

## 10.4. Draft Community Engagement Strategy

<b>AUTHOR</b>	Catrin Hobart, Executive Manager Corporate Affairs
<b>ENDORSED BY</b>	Therese Cole, Chief Executive Officer
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	1. Draft Community Engagement Strategy [ <b>10.4.1</b> - 30 pages]
<b>CSP LINK</b>	5. Our Civic Leadership 5.1 Lead North Sydney's strategic direction 5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council to exhibit the draft 2025-2029 Community Engagement Strategy including the Community Participation Plan.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- The new 2025-2029 Community Engagement Strategy (CES) replaces the previous North Sydney Community Engagement Protocol (adopted in November 2019), in line with the Office of Local Government guideline to review the CES every four years.
- The new CES follows best practice recommendations from the Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook for Local Councils in NSW (2021) and aligns with the community engagement principles in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
- The Community Engagement Strategy (CES) provides a framework for how North Sydney Council will engage with the community to support the development of its plans, policies, programs, and key activities. It provides clear guidelines detailing how, when, and with whom Council will engage, ensuring that every step of the process is transparent and accountable.
- The CES also includes the Community Participation Plan (CPP) that sets out when and how Council will undertake community engagement across its specific planning functions. This is required under the Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).
- As part of the new CES, eight new Strategic Advisory Reference (STAR) committees will be established to provide strategic advice and expert input towards the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. These Committees will assist the Council to leverage the social capital within North Sydney to enhance strategic outcomes.
- Approval is now sought to publicly exhibit the draft CES and invite community feedback from 14 May to 11 June 2025. Following this consultation, the CES will be presented to Council for adoption.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. THAT** Council undertake community consultation on the draft 2025-2029 Community Engagement Strategy (including the Community Participation Plan) attached to this report from 14 May to 11 June 2025.
- 2. THAT** Council receive a report on the outcomes and feedback from the community engagement on the draft 2025-2029 Community Engagement Strategy, at the meeting of Council scheduled for 23 June 2025.

## **Background**

All Councils in NSW are required to comply with the State Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Guidelines to ensure that they plan holistically for the future and deliver the maximum benefit to the community.

The Community Engagement Strategy (CES) is a Council-adopted strategy, prepared as a requirement under Section 402(A) of the Local Government Act 1993 and the Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) Framework.

The Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) also requires Councils to develop a Community Participation Plan (CPP) that sets out when and how they will undertake community engagement across their specific planning functions. The requirements of the CPP have been incorporated into this strategy, including Appendix A which specifically addresses community engagement in planning functions.

The Office of Local Government Guidelines specify the Community Engagement Strategy be reviewed and adopted by Council every four years. This document has been prepared in alignment with those guidelines.

## **Developing the CES**

The 2025-2029 CES builds on the previous North Sydney Community Engagement Protocol adopted in November 2019. It aligns with the best practice recommendations from the Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook for Local Councils in NSW (2021) as well as the Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure guidance material to Councils for Community Participation Plans (2024).

The strategy is based on the social justice principles of equity, access, participation, and rights, and aligns with the community engagement principles in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. It also follows the internationally recognised IAP2 (International Association of Public Participation) Spectrum to guide community engagement efforts (excluding regulated planning matters).

## **The Strategy**

The Community Engagement Strategy (CES) provides a framework for how North Sydney Council will engage with the community to support the development of its plans, policies, programs, and key activities. It provides clear guidelines detailing how, when, and with whom Council will engage, ensuring that every step of the process is transparent and accountable.

The strategy informs the community about our engagement approach; explains why we engage and how the community can participate; and details the methods we use as well as the legislated timeframes for public exhibition.

The CES also includes the Community Participation Plan which outlines how Council will engage with the North Sydney community on land use planning and development matters.

Having a CPP is a requirement under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). However, Community engagement on applications for State Significant Development, State Significant Infrastructure, and Planning Proposals where Council is not the nominated Planning Proposal Authority, are not covered in this plan. This process, including notification, is managed by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure.

### **Strategic Advisory Reference (STAR) Committees**

As part of the 2025-2029 Community Engagement Strategy, we propose the establishment of eight new Strategic Advisory Reference (STAR) committees to provide strategic advice and expert input towards the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. These Committees will enable Council to leverage the social capital of North Sydney and improve strategic outcomes for the community.

Each group is aligned to one of our strategic directions, with members providing expert knowledge, advice, and strong community connections. A phased implementation approach for each committee will be adopted with a draft timeline for establishment listed below.

The new STAR Committees will be:

- Access and Inclusion (ongoing) - the existing Access and Inclusion Committee will become a STAR committee and continue to operate under its Council-endorsed Terms of Reference.
- Culture and Creativity (Jan-June 2026)
- Economic Development (Jan-June 2026)
- Environment (July-Dec 2025)
- First Nations (Jan-June 2026)
- Integrated Transport (July-Dec 2025)
- Open Space and Recreation (July-Dec 2025)
- Social Inclusion (July-Dec 2026)
- Youth Council (July-Dec 2026)

If adopted, the STAR Committees will replace Council's previous Streetscape Committees (Cremorne, Crows Nest, Kirribilli, and Neutral Bay shopping areas) and Reference Groups (Environment, Sport and Recreation, and Sustainable Transport).

Council's three legislative committees (Audit and Risk Improvement, Traffic, North Sydney Local Planning Panel) and 23 precinct committees (19 active, four inactive) will continue to operate as usual.

The STAR Committees will have no delegation of authority nor delegated powers and will be advisory only. They will not be decision-making bodies.



## **Exhibition**

Subject to Council approval, the draft CES will be exhibited from 14 May to 11 June 2025. Following consideration of community feedback, the CES will then be presented to Council for adoption on 23 June 2025.

## **Next Steps**

When the CES is presented to Council for adoption, the draft Terms of Reference and Expression of Interest (EOI) membership recruitment plan for the new STAR Committees will also be presented. EOI recommendations will be reported to Council in line with the phased approach to implementation.

## **Consultation requirements**

Section 402A of the Local Government Act 1993 states that Councils must establish and implement a Community Engagement Strategy. Whilst exhibition of the CES is not required under the Act, it is best practice to exhibit the draft CES for at least 28 days.

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) Division 2.6, a CES must be exhibited for 28 days if it is combined with a Community Participation Plan.

This report seeks approval to publicly exhibit the draft Community Engagement Strategy including the Community Participation Plan from 14 May to 11 June 2025, in accordance with the legislative consultation requirements.

## **Financial/Resource Implications**

The CES and CPP define North Sydney's engagement framework outlining how Council will consult with the community in relation to its planned and proposed activities. There are no financial implications in relation to this recommendation.

Redefining advisory committees within the CES is expected to result in improved utilisation of Council resources.

## **Legislation**

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) Division 2.6, a CES must be exhibited for 28 days if it is combined with a Community Participation Plan.

The draft 2025-2029 Community Engagement Plan is presented to Council in accordance with this requirement.

