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6 December 2024

Ms Abigail Boyd MLC Committee Chair Legislative Council, Public Accountability and Works Committee Parliament House Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000

Via email only: PAWC@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Boyd

Inquiry into Western Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis developments Celestino Response to Questions on Notice and Supplementary Questions

Thank you for inviting us to appear before the Committee on 31 October 2024. We hope that the information we were able to provide on the day assisted the Committee with its purpose and to understand more about Sydney Science Park.

Please find enclosed our responses to the questions taken on notice and the supplementary questions issued by the Committee. We thank the Committee for the opportunity to clarify and respond to the questions asked on the day, and we would again like to state for the record that at no time did we have the intention of misleading the Committee (as alleged on page 25 of the transcript). We attended before the Committee in good faith and answered the questions we were asked, without notice, as best we could on the day.

We want to assure the Committee that Celestino remains committed to its vision to create a mixed-use city at Sydney Science Park, with jobs in research, education and health sectors, to be integrated with thousands of homes and over 80 hectares of open space. As advised to the Committee, we are progressing our planning approvals for the first 15 hectare precinct.

Matthew Scard / Chief Executive Officer





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Inquiry into Western Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments

Celestino Response to Questions on Notice and Supplementary Questions

Date: 6 December 2024

Questions on Notice Response Table

Question (refer to the enclosed annotated transcript for reference	Answer
numbers)	
1	The Chair's question relates to two separate issues:
	 the sale price of the undeveloped portion of The Gables; and the total end value of The Gables once it was fully developed and sold or leased.
	The two values measure different things and therefore are not comparable.
	The sale price to Stockland in March 2020 for the portion of The Gables that was then undeveloped was \$415m.
	The end value of all of The Gables, once fully developed and sold or leased, was estimated at the time of the sale to be \$4bn. We do not have any information to indicate that this figure would have decreased, though we no longer own the site and so cannot confirm.
2	When Celestino sold the undeveloped portion of The Gables to Stockland, the total number of dwellings approved across the entire site (developed and undeveloped) was 4,100. Celestino sold to Stockland the undeveloped portion of The Gables (equivalent to approximately 2,608 residential lot yield).

Question (refer to	Answer	
the enclosed annotated transcript for reference numbers)		
3	The Premier's Trade Mission focused on the theme of innovation in two key areas:	
	 Fintech, communications and cyber security and Medtech 	
	The delegation to Israel focused on the ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship. The program included meetings with tech incubators, accelerators, world-leading cyber security and R&D centres. In addition, the delegation met with Israel's Chief Scientist.	
	The Australian-Israel Chamber of Commerce invited Celestino to be part of the Premier's delegation to Israel. Celestino is a member of the Australian-Israel Chamber of Commerce. Celestino's visit to Israel was undertaken at our expense.	
	Celestino attended the trade mission to learn first-hand how Israel established innovation precincts, entrepreneurship and start-ups. These learnings would help inform the best approach to delivering Sydney Science Park over the short, medium and long term. It also allowed Celestino to explore collaboration opportunities in innovation, science and technology.	
4	The Australian-Israel Chamber of Commerce invited Celestino to be part of the Premier's delegation to Israel. Celestino is a member of the Australian-Israel Chamber of Commerce.	
5	Celestino has participated in two trade missions. One was the Premiers Trade Misson to Israel, described in detail in the responses to Questions 3 and 4.	
	The other trade mission was arranged by Penrith City Council to Japan in October 2019.	
	This trade mission aimed to support Penrith City Council with their engagement with their Sister City Partner (Fujieda City), the Australian Trade Commissioner to Japan, tourism agencies and the Urban Renaissance Agency (their version of Landcom in Japan). The focus of the trade mission included meeting industries in food, agribusiness, and pharma. This included a visit to the Industrial Research Institute of Shizuoka Prefecture.	
	During this trade mission, Celestino scheduled separate meetings with the following high-tech companies to promote collaboration and partnership opportunities at Sydney Science Park:	
	 Global Water Recycling and Reuse System Association Mitsui Fudosan 	
	Sumitomo Forestry	



