.

The GPOP as an infill development area is highly diverse. While the GPOP was divided into four quadrants with very different spatial characteristics, it was only designed in collaboration with stakeholders internal to the NSW Government. Expanding beyond the bubble of the NSW government could attract more diverse considerations from additional stakeholders with local perspectives. This section synthesises the perspectives by key precincts, building on the case studies developed in Chapters 5 & 6.

7.1.1 Westmead Health and Innovation Precinct

Since opening its first hospital in 1978, health infrastructure in Westmead has grown steadily over the last half century. Growing from a specialised tertiary referral hospital that serviced Western Sydney, it has grown in importance and size, and has become the anchor function of the Westmead Health and Innovation Precinct. This growth trajectory neatly aligns with the functional demands of places qualifying as an innovation precinct – a diversified high-value space that joins together health, technology, and education industries.

The NSW Government's exploration of best practice innovation precincts extracts lessons learnt from international case studies and research and applies them to the Australian context. Through this exercise, they define the Westmead Health and Education precinct as an 'active precinct' which they describe as having "recognised identity, a strong culture of collaboration and entrepreneurialism, access to venture capital investment and actively undertakes research and development to commercialise new products and services. It has good enabling infrastructure and a vibrant, mixed-use environment that attracts skilled workers and visitors" (NSW IPC 2018, p. 17).

It is this catalytic injection of private sector investment that can accelerate development in the Westmead precinct, and where governments can leverage the physical attributes and knowledge assets of the precinct to support precinct development and growth. The interview findings suggest that there is already significant private-sector focus and partnerships in place around the Westmead precinct, that may have favoured the elevation of Westmead as an innovation precinct. For example, WSU have been involved in the masterplanning process, identifying opportunities for coordinating planning and investment to develop WSUs campus planning across Western Sydney. Business Western Sydney, emerging out of the Sydney Business Chamber in 2012, advocate for development and investment across Western

Sydney. Both of these organisations highlight the need for improving transport infrastructure, urban design, and policy support to better connect the economic centres of the Central City. These activities would support spatial development and highlight the importance of local and regional transport links to catalyse development in and around Westmead, stimulating economic growth.

7.1.2   Parramatta CBD

Focusing on development in and around the Parramatta CBD has been an ideal case study demonstrating the gap between rhetoric and reality of plans that attempt to align regional and place strategies, and built and urban outcomes. Since the 1950s, plans and strategies have attempted to develop a comparable centre to the Sydney CBD in Western Sydney. Parramatta has regularly been a primary contender for this role. While this ambition was first flagged nearly 70-years ago, action to achieve this ambition has been inconsistent.

From the interview responses, a pervasive barrier to joined-up planning was attributed to governance challenges, and the insulated authorising environment within state government and in particular, the NSW Treasury, which sets the guideposts (and limits) of what a place-based infrastructure compact could look like. On the one hand, it could be seen as necessary and perhaps pragmatic for the NSW Government to identify infrastructure delivery, place and development outcomes that are pertinent to state-level priorities. On the other hand, separating out perceived state-level priorities from local-serving infrastructure leads to two significant negative consequences: planning that is not joined-up, and outcomes that are not place-based. There is a need to better integrate and involve the multiple actors both internal to government and external including councils and deliver actors to reduce friction and support the delivery of better outcomes (Haselsberger 2014). While on the surface, engagement and collaboration has occurred with external stakeholders, the outcomes have not been integrated with these processes. And while the GSC have introduced a place-defined label for the compact, the distinction from a previous focus on growth has not been made clear.

Functionally, categorising and classifying infrastructure at a local and state level clarifies its function and relative strategic importance. Infrastructure can function simultaneously at local and state levels (take for example roads). Other types of infrastructure such as libraries are

generally considered local, but can also be hubs of state significance, for example, the State Library of NSW. The approach taken by the GPOP PIC oversimplifies this issue and does not appropriately capture local context, in particular the time-based dimension of strategies. This reveals a coordination gap, that impacts on the capacity of the GPOP PIC to deliver place-based planning outcomes and requires the GPOP PIC to be situated in an ambiguous space between local plans and metropolitan regional strategies. In regard to the delivery of blue and green infrastructure, this coordination gap has been identified by Infrastructure Australia and Infrastructure NSW, as well as apportioning costs between infrastructure 'owners' and 'users' (IA & INSW 2021, p. 42).

7.1.3   Camellia-Rydalmere Industrial Precinct

Given the relative richness of transport infrastructure servicing Parramatta and Westmead, the pace of development which has occurred over the last 5-years within these two precincts is unsurprising. However, while located only 1.5km from Parramatta, a different context and development background applies to the Camellia-Rydalmere precinct.

The spatial condition of the Camellia-Rydalmere Industrial Precinct can be compared to the strategic development process for Green Square which occurred 20-years prior. Green Square is an ex-industrial area located in Sydney's inner east. It took over 10-years to advance from initial plan-making to renewal, but land earmarked for the core town centre was owned by the NSW Government and had benefitted from a state-owned development corporation leading the renewal process.

An innovative approach to the delivery of infrastructure, through planning agreements with developers, included in kind contributions for essential services and dedication of land for community purposes (White 2014, p. 80). Similarly, flooding was a significant hurdle required to be addressed prior to development of Green Square. This was resolved through the installation of a major 2.4km storm water drain shared in equal part between the City of Sydney Council ($50M) and Sydney Water ($47M) (CCCLM 2016, p. 2). The timing of infrastructure delivery was also advantaged by the requirement for a new passenger rail line that was built for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games servicing the area. Camellia-Rydalmere did not receive similar benefits.

The 2016 GPOP Vision set out an agenda for major renewal of each precinct - Westmead, Parramatta CBD and Camellia-Rydalmere (GSC 2016, p. 22). While not yet statutory or government policy, this sent a market signal for downstream actors including developers and local government to prepare for significant changes from business-as-usual which could be inferred from the proposed vision. Given the previous masterplans developed by previous iterations of the Department of Planning individually, and with Council collaboratively, this interest may have signalled a catalyst for comparable development attention to that attracted by Green Square. It is understandable for the NSW Government to sequence infrastructure delivery with anticipated growth given the challenges of delivering large greenfield and brownfield precincts – Wilton in Sydney's south-west is an example of market demand preceding infrastructure supply, and Green Square an example in Sydney's inner east of development outpacing the delivery of supporting infrastructure (Hart 2017). It is this balancing act which has been identified by major infrastructure bodies, acknowledged by the GPOP PIC, and actioned by the NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment in developing a strategic business case for the GPOP (Infrastructure Australia 2018).

The model of the 2019 GPOP PIC pilot was then a major departure from successive attempts at precinct development. In support of their sequencing plan, the GSC claimed that the cost of accommodating a new resident or job in the Camellia-Rydalmere Industrial Precinct was significantly greater than other areas in the GPOP (GSC 2019, p. 9). The aims of a PIC (the same as a GIC) are to

- model the growth potential of an area and explore scenarios for its long-term future

- encourage openness about the range of infrastructure and services needed to grow an area, the costs involved and how this could feasibly be funded

- stage growth by being selective about where, when and what to invest in to deliver successful areas

- make the roll-out of new areas more certain, cost effective and easier to understand for investors, developers and the local community.

The 2018 metropolitan plan extends and clarifies on these points: "growth infrastructure compacts assess the nature, level and timing of the infrastructure investment required for an area, by considering its forecast housing and employment growth, and analysing growth

scenarios" (GSC 2018a, p. 36). While infrastructure agencies provided input, based on the interview findings, the intended delivery plan did not achieve an outcome that was "co-designed and co-delivered by State and local governments together with industry" (GSC 2018a, p. 36). Two observations can be made. Firstly, while the GPOP PIC had identified the need to deliver a place-based response to infrastructure development and delivery, the governance structure and design of the GPOP PIC limited involvement of stakeholders outside of the NSW Government. Secondly, this path-dependent process that inhibited access to other stakeholders resulted in further delays to address stakeholder concerns regarding the GPOP PIC findings and recommendations.

7.2   Reflecting on how place-based planning outcomes could respond to metropolitan ambitions

Place-based planning and place-based policies are hardly new policy tools (Tomaney 2010, p. 6). As an infill development strategy, the GPOP PIC is inherently more complex in mediating place-based outcomes than if applied to greenfield areas such as the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. The previous section synthesised opportunities and tensions involved in achieving joined-up planning in spatially mature and spatially developing areas, and the impact of the GPOP PIC to achieve these outcomes. This section examines the relationship between place-based strategic outcomes and metropolitan strategic priorities, and the extent to which they are aligned.

While the GPOP Growth Infrastructure Compact has 'evolved' to become a Place-based Infrastructure Compact, there is little to distinguish this step change. The GPOP PIC is a draft policy or guidance, but it has invited confusion by the inclusion of 'place' in the policy label, and through the intention of limiting primary engagement with state government stakeholders. Given there is no clear distinction from the 2016 Growth Infrastructure Compact, the resulting document presents as a halfway point between local strategy and metropolitan vision, attempting to satisfy everyone while leaving stakeholders asking for more to be done, or evidence to justify its recommendations. The GPOP and the GPOP PIC add to existing layers of governance at a local and state government level, with the GPOP acting as a 'spatial fix' or fixer, working to address broader metropolitan challenges (Blatter 2004). While spatial fixes are designed to mediate political, social and economic differences

across the metropolitan region, they can often increase the messiness of spatial policies as new institutional relationships are developed, acting across governmental hierarchies and non-government stakeholders (Newman 2011). However, some level of messiness is inherent and reflective of urban life. This is particularly so in hybrid and mixed-use precincts that may benefit from a flexible approach to land-use planning, thus a discretionary approach may be required to allow genuinely innovative proposals to deliver higher quality outcomes in regard to development quanta, and quality of place (DIIS 2018).