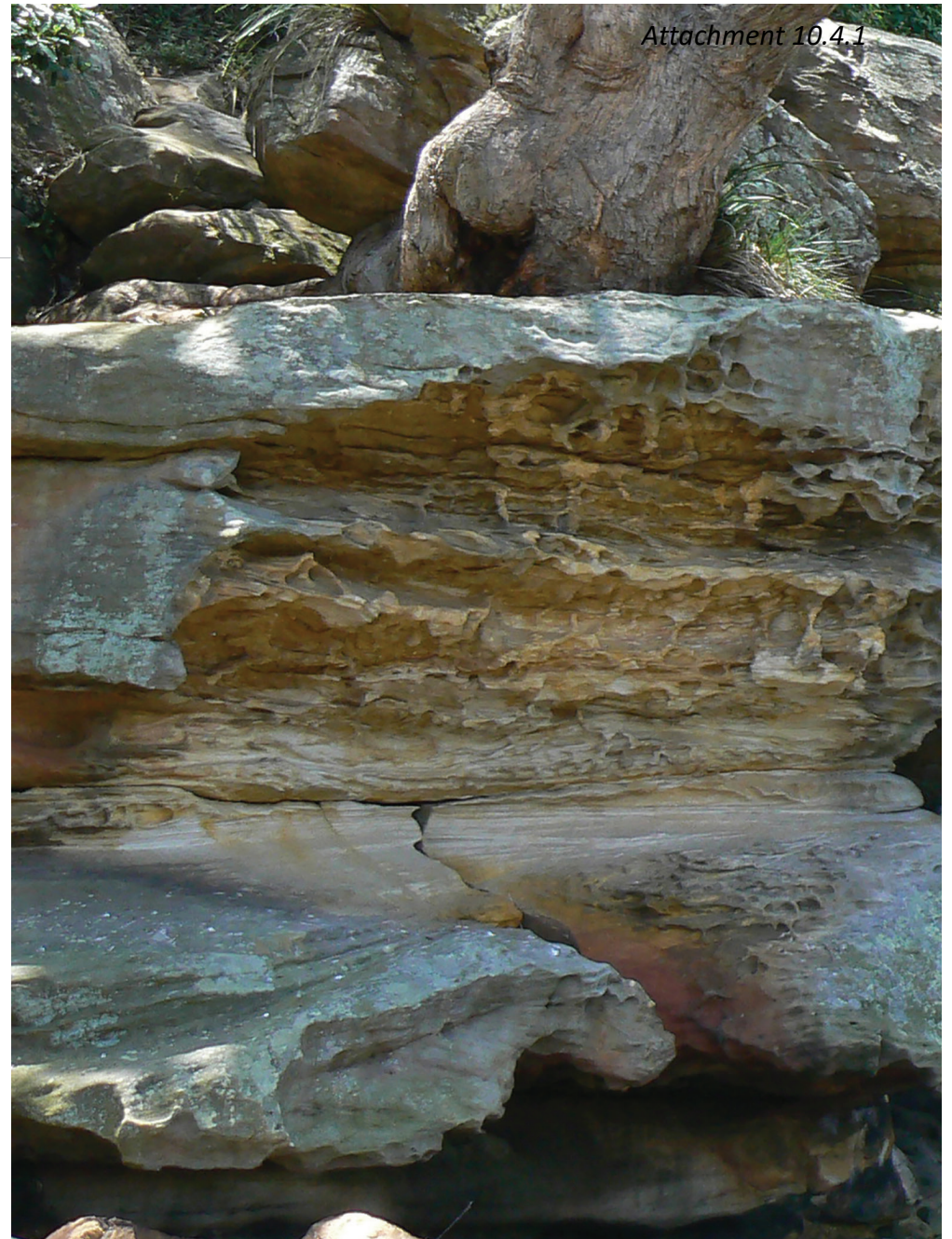


# Community Engagement Strategy 2025-2029



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## Recognition of the Cammeraygal People

*We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of North Sydney local government area (LGA), the Cammeraygal people.*

We recognise the Cammeraygal people as the Traditional Owners of the area known today as North Sydney.

We acknowledge that the alienation of Cammeraygal Country followed the first local land grant in 1794 which occurred without consultation, treaty, or compensation.

Western archaeological evidence shows that Aboriginal people lived in the North Sydney area at least 5,800 years ago, and likely for thousands more. That evidence is precious. We seek to preserve it and through that to better understand Cammeraygal connection to Country.

After North Sydney Council was formed in 1890 through the merging of three boroughs, the word Cammeraygal was included on its coat of arms. Today it holds a central position in the Council's logo as a reminder of the long and ongoing Indigenous heritage of this place.

In recent years, the spelling of Cammeraygal has varied to include Gammeraigal and Gai-maragal as our community has sought to reflect and honour the heritage of First Nations people in a more culturally appropriate manner.



## Message from the Mayor

Community engagement is at the heart of what makes North Sydney such a special place to live, work, and visit. Our strong tradition of public participation reflects our shared collective commitment to active involvement in local life and decision-making.

This Community Engagement Strategy is a testament to our dedication to ensuring that every voice is heard and valued in shaping North Sydney's future. It outlines our plans to foster a truly collaborative approach to decision-making between Council and community, and details our commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness in every aspect of this process. By clearly defining who, when, and how we will engage, this strategy provides the framework needed to ensure meaningful and impactful participation.

Engaging with the community is a fundamental aspect of creating vibrant, resilient, and connected communities. This strategy will help us better understand your needs, address local issues effectively, and incorporate diverse perspectives

into our planning and decision-making processes. It reinforces our belief that effective community engagement leads to better decisions, stronger relationships, and a more dynamic and equitable community.

Through this strategy, we aim to build on our tradition of active public participation and continue working together to enhance the quality of life in North Sydney.

I encourage you all to familiarise yourselves with this strategy and embrace the opportunities to actively participate in your local community and meaningfully engage with the decisions that shape your future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zoë Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Cr Zoë Baker, Mayor of North Sydney

# What is community engagement?

Community engagement is a process that encourages the community to contribute their thoughts and actively participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. It is essential for building trust, strengthening relationships and helping Council better understand local needs, values, and aspirations.

The Community Engagement Strategy (CES) provides a framework for how North Sydney Council will engage with the community to support the development of its plans, policies, programs and key activities.

It provides clear guidelines detailing how, when, and with whom Council will engage, ensuring that every step of the process is transparent and accountable. This strategy aligns with both legislative and ethical standards, ensuring that community input supports informed decision-making and responsive governance. It's an ongoing conversation that allows us to build a stronger understanding of our community and helps us make better decisions.

*“Community engagement helps communities shape their own futures and informs the vision and direction of council.”*

Office of Local Government

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Community Engagement Strategy is based on the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights and aligns with the community engagement principles in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. These principles ensure effective, transparent, and inclusive engagement.

These principles inform the actions we take, the choices we make, the behaviours we demonstrate and the interactions we have.



### PURPOSE

Engagement activities will be guided by a clearly defined purpose outlining objectives, timelines, and resource needs.