Question (refer to the enclosed annotated transcript for reference numbers)	Answer
	 Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport and Urban Development Marubeni Hitachi Panasonic
	Innovation Precinct Visits: Kashiwa-no-ha precinct Tsukuba site University of Tsukuba Hospital Panasonic Homes tour Serizawa Keisuke Museum Koshigaya Lake Town
	The trade mission allowed Celestino to explore collaboration opportunities in innovation, science and technology with Japanese companies.
6	During the timeframes referred to in the question (2011, 2012 & 2013), the following strategic planning documents were released by State Government: • Long-Term Transport Master Plan (December 2012) • Draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney to 2031 (March 2013) • Broader Western Sydney Employment Area: Draft Structure Plan (June 2013)
	The strategic planning framework outlined within the above documents contemplated several potential transport corridors including road and rail. The masterplan for Sydney Science Park at this time considered the potentiality and absence of these corridors and dialogue was had with Government in relation to the masterplan. Celestino also made a submission in response to the Broader Western Sydney Employment Area: Draft Structure Plan in August 2013 as part of the government's consultation process, and this submission addressed the potential transport corridors and rail solution. Ultimately however no decision was made on rail by the time of Sydney Science Park's rezoning. This uncertainty about whether a rail station would go ahead and, if it did, where a rail station would be located continued for years afterwards. The Sydney Metro - Western Sydney Airport project was only first announced and formally committed in 2018 as a part of the Western Sydney City Deal. After this announcement, we made an Unsolicited Proposal to Government about a Metro station at Sydney Science Park, but as detailed in the other responses to these questions, the terms of our proposal were not acceptable to Government.

Question (refer to the enclosed	Answer	
annotated transcript for reference numbers)		
7	According to a letter from Investment NSW dated 27 May 2021 to Celestino, the following reason was given for rejecting our Unsolicited Proposal for a Metro Station at Sydney Science Park:	
	"The proposal has been considered within the context of the Unsolicited Proposals Guide for Submission and Assessment (August 2017) and in consultation with relevant agencies. After a thorough assessment, the Government decided not to proceed with the proposal further, as the proposal did not satisfy several assessment criteria, including value for money and the Government's commercial and legal terms."	
8	The Western Sydney Rail Alliance was not a Celestino or Sydney Science Park specific entity. It was an alliance of stakeholders in the Western Sydney area advocating for much-needed rail infrastructure in Western Sydney. It did not advocate for specific station locations. The Alliance included the following members: - Campbelltown City Council - Liverpool City Council - Penrith City Council - Medich Corporation - Defence - Housing Australia - Ingham Property - Lendlease	
	 Perich Group Celestino The Committee for Sydney Twin Creeks Golf & Country Club University of Sydney Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue Please note, the Western Sydney Rail Alliance included members from southwest Sydney and northwest Sydney who were not direct beneficiaries of the decision to build what is now the first stage of SMWSA. Accordingly, the report advocates for the extension of the southwest rail link and the full extension of what is now the SMWSA project to Macarthur station. It was agnostic about which part of	
	the corridor would be the first stage.	

Question (refer to the enclosed annotated transcript	Answer
for reference numbers)	
9	The disclosure of commercial fees or terms is commercial in confidence. Please note that the Western Sydney Rail Alliance members each paid an equal amount, which went towards preparing a needs report and resourcing of the advocacy campaign. Taylor Street Advisory was not engaged as a lobbyist by Celestino for the Western Sydney Rail Alliance. The Western Sydney Rail Alliance was an association of various entities (refer to the list above in the response to Question 8) comprising many public and private entities advocating for rail in the general region, as explained in the response to Question 8.
10	We acknowledge The Hon. Mr Primrose's request for a list of all consultants Celestino engaged with in relation to Sydney Science Park across all disciplines and fields. Over 310 consultants and vendors have been engaged on many aspects of the Sydney Science Park project since 2010, including civil engineering, town planning, urban visioning, wastewater management, ecology, traffic solutions, geotechnical, legal, accounting, sustainability and marketing. The specifics of the consultants and vendors and the terms of their engagements or work product are commercial in confidence information; are generally the subject of confidentiality obligations via the consultancy engagement agreements; and/or contain private individuals' information that is subject to privacy legislation. Based on a review of the available records, to the best of our knowledge, the government relations consultants that we have engaged is a matter of public record via the NSW Electoral Commission Register: Chikarovski & Associates – not currently engaged. Taylor Street Advisory – currently engaged to provide strategic government relations advice to Celestino generally, not only for Sydney Science Park.
11	Taylor Street Advisory provides us with general strategic advice on matters related to government relations as they relate to our business. We then lead the engagement with the government directly, as this is our preference.
12	Refer to Annexure 1 of this table.
13	For context, The Hon. Mr Latham's statement that preceded this question was, "The main change that comes out of the material is that two years after your final approval, you wanted to turn it into a 30,000-dwelling housing estate. That's the main change that we can see and what appears to be the reason why the knowledge-based jobs and none of the investment has ever been delivered." We assume that "final approval" means the rezoning of Sydney Science Park in 2016. In November 2018, Celestino made a public submission on the Aerotropolis Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan Stage
	1 (LUIIP), released by the NSW Government as part of its rezoning of the Aerotropolis. The LUIIP was one of the first steps taken by the Government to plan and rezone the entire Aerotropolis.