Part of the challenge in operationalising the GPOP is the sheer scale and size of the functional economic area in proportion to the size of the built-up area. And within the GPOP, the four dominant precincts vary significantly from context, connectivity, and growth constraints. While the Parramatta CBD is a clearly identified anchor point to shape the spatial strategy there are significant historical deficits in infrastructure provision, local economic development, and conflicts regarding cultural heritage such as the relocation of the Willow Grove Villa on the Parramatta waterfront. In relation to the heritage challenges of relocating Willow Grove Villa, this was moreover a matter of process and optics rather than policy. A more tactful approach in the relocation of Willow Grove could include engagement with affected community stakeholders. This could have contributed to reduced public opposition to development on its former site, and even increase stakeholder support for wider precinct densification and transformation. The GPOP PIC perhaps could include an additional step in identifying and acknowledging these touchpoints before beginning the strategic dialogue.

Enabling good governance arrangements also requires buy-in from affected stakeholders. While regions or functional economic corridors are scalable frames to operationalise a concept, the idea of place is subjective, inconsistent, and emotive. It is a spatial frame understood differently by different stakeholders and as with the case of Willow Grove Villa presented above, can convey a sense of emotional attachment. Therefore, an agreement on what a place is, should be undertaken both as an act of good place governance, and to align perspectival difference. This is no different to program design and organisational strategy to set lane markers and directions for stakeholders. The development of a spatial taxonomy that gives definition to key spatial units including 'place', and 'precinct' may go some way to addressing perspectival difference between stakeholders. A shared understanding between stakeholders may also improve infrastructure delivery for places while allowing a consistent measure for comparison between places internal and external to the GPOP.

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At a broader level, the aims of the GPOP PIC do align with the 2018 metropolitan plan. There have been achievements in advancing governance of the GPOP, and collaboration with stakeholders (although primarily at the foundational stages). Given the ambition to transform the GPOP towards a comparable centre to the Sydney CBD, in particular around measures of employment, business attraction, and amenity, there is clearly a need for policy intervention from the NSW Government into local development, and the strategic advancement of places. Given the large-scale change required to meet this ambition, greater coordination and collaboration with local government and developers is required to appropriately account for enabling and supporting infrastructure, and sequencing of development aligned to market conditions. A place-neutral approach cannot deviate from business-as-usual development outcomes – in part due to the scale of change required to reach the metropolitan vision, but also given the highly interrelated linkages of spatial development at the local level, and regional vision at the metropolitan level. To align the place-based strategy and metropolitan vision, a boundary-spanning actor is needed, that is not only authorised to lead the development and implementation of coordinated strategies, but also appropriately communicates the needs of places. While a metropolitan governance actor such as the GSC can fill this role, the structure of metropolitan governance will require greater autonomy from state government politicking and expanded collaborative remit to more appropriately respond to the needs of places in receipt of spatial interventions. Planning policy reform also requires that "A balance is then called for between exogenous and endogenous forces, by which local actors set targets and design projects, while the external 'development agency' sets the general conditions that the former must follow and tailor to specific places" (Barca et al. 2012, p. 139).

Reading the interview responses, the participants are well aware of the value and role of place-based planning. However, there was an inconsistent understanding of what is required for place-based planning to be achieved. While the GSC has attempted to define place-based planning, the outcomes of the GPOP PIC only partially fulfill this definition. The GSC can do more to leverage collaboration with stakeholders who have local expertise, to understand the background and constraints that underlie future and projected infrastructure delivery to support development. Given that so much of the spatial strategy is focused on 'place,' there is clearly a need to give some level of precision to this concept.

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The Victorian Government provides a definition of place as "a geographical area that is meaningfully defined for our work" and further clarifies its usage by regional and localised initiatives, "for broader work in place, such as regional development work, a 'place' might be a departmental region or a larger area where economic, social or ecological trends interact and play out…for more localised initiatives, a place might be a local government area, a suburb or an area that crosses these types of administrative boundaries but where locals feel connected to or affected by what happens there" (Victoria State Government 2020, p. 5). This definition, as a starting point can be adopted by the NSW Government to drive common definitions across the public service more broadly. More recently, the NSW Government has made strides to connect movement and place. This work, led by the NSW Government Architect in partnership with TfNSW has potential to deliver common spatial definitions, also giving clarity to local government and other stakeholders.

This definition from the Victorian Government is consistent with idea developed in the academic sphere. Beer and colleagues suggest that place-based policies have a "focus on specific cities, localities or regions, but they represent far more than just a label for already established programmes of government activity, or the concentration of public sector resources in specific locations" (Beer et al. 2020, p. 12). This specification of higher concentration of public sector resources in specific locations aligns with some observations gained from the expert interviews. The role of place-based partnerships or coalitions have been highlighted as providing the connections and resources needed in the promotion and development of emerging precincts. This is seen, in particular, in the Westmead Health and Innovation District. Given the important role of place-based partnerships to advance second-tier and lower order centres, more attention should be given to their role in supporting the design and delivery of a place-based infrastructure compact. PICs may also be utilised in shaping foundational assumptions of a place, including the capacity of current and future infrastructure requirements to service any anticipated uplift or density increase.

However, the design of a PIC should more appropriately consider the contextual characteristics of a place, that is, greater understanding of its strengths and requirements to meet its strategic goal. This approach would support the identification of what is needed to transform the GPOP from a regional to metropolitan centre and support the design of specific metrics and criteria as a base case for comparison. This would better align the NSW Government and delivery stakeholders around shared outcomes of improving spatial equity

across the GPOP and greater Sydney metropolitan region. This is akin to providing terms of reference for a review, specifying the starting point and direction for all stakeholders. Taking this approach can deliver two improvements on a place-based policy agenda. Internally within the NSW Government, assumptions set a background for cross agency collaboration to coordinate a whole-of-government response to a policy challenge. Externally to the NSW Government, getting these assumptions right can support buy-in from local government and communities, while giving a market indication of the types of development that can be accommodated, and the types of infrastructure required to support current and future communities. In lieu of institutional devolution, greater attention can be given to institutional design and multi-spatial metagovernance structures to reach the ambition of a metropolis of three cities.

The interview findings suggest that the GSC should telegraph the intent of the spatial imaginary of the GPOP and engage more closely with industry stakeholders to understand how the PIC shifts the course of development and other overlapping funding contribution mechanisms, for example, Special Infrastructure Contribution levies. There is a need to provide clarity of the proposed implementation of new spatial policies that allows both internal and external stakeholders to understand if the GPOP was intended as an additional or competing area of growth, and what are the implications for government and delivery stakeholders. The GPOP is a space that allows one to observe complex, tangled and interwoven spatial and social relations. It also impacts on territorial re-organisation that require a MSMG approach to disentangle the messiness of overlapping policies and spaces (Jessop 2016). This is particularly relevant as the GPOP acts as both nesting and competing spatial layer that can be seen to impact on both structure planning and infrastructure contributions that bear weight in planning and investment decisions.

Collectively, the range of policies spurring urban development in the GPOP including the GPOP PIC are as much leveraging the qualities of place, as they are meeting a broader metropolitan vision. The high-level strategies developed in the 'metropolis of three cities' metropolitan plan seem common-sense and reasonable approaches to urban development writ large. While the stakeholders interviewed recognise that the GSC has improved on business-as-usual governance and improved on collaboration across government, there needs to be similar approaches that can be taken with external stakeholders.

7.3   Aligning stakeholder interests – pathways to progressing precinct planning

This section is delivered in three parts: firstly, summarising the approach taken by the GSC since their inception to the release of the GPOP PIC; secondly, explaining the GSCs response from stakeholder feedback and advice to the NSW DPIE; and thirdly, synthesising recent reform agenda items including changes to industrial land policy to provide potential pathways to future precinct planning.

The ambition and scale of the GPOP PIC seeks to transform a large urban area with individual precincts at varying levels of development with both local and precinct-scale infrastructure to support intensification and uplift of an area of predominately suburban character. However, as is made clear in the GPOP PIC, not all of the GPOP will be able to accommodate this uplift, nor will it be palatable for communities across the broader economic corridor to accept a significant density and development uplift. Thus, winners and losers will emerge as a result of this implementation. This necessitates the application of a broad suite of policy tools that was developed by the GSC to identify a hierarchy of centres, precinct plans and prioritisation pathway that guides greater Parramatta to becoming a metropolitan centre.

Through this process, the GSC are required to consult and communicate with the community and key government and non-government stakeholders. This requirement is also written in the *GSC Act (2018)*, compelling the GSC to follow good practice engagement processes. During the early stages of development, the GSC did follow through on this mandate (L_2). However, greater communication of the strategy development processes, inputs and variations of previous strategies play some part in signalling to external stakeholders that the NSW Government, through the GSC, are addressing long held criticisms of an overly complex planning system. This is especially important in a contested and high-profile planning space such as the GPOP. Given the dynamic contextual factors and multiple disparate stakeholders groups, a multispatial metagovernance approach could have more effectively situated the plurality of stakeholder interests, place-based partnerships, and the need to accommodate growth to reach the ambition of making the GPOP a comparable centre to the Sydney CBD.