### RESOURCING

Adequate resourcing, including staff and financial support, will be allocated according to the project's complexity and impact.



### TIMING

Engagement will occur at appropriate stages in the project lifecycle to allow sufficient time for meaningful stakeholder input.



### INCLUSION

Engagement efforts will be inclusive, aiming to reach a diverse audience and provide information in accessible formats.



### CLARITY

Information provided will be accurate, unbiased, and presented in plain language, with technical details clearly explained.



### RESPONSIVENESS

We will offer regular updates and clear feedback on how community input has influenced decisions.



### IMPROVEMENT

Engagement practices will be evaluated regularly to identify strengths and areas for enhancement, using feedback to refine future efforts.



## Why we engage

Community engagement is an inclusive process that makes sure the community has an opportunity to be informed or have a say on the decisions that affect them. We value the diversity of opinions, interests and experience that our community brings. Meaningful engagement helps us to deliver better plans, projects and services, consider a broad range of options and harness ideas to inform our decision-making, identify solutions for our community's needs and meet our legislative and regulatory requirements.

### WHY GET INVOLVED?

You can help shape North Sydney. By participating in community engagement activities, you can:

- share your ideas and meet new people
- gain insight into the issues affecting North Sydney
- learn more about Council and the many services it delivers
- hear what other people think about a particular issue
- provide feedback and influence decisions that impact you
- get more information about important plans and projects
- learn how decisions are made by the Council
- help raise awareness of issues
- support better outcomes for the community, economy and environment.

*Genuine and meaningful communication and engagement results in better outcomes for the community.*









# When we engage

Generally, the greater the level of impact and reach of a project, the greater the level of community engagement we will undertake to inform our decision-making.

There are some circumstances when community consultation or engagement is not appropriate or practical. Reasons for not engaging include:

- Operational matters informed by legislation, contractual obligations or previously adopted policies and plans
- Risk to public health and safety
- Confidentiality is required or matter is commercially sensitive
- The decision supports a matter where consultation has previously occurred
- An immediate decision is required (e.g. in an emergency).

## CHALLENGES TO ENGAGEMENT

While we can't engage on every issue, we still ensure the community is well-informed about Council's plans and projects. We aim for consistent, simple engagement that helps people both understand an issue and participate. By planning early and adhering to our principles, we can address potential challenges to engagement including:

- **Balancing different views:** we engage affected communities to understand and balance competing needs and expectations.
- **Stakeholder imbalance:** we use inclusive, accessible methods to ensure all voices are heard equally.
- **Hard-to-Reach groups:** we create targeted activities to overcome participation barriers.
- **Engagement fatigue:** we combine engagements by theme or location to make participation easy and efficient.
- **Community expectations:** we provide the background context and information for each engagement, helping the community understand what they can and can't influence due to project timings, resources, legislation, budgetary constraints etc.
- **Lack of trust in the process:** we follow principles, continuously evaluate and improve our engagement approach, and maintain transparency in decision-making by providing feedback on engagement outcomes.

# Legislative requirements

The Community Engagement Strategy is a Council-adopted strategy prepared as a requirement under Section 402(A) of the Local Government Act 1993 and the Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) Framework.

The Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) also requires Councils to develop a Community Participation Plan (CPP) that sets out when and how they will undertake community engagement across their specific planning functions. The requirements of the CPP have been incorporated into this strategy, including the Appendix which specifically addresses community engagement in planning functions.

The Office of Local Government Guidelines specify the Community Engagement Strategy be reviewed and adopted by Council every four years. This document has been prepared in alignment with those guidelines.

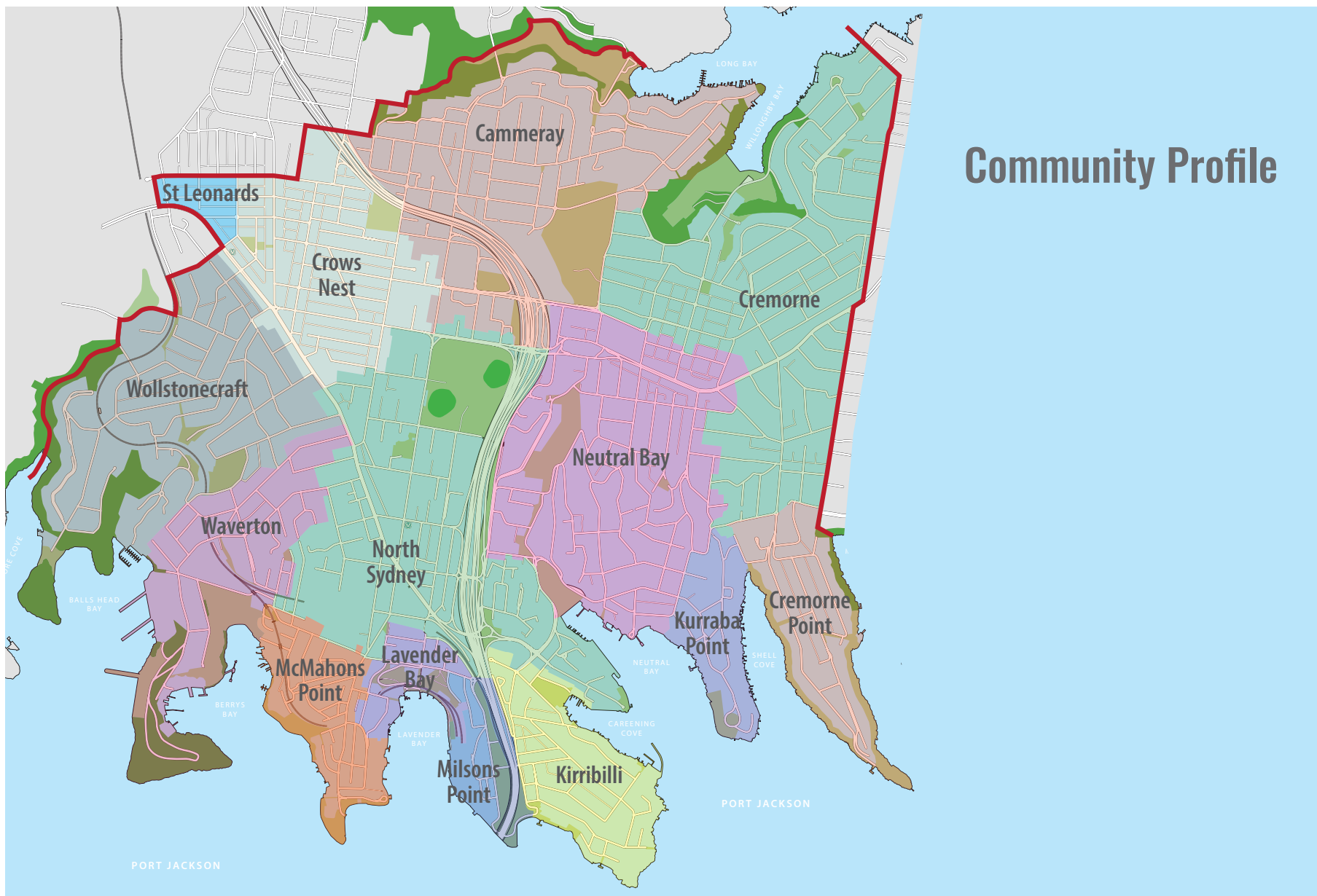
## INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING

Our approach to Integrated Planning and reporting (IP&R) is based on the legislated IP&R Framework for NSW. It is a structured framework that helps Council effectively plan for and deliver on community needs. It ensures long-term sustainability by aligning actions with available resources and fosters transparency and accountability through regular monitoring and reporting.