Question (refer to	Answer	
the enclosed annotated transcript for reference numbers)		
	Part of Celestino's submission to the LUIIP was that if Sydney Science Park and the adjacent landholdings owned by Celestino were amalgamated and included in the Aerotropolis, then Celestino felt it to highlight to the NSW Government that we believed our total landholding capacity was significant enough for them to consider the dwelling and retail caps be lifted to 30,000 and 130,000sqm respectively, as well as height increases. It is important to note that the total size of the landholdings the subject of our LUIIP submission was 490 hectares, and the submission was made in the context of potentially all new planning controls to those in the Penrith Local Environmental Plan (being the instrument governing the 2016 rezoning approval). Sydney Science Park comprised only 287 hectares of the LUIIP submission.	
	In any event, the Government did not act on this submission and the additional landholdings are not included the Aerotropolis.	
14	Internal modelling of this nature is confidential.	
15	For context, Question 15 was preceded by a discussion on a meeting The Hon. Mr Latham advised occurred on 23 October 2019 between John Vassallo, former Celestino CEO, Chris Brown from the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue, and a summary of that meeting prepared by Minister Stokes' advisers. Celestino has not been provided with a copy of the document to which The Hon. Mr Latham referred, and so is only able to respond to the extract of the document that is in the transcript.	
	The summary extract refers to Celestino's 2018 LUIIP submission. As explained in response to Question 13 above, the 2018 LUIIP submission was in relation to a much larger parcel of land than only Sydney Science Park. It was also in the context of the potentially different planning controls that the Aerotropolis rezoning process could introduce. These different planning controls could have allowed for more housing and employment-generating activities.	
	Therefore, it is not accurate if the summary prepared by Minister Stokes' advisors says or that that the LUIIP submission sought to alter the planning controls for Sydney Science Park only, or if that inference is drawn by a reader of the summary. The 2018 LUIIP submission was for more land than Sydney Science Park, and was in the context of potentially different planning controls.	
	It is also incorrect to characterise the inclusion of the land immediately to the west" as a "separate measure", as is shown on page 25 of the transcript. A review of the LUIIP submission will confirm that all 490 hectares of land were the subject of the increased density and heights.	
	We would like to take this opportunity to again address the statement by The Hon. Mr Latham, which appears on page 25 of the transcript, that Celestino attended the hearing "to mislead this Committee, under oath, about what you've tried to do with planning officials and ministerial advisers in moving from a science park with 12,000 knowledge-based jobs to 30,000 residential dwellings—all clearly documented here—time after time?"	