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Moving from west to east, we start with Westmead. The health cluster that has been developing since the 1970s is relatively mature. There is a critical mass of industry, education and health services and place-based partnerships have been nurtured and leveraged to influence precinct plans built around a health specialisation. As the only health and education precinct of significant maturity in the GPOP and western Sydney more broadly, the advancement of the Westmead Health and Innovation District is a critical factor in the concentration of industrial activity in the Central River City. There is also significant investment committed and already spent on delivering this precinct strategy. However, in comparison to the Eastern Harbour City, current and committed transport infrastructure do not support continued expansion of the precinct, to attract further investment, or provide rapid transit options to access these services. The interview findings from WSU note the difficulty in advocating for a metro stop to service the Westmead community, while there are a cluster of stations planned for an already transit rich east. Sydney is not just the Sydney CBD. This observation of primate cities has been noted elsewhere by Barca and colleagues just as "the economy as a whole can reach its total output frontier by developing places of different sizes and densities, because it is the performance of the urban and regional system as a whole which is critical, rather than just the cities at the top of the urban hierarchy" (Barca et al. 2012, p. 140).

As the CBD core of the Central River City, development activity and new transport linkages to the Parramatta CBD has been more forthcoming. However, while the scale of development relative to other precincts in the GPOP is high, the 2018 metropolitan plan has significantly higher housing supply targets and while lower in absolute terms, the jobs targets for greater Parramatta (82% from 2016-2036) are proportionally greater than the Eastern City (47% from 2016-2036). The interview findings also suggest that certain types of infrastructure are more easily fundable than others, e.g. stadiums rather than libraries. And while most stakeholders are in favour of the increased visibility and attention afforded to greater Parramatta through the GPOP PIC, still more is needed to address longstanding gaps in infrastructure and service delivery.

Stakeholder expectations are least aligned in the Camellia-Rydalmere precinct. The spatial proximity to the Parramatta CBD has not won over policy-makers in government to prioritise urban transformation of this area. While there have been several plans made prior to the GPOP PIC to explore of the potential of this area, more recent data produced and synthesised

by publication (though the source data was not revealed) by the GSC undermine the argument that Camellia-Rydalmere should be prioritised. While external stakeholders would prefer a metro stop close to their landholdings, both WSU and the developer interviewed are adamant that not having a metro stop to cater to the wider precinct is a missed opportunity. The development outcomes of Green Square demonstrate what can be achieved when transformational infrastructure such as mass transit investment are delivered. Wider economic benefits of infrastructure investment including the potential to stimulate urban development and inwards private investment should be considered for the long-term success of a place and its development. Beyond playing to the whims of these stakeholders, there is a dearth of transport connectivity in the GPOP, and the Metro West provides opportunities for the development of hubs where industry is already established and partnerships are ready to be deployed for urban intensification.

Notwithstanding the inroads to equitable access to transport infrastructure across the metropolitan region, there are well known benefits afforded to transit oriented development, and the opportunities it allows for development uplift, private investment and increased amenity. A key contributor to the cost of accommodating a resident or job in the Camellia area is likely to be the need for land remediation from industrial activity in the earlier 20th century. However, taking Green Square as a demonstration project, contamination can be cleaned up, and given the positive outcomes of Green Square, there is potential for similar outcomes at the Camellia town centre. Given the success at Green Square, remediation should be considered part of the 'spatial fix' toolkit in enabling development ready sites and investment. Further, given the opportunities for investment and development, land remediation should be considered as part of government's response to place-based planning to activate Camellia-Rydalmere, and contributing to the wider spatial development of the GPOP in supporting the Parramatta CBD. Flooding was also an issue in Green Square, addressed through effective floodplain planning and mitigation.

At the time of publication of the 2018 metropolitan plan, place-based planning was in its relative infancy in the Australian context. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a focus on local area development and neighbourhoods within the metropolitan region, the development of smaller centres, acting in concert with metropolitan centres and clusters, play a key role in the realisation of place-based planning outcomes. Given the early stage of planning post GPOP PIC for the Camellia-Rydalmere area, opportunities to leverage the

geographic qualities and industry advocacy for these places can support the broader metropolitan vision to improve equitable outcomes for greater Sydney.

7.4   Conclusion

The broad finding taken from explorations of key precincts within the GPOP, through the lenses of joined-up planning, place-based planning and alignment of stakeholder interests demonstrate the difficulty for precincts without established place networks to influence catalytic public and government investment. Beyond the top-tier places with proven development potential where investment has been de-risked (such as Green Square), other areas that are well placed in other metrics lack the buy-in from NSW Government departments and their statutory authorities. This is primarily due to the disconnect between NSW Government agencies in the planning and development of infrastructure and land use, and finite government resources.

Camellia-Rydalmere had benefitted from explorations and precinct strategies by a partnership of local government and previous NSW Departments of Planning. Significant investment had also been made for land acquisition to provide supporting infrastructure for the Parramatta Light Rail in this area. Through the transport lens, there are clear misalignments across NSW Government agencies in the integration of infrastructure and land-use planning. As Transport for NSW (TfNSW) are the lead agency shaping the development of major transport infrastructure projects, there are limits to the place-making potential to leverage these once-in-a-generation infrastructure developments. While the GSC do play some part in brokering relationships and steering strategic planning outcomes, it has been difficult to shift the course of the NSW Government as a whole. TfNSW are the largest NSW Government agency with the largest capital expenditure budget allocation, thus commanding a dominant position over other NSW Government agency priorities.

Collaboration is a strongly emphasised aspect of the GSC's role, however, this is not consistently realised in practice. The GSC are legislated to primarily function within the NSW Government as an executive agency. The application of collaboration outside of the NSW Government has been less than ideal. There has been much more discretion given to the definition of collaboration outside of this government bubble. The GSC's exercise of its authority as an Executive agency has also led to conflicts with stakeholders who deliver built

outcomes, primarily local government, and the development community. Where this is most pronounced is in the delivery and implementation of infrastructure funding programs. Greater attention to engagement and collaboration with these stakeholders can better address the challenges of infrastructure identification, funding, and provision.

Some key findings can be synthesised from the research:

- While to some extent, the GSC did engage with stakeholders outside of the NSW Government to develop the GPOP PIC, it would be difficult to class it as collaboration. Noticeably, addressing the two major areas of collaboration and transparency, and consistency in the hierarchy of plans would improve the outcomes of the GPOP PIC. Given that the virtue of collaboration was well signalled as a remit and responsibility of the GSC, and described throughout the GPOP PIC, greater action can be taken to fulfil this collaborative role.

- Rather than focusing on place, the practical outcomes of the GPOP PIC were most useful for reducing risk for the NSW Government and delivery stakeholders. The limitation of place-based infrastructure to that delivered by the NSW Government failed to acknowledge the breadth of supporting infrastructure and community facilities that are financed by other sources. This was especially clear for the delivery of infrastructure shared by council (e.g. libraries) and community infrastructure (e.g. local parks) that are necessary to support quality place-based outcomes. This outcome could be avoided by greater engagement with external stakeholders including local government and community stakeholders which would also gain community buy-in and support the de-risking of infrastructure delivery.

- The theoretical scaffold introduced in Chapter 3 supported the framing of the case study and was a useful tool for explaining the outcomes of the spatial imaginary of the GPOP. It was through the integration of these diverse theoretical foundations that key findings identified in this chapter have been distilled. Urban planning, policymaking and development are inherently complex and it is through this interweaving of complementary and distinct theoretical approaches that has allowed the triangulation of views under different ways of understanding the impact of the GPOP. However,

given the complexity of the theoretical scaffold, there may be opportunities to simplify its application in future for greater utility for a wider range of stakeholders.

These findings respond to the thesis aim and research questions by identifying how different actors (NSW Government, council, industry) advance their interests within the GPOP, the role of the GSC in these processes and the role of the GPOP PIC in the development of place-based policy-making. The next section concludes the research, by providing answers to the research questions, explaining the contribution to new knowledge and proposing pathways for further research.

Chapter 8   Conclusion

The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:
The case of Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula, Sydney

it is never the spatial form that acts, but rather social actors who, embedded in particular (multidimensional) spatial forms and make use of particular (multidimensional) forms, act. The relevance of a particular spatial form ... can be measured only from the perspective of the engaged actors

(Mayer 2008, p. 416)

The thesis has explored the relationships between spatial imaginaries, plan making, place-based policies, and metropolitan growth priorities. The geographic context of the research explored the relationship of the GPOP within the Sydney metropolitan region framed under a lens of urban governance and strategic spatial planning practices. Tracing the multi-spatial metagovernance relationships within the GPOP identified the connections and contributions of a wide range of significant urban governance actors. Through this process, this thesis developed and uncovered important empirical evidence that has provided some key observations and suggestions that may contribute to shifting the course of spatial development in the case study area, potentially with wider applicability for global cases.