As detailed in the following diagram, the North Sydney Council IP&R cycle is underpinned by eight key Informing Strategies: Environment, Social Inclusion, Open Space and Recreation, Integrated Transport, Economic Development, Culture and Creativity, Housing and Governance. These strategies provide a direct link between community priorities articulated in the Community Strategic Plan and Council's Delivery Program.



Figure 1: Integrated Planning and Reporting at North Sydney





**72,000**

Estimated resident population (2023)<sup>1</sup>

**15,220**

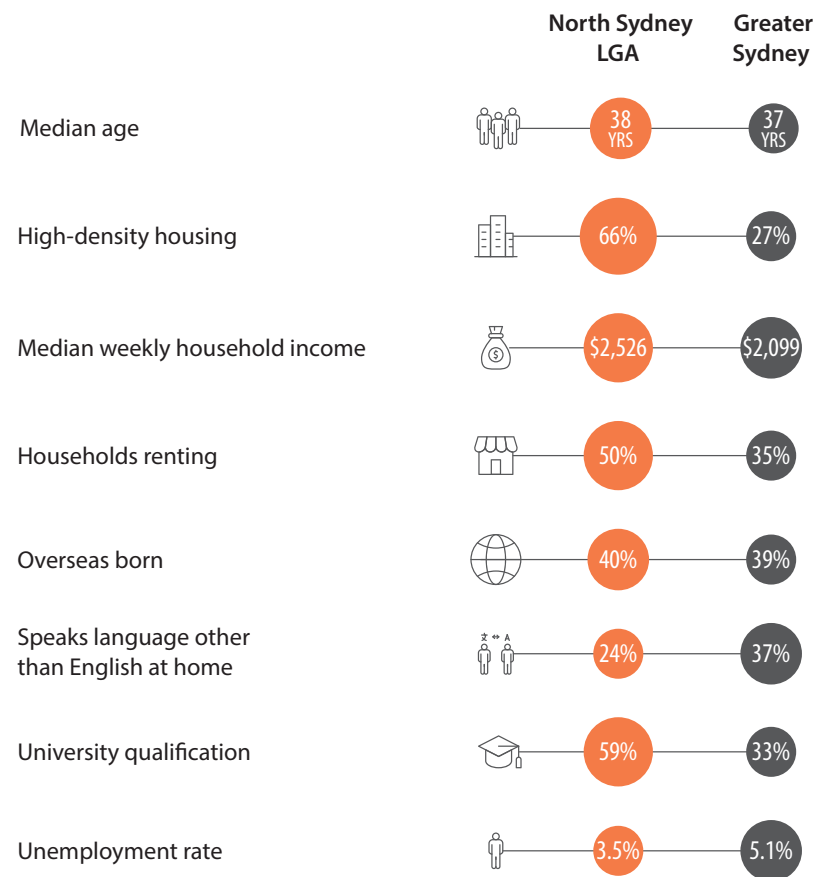
Additional residents by 2035<sup>2</sup>

**6,860**

Population density (persons/sqm) (2023)<sup>1</sup>

**80,700**

Working population (2021)<sup>3</sup>



Source:

1. Regional Population Growth, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023), via community.id. by .id (informed decisions)

2. Based on NSW Government dwelling completion targets of 5,900 (2024-29) and 3,000 (2029-35)

3. North Sydney Council Community Profile (2023), via community.id. by .id (informed decisions)

## Our stakeholders

We are committed to actively engaging with as many people as possible across our community to ensure a diverse range of backgrounds, perspectives, ideas and values are reflected in our decision-making processes. We understand that people are most interested in decisions and projects that personally impact them or their family so stakeholders can vary significantly from project to project.

Typical stakeholder groups include:

- **Business:** Chambers of Commerce, industry associations, local business owners etc
- **Community groups:** local neighbourhood groups, special interest groups, sporting groups etc
- **Council:** council staff, committees, advisory groups, volunteers and Councillors
- **Government agencies and Members of Parliament** (state and federal)
- **Media**
- **Populations:** Children and Families, First Nations, LGBTQIA+, Older people, People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, People with Disability, Students, Youth etc
- **Residents and ratepayers**
- **Schools and Educational Institutions**
- **Working people**



## Roles and responsibilities

Community engagement is a shared responsibility. We all have a role to play in participatory decision making to shape where we live, work and play.

**Council Staff:** Identify engagement opportunities, plan and deliver activities, consider feedback, and share results with decision-makers and participants. The Community Engagement team manages the Your Say North Sydney platform and coordinates all community engagement activities.

**Councillors:** Elected representatives who listen to and represent community views, facilitate communication between the community and Council, and endorse the Community Engagement Plan.

**Executive Leadership Team:** Approves engagement strategies, allocates resources, and integrates outcomes into decision-making.

**Community:** Includes residents and stakeholders who provide feedback, share ideas, and participate in engagement activities.

**Contractors:** Sometimes used to help deliver projects in line with the Community Engagement Strategy and related policies.



## How we engage

Our engagement process is split into seven steps, from planning engagement activities through to delivery, reviewing the effectiveness of our engagement and sharing information about how input from the community was used to inform our decision-making.

### SEVEN STEPS TO ENGAGEMENT SUCCESS



#### 1 ASSESS PROJECT IMPACT

We evaluate each project's potential impact on the community, categorising it as high or low, to allow us to determine the engagement level. High-impact projects may include LGA-wide strategies or major budget changes, whereas lower impact projects may include park upgrades or street works. This step also involves identifying associated risks and opportunities.



#### 2 DETERMINE ENGAGEMENT LEVEL

We determine the appropriate level of community input required based on the impact identified in Step 1. This ensures that the engagement strategy aligns with the project's importance and influence, providing a clear and effective pathway for community involvement.



#### 3 DEVELOP COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

We create a detailed plan outlining who, when, and how we will engage. This plan ensures clarity, sets expectations, and maintains transparency throughout the engagement process.



#### 4 IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

We execute the engagement plan using tailored methods to actively gather input from the community. This step ensures that participation is in line with the project's assessed impact and engagement level.



#### 5 ANALYSE FEEDBACK

We review and evaluate the collected feedback to identify key themes and insights. This analysis helps guide decision-making by highlighting community concerns and preferences.



#### 6 MAKE THE DECISION

Informed by community input and the project's impact, we make decisions that reflect the feedback received. This integration of insights ensures that outcomes are aligned with both community needs and project objectives.