Question (refer to	Answer	
the enclosed annotated transcript for reference numbers)		
	It is very important to Celestino that the Committee understands we have never held any intention to mislead them, nor do we consider that we have done so. We reiterate what was said by Mr Camilleri in response to this question during the hearing on 31 October 2024: we did not attend the hearing to mislead the Committee. We attended in good faith. We were asked a range of questions without notice that spanned many years; that referred to documents that were prepared years ago by people other than Mr Scard or Mr Camilleri; or that concerned meetings that Mr Camilleri and Mr Scard had not attended. Mr Camilleri and Mr Scard responded in the best way that was possible in the circumstances, or otherwise took questions on notice so that the relevant issue in question could be considered further. Any suggestion that we intended to, or that we did, mislead the Committee is categorically rejected.	
	Moreover, the transcript demonstrates that at times the participants were speaking at cross-purposes. For example, the discussion on page 23 of the transcript concerns Celestino's 2018 LUIIP submission. Mr Scard answered a question from The Hon. Mr Farlow regarding the LUIIP submission. At the top of page 24 of the transcript, The Hon. Mr Latham then characterises the answer given by Mr Scard about the 2018 LUIIP submission as being in relation to a meeting held 3 years later, in 2021, with Mr Whitworth from the Department of Planning. We hope that our responses to the questions on notice have cleared up the confusion that prevailed during the hearing.	
	As to the substance of the statement by The Hon. Mr Latham that Celestino's intention for Sydney Science Park is "moving from a science park with 12,000 knowledge-based jobs to 30,000 residential dwellings", it is important for the Committee to appreciate that Sydney Science Park has always been approved for residential dwelling purposes. The ability for people to live near where they work is, and always has been, important to the vision of Sydney Science Park. This has been documented in all planning submissions for Sydney Science Park, which are publicly available, since the project's inception. Furthermore, Celestino has never sought to walk back any employment-generating activity. Creating knowledge-based jobs remains a cornerstone of the vision for Sydney Science Park.	
16	There is a highlighted section at the bottom of page 26 of the transcript that has been identified as a question on notice for Celestino to answer. On review of this question, it appears that The Hon. Mr Latham was to provide to Celestino the documents to which he was referring so we are able to respond. For ease of reference, the exchange is below and we have highlighted the most relevant section:	
	The Hon. MARK LATHAM: These documents indicate in 2013 you were telling Penrith council, and subsequently the State Government, you had a high expectation that there would be a train station on the site. JOHN CAMILLERI: I'll have to take that on notice because I'm not aware of saying that to Penrith council. The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Celestino did, clearly, in the documentation we've got. JOHN CAMILLERI: If that information could be provided to us, we can respond to it. I don't have that information.	

Question (refer to the enclosed annotated transcript for reference	Answer
numbers)	
17	Based on historical correspondence available in Celestino's records, Urbis, on behalf of Celestino, made a formal submission (dated 6 August 2015) to the Outer Sydney Orbital Corridor Preservation Study. The submission proposed an alignment for the Outer Sydney Orbital west of Sydney Science Park which encumbered land owned by Celestino in lieu of traversing Sydney Science Park.
	From mid-2015 to mid-2016, Celestino wrote to the following people as part of Celestino's advocacy work to minimise the impact of the Outer Sydney Orbital on Sydney Science Park:
	 TfNSW (various staff including Geoff Cahill, Project Director, Corridors Preservation, Transport Networks Freight, Strategy & Planning) Ray Williams Marise Payne Tanya Davies
	The correspondence from mid-2015 to mid-2016 outlined Celestino concerns about the Outer Sydney Orbital corridor proposed by TfNSW. In response, Celestino proposed an alignment to the west of Sydney Science Park, which encumbered land owned by Celestino. This was not ideal but was preferable to the material damage that would be done to Sydney Science Park if the proposed alignment remained. An alternative route further to east of Twin Creeks was discussed as an alternative. The final decision on the route was determined by TfNSW. We note that the final route did not follow the alignments discussed by Celestino.
18	To our knowledge, the final decision to align the Outer Sydney Orbital to the eastern side of Sydney Science Park was made by TfNSW.
19	To our knowledge, Taylor Street Advisory was engaged to provide government relations advice and Celestino engaged in the advocacy that is detailed in the response to Question 17 above.
20	Celestino and CSIRO have a commercial agreement to deliver the Sydney Science Park Urban Living Lab. CSIRO's contribution to the Urban Living Lab budget is in-kind (30%) and Celestino's contribution is cash and in-kind (70%). The Sydney Science Park-Urban Living Lab, in partnership with Sydney Water, Penrith City Council and Macquarie University, successfully applied for government grant funding (which included Celestino's funding contribution as a condition of the government grant process) to establish an arboretum at Sydney Science Park. Unfortunately, due to the delays caused by the NSW Government Aerotropolis Precinct Planning, the grant funding was reallocated to another location (Australian Botanical Garden, Mount Annan).

