

Waverley Community Strategic Plan

Community engagement report





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Photo by Sam Hodgson.



Executive Summary

Waverley Council is responsible for preparing a Community Strategic Plan (the Plan). Following each Council election, Council must review the Plan. The Plan outlines the community's vision and priorities for the Waverley Local Government Area (LGA) for the next 11 years.

Council needs to adopt the Waverley Community Strategic Plan by June 2018. To inform the review an extensive consultation and engagement program was conducted to ensure the whole community has the opportunity to contribute.

It is essential that this Plan reflect the Waverley community's vision for the area and the community's priorities for the next ten years.

Council prepared and distributed an issues paper, to stimulate community members to think about their views and to guide their thinking across eleven themes (see the Issues Papers attached):

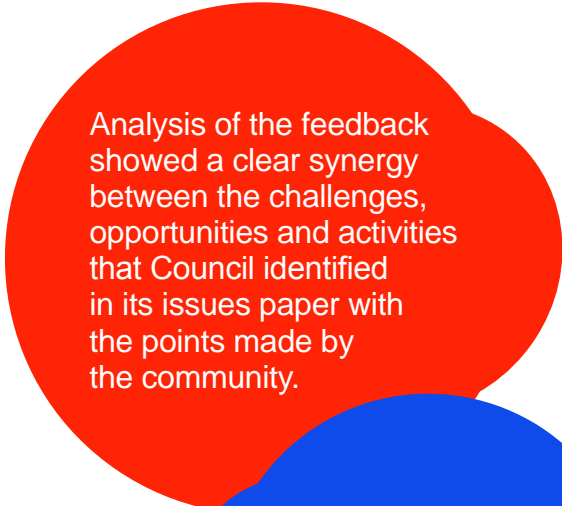
- Arts and Culture
- Community Services and Well-being
- Recreation and Public Spaces
- Local Economy
- Planning, Development and Heritage
- Transport, Pedestrians and Parking
- Buildings and Infrastructure
- Sustainable Environment
- Sustainable Waste Management
- Corporate Leadership and Engagement
- Knowledge and Innovation

Council used a wide range of activities to engage with its community, to obtain feedback to inform its Community Strategic Plan. Engagement activities included a survey, receipt of submissions, pop-up stalls, interactive displays, Craft-a-palooza school holiday program, precinct committee workshop, two councillor workshops, community summit, community organisations breakfast, youth survey, photographic competition and focus groups and Q and A forums via social media.


Council worked with community partners to ensure it reached 'hard to reach groups', including children and families, young people, older people, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Section 2 below describes the engagement process in detail.

The engagement process yielded extensive inputs from the community, non-government organisations (NGOs), local businesses and councillors.



Analysis of the feedback showed a clear synergy between the challenges, opportunities and activities that Council identified in its issues paper with the points made by the community.



This indicates Council's strong existing alignment with its community's views and priorities.

Some of the strongest issues to emerge from the engagement were:

Arts and Culture

- The library is strongly valued.

Community Services and Well-being

- With respect to social issues the key focus included:
 - Potential gaps arising from the transition to the new model for support for people with disability, including the need for new facilities in the Waverley area
 - Support for seniors, in relation to carers, dealing with dementia and social isolation
 - Support for young people and families.
- There is strong advocacy for additional public schools in Waverley, particularly a secondary school.

Recreation and Public Spaces

- The beaches and parks are highly valued by the community. High standards of maintenance are important.

Local Economy

- There is a desire for a diverse economy that is not too heavily reliant on tourism. A diverse night-time economy is valued, including a range of evening dining options.

Planning, Development and Heritage

- Concern was expressed about perceived overdevelopment, particularly high-rise development. The concerns relate primarily to traffic congestion, impacts on heritage properties, loss of open space and the pressure of increasing population density.
- Respondents sought to protect heritage buildings and to provide more social and affordable housing.