#### 7 CLOSE THE LOOP


We report back to the community on how their input influenced the final decision. This step includes evaluating the engagement process and identifying areas for improvement, ensuring transparency and demonstrating the value of community participation.

## Scope of engagement (adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum)

We use the internationally recognised IAP2 (International Association of Public Participation) Spectrum to guide community engagement efforts (excluding regulated planning matters). The Spectrum outlines five levels of

public involvement: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower. This helps us to determine the appropriate scope of input from the community and the role that the community will have in the decision-making process.

### INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION



	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
<b>Public participation goal</b>	Provide balanced and objective information to assist the community in understanding the issues, problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	Obtain community feedback on issues, analysis, alternatives and decisions being considered by Council.	Work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	Partner with communities in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of a preferred solution.	Place final decision making in the hands of the public.
<b>Promise to the community</b>	Council will keep stakeholders informed.	Council will keep our stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge aspirations, concerns and issues.	Council will work with our stakeholders to ensure that concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in decisions made.	Council will look to our stakeholders for direct advice and innovation and incorporate this in Council decisions to the maximum extent possible.	Council will implement what you decide.
<b>Typical engagement methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council news &amp; e-newsletters</li> <li>• Factsheets/flyers/posters</li> <li>• Media releases</li> <li>• Noticeboards/digital displays</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Site notice</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Written notice/letters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public exhibitions</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• YourSay online consultations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drop-in sessions</li> <li>• Forums</li> <li>• Interactive maps</li> <li>• Pop-up event stalls</li> <li>• Roundtables</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council advisory groups &amp; committees</li> <li>• Precinct Committees</li> <li>• Stakeholder focus groups &amp; interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-design sessions</li> <li>• Deliberative processes</li> <li>• Working groups</li> </ul>



# Community engagement methods

We use a range of both face to face and online communication tools and engagement activities to reach the community. Engagement can be about specific projects, or ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders.

## YOUR SAY NORTH SYDNEY

Our primary online engagement platform, Your Say North Sydney, serves as a central hub for all community engagement activities. This user-friendly, accessible portal allows residents to provide feedback at their convenience and helps Council understand participant demographics to reach diverse community segments. Participants can also opt-in to receive updates on upcoming projects and engagement opportunities.

## PRECINCT COMMITTEES

For 50 years, residents across North Sydney have run regular community meetings, known as Precinct Committees, to have a voice in local matters. Precincts are open to everyone living in the area, you don't need to sign up to attend. They are a great way to increase awareness and facilitate two-way communications between Council and the community, as well as meet your neighbours.

Precinct Committees are independent but supported by Council through the sharing of information, providing modest funding and responding to resolutions passed at meetings.

You can attend your local Precinct meeting to discuss local issues or raise a motion for debate. Meetings are typically face to face, run by a volunteer chairperson and secretary elected by fellow residents and independent of Council. Search 'Precincts' on Council's website to find out more.

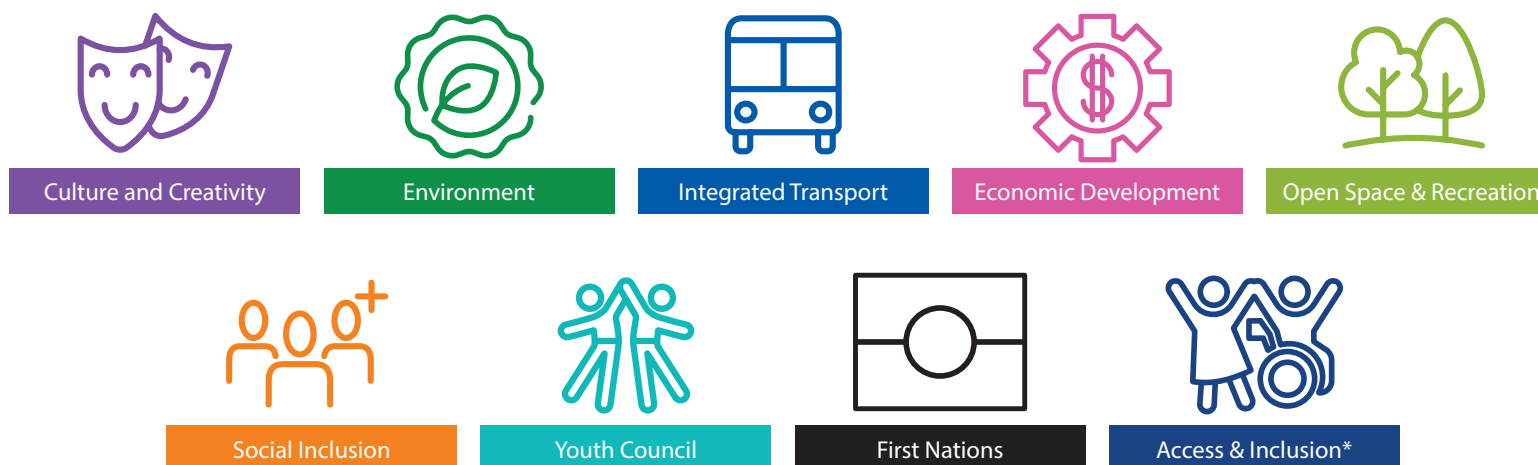
## LEGISLATED COMMITTEES

The Council also has statutory committees required by legislation which include community representatives.

