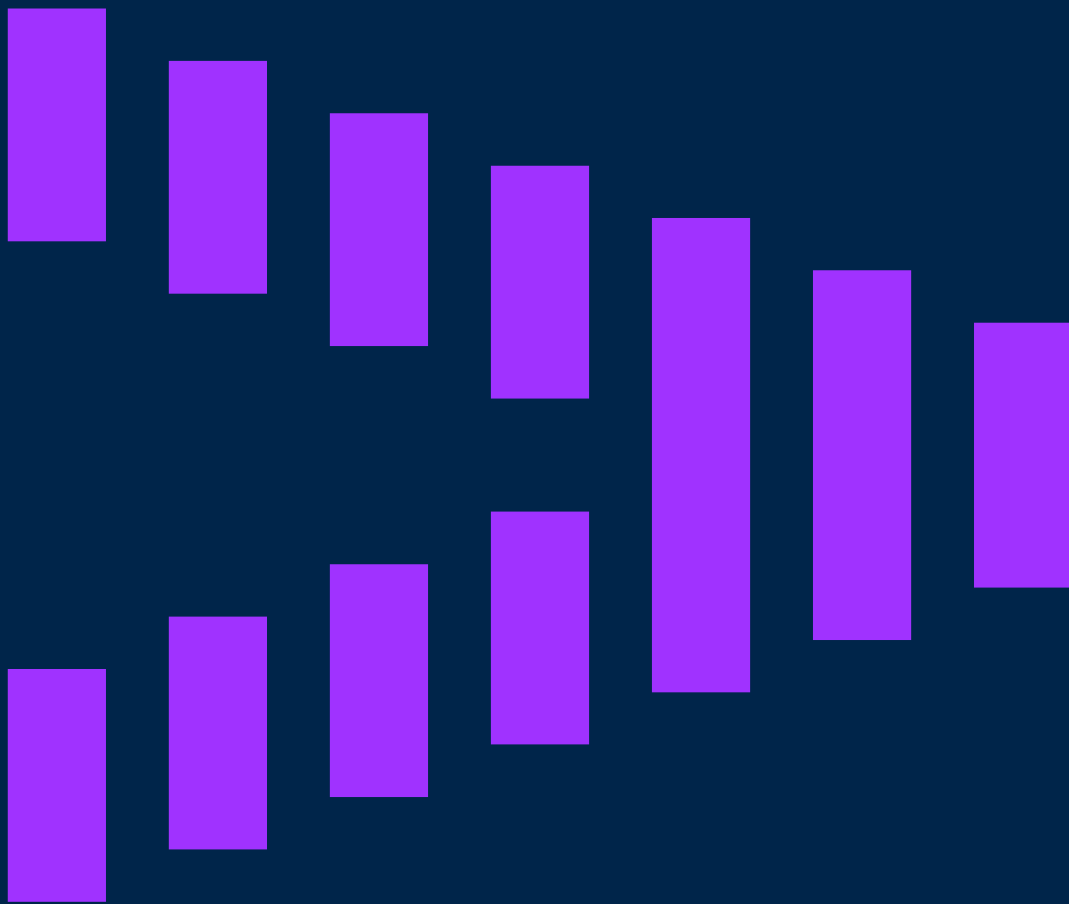


# AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Parramatta Legal  
and Justice Precinct



INVEST  
PARRAMATTA





## Message from the Lord Mayor

Parramatta is the second-largest legal centre in NSW, however it makes up only five per cent of Greater Sydney's legal jobs. City of Parramatta proposes that with an expansion of legal services, it hopes to attract more barristers, solicitors, judges and judicial officers to the area.

With the growth and transformation that Parramatta is experiencing, it makes sense that our justice precinct grows with it. And as Sydney's Central City, Parramatta is ideally located to service more jobs and create greater economic outcomes for the area.

Our proposal includes the construction of a permanent Supreme Court, a legal start-up hub and a Parramatta based law school. Not only will an expanded justice precinct accommodate the needs of our growing population, but it will also help support and retain local legal talent and encourage new and innovative ways to improve the justice system.

To promote this work, we propose that a Parramatta Justice Precinct Coalition be formed to advocate for this expansion. We welcome the expertise and advocacy that such a Coalition can bring to this proposal.

*City of Parramatta Lord Mayor,  
Bob Dwyer*









# GROWING PARRAMATTA'S LEGAL AND JUSTICE PRECINCT

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

## Parramatta vs Sydney CBD

Parramatta is home to the second-largest legal and justice precinct in Greater Sydney behind the Sydney CBD – but there is a significant gap.

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

## Should Justice Move Closer to the People?

More than two million people call Western Sydney home. Over the next 20 years, that's set to rise by another one million – relative to just 700,000 in the east.