This exploratory case study research sought to deepen the understanding of spatial imaginaries in the Australian context. The selection of the GPOP was tactical both to provide evidence from an emerging spatial imaginary, and through the selection and investigation of the GPOP as a brownfield or infill development context. This contextual factor was identified as potentially offering greater transferability in its insights on urban consolidation within the Australian and global urban agenda. While the specific case geography and purpose of the spatial imaginary is different to the Atlantic Gateway and Baltic Sea Region introduced in Section 3.3.1, there are similarities and points of comparison as there is an intent to coordinate a range of actors through the alignment and stabilisation of a regional identity (Metzger & Schmitt 2012). This has relevance when considering socially produced conflicts that emerge as place-based policies are implemented. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 4, the Australian context is quite different from the inherited urban policies taken from the English context. Yet in a globalized environment, there are both exogenous and endogenous factors that shape local policy, economic and governance relations (Swyngedouw 2004). Policy transfer also continues to be a readily adopted strategy with the aim of bringing in

policy tools with demonstrated success within particular places by governments and their consultants (McCann & Ward 2011).

This concluding chapter reflects on the research process, acknowledged limitations of the research as well as limits of the research findings, and potential avenues for future research. The key insights will extend from those identified in Chapter 7 and reflect on the research questions and anticipated findings from Chapter 1. These findings will be positioned against the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3 to identify the critical factors that support or hinder the advancement of place-based strategies. Other unanticipated factors will also be reflected on that may provide further insight to the findings, and paths for future research.

8.1   Case study importance

While the aim of this thesis was to engage in in-depth research of the single case of the GPOP, the interview data also revealed some interesting findings that positioned the GPOP relative to other metropolitan centres. Given the seniority and broad ranging professional experience of the interview participants who were well versed in broader planning and governance challenges across the Sydney metropolitan region, there was an overarching consensus that the ambition and responsibility of the GPOP was welcome and needed as a catalyst for change. While some interviewees questioned the need for the GPOP PIC in the context of brownfield development, particularly around adapting existing land-uses, there was consensus for the need of a mechanism to shift the focus of spatial development towards Parramatta.

Secondly, while the idea of the GPOP PIC to better align infrastructure, growth, and place-based outcomes is not particularly novel, it is an attempt to deliver an original spatially targeted strategy that is not derived from international cases, for example, the UK City Deal through the Western Sydney Aerotropolis (WSA). The implications of reorganising the Sydney metropolitan region under three cities is a significant step change from previous metropolitan plans. Out of these three cities, the Central City is undergoing the most significant spatial change. Interview findings suggest that a transition towards a more compact form requires navigating incumbent challenges of multilevel governance coordination, infrastructure deficit and institutional continuity to carry out the proposed strategies. In the case of the GPOP, this was achieved in some respects, although legislation

governing the GSC and the extent of collaboration with external stakeholders limited the outcomes. Read together, these challenges and interview perspectives pointed to the timeliness of this research and the need for continuing attention situated on the Central City that may continue to shift the course of historical infrastructure deficiencies, notwithstanding competition from the WSA that is advantaged by additional Federal Government support.

8.2 Addressing the research questions: Precinct development, collaboration, planning

Reflecting on the proposed research questions introduced in Chapter 1, summative responses can be made to these points of departure and inquiry into the role of the GPOP PIC. Each primary research question will be addressed in turn, then an attempt will be made to provide summative statements to bring the findings together at the section end.

RQ1. How do urban actors advance their interests within the GPOP?
While the GPOP PIC claims to improve collaboration within the GPOP, well-established relationships pre-dated the GPOP PIC. Stakeholder relationships, actor coalitions and place-based partnerships have existed prior to formal government action to establish the GPOP PIC. For example, the WSU, as part of a wider Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD) advocates for health, research and education services centred on Westmead and delivering to Western Sydney LGAs. Education partners also bring together industry stakeholders to plan for the growth of Westmead as a health precinct. Representing local businesses, the Western Sydney Business Chamber perceive that "Westmead is an area where we've targeted as the Chamber. The potential for Westmead to shift the needle on jobs in Western Sydney… it can truly become an innovation precinct by attracting large private sector partners, and start-up companies" (B_1).

From the council perspective, stakeholders from Parramatta City Council take the position that market signals need to be given far in advance, and they make plans for funding well before infrastructure needs to be delivered "very clearly, simply, identify the need or what the problem is you're trying to solve… the developers actually do stop and listen to you… they don't like it, but they are starting at a higher level in the discussion" (L_2).

In the GPOP, urban actors have taken three distinct actions to advance their agendas. Firstly, through developing a place-based coalition as with the WSLHD, these actors have successfully managed to advocate and achieve support from the NSW Government to provide infrastructural endowments improving connectivity to the precinct. The established health precinct was also seen as lower risk and higher priority to build a growing employment centre of high-value jobs. Secondly, the approach taken by Parramatta City Council to clearly communicate their plans to developers has given a sufficiently long runway and market signal for the alignment of development and infrastructure provision. Thirdly, actions by developers to finance infrastructure, as with the proposal to fund and deliver the station box as mentioned in Section 5.4, were not enough to gain support by the NSW Government to deliver a metro station that could have enabled development in the Camellia-Rydalmere area, given the necessity of expensive land remediation. And while one of the strengths of spatial imaginaries is their ability to transect across multiples scales (Haughton & Allmendinger 2017), this quality was not sufficiently leveraged. Indeed, the development of strategies for this area produced over the previous 6-years were overturned in light of the cost of accommodating a new resident or job identified in the GPOP PIC (GSC 2019). The outcomes of the GPOP PIC in essence supports the growth of Westmead backed by an existing health district coalition of actors, and relegates development in Camellia-Rydalmere to a lower priority.

RQ2. How does the GSC, a metropolitan planning organization, support or hinder place-based strategies?

As mentioned in response to RQ1, the GSC through the GPOP PIC are not alone in advancing strategies and strategic relationships in the GPOP. Actions within the GPOP PIC build on locational endowments and present challenges for the GSC as they attempt to align the place-based strategy of developing the GPOP with a broader metropolitan vision of a 'metropolis of three cities.' In the case of the Camellia-Rydalmere area, the intervention of the GPOP PIC reversed plans and strategies produced in 2015 and 2018. Given this shift in policy, it was not surprising to see negative sentiment from industry stakeholders, and this leads to development stasis. In the Parramatta CBD, the developmental context was far more advanced. The policy environment was more supportive of advancing urban redevelopment

of the metropolitan centre and complemented the stakeholder groups here and the adjacent Westmead Health and Innovation District.

The GSC are a boundary-spanning metropolitan governance actor. They engage with stakeholders both within and external to the NSW Government, and attempt align the priorities of government agencies with those of the metropolitan vision. The GSC's attempt to integrate planning across government agencies and through strategic outcomes was well-intentioned, but the result has been mixed. Stakeholder perspectives can be both positive and negative depending on the place of intervention. This generally followed the line of least resistance, providing support to the "winners," and withholding it from places with poor development prospects. Some consideration should also be given to the competing WSA. This speaks to the chance, and challenge of timing when multiple spatial imaginaries compete for fixed funding and resource envelopes (Tomlinson & Spiller 2018). So, while on balance the contribution of the GSC supports development within the GPOP, the prioritisation of mature urban centres reinforces rather than disrupts spatial inequalities within the GPOP. In this regard, while the spatial reconfiguration of Sydney's planning landscape has altered over time, spatial inequality tends to persist (McGuirk 2005). Greater engagement and collaboration with external stakeholders as identified in RQ1 could provide greater alignment with place-based needs to support development such as densification of Parramatta, redevelopment and remediation of Camellia, and better light rail connections.

RQ3. What role do spatial imaginaries play in the development of priority precincts in the GPOP?

There is a general optimism about the idea of addressing regional spatial inequality through targeted interventions such as the GPOP spatial imaginary. However, as mentioned in response to RQ2, the overall impact is felt differently by each group of actors interviewed. Not surprisingly, the GSC and NSW Government stakeholders are more positive than the other interview participants. While they attribute positive outcomes to the GPOP PIC they also note that more could be done to collaborate with and include the perspectives of non-government actors. The WSA PIC was demonstrated to improve on the process of the GPOP PIC to both engage more collaboratively, and to be more transparent in sharing data and modelling assumptions.

The achievements of the GPOP PIC have been nuanced. As G_1 mentions "I think GPOP is beyond business as usual in its ideas. But a lot of the way it gets the data is quite business as usual. And I think there's a tension there." Through this insight we can read that the GPOP PIC had attempted to improve the relationship between infrastructure and development outcomes, and redistribution of equity across the metropolitan region. While there was an ambition to improve these relationships, the process to achieve these outcomes were not fit for purpose, nor had the foundational assumptions been appropriately considered. Greater engagement would have been required with council and other stakeholders to grasp how the already existing deficiencies including infrastructural backlogs could have been better addressed. Similarly, L_1 has suggested that "the [GPOP] PIC suffered from the division between local and state, making sure it hit the spread of state regional facilities and dealing with the different agencies capability to plan into the future." While the GSC have a mandate to deliver, coordinate and align the planning of the metropolitan region, they are also an independent agency. The GSC also has an institutional role to coordinate and address governance challenges across the NSW Government as is mandated in the *GSC Act (2018)*.

The GSC has not avoided the impacts of a nearly constant restructuring of government and the Planning system. As an independent agency, the GSC has the potential to act as a boundary-spanner both horizontally and vertically across government and their partners (Haselsberger 2014). Though the development of the GPOP PIC was novel, more needs to occur if it is to counter path-dependent urban processes (Faludi 2012; Metzger & Schmitt 2012). Through the spatial imaginary of the GPOP, and the policy intervention of the GPOP PIC, the GSC were able to focus more attention on improving development outcomes for specific areas within the GPOP. However, the interview findings suggest this was too narrowly defined. In addition to the limited spatial impact within the GPOP, competition from the WSA that was developing in parallel has reduced the resources targeted to accelerating development in the GPOP; the State has had limited resources to advance both projects simultaneously. Both spatial imaginaries should be conceptualized as part of a suite of spatial strategies across government by a metropolitan governance body. A multispatial metagovernance approach to consider the reciprocal interdependence of multiple spatio-temporal social fields more holistically may better integrate these competing spatial imaginaries (Jessop 2016). This approach would give greater visibility to the ambition of

spatial policy across the metropolitan region and allow government decision-makers to give priority to highest value projects in light of limited government resources.