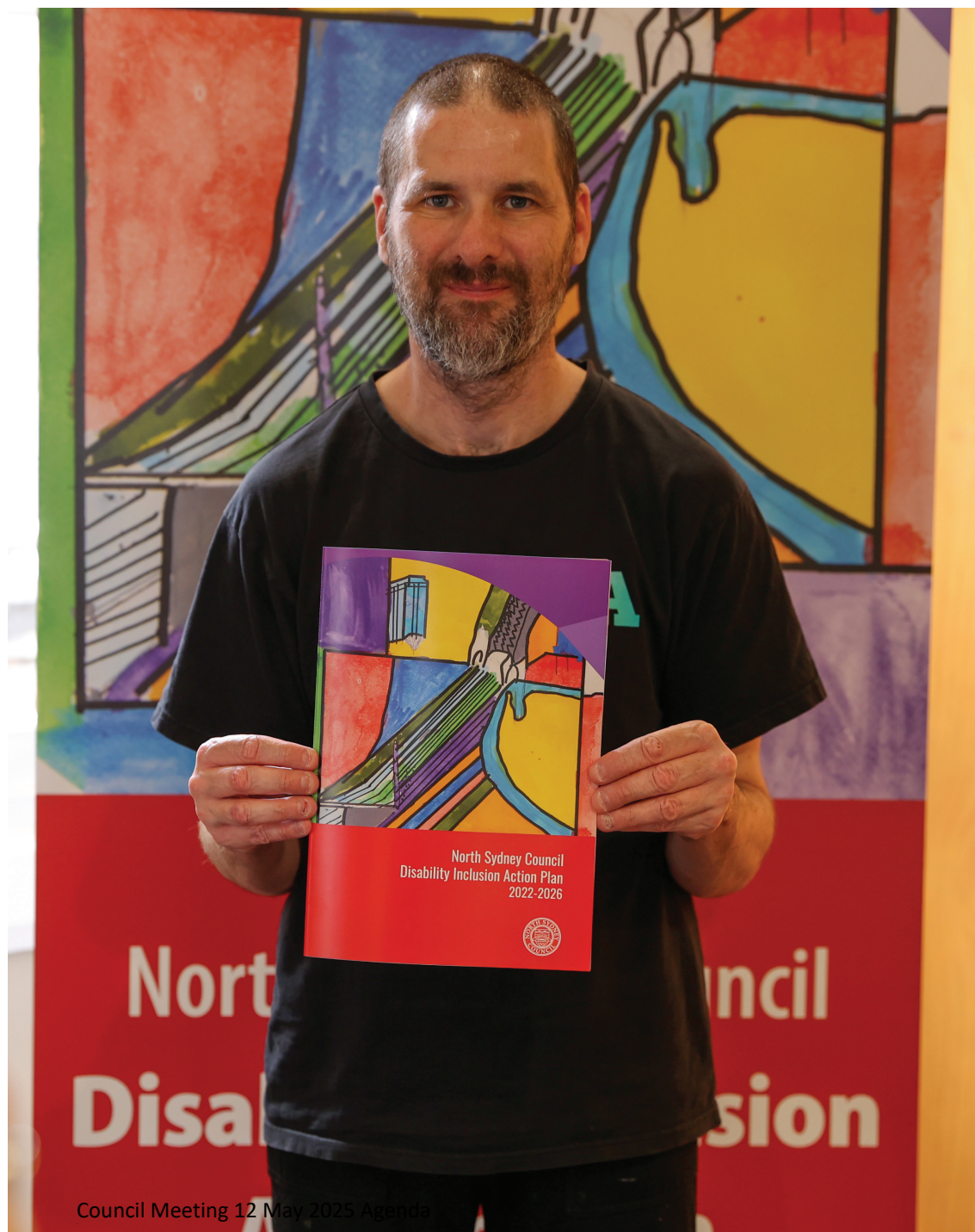
- Audit, Risk and Improvement committee (ARIC) – provides independent assurance and assistance to North Sydney Council in the effective discharge of its responsibilities for financial reporting, risk management, internal controls, governance, improvement and internal and external audit.
- North Sydney Local Planning Panel (NSLPP) – consists of independent experts who consider and determine Development Applications on behalf of Council and provide advice on other planning matters, including planning proposals.
- Traffic Committee – reviews proposed changes to traffic and parking matters and provides advice and recommendations to Council.

### STRATEGIC ADVISORY REFERENCE (STAR) COMMITTEES

As part of the 2025-2029 Community Engagement Strategy, we will establish 8 new Strategic Advisory Reference (STAR) committees to provide advice and input towards the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. Each group is aligned to one of our strategic directions with members providing expert knowledge, advice and community connections.



\*The existing Access and Inclusion Committee will also form part of these STAR committees and continue to operate under its Council endorsed terms of reference.



## HARD TO REACH AUDIENCES

Our goal is to ensure everyone can participate. We achieve this by:

- Creating safe, welcoming environments
- Respecting cultural sensitivities and needs
- Partnering with community leaders and service providers
- Using arts and creative expression to boost participation
- Asking people how they prefer to engage and acting on it
- Providing accessible venues and resources and assistance to participate where required
- Engaging at appropriate time and day for the target groups
- Using plain language and avoiding jargon
- Tailoring information to the needs of each audience
- Offering blended and multi-layered engagement methods
- Providing age-appropriate engagement opportunities, especially for large projects and LGA-wide issues.

## ACCESS AND INCLUSION

This Strategy supports key actions within the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP 2022-2026) such as inclusive and accessible community engagement events, accessibility of web content and documents and ensuring people with disabilities are better able to participate in engagement activities.

We will continue to work closely with the Access & Inclusion Strategic Advisory Committee to improve the ways we communicate and engage with the community. This includes providing information in a range of different formats: easy read versions, Auslan, video explainers, live captioning and large print to help make our information as accessible as possible.



# Implementing the Community Engagement Strategy

To ensure that community input supports informed decision-making and responsive governance, Council will implement the following activities.

- Consult on and review the Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan every four years
- Deliver best practice engagement that is meaningful, accessible and appropriate for our community
- Undertake a community satisfaction survey every two years, sharing results with the community
- Build organisational capability and understanding of Council's community engagement strategy and responsibilities
- Report on engagement in the Annual Report
- Provide feedback on engagement results and evaluate effectiveness
- Coordinate and streamline engagement activities to improve community experience.







# Closing the loop:

## LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

When you give us feedback, we make sure to consider it and keep you informed. Feedback can be submitted online, in writing, or verbally.

We analyse your feedback to identify key themes and ideas, issues and priorities. We assess any gaps in participation and information needs and identify any feedback that is out of scope or where a response to a community member is required. We then use this analysis to guide our projects and plans, incorporating suggestions where possible.

### AFTER EACH ENGAGEMENT, WE REPORT BACK ON WHAT WE HEARD AND HOW IT INFLUENCED DECISIONS.

- For smaller projects that directly impact you, we will inform you of the decision and outcome by writing or emailing you.
- For larger projects and issues, we inform the community of the decision and outcome by updating the “Your Say North Sydney” platform, sharing information on our website and in Council, committee or planning panel reports.

Where the community is asked to vote on a proposal as part of a consultation process, Council will adhere to the principle of ‘one person, one value, one vote.’ This means that when votes are counted, each person’s vote is counted only once, whether they vote as an individual or as part of a group. Council counts each individual vote for or against a proposal separately, rather than counting a majority vote from an organisation as a single vote.

For information on how we respond to planning and development matters refer to the Appendix.

# Evaluating and measuring success

We evaluate the effectiveness of engagement activities as well as community satisfaction using four key indicators: Principles, Implementation, Reach and Outcomes. We use the insights from this process to continuously improve our engagement practices.

PRINCIPLES	IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was engagement delivered in line with Council's engagement principles?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well were we able to implement our engagement plan?</li> <li>• Did participants have a clear understanding of the purpose of the engagement?</li> <li>• Were the engagement methods selected appropriate for the targeted group/participants?</li> <li>• Did the engagement methods selected successfully consider the scope of engagement, timeline and resources available?</li> <li>• How effectively were any barriers to engagement managed?</li> </ul>
REACH	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the people reached through the engagement representative of those affected by the decision or outcome?</li> <li>• Statistics collected: number of submissions/responses, visits to YourSay website, participants in engagement events / surveys etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did we achieve our desired result?</li> <li>• Were the contributions provided by participants relevant and realistic?</li> <li>• How well did we 'close the loop' with participants on the results of the engagement?</li> </ul>

We capture feedback specifically about Council's engagement approaches and activities by:

- Asking survey participants how they became aware of the consultation
- Tracking visits to Your Say North Sydney
- Questions in our biennial Community Satisfaction Survey
- Feedback forms from engagement events such as workshops, meetings, information sessions, forums etc.