As Sydney's population continues to move west, equitable access to justice services becomes a critical consideration. There are other benefits, too.

An increase in legal professionals in Parramatta would increase expenditure in the local economy and the boost in jobs would represent between \$36 million and \$350 million in value add to the local economy.





# BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Various factors have created a vicious cycle that keeps the bulk of law – and legal talent – in Sydney's CBD:

- Resourcing of Parramatta courts (including the number of judges) is a constant strain on growth
- Sydney's CBD is perceived as more prestigious

## A Report to Drive Change

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

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

Here, we summarise key findings from the four parts of the report:

- Legal and Justice Precincts
- Parramatta Legal and Justice Precinct
- Forecasting Future Demand for Legal and Justice Services
- Benefits of an Expanded Parramatta Justice Precinct



# LEGAL AND JUSTICE PRECINCTS IN NSW

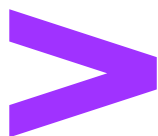
There is currently no publicly available policy or strategy governing where NSW courts are located or how justice infrastructure and facilities are managed in the long term.

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

- **Three cities vision:** The Greater Sydney Region Plan identifies Parramatta, along with Sydney CBD and the future Badgerys

Creek Aerotropolis, as one of the primary locations for services and knowledge jobs in Greater Sydney.

- **Government office re-location:** Sydney Water, the Greater Sydney Commission, Departments of Education and Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW Industrial Relations Commission, NSW Police Headquarters and most of the Department of Justice are already located in Parramatta.



**The NSW Government is on track to occupy 250,000 sqm of office space in Parramatta by 2022, matching its Sydney CBD presence.**



## Beyond Policy, Infrastructure and Talent: Access to Justice

The location and growth of Legal and Justice Precincts touches on something fundamental to our legal system and society.

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



## Attracting Legal Minds

Universities are an integral part of the legal and justice ecosystem. Western Sydney University has a high-rise Parramatta CBD campus with the Master of Laws (International Governance) taught there and undergraduate law degrees taught at the Parramatta South Campus.

The University of New England and Swinburne University of Technology also have a Parramatta presence.

# EXISTING LEGAL AND JUSTICE PRECINCT

Parramatta's Legal and Justice Precinct is home to five courts.

1. Parramatta Local and District Court
2. Children's Court
3. Drug Court
4. Federal Family Court
5. Federal Circuit Court



## Location and Access

The Parramatta Justice Precinct is located in the midst of Western Sydney's two-million strong population. It's 500 metres from the Railway Station which offers frequent services to Sydney CBD. The Parramatta Light Rail route runs through the precinct and it is anticipated that stage 1 will be completed by 2023. Currently in planning is the Sydney Metro West, an underground metro line linking Parramatta to Sydney CBD and communities in between.

## Where are the Jobs?

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

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

## Court Capacity Challenges

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

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





# FORECASTING FUTURE SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

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

## Demand for Court Services

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

**3,400 →** Supreme Court matters

**4,700 →** District Court matters

**115,700 →** Local Court matters

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

## Growth in Legal Professionals

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

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

**Just announced:  
The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal  
will now have its own  
premises at Parramatta.**

**The new \$2.3m fit out  
will quadruple capacity  
in Parramatta from  
5 hearing days a week  
to 20 a week.**





# CASE FOR EXPANDING PARRAMATTA'S LEGAL & JUSTICE PRECINCT

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

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

## Potential Economic Impacts

Between 700 and 1,400 new legal jobs within the Parramatta CBD is possible with investment by the NSW Government to increase the service capacity of the Parramatta Justice Precinct – representing between \$110 million and \$225 million in value add to the local economy.

As these legal professionals spend money in the local economy, flow-on employment effects could be as high as 250 to 2,420 additional jobs.

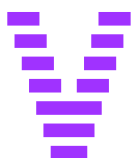
**Direct economic impact from new legal jobs**



**Production and consumption induced with "flow on" growth as new firms and staff spend money locally**







The opportunities for the legal and business sectors in Parramatta are already beginning to be realised.

There are a number of small to medium legal firms establishing in Parramatta and three of the big four accounting firms have a Parramatta presence.

## Potential Social Impacts

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

## Practical Impacts

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







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

The economic, social and practical benefits of Parramatta Justice Precinct's expansion are waiting. However, commitment is required, including at both levels of government.

## GOVERNMENT

**Making an investment** to grow the legal and justice precinct in Parramatta and provide more local employment opportunities for a growing talent pool.

## COUNCIL

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

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

## PRIVATE SECTOR

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

*"We've grown up with Western Sydney; like the City, we've changed and evolved from a traditional firm. I think our growth has aligned with Parramatta and the region. We have seen the opportunity, and know from experience that if you give to the region, the region will give back to you."*

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