What are the critical factors that support or hinder the advancement of place-based strategies?

The interview perspectives of the GPOP and GPOP PIC, have suggested that they are clearly important place-based strategic interventions used to support the shifting course of spatial development across the metropolitan region. Within the GPOP boundary, the biggest beneficiaries of this place-based strategy are the larger centres of Parramatta CBD and Westmead. These centres are the most developed areas within the GPOP, with already existing development of advanced industry and professional services based on health and education services, and general CBD located firms. While these centres are reasonably developed, they suffer from an infrastructure deficit. As B_1 states, "[Parramatta] has good bones" but greater attention can be focused on supporting infrastructure that has generally been deficient in the greater Parramatta area including place-making and cultural infrastructure. The GPOP PIC is pictured as part of a greater suite of interventions (including the establishment of an investment office) that can be used to shift the distribution of resources towards to the western half of the metropolitan region. It could also be conceptualised that spatial imaginaries are more than just spatial documents and strategies, but are also part of this larger suite of strategies that can be leveraged to elevate specific places.

The GPOP PIC has attempted to deliver a "strategic planning model that looks holistically at a place to better align growth with the provision of infrastructure" (GSC 2019, p. 7). Through this process, the GPOP PIC was selected as a 'game-changer' that could be implemented to improve the infrastructure-development nexus. While the ambition of the GPOP PIC was grand, the impacts, as shared through the perspectives of the interviewees were more modest. Building on the 2018 Sydney metropolitan region plan, greater attention has been given to precincts within the GPOP. Pragmatically, collaboration and engagement were limited to NSW Government stakeholders. This governance limitation impeded on the institutional and strategic design of the GPOP PIC where a risk averse approach to policymaking and compartmentalising knowledge to only select stakeholders also limited engagement to actors

even within the NSW Government "even I in the GSC see some parts of it, they wouldn't show me everything" (G_1). Such an approach had limited the diversity of stakeholder perspectives, particularly at the local level. This perspective was verified through the experience of non-state government interviewees who had previously held leadership roles in the NSW Government. These perspectives have afforded a useful counterpoint to their current appointments. More could be done to improve collaboration among urban professionals working within the GPOP. Expanding the interpretation of stakeholders beyond the NSW Government could also lead to more effective place-based strategies.

Critically, the legislative mandate of the GSC, institutional baggage that limits integration across governance agencies and limits collaboration with non-government stakeholders, has hindered the impact of the place-based intervention of the GPOP PIC. The tensions around collaboration are entrenched by the hardening of soft spatial imaginaries. When the borders of soft spatial imaginaries start to harden, and ideas evolve to become strategic intent, practical implications such as delivery outcomes need to be addressed. In the process of strategy formation, it was easier to obtain agreement from internal stakeholders, that is, the NSW Government rather than addressing uncertainties that can arise when engaging with Local Government and other community stakeholders. While it may have reduced uncertainty in the design of the planning strategy, it could also be seen to increase risk in its implementation.

During the inception of the GPOP, the boundaries and borderlines remained fuzzy, and it was difficult to discern where, or how the spatial policy may have effect. This contributed to uncertainty, especially while local governments within the indicative area were undergoing land-use harmonisation after a contentious phase of local government amalgamation. While it may have been practical during an earlier phase of the project to leave the spatiality of the GPOP fuzzy as decisions had not been finalised, the fuzziness also reflected the confidentiality of the boundaries "when you look at the three cities, they're fuzzy blobs, there's no boundary, and the boundary is confidential. And the cause and this is where I think there's a real problem, because lots of calculations are based on it yet because it cuts halfway through councils" (G_1).

This perspective is interesting, as this Director in the GSC had also stated they did not know that some of the smaller councils were included in the GPOP as indicated by the draft

boundary (NSW DPE 2017). While spatially, the location of a statutory boundary has implications for land-use planning, however, the broad brushstrokes taken from a strategic perspective tends to treat hard boundaries as being of peripheral importance. In the evolution of the GPOP PIC, the location of existing infrastructure, urban development, and place-based partnerships placed greater importance on the precincts defined by the GPOP strategy. While functional precinct boundaries were informed by employment areas, for example, Parramatta CBD, Westmead Health and Innovation, Camellia-Rydalmere industrial, greater engagement should be fostered with delivery partners, that is, council and developers, to identify barriers and strategic enablers to the success of delivering the GPOP.

While the critical factors that emerged from the research identified a preference for supporting existing urban centres that led to the acceleration of development in Parramatta CBD and Westmead, by default this has left areas with strong growth potential without access to transformational infrastructure. These areas including Camellia-Rydalmere were left without a metro stop and this pulled them further away from delivering on the GPOP vision. This approach of risk aversion leads to the perverse outcome of backing winners and avoiding balanced development within the spatial frame of the GPOP. As there is a significant deficit of jobs in the Central City, targeted infrastructure investment in these areas (including Camellia-Rydalmere) could spur private investment and locational priorities here to support a larger economic cluster around Parramatta CBD. A more holistic intent of the GPOP to intervene in spatial development may require more effort to stabilise the fluidity of spaces but may also offer greater opportunity for coherence with other spatial layers (Jones 2019). A wider framing of opportunity or benefit could shift thinking in this regard.

Lastly, while the GSC espouse principles of open data and promoting one source of truth in data, it hasn't been so easy to put into practice, "I think [the former GSC Chief Commissioner] wants the GSC to be the holder of data. And to really get it right, get it believable, get it consistent, and share it with everyone. But he thinks there should be one repository of data" (G_1). This motivation to get it right, to be believable and consistent, and share it with everyone, remained an unmet goal for the GPOP PIC. Across the NSW Government there are several initiatives that attempt to align historical data and growth projections for use across government. This includes population projections, growth forecasts and industry data. While the nature of these projections and forecasts are general and can be prone to significant adjustment as has been seen through the impacts of COVID-19, more

specific data including the apportionment of infrastructure funding in the GPOP PIC was not made public or even shared for wider consumption within government. Addressing these shortfalls in the strategy development process can adjust the course of policy design for the better. Sharing data across and beyond government would also support greater alignment of existing strategies and plans with policy development processes.

8.3   Theoretical development and applicability to the thesis

This thesis has situated the GPOP both as a planning space and a governance mechanism through the GPOP PIC. This dual quality required adapting and combining theoretical approaches to capture the complexity of both the case study context, and the strategic ambition to rebalance the Sydney metropolitan area. Gaining the perspective of a wide range of urban stakeholders was also enlightening to understand how the GPOP was conceived as a non-standard planning space, and the implications of this conception.

Since the turn of the century, there has been an increasing preference by urban policymakers to adopt place-sensitive approaches to area and regional development (Barca 2008; Rodrigues-Pose 2018). The interview participants were keenly aware of the historical challenges of rebalancing development and opportunity and the potential of the GPOP PIC. However, while the ambition and intention of rebalancing the metropolis was sound, the limited collaborative approach taken by the GSC had hindered achieving those outcomes. For example, L_2 claimed that acknowledgement of local infrastructural need by the NSW Government increased exposure to operational risk and thus requiring a response from government to address these shortcomings. Including local infrastructure within the assessment of needs in the GPOP PIC would have added benefit for the GPOP community. This observation of achieving a thin level of consensus has been documented in similar priority precincts in metropolitan Sydney (Morrison & van den Nouwelent 2020). As stated in Section 8.2, as the spatial imaginary of the GPOP evolved into a concrete spatial strategy, an aversion to risk had resulted in a narrower stakeholder consultation to advance the delivery of the GPOP PIC.

Considering the broad ambition of the GPOP as both spatial strategy and a planning space, the combined theoretical backdrop is appropriate. While the terminology of a spatial imaginary was not universally understood by the interviewees, there was largely a consensus

among the interviewees regarding the intention of the GPOP PIC, what it was, and what it was trying to achieve. The traditional roles and relationships of key institutions including WSU as an education provider has diversified to include land development. This expansion beyond disciplinary boundaries and altered their position to develop new partnerships to advance their institutional agenda. Thus, it was clear of triangulating the thematic of collaboration, spatial strategy and planning spaces to advance the development and operationalisation of the GPOP spatial imaginary. These component parts were more tangible and most easily understood, however, the stitching together of empirical and theoretical components, that is the aspects of multispatial metagovernance were more challenging. However, the MSMG part of the theoretical framework was a useful schematic to synthesise the interview findings through the data analysis process.