# APPENDIX: Community Participation Plan

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING FUNCTIONS

The Community Participation Plan (CPP) outlines how Council will engage with the North Sydney community on land use planning and development matters. It follows the principles outlined in the Community Engagement Strategy and details how you can participate and provide feedback to Council. Having a CPP is a requirement under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

Community engagement on applications for State Significant Development, State Significant Infrastructure and Planning Proposals where Council is not the nominated Planning Proposal Authority are not covered in this plan. This process, including notification, is managed by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

## HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

There are a variety of ways to have your say on planning and development matters in North Sydney.

Some types of projects have specific engagement activities and timeframes that are determined in legislation. Council must legally abide by these although we may extend the engagement and submission timeframes if we consider it appropriate.

For non-statutory policies and initiatives, we prepare project-specific engagement plans and exhibition periods based upon the project's scope and likely impacts on the community. In some instances, particularly under the 'inform' level of the IAP2 spectrum of participation (refer to page 15), we simply provide information to the community, with no other community engagement activities.

# Public exhibition

Public exhibition plays an important role in enabling the community to participate in the planning process. Public exhibition is the official period in which draft documents or certain development applications are made available for feedback.

## WHAT IS A PUBLIC EXHIBITION?

For planning matters, public exhibition usually includes a:

- Description of what is being proposed
- Notifying individual landowners/occupiers
- Advertising/publishing exhibition notice, including timeframes, and how submissions can be made
- Displaying the documents for public view
- Publishing details on Council's website.

Some public exhibitions, particularly those that are related to planning and development, have legislated minimum exhibition periods shown in the following table. Publicly exhibited plans, planning and development applications and other matters cannot be finalised until after public exhibition concludes.

Project Type	Minimum exhibition timeframe
<b>Council plans and strategies</b> including non-legislated plans, policies and strategies such as masterplans, studies and informing strategies	28 days
<b>Infrastructure projects</b> including Council construction or renewal of community facilities, buildings, parks and playgrounds	28 days
<b>Community programs</b> including Council projects relating to Council service levels, change of use of a location, introduction or modification to a Council-supplied community service (e.g. new dog off-leash areas, changes to waste collection)	42 days (high impact to community) 28 days (low impact to community)
<b>Local transport and traffic matters</b> including road closures, parking changes and Resident Parking Schemes	28 days (high impact to community)  NB Low impact matters are reported to the Traffic Committee with stakeholder notification and a resident letterbox drop. No formal consultation is required.
<b>Other matters</b> including: > Community Engagement Strategy > Special rate variations > Non-statutory strategic planning policies	28 days



**PLANNING DOCUMENTS - Statutory strategic planning policies**

> Community Participation Plan	28 days
> Local strategic planning statements	28 days
> Planning Proposals for Local Environmental Plans (LEPs)	28 days or as specified by the Gateway determination
> Development Control Plans	28 days
> Voluntary planning agreements	28 days
> Local infrastructure contribution plans	28 days

**DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS - Development Application Related Matters**

> Development applications (DAs) (including modification applications, review of determination) / Application for development consent	14 days
> Applications for designated development	28 days
> Applications for integrated or threatened species development	28 days
> Environment impact statements obtained under Division 5.1	28 days
> Council-related development applications	28 days in act

The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition following clause 16 to Schedule 1 of the EP&A Act 1979. Extended notification periods may be needed under the EP&A Regulations 2021.

**MAKING SUBMISSIONS**

Anyone is welcome to make a submission during the specific exhibition period. Council may sometimes also consider late submissions before the application is determined. Information on public exhibitions is available on Council's website or by visiting Customer Services at Council Chambers. For development applications, search the DA tracker on Council's website. You can also visit the Your Say North Sydney website to view and participate in community consultations. Submissions should be made either online via the DA tracker or by email/writing to Council. All submissions must include a name, address and contact details. Submissions should include the reasons for support or opposition to the proposal.

**HOW WE CONSIDER SUBMISSIONS**

When you give us feedback, we acknowledge receipt. We consider the merits of each individual submission together with all submissions when deciding the outcome of an application. Council's report includes the number of submissions received, summarises and addresses issues raised and explains how we have considered the community's views. The number of submissions received decides if an application will be determined under delegation by Council or referred to the North Sydney Local Planning Panel. Should the application be reported to the Panel the report will be published on Council's website. Individual submissions and Council reports can be viewed under a Government Information (Public Access) 2009 (GIPA) Open Access Application. Council will not respond individually to submissions.

Any submission that uses a pro-forma template or is in the form of a petition is considered as one submission. Council will respond to the head petitioner only (the first person that signs the petition unless otherwise advised). Multiple submissions made from one property are also considered one submission.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR NOTIFICATION

How a development application is notified depends on the scale of development and impact on the surrounding locality. There are also specific notification procedures that Council uses for statutory strategic planning policies as outlined below.

<b>HOW?</b> Notification methods may include one or more of these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notice on Council’s website</li> <li>Direct notification to owners or occupiers by letter or email</li> <li>NSW Planning Portal</li> <li>Site notice*</li> </ul>	
<b>WHO?</b> Stakeholders to be notified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Owners/occupiers of land, adjoining or neighbouring land who Council considers may be adversely affected by a development application or planning policy**</li> <li>Precinct Committee/s (refer to page 16)</li> <li>Adjoining Council (if land is near the LGA boundary)</li> <li>Other stakeholders identified by Council</li> </ul>	
<b>WHAT?</b> Required notification content.	<b>STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of the strategic planning policy</li> <li>Description of the land to which the policy applies</li> <li>Name of planning authority responsible for the policy</li> <li>Dates, time and locations where the policy documents may be inspected</li> <li>Dates when the application documents may be inspected</li> <li>Statement that written submissions will be accepted during a specified period and method of delivery</li> <li>For planning proposals, all the above plus:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the goals or intended outcomes of the proposal</li> <li>- statement confirming if Council has been granted delegation to the Local Plan Making Authority</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of land including address / legal description</li> <li>Name of applicant and consent authority</li> <li>Description of proposed development</li> <li>Dates when the application documents may be inspected</li> <li>Statement that written submissions will be accepted during a specified period</li> <li>For buildings, a plan containing details of the proposed development</li> </ul>

\*Council may install signage (including the external configuration of the development or QR code linking to Council’s website) at each property for development related notifications. For properties with more than one street frontage, only one sign is needed.

\*\* To decide which neighbouring land may be adversely affected, Council will consider the likely impacts of the policy on the natural and built environment of the neighbourhood, and the social and economic impacts on the neighbourhood. Where a strategic planning policy applies to the entire LGA, and the proposal involves a relatively minor amendment, Council will not notify all property owners and occupiers within the LGA and will consider the extent of notification on a case-by-case basis. If land is owned or occupied by more than one person such as a Strata Plan, a written notice to one owner or one occupier or the Owners Corporation is taken to be a written notice to all the owners and occupiers of that land.