Question (refer to the enclosed annotated transcript for reference numbers)	Answer	
21	 ANSTO Westmead Medical Precinct University of Technology Sydney Macquarie University University of NSW Centre for Innovative Medical Research NSW Smart Sensing Network Mitsui & Co NEC Uniting Church of Australia The Quarter, Penrith Powerhouse Museum Centre For Organic Research & Education Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District 	
22	Consistent with the evidence given by Sydney Water Corporation, this agreement is commercial in confidence and cannot be fully disclosed because it details commercially sensitive information.	
23	This was a self-funded trip (i.e. Celestino covered all its expenses and did not receive government funding).	

Annexure 1 to the Questions on Notice response table

Development	Date Approved	Status at the acquisition date
Staged Torrens Title Subdivision x 7 Lots and associated civil engineering, stormwater and earth works (including Precinct 1 Loop Road)	20 February 2018 (Modified on 17 July 2019)	
Land remediation works	23 May 2017	Works complete, except on the overhead power poles.
Commercial and laboratory building for Baiada (10,000sqm of non-residential GFA)	7 March 2018	Not commenced. Consent lapsed on 7 March 2020.
Roads, stormwater and commercial subdivision works	9 June 2017	Lapse date extended due to COVID-19 provisions of the EP&A Act.
		CC Design for phase 2 complete.
Dam de-watering and site clearing	13 September 2018	Not commenced. As a result of COVID 19 provisions this consent would lapse 13 September 2025 if not commenced beforehand.
Potable water lead-in	25 May 2018	Works complete.
Water recycling facility, access road and associated earthworks and site works	11 December 2018	Lapse date extended due to COVID-19 provisions of the EP&A Act. Not commenced.
	Staged Torrens Title Subdivision x 7 Lots and associated civil engineering, stormwater and earth works (including Precinct 1 Loop Road) Land remediation works Commercial and laboratory building for Baiada (10,000sqm of non-residential GFA) Roads, stormwater and commercial subdivision works Dam de-watering and site clearing Potable water lead-in Water recycling facility, access road and associated earthworks	Staged Torrens Title Subdivision x 7 Lots and associated civil engineering, stormwater and earth works (including Precinct 1 Loop Road) Land remediation works Commercial and laboratory building for Baiada (10,000sqm of non-residential GFA) Roads, stormwater and commercial subdivision works Dam de-watering and site clearing Potable water lead-in Water recycling facility, access road and associated earthworks 20 February 2018 (Modified on 17 July 2019) 7 March 2018 7 March 2018 13 September 2018 11 December 2018



Supplementary Questions Response Table

Supplementary Question	Answer
What directions, instructions, targets or KPIs or any other guidance have you provided to any lobbyists engaged by Celestino with relation to the Sydney Science Park development?	Based on historical correspondence available in Celestino's records, Chikarovski & Associates and Taylor Street Advisory were engaged to provide strategic advice to Celestino on various planning and development matters, including the original planning proposal to rezone Sydney Science Park.
What metrics do you use to measure the success of that investment in a lobbyist? Are they paid on an outcomes basis and/or paid a retainer fee?	We engage advisors on government relations. We do not have "metrics" to measure success. We do not pay government relations advisors on an "outcomes basis". We make judgement calls on whether we feel we are getting sound advice on how to deal with the various government departments.
 Please provide details of any updates or meetings had with a lobbyist in relation to their work on behalf of Celestino in relation to the Sydney Science Park project. 	In the course of an engagement with a consultant, Celestino would typically meet fortnightly or monthly for project updates, or as otherwise required. Meeting cadence would depend on issues or external factors such as government decisions/processes at any given time.
4. Please provide details regarding all industry groups, associations, peak bodies, advocacy organisations or think tanks, or any other similar body, that Celestino or any of its associated entities are associated with or members of.	 Property Council of Australia UDIA (NSW & QLD) Committee for Sydney NSW Business Chamber (Business Western Sydney) Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue American Chamber of Commerce Australian Museum Trust (as a sponsor of the Eureka Awards (promoting the understanding of science category) Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce McKell Institute Penrith Performing & Visual Arts (as a sponsor) Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce
5. Do you recall Matthew Scard and John Camilleri meeting with Planning Department representatives, Brett Whitworth and others, on 7 June 2021 where you requested:	Mr Scard and Mr Camilleri met with Mr Brett Whitworth, Deputy Secretary, Greater Sydney Place and Infrastructure, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on 7 June 2021 to express Celestino's concerns with the then draft version of the Aerotropolis Precinct Plan and its potential to adversely affect Sydney Science Park and the Northern Gateway.

Supplementary Question	Answer
	These concerns were primarily:
	 The draft Precinct Plan ignored the existing approved planning controls for Sydney Science Park and proposed the introduction of new and costly planning controls. Our validly obtained 2016 rezoning was being overwritten, meaning years of wasted cost and effort. The 3,400 cap on dwelling numbers remained, even though the changes in the built form planning controls meant that 55 hectares of land would sit untouched and not be available for housing. The built-form controls were changing from detached dwellings to focus on high density around the Metro station, meaning that the density was concentrated around the Metro station and good, viable land that could be used to house people were to be left vacant. The draft Precinct Plan scrapped detached dwellings from being able to be built at Sydney Science Park. Celestino has been clear from the beginning, and it is widely accepted in the development industry, that greenfield sites initially need detached dwellings. The medium and high-density built form follows as the residential population grows to a point where the market demand for this type of residential product becomes commercially viable to deliver. The proposed controls in the draft Precinct Plan undermined our commercial agreements. For example, the draft Precinct Plans prohibited sewerage reticulation as a permitted use, which would have made our agreement with Sydney Water impossible. There were numerous instances within the draft Precinct Plan of development controls that would have made it simply unfeasible and unviable to develop land pursuant to the Precinct Plan. As a specific example, SSP's then-existing planning controls (that is, those in the 2016 rezoning approval) required 10,000 sqm of non-residential development to be carried out before any residential dwellings could be developed. The draft Precinct Plan ignored this existing planning control and proposed to change this so that we would need to provide 47,500 sqm of non-residentia
	750 residential dwellings. The additional cost for Celestino to comply with this new trigger was estimated to be in the vicinity of \$93 million.
(a) Developing extra detached dwellings to	We have not been provided with any documentation in support of this question. However,
better "activate the site" and support a new school; and	the context of the discussions with Mr Brett Whitworth on 7 June 2021 was associated with the prohibition of detached homes within Sydney Science Park proposed by the Draft Western Sydney Aerotropolis Planning Framework. Celestino reiterated that the inability to build detached houses jeopardised the timely activation of Sydney Science Park. Without suitable detached homes, there is little attraction for people to move to the Aerotropolis in its



Supplementary Question	Answer
	formative years. It was highlighted that this would lead to the potential loss of investment in business and related job opportunities and failure to unlock the additional housing supply that is needed in Western Sydney. Our request was to reinstate detached homes as a permissible use, consistent with the original rezoning for Sydney Science Park in 2016.
(b) Lifting the development caps and triggers to allow increased residential development?	Please refer to paragraphs 2 and 5 above for explanations of these two points. The concerns were raised in relation to the draft versions of the Precinct Plan as it stood in 2021. The Department listened to some of our concerns and made adjustments to the final version of the Precinct Plans when they were released in March 2022. The 3,400 dwelling cap and the requirement to develop 10,000 sqm of commercial floor space before any residential dwellings were included in the final version of the Precinct Plan and apply to Sydney Science Park to this day.
In light of this meeting you both attended, will you now revise your evidence that Celestine didn't seek approval for a substantial housing estate at the Science Park at Luddenham?	Celestino stated at the hearing on 31 October 2024 that it remains committed to its vision for Sydney Science Park, which is to be a mixed-use specialised centre that delivers world-class amenities, open spaces and parks and knowledge-based employment in areas of retail, health, education, and research, together with housing. Celestino would be supportive of more housing at Sydney Science Park, which is much needed by the community and would enhance Sydney Science Park's vision to be a place where people can live, work, learn, play and trade. Celestino has never expressed a desire for Sydney Science Park to only be a residential estate.