Most of the interviewees had formal planning training thus planning policy and spatial concepts were familiar to them. The backdrop of the GPOP as a spatial imaginary was a useful framing device to bring together the historical challenges of shifting development opportunities and infrastructural commitments to the GPOP area. This rhetorical device also served a practical purpose to draw out their perspectives on what the interviewees thought the GPOP should achieve and whether a similar outcome could be achieved without the GPOP PIC. The concept and conceptualization of borders were less understood. Beyond the application of statutory boundaries, for example, local government and ward boundaries, the use and importance of borders was not significant to the interviewees, at least explicitly. While G_1 spoke to the idea of borders directly, they admitted to not knowing where the edge of the GPOP was situated or the extent of its coverage as they had only directly engaged with Parramatta council, and not with other local governments within the GPOP boundary. On reflection, more explicitly integrating Actor-Network theoretical approaches, or more strongly utilising assemblage theory may have highlighted further nuances in the relationality of policy and power (Allen & Cochrane 2007; McCann, & Ward 2011). However, as it stands, the theoretical construct developed for this thesis was sufficiently complex and fit-for-purpose given the focus on the implementation of place-based policy.

The location of spatial imaginary boundaries (whether given statutory weight or merely visualized as fuzzy lines) has significant impacts on spatial policy, and subsequently the delivery of place-based interventions. And given the political capital and influence attributed to boundary location (gerrymandering is a more explicit form of this political influence),

perhaps more attention could be given to the significance of borders and border theory in the training of planners. While the different theoretical tools were useful to frame the findings and outcomes of the thesis, there is potentially an opportunity in future work to reach a point where academic and practitioner audiences could refer to the same terminology. For example, MSMG is a very complex concept that could be unpacked into more digestible language and ideas to be read and understood by a general practitioner and policy audience. By combining the component parts of a border theory and spatial imaginaries, practitioners, policymakers, and academics may more easily understand how these two theoretical approaches overlap, and thus recognize the political and spatial implication of plans, policies, or projects. This theoretical framework was useful to draw out the multiple overlapping perspectives of spatial policymaking and identify the critical factors that supported and hindered the delivery of the GPOP PIC. It highlighted the importance of a legislative mandate and governance framework that set the boundaries and priorities of strategy-making. These dual issues of power and space highlight in turn the importance of spatializing a multilevel governance framework.

MLG is a well understood public administration and urban governance framework. However, the spatial concerns of urban policies, and other "complex reciprocal interdependence across several spatial-temporal social fields" (Jessop 2016, p. 30) have not been effectively integrated in spatial policy. The GPOP PIC has the potential to anchor the plurality of territory, social spaces, networks and places through effective coordination and collaboration among a broad heterogenous field of actors. Jessop also warns that "no actors can grasp geo-socio-spatial relations in all their complexity, this forces them to view space through spatial imaginaries that frame their understandings, orientations, directly spatial projects, or other projects with spatial aspects" (Jessop 2016, p. 10). This highlights the importance of expanding the perspective beyond a single stakeholder group. While increasing complexity, the resultant process and output could form a more holistic perspective of the context and problem to be addressed and could de-risk the delivery of the GPOP PIC.

A multilevel metagovernance approach can bring together the socio-spatial and socio-temporal context of strategy within the sphere of political activities. This approach may also support the redistribution of power and improve spatial equity across the Sydney metropolitan region. The role and involvement (or exclusion) of stakeholders external to the NSW Government complicates the policy intervention, with tangled hierarchies and complex

interdependencies. This warrants greater attention to MSMG by policy-makers, which may reduce the frictions evident in the GPOP PIC.

8.4   Contribution to new knowledge

Over the course of this research, the thesis sought to understand the relationship between place-based strategies and the delivery of metropolitan growth priorities. This is important because of the growing maturity and use of place-based planning approaches as well as the need to improve spatial equity across the Sydney metropolitan region. To understand these processes, it was important to understand the intent of the emerging GPOP spatial imaginary, explain the implications of the spatial strategy, and consider the perspectives of actors involved. The outcomes of this research can be situated against the wider work on the processes and impacts of spatial imaginaries in global cases introduced in Chapters 3 & 4 (Metzger & Schmitt 2012; Haughton & Allmendinger 2017). The challenges of improving economic competitiveness and spatial equity outcomes are often a dialectic proposition. However, the design and implementation of spatial imaginaries seeks to counter these dualities. While the spatial imaginary of the GPOP has attempted to improve on both measures, the outcomes have tended to follow along path-dependent lines of development not dissimilar to historical processes of urbanisation identified in Chapter 4 (Searle 2002).The spatial imaginary of the GPOP, in combination with broader NSW Government priorities have privileged areas with regional competitive advantages, such as Parramatta and Westmead, while areas requiring greater intervention such as Camellia and Rydalmere lacked attention. A more intentional multiscalar approach to the development of the GPOP may have acted on these intra-GPOP inequalities.

A novel theoretical approach was taken, exploring how spatial theories could provide greater insight into the multispatial metagovernance (MSMG) relationships that emerged in the contested planning space of the GPOP. Taking a MSMG approach to place-based planning sought to integrate the multiple spatial scales in which the case study was situated, relate these to the multiple stakeholder perspectives, and identify the challenges of power imbalance and spatial equity. This struggle for power has played out both internal to the NSW Government and with external stakeholders such as councils and developers. Within the NSW Government, the TfNSW maintained primacy, leading to missed opportunities in

activating transit oriented development, and the opportunity to activate supporting areas to the centre of the GPOP. External to the NSW Government, the perspective of councils in identifying the social infrastructure needs of the GPOP are not registered, drawing similarities to the Baltic Sea Region case study where political hierarchies are maintained (Metzger & Schmitt 2012). Between the development of a new theoretical framework and case study findings, there are several touchpoints that contribute to new knowledge in the global canon of spatial theory, and insights more pertinent for the greater Sydney area.

There are several alternative spatial and governance theories that could have been applied to this study. However, the integration of insights from spatial imaginaries and multispatial metagovernance approaches offered the most fine-grained understanding of the spatial dynamics of the GPOP. Chapter 3 synthesised the related theories of spatial imaginaries, borders and multispatial metagovernance. This approach supported the identification and synthesis of the multiple and sometimes disparate stakeholder perspectives that cut across spatial scale and metagovernance relationships. This theoretical approach can be adapted by both academics and policymakers to more appropriately capture the context of place-based policymaking and consideration of cross-cutting relationships of stakeholders interacting in these spaces.

For the policymaker, this approach would encourage taking a wider view of the stakeholders acting in the GPOP. This would counter a risk averse approach that was adopted in the development of the GPOP PIC, improving collaboration with stakeholders outside the NSW Government. This approach would achieve the intended outcome of risk reduction and increased effectiveness of the policy, without needing to merely back winners and limit collaboration within the policy space. The academic contribution is the provision of another arrow in their quiver with the intention that this theoretical approach can be tailored to specific contexts in the examination and investigation of spatial imaginaries and place-based policies.

Building on the contribution to policymaking, policy development in contested urban spaces such as the GPOP brings together stakeholders with different priorities, and the interests for which they advocate. The methodological model introduced in Section 2.2 guided an iterative approach to sharpening the findings. Steps in the research were repeated moving from

literature review, data analysis and presentation of findings to academic and industry audiences to test the acuity and relevance of the findings.

More specifically, this thesis has identified several critical factors that enabled, or hindered the outcomes of place-based strategies in the GPOP. In the GPOP, it was clear from the synthesized interview findings that stakeholders needed to be chosen to represent the full range of interests in the place. Some more specific recommendations from the research could improve the outcomes of future place-based interventions:

- Building trust and enabling genuine collaborative approaches to place-based planning is essential to understanding the challenges for place-based interventions and leads to improving strategic outcomes. Establishing a common point of departure and an agreed definition and meaning of key terminology for example, place, precinct, place-based, collaboration, co-design, and co-delivered is important to align the perspectives of contributing stakeholders. The agreement on these foundational elements of the design of a place-based strategy can then shape the governance and involvement of key stakeholders. This action would establish a clearer picture of the aims of policies, provide internal coherence, and a platform for coordinating NSW Government agencies. It would also give direction and set expectations for external stakeholders, defining spatial units and how stakeholders may be engaged.

- Getting the assumptions right *as the starting point* is essential to setting the strategy, reform, or compact off on the right path. This includes a scan of the foreground data to establish a baseline for what is required in place-based interventions, identifying community needs and current endowments that can be leveraged. While place-based planning is a means to better understand a place to enable it to deliver on its potential, understanding the context and background of places also means knowing its history, attributes, and deficiencies. For example, while the GPOP PIC set high expectations to transform Parramatta to a metropolitan centre, there has been a significant backlog of the infrastructure that would be required to perform at the level of the Sydney CBD. This focus on Parramatta also left fewer resources to develop other precincts within the GPOP including Camellia-Rydalmere. This interrelates with the first recommendation for undertaking collaborative place-based planning as a method to understand the problem to be solved.

- Place-based policies and their outcomes should align the KPIs of all relevant stakeholders, in particular, NSW Government departments and agencies. While KPIs should be aligned, better coordination and collaboration is required to bring stakeholders together to identify the trade-offs required to reach a balanced outcome. For example, the Sydney Metro West project provided a rare opportunity to improve connectivity to the Central City. Transport was the lead agency for this project, and their KPI was to reduce travel time from Parramatta to Sydney CBDs to around 20-minutes. Planning KPIs seek to improve spatial outcomes through supporting strategic land use planning to meet housing and jobs targets. Much of this is centred around the delivery and access to transport hubs where density can be accommodated. By adopting a place-based approach to government outcomes and sharing KPIs across agencies, government can leverage and optimise these rare opportunities to coordinate desired outcomes for both agencies.