Preference for electronic communication: Council will try to email interested parties whenever possible. However, Council will only do so when it holds appropriate information.

## NOTIFICATIONS DURING AND AFTER THE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION PROCESS

### AMENDMENTS

An applicant may amend an application at any time before the consent authority has made its final determination. Council will renotify the owners or occupiers of adjoining or neighbouring properties that may be adversely affected by the amended application. No notification will occur where the amendments are considered to address issues raised by submitters and introduce no new or different concerns.

### MODIFICATIONS

Once consent is granted, an applicant can lodge an application to modify a development consent or a deferred commencement consent. For applications made under s4.55.2 (applications of significant environmental impact) Council will notify the same area as used for the initial application. Applications under s4.55.1 (to correct a minor misdescription or error) or s4.551(a) (minor environmental impact) will only be notified at the discretion of Council.

For applications to modify a development consent granted by the Land and Environment Court under Section 4.56 of the EP&A Act 1979, we will notify anyone who made a submission in response to the DA, and owners or occupiers of neighbouring or adjoining properties who may be disadvantaged by the modifications in the opinion of Council.

### REVIEWS

Applications made to review the determination of a DA or a modification decision, will be notified in the same manner as the original application. Council will also notify, or make reasonable attempts to notify, each person who made a submission to the original application.

### EXTENSIONS OF EXHIBITION PERIODS

Council may consider written requests for extensions of notification periods that apply to development applications. The reason for the request must be clearly stated. Typically, a maximum of 7 additional days may be granted. No extension of time will be granted to applications advertised over the Christmas period as these applications are already subject to an extended notification period.

## HOW WE NOTIFY DETERMINATIONS (APPLICATION OUTCOMES)

We will provide notice of determination by Council, the North Sydney Local Planning Panel (NSLPP), or other relevant bodies (including the Land and Environment Court) on Councils website. The notification will include details about the decision including the date, reasons for decision (including any statutory requirements that apply) and how community views were considered during decision-making. We will also notify the determination of individual applications to those who made submissions.

## WHEN WE DON'T NOTIFY ON DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

Development Matter	Reason for no notification
<b>Development applications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; internal alterations and additions to existing buildings</li> <li>&gt; change of use or intensification of an existing use (except to a food and drink premises in certain zones) that will have no adverse impact on the neighbourhood in the opinion of Council</li> <li>&gt; applications with no material impact on neighbouring properties</li> <li>&gt; strata and/or stratum subdivision</li> <li>&gt; tree works not involving other development</li> <li>&gt; capital works on Council-owned land that have previously been consulted on</li> </ul>
<b>Amendments</b>	<p>Council will not renotify for amendments that in its opinion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; do not increase the adverse effect on adjoining, adjacent or neighbouring land</li> <li>&gt; reflect the outcome of Council-led refinement and do not increase the environmental impact of the DA</li> <li>&gt; involve tree works required by a development control order given in the event of an emergency and no other associated change in development</li> </ul>
<b>Modifications</b>	<p>For proposals under s4.55.2 that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; do not seek to change the height, façade or external shape of the original application</li> <li>&gt; do not substantially change the original approved development</li> <li>&gt; are of a minor nature, or have minimal or no impact on the environment in the opinion of Council</li> <li>&gt; do not disadvantage owners or occupiers of neighbouring properties, or anyone who has already made a submission in response to the DA</li> </ul> <p>Applications made under s4.55.1 and s4.55.1(a) will only be notified at the discretion of Council.</p>

## Planning Proposals for Local Environmental Plans

Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) guide planning decisions for Local Government Areas (LGAs) through zoning and development controls. Most LEPs start with a planning proposal from either Council or a developer. If Council supports the planning proposal it is sent to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for assessment. Should DPHI support the proposal it receives a Gateway Approval – a list of requirements that need to be met before final determination. This can include specific exhibition requirements.

The Local Environmental Plan Making Guidelines (August 2023) also state the minimum number of days that specific types of Planning Proposals are to should be publicly exhibited. This Strategy adopts the recommended exhibition timeframes within these Guidelines as minimum.

Planning Proposal Type	Minimum Exhibition Timeframe
Basic (e.g. amend an LEP to list a local heritage item)	10 working days*
Standard (e.g. reclassification of public land)	20 working days*
Complex (e.g. a change that would require infrastructure funding)	30 working days*
Principal (e.g. create a new LEP that applies to the whole LGA)	20 working days*

\* Working days are defined under the NSW Local Environmental Plan Making Guidelines as Monday though to Friday excluding Saturday and Sunday, public holidays, and the Christmas/New Year period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive).

The Gateway Determination may change the exhibition timeframes including deciding that no public exhibition is required because of the minor nature of the proposal. If given, the Gateway Determination always overrides the minimum exhibition timeframe.

Planning Proposals which seek to create, amend or repeal a Local Environmental Plan must be exhibited for a minimum 28 days.







**TRANSLATION SERVICE**

If you do not understand this information, please ring the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50, and ask for an interpreter in your language to contact North Sydney Council on (02) 9936 8100. This is a free service.

**CHINESE**

如果您不明白本信息的内容，请致电翻译与传译服务(TIS) 13 14 50，然后请会说您母语的传译员接通North Sydney市议会电话(02) 9936 8100。这是一项免费服务。

**HINDI**

यदि आप इस जानकारी को नहीं समझ पा रहे हैं, तो कृपया 13 14 50 पर अनुवाद और दुभाषिया सेवा (Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)) को फोन करें, और नॉर्थ सिडनी काउंसिल से (02) 9936 8100 पर संपर्क करने के लिए अपनी भाषा के एक दुभाषिए के लिए अनुरोध करें। यह एक निःशुल्क सेवा है।

**JAPANESE**

この案内の内容を理解できない場合には、13 14 50 の翻訳通訳サービス(TIS)にかけて、あなたの母国語の通訳者に(02) 9936 8100のノースシドニーカウンシルにつなぐように伝えてください。当サービスは無料です。

**PORTUGUESE**

Se você não entender estas informações, ligue para o Serviço de Tradução e Interpretação (TIS) em 13 14 50 e peça um intérprete em seu idioma para entrar em contato com o North Sydney Council em (02) 9936 8100. Este é um serviço gratuito.

**SPANISH**

Si no comprende esta información, llame al Servicio de Traducción e Interpretación (TIS), en el 13 14 50, y solicite un intérprete en su idioma para ponerse en contacto con el Concejo Municipal de North Sydney, en el (02 9936 8100). Este es un servicio gratuito

**KOREAN**

본 내용이 잘 이해되지 않는 경우에는 통번역 서비스(TIS) 13 14 50번에 전화해서 한국어 통역사에게 노스 시드니 카운슬 전화 (02) 9936 8100번으로 연결을 요청하시기 바랍니다. 이 서비스는 무료입니다.

This Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan has been prepared in accordance with Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework requirements.



North Sydney Council,  
200 Miller Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

P (02) 9936 8100 | E [council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au)

[www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au)

Endorsed: