We set the standard

By Alison Mills

PARRAMATTA is the “perfect model” for other key centres in western Sydney to follow because of three decades of government attention and the relocation of jobs.

This is the view of Professor Phillip O’Neill, Urban Research Centre director at the University of Western Sydney’s Parramatta campus.

Professor O’Neill is the author of a major report, Employment Strategies for North West and West Central Sydney, commissioned by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils and funded by the NSW Planning Department.

It was launched at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Parramatta last Wednesday.

The report says western Sydney will fall dramatically short of the State Government’s Metropolitan Strategy jobs target of 280,000 over the next two decades because of a lack of investment in infrastructure in the recent past.

However, Professor O’Neill told The Sun Parramatta was better placed to grow and prosper in that time.

“Parramatta is the perfect model for the other key centres in western Sydney,” he said. However, Professor O’Neill said it didn’t make sense to expect other centres in the region to perform as well in terms of job generation. “Unfortunately the regional economy did not undertake the adjustments during the period of prosperity to make it strong during the downturn, and in the long term.”

He said the current economic climate was an opportunity to draw the attention of the government at a time when “they are spending money to generate jobs”.

The report said in addition to employment generation, key issues to be addressed in “strategic centres” like Parramatta and Westmead in the future included public spaces and safety, transport accessibility, residential amenity and urban design.