- Public sector assumptions of risk should more appropriately engage with the reality of commercial delivery of infrastructure and associated development. The intent of the GPOP PIC to support greater levels of infrastructure and development in the GPOP is sound, however, understanding the needs, attributes, and constraints of a diverse area such as the GPOP is required. Gaining an understanding of these factors and gaining support from affected communities and delivery partners would support the de-risking of implementing such an ambitious program of reform and the delivery of place-based policies. This final point ties in the prior recommendations. Given the scarcity of resources to deliver on the GPOP PIC, and the need to influence and gain support of a broad range of stakeholders, a more wholistic understanding of place-based planning design and delivery risks is required to achieve the GPOP PIC outcomes.

The findings from the research may have broader applicability where brownfield areas globally experience similar contextual challenges. The research demonstrates the importance of understanding the context and ambition of a place, and gaining support of diverse stakeholder groups to enabling place-based policymaking in these areas.

8.5   Limitations

Beyond the limitations identified in the introductory chapter, others emerged on reflecting on the entire thesis process.

As this research was investigating a live case study, the contextual map was changing in the background. Since the research proposal was accepted in 2018, changes were observed from an institutional perspective as the GSC had shifted reporting lines from the Department of Planning and Environment to the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The strategy and space of the GPOP had evolved, and this resulted in the changing positions of and access to stakeholders for interview. In addition, following the data collection, further significant changes have occurred to the structure and organization of government departments, and the metropolitan strategic planning remit of the GSC (now called the Greater Cities Commission) expanding to the wider region, including the Newcastle, Central Coast and Wollongong areas.

Impacts stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic should also be mentioned. While limits to mobility and face-to-face contact were barriers to completing the research, especially through conducting interviews, delays in obtaining data had led to a longer period of forced reflection, though this additional time had provided space to improve on the research design. That said, COVID-19 was a noticeable disruption to the research process.

8.6   Further Research

This research has conducted a point-in-time examination of the GPOP PIC through the experience and perspective of an identified group of planning and policy actors with current or previous responsibility for the GPOP area. This has limited stakeholder interviews to senior leaders in the planning and policy fields who have been engaged with this case study, rather than the state-wide population of planning and urban policy leaders, or other groups such as community stakeholders, who have not been engaged in policy and planning discussions. This accounts for the relatively small number of interviewees.

While the research has explored the factors shaping a critical case, there are also potential pathways for further research. Beyond extending on the identified findings, reflecting on both interview findings and my reading of precinct and place-based planning case studies,

different avenues of inquiry may include: (1) post-completion analysis as described below, and (2) a comparative analysis with other contemporary spatial imaginaries could also provide an interesting perspective on different contextual factors that support or hinder their development.

Firstly, as the GPOP, GPOP PIC, and related land-use and infrastructure plans and strategic business cases are at various stages of progress and completion, a post-completion analysis would discern the effectiveness of the PIC program and selection of GPOP as program boundary. Findings from this research may point to several different pathways including focusing on a collaborative lens between state and local relations, infrastructure provision, location and financing. It would be anticipated that 2030 when the Sydney Metro West is scheduled for completion may be the earliest timeframe for a preliminary review.

Secondly, in place of a critical case study, the GPOP could be compared to another spatial imaginary, either within the Sydney metropolitan area or a similar competing region, for example, the Brisbane CBD conceptualised as another 'river city' that was developed under different circumstances but with similar infrastructural projects to stimulate the area. Potential findings could strengthen the utility of particular spatial interventions within their jurisdictions and could further spatial imaginary research in Australia.

8.7   Conclusion

This study has contributed a significant piece of original research exploring the impact of spatial imaginaries in the Sydney metropolitan region. It has identified three distinct tensions from the case study of the GPOP that can be addressed in future iterations of the GPOP PIC and spatial strategy making in general. These include (1) the challenges of enabling precinct development, (2) aligning infrastructure and planning growth whilst taking stock of historical infrastructural underinvestment, and (3) the underreported issues of politics, process and confidentiality, and timing challenges that hinder collaboration and the efficient implementation of the GPOP. Furthermore, these tensions can be encapsulated under improving the understanding of, and public sector assumptions of risk in the delivery of place-based strategies.

The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:
The case of Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula, Sydney

The aim of this research was to understand how place-based strategies impact on metropolitan growth priorities. Within the boundary of the GPOP, place-based strategies were more likely to support existing winners, in this case, supporting development in Westmead and Parramatta CBD. The drivers shaping the GPOP PIC and associated infrastructure investment also followed institutional hierarchies within the NSW Government, that is, alignment with TfNSW outcomes as the dominant agency. While the GPOP PIC has improved on the GPOP in general, there is a tendency in adhering to a business-as-usual approach to tempering risk by limiting engagement with adversarial stakeholder perspectives. Political cycles, leadership, and temporal circumstances shape to a large extent the remit and terms of reference of spatial policy and policy-making.

As mentioned above, the impacts and influence of the GPOP PIC are uneven. While certain areas that did not need such a significant shift in fortune such as Parramatta CBD and Westmead were given greater attention, other areas were left out. The Camellia-Rydalmere area is well located in between Parramatta and Olympic Park yet misses out on the co-location and benefits of a metro station that could de-risk private sector investment. The reality of place-based interventions such as the GPOP PIC require genuine place-based collaboration. An explicit focus on the design of a multispatial metagovernance framework for the GPOP PIC would benefit from greater transparency and collaboration. Identifying existing deficits, and local infrastructure needs, and appropriately engaging with all significant stakeholders about these would also simultaneously improve trust with non-state agencies. These actions would focus attention on unaccounted risks including delayed implementation of policymaking, and delayed delivery of infrastructure projects.

Historically, planning ideas and spatial strategies have been readily transferred to Australia from other planning systems (most commonly England and North America). Further experiments in devolution could improve trust between state and local governments while making more effective use of a limited fiscal envelope to deliver soft and hard infrastructure through appropriate policy design. A shift in institutional design and place-based governance will be needed to gain the support of stakeholders outside the NSW Government for the delivery of a place-based intervention such as the GPOP PIC. The success of future place-based interventions will require a collaborative approach by governments and their stakeholders in partnership to design and deliver place-based strategies and outcomes.

Appendices

A1. Publications producing during the research

* Denotes peer reviewed contribution

* **Pham, K.** 2017. Relational planning and performative sub-regional strategies: Analysing the construction of the Sydney Global City Region through an assemblage framework, presented at *State of Australian Cities Conference*, 28 - 30 November 2017, Adelaide.

Pham, K. 2018. Rhetoric and ambiguity as performative strategy shaping the Sydney Global City Region, presented at *Urban Affairs Association Conference*, 4 – 7 April 2018, Toronto.

Pham, K. 2018. Assembling the city-region: Intensification at the intersection of glocal politics and border relations in the Sydney Global City Region, presented at *American Association of Geographers Conference*, 10 – 14 April 2018, New Orleans.

* **Pham, K.** 2018, Bordering practices in Global Sydney: Becoming a City-Region or a 'metropolis of three cities', in Grant, B., Liu, C. Y., Ye, L., (eds.) *Metropolitan Governance in Asia and the Pacific Rim: Borders, Challenges, Futures*, pp. 57-72. Singapore: Springer Nature.

Pham, K. 2018. Finding place in a city-region: Tracing reform through global assemblages, presented at *Royal Geographical Society: Institute of British Geographers Conference*, 28-31 August 2018, Cardiff.

Pham, K. 2019. Alternative perspectives of everyday spaces: introducing a multiperspectival framework of city-regional change, presented at *Regional Studies Association Australasia Conference*, 11 – 13 February 2019, Christchurch.

Pham, K. 2019. Multiperspectival borders and metagovernance of functional economic corridors, presented at *Emerging Trends in Local Government*, 19 March 2019, Sydney.

Pham, K. 2019. Placing local government in metropolitan reform agendas: Re-shaping the Sydney Global City Region, presented at *American Association of Geographers Conference*, 3 – 7 April 2019, Washington DC.

Pham, K. 2019. Comparative metropolitan strategic planning: Perspectives from Australia, presented at *Urban Affairs Association Conference*, 24 – 27 April 2019, Los Angeles.

The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:
The case of Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula, Sydney

Pham, K. 2019. Governance in motion: Finding the missing (metropolitan) middle, presented at *Transformative Urban Governance Conference*, 26-27 June 2019, Melbourne.

* Pham, K. & Pugalis, L. 2019. De-bordering and re-bordering the metropolis, presented at *State of Australian Cities Conference*, 3-5 December 2019, Perth.

* Pham, K. 2020, 'Beyond borders: steering metropolitan growth priorities through spatial imaginaries', *Australian Planner*, vol 56, no. 2, pp. 103–113.

The role of spatial imaginaries in plan making:
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A2. Interview guide

- **Background and aims of the PhD**

This research aims to understand the relationship between place-based strategies and the delivery of metropolitan growth priorities.

Recent metropolitan strategies have identified the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) as integral to the vision of a 'metropolis of three cities' and the Central River City in the Sydney metropolitan plan. The plan also suggests that a place-based approach to planning and collaboration across State and local governments, businesses and the community is at the heart of this strategy. This has wide ranging implications both within the GPOP and the Sydney metropolitan region more broadly.

Given this context, this research project will explore how the GPOP performs at different spatial scales – that is – from the local through metropolitan scales of governance. Its focus will be on the perceptions of professional planners and policy-makers, businesses, peak bodies and political representatives who are directly involved in shaping and delivering strategic plans and policy frameworks.

The research aims to provide insights into the relationships between planning, policy and metropolitan strategy highlighting the innovative measures developed and the challenges that emerge.

- **How the information/data will be used**

I intend to record and transcribe the interviews. The interview data will be de-identified and coded removing all reference to specific names. Following transcription, the recordings will be destroyed. The data will be securely stored on my computer at UTS, only accessible via an authenticated UTS system login.

- **A few things to note**
  > The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes. It is intended to be semi-structured and free flowing conversation and based around the questions on the following page.
  > All information collected will be strictly confidential and stored securely.

> Any subsequent use of the data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and organisations
> You can withdraw from the interview at any time without providing a reason.

- **Interview themes**

The interviews are intended to gather perspectives of planners, policy-makers in government and NGOs. The questions asked will broadly cover:

> How are spatial policies aligned across different levels of government?
> What are the three most pressing issues facing the growth of the Sydney metropolis?
>   o What role does your institution/organization play to respond to these issues?
> Thinking about spatial policies in Sydney
>   o (horizontal) How well are they aligned across government departments?
>   o (vertical) How well are they aligned across levels of government?
> What are the implications of the success or failure of the GPOP?
>   o How would this affect its immediate area?
>   o How would this affect the metropolitan area more broadly?
> The GPOP is a key strategic space in the Sydney metropolis
>   o What role does your institution/organization play to support it
>   o What are the key conflicts involved
>   ▪ Across space
>   ▪ Across institutions
>   ▪ Aligned with strategies

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this discussion.

A3. Key planning and policy documents relevant to the thesis

Date	Author	Document	Description and relevance
2007	Australian Public Service Commission	*Tackling wicked problems: A public policy perspective*	Describes the nature of 'wicked' problems, their interdependencies, and multiple causes. Identifies that power, collaboration, organisational boundaries, and governance structures often limit the ability of changing behaviour to address wicked problems.
2010	NSW Department of Planning and Environment	*Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036*	Update of the 2005 metropolitan regional plan. Integrates transport and land-use planning for the first time in a metropolitan plan. Focus on sustainable growth and development to achieve the vision of building Sydney's status of a global city. Identifies Parramatta as Sydney's second CBD and the need for Sydney to become multi-centred and connected to achieve on the vision. The spatial imaginary of the global economic corridor has been extended from Macquarie Park to terminate at Parramatta.
2014	NSW Department of Planning and Environment	*A Plan for Growing Sydney*	Continues the 2010 plan in focussing on Sydney's global competitiveness agenda. Announces the establishment of the GSC and defers most future work to this body. Identifies the location of growth centres in western Sydney, and new spatial imaginaries including the cultural ribbon along the Sydney foreshore.
2016	Audit Office of NSW	*CBD and South East Light Rail Project*	The Audit Office found that TfNSW processes departed from their own project assurance framework, investment gating and investment system. Costs have increased and benefits reduced compared to the approved business case (BCR from 2.4 to 1.4), though due diligence and probity in the procurement process met requirements.
2016	Greater Sydney Commission	*GPOP Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula, Our true centre: the connected, unifying heart*	Introduces the GPOP vision, compares GPOP locational endowments and opportunities to the Sydney CBD and surrounds, proposes four key precincts within the GPOP, and 12 directions to drive the vision.
2016	Infrastructure NSW	*Parramatta Strategic Framework*	Develops an evidence base to inform decision making around Parramatta. Establishes a high level urban logic, key values and urban design principles to transform Parramatta. Spatial analysis is limited to the extended Parramatta CBD and Westmead.
2018	Greater Sydney Commission	*A Metropolis that works*	Highlights the future strategic role of industrial or employment precincts across Greater Sydney. Identifies the role that industry land plays in inner city areas. Highlights the hard to replicate assets of industrial areas such as an oil pipeline in

			Camellia, but also notes the challenge of building complementary economic and service activities.
2018	Greater Sydney Commission	*Greater Sydney Region Plan: A metropolis of three cities*	Introduces the vision and concept of a metropolis of three cities. It is also the first metropolitan strategic plan to integrate strategic planning, transport and infrastructure plans. Presents ten key directions under four themes of infrastructure and collaboration, liveability, productivity, and sustainability. It is not clear where the boundaries of three cities lie, nor whether they overlap. Of critical importance to achieve the vision are integration of mass transit network with economic corridors, transit oriented development and priority precincts.
2018	Greater Sydney Commission	*Our Greater Sydney 2056 – Central City District Plan*	Extends on the 2018 Greater Sydney Region Plan and identifies planning priorities for the ten key directions. Provides demographic data, and population and housing growth projections. Places emphasis on the GPOP and potential governance mechanism of a growth infrastructure compact to align and sequence infrastructure with growth.
2018	Infrastructure Australia	*Planning Liveable Cities: A place-based approach to sequencing infrastructure and growth*	Provides advice to governments, industry and the community on how to enable best-practice sequencing of infrastructure in fast growing cities. Identifies that creating liveable places are not optional but essential, and in inextricably linked to economic growth. Identifies six common challenges when sequencing infrastructure and housing including governance, sector-led infrastructure planning, infrastructure funding mechanisms and lack of a shared understanding of industry and governments capacity to deliver infrastructure.
2018	Transport for NSW	*Future Transport Strategy 2056*	Presents a 40-year vision for the transport system, with particular importance of strategy and plans, and technology and innovative service delivery models. Outcomes are focussed on the customer.
2019	Greater Sydney Commission	*A City Supported by Infrastructure: Place-Based Infrastructure Compact Pilot - Draft*	Describes the creation of a new collaborative model, the PIC, as a strategic planning tool that guides growth through the lens of place-based planning. Describes the value and role of piloting this tool in the GPOP, and states the post-hoc collaboration processes attributed to the PIC in consulting with stakeholders outside of the NSW Government. Details scenarios in potential implementation of the PIC, high-level justifications of the findings, though little detail on identifying funding quanta besides sectoral proportional contributions.
2019	Infrastructure NSW	*Transport land use and demand impacts NSW Government Business Case Practitioner Notes*	Guidance on the relationships between transport land use and demand impacts. Identifies a hierarchy of infrastructure initiatives from strategic, structural and local infrastructure. Notes the challenging nexus of lack of transparency regarding assumptions and, land use projections and infrastructure demand.

2019	Investment NSW	*Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula*	Situates the GPOP in relation to the ecosystem of regions and centres in NSW. Promotes institutions, assets and locational endowments within the GPOP.
2020	Greater Sydney Commission	*Recommendations report Place-based Infrastructure Compact Pilot for Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula*	Summary of public consultation feedback on the GPOP PIC. Key areas of concern were collaboration and transparency, and consistency with hierarchy of plans. 23 recommendations were organised under ten themes that emerged from the feedback. These are presented in two sections: the results of the PIC Pilot in GPOP and the PIC model itself. Specific geographical concerns were raised in the Camellia area, notably drawing inconsistency between the GPOP PIC and existing plans.
2020	Investment NSW	*Final Business Case Evaluation Summary Sydney Metro West*	Justifies the importance of the Sydney Metro West project as of national importance given the boost to economic productivity and the imperative of maintaining Sydney's global competitiveness and future liveability. The evaluation states that "The corridor currently has insufficient transport accessibility and amenity to support planned land use outcomes, resulting in sub-optimal productivity and place-making outcomes."
2020	Victorian State Government	*A Framework for place-based approaches*	Identifies the urban challenges and opportunities and the need to see them from a local perspective and work with local people and communities. Defines what a place-based approach is, and how government can better support place-based approaches. Ensures consistency across government by providing definitions of key terms including place, power, and place-focused approaches.
2021	Audit Office of NSW	*Acquisition of 4–6 Grand Avenue, Camellia*	Findings of audit assessing TfNSW effectiveness of processes in purchasing 4-6 Grand Avenue, Camellia. TfNSW were assessed as conducting an inadequate process in purchase including the exclusion of contamination risk, lacking in probity practices, and lack of approval to provide funds for purchase.

A4. Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

BCR	Benefit Cost Ratio
CBD	Central Business District
CCC	County of Cumberland Council
CCPS	County of Cumberland Planning Scheme
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DPE	Department of Planning and Environment
DPIE	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
EP&A Act	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act
FRS	Functional Regulatory Space
GCC	Greater Cities Commission
GIC	Growth Infrastructure Compact
GPOP	Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula
GSC	Greater Sydney Commission
ILGRP	Independent Local Government Review Panel
INSW	Infrastructure New South Wales
IPART	Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statements
MLG	Multilevel governance
MSMG	Multispatial metagovernance
NAB	National Australia Bank
PIA	Planning Institute of Australia
PIC/ GIC	Place-based Infrastructure Compact (formerly Growth Infrastructure Compact)
PLR	Parramatta Light Rail
PRCUTS	Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy
PwC	Pricewaterhouse Coopers

SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy
SIC	Special Infrastructure Contribution
SPA	State Planning Authority
SROP	Sydney Region Outline Plan
STF	Spatiotemporal Fixes
TfNSW	Transport for New South Wales
UDIA	Urban Development Institute of Australia
UNSW	University of New South Wales
USYD	University of Sydney
UTS	University of Technology Sydney
VPA	Voluntary Planning Agreement
WHID	Westmead Health and Innovation District
WSA	Western Sydney Aerotropolis
WSBC	Western Sydney Business Chamber
WSLHD	Western Sydney Local Health District
WSU	Western Sydney University
YIMBY	Yes In My Backyard

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