Transport, Pedestrians and Parking

- The issue of inadequate parking is one of the strongest in the feedback received. Specifics included improved access or free parking for residents and improved parking solutions at beaches.
- Improving infrastructure for cycling was another key issue.

Buildings and Infrastructure

- Housing affordability is key issue. There is a desire for young people who have grown up in the area to be able to afford to continue to live in Waverley.
- There is concern for the heritage value of buildings and infrastructure to be preserved and managed.

Sustainable Environment

- The community is very proud of the natural assets of the Council area, particularly the iconic beaches and the parks. They are keen for these highly valued assets to be protected from any development encroachment, to be well maintained and the litter generated by the very high visitation rates to be effectively managed.
- A clean green LGA is important: a holistic approach encompassing climate change, biodiversity, green spaces and recycling is valued.

Sustainable Waste Management

- There is strong concern about the impact of waste on the environment, particularly beaches and the ocean and the unsightliness of litter throughout the Council area.
- There is a desire for increased cleansing and improved maintenance of public areas.

Corporate Leadership and Engagement

- More opportunities to engage with Council and to access information are sought, e.g. through kiosks and events.

Knowledge and Innovation

- Fostering digital innovation and improved NBN and wifi access was raised. It is desired that Council be progressive in its application of communication technologies.
- Respondents valued the library's important role in supporting the community and business by continuing to offer a range of services and remaining relevant to the information economy.



Photo by Isaac Grove.



01

Introduction



1.1 Context and purpose

Waverley Council is responsible for preparing a Community Strategic Plan (the Plan). Following each Council election, Council must review the Plan. The Plan outlines the community's vision and priorities for the Waverley Local Government Area (LGA) for the next 10 years.

Council needs to adopt the Waverley Community Strategic Plan by June 2018 and to inform the review an extensive consultation and engagement program was conducted to ensure the whole community has the opportunity to contribute.

It is essential that this Plan reflect the Waverley community's vision for the area and the community's priorities for the next ten years.

1.2 Limitations

Council has undertaken an extensive community engagement process that included multiple methods, opportunity and channels of communication, to secure comprehensive feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. No matter how extensive an engagement process might be, it can never be said to be completely representative, as such engagement does not obtain feedback from every constituent and stakeholder. Community engagement is not social research and this report does not present this information in that manner.

02

How Council engaged



2.1 Engagement objectives

The purpose of the community engagement was to:

- Work with the community to determine the vision and priorities for Council for the next 10 years;
- Create avenues for long term community engagement in Council decision making;
- Enable the community to provide informed feedback and make informed decisions; and
- Build strong relationships between Council and the community.

2.2 Engagement activities

After publicising the engagement opportunity, Council undertook the following engagement activities, to inform the Community Strategic Plan:

Phase 1: vision and themes	
Community survey via <i>Have your say</i> website	72 responses
Surveys via 15 Pop-up stalls	75 participants
<i>Have your say</i> interactive displays invited responses to questions “What do you love about Waverley?” and “What would you change in Waverley?”	204 participants 10 locations with post-it notes
Two Councillor workshops	Summary report
General submissions by email	3 received
Craft-a-palooza – school holiday program at library	12 participants
Total individual submissions phase 1	366
Combined precinct committee workshop	Summary report
Phase 2: detailed submissions based on themes	
Community survey via <i>Have your say</i> website	17 responses
Surveys via pop-up stalls	42 responses
General submissions by email	3 received
Youth survey	7
Youth photo competition	18
Youth focus groups (2)	13
Total individual submissions phase 2	100
A community organisations breakfast for government and community/non-profit organisations	40 organisations 5 councillors 15 staff
Community summit	140 community members 35 staff/councillors
Q and A forums via social media	
Total individual submissions both phases	466
Total summary reports	7
Participants in focus groups, workshops and events	Approximately 220



Photo by Helen Sansom-Maris and Violetta Dawes.

The youth engagement activities spanned both phases.

The community survey was available online, supplemented by intercept surveys at council events and locations (pop-up stalls). The survey was open from 30 November 2017 to 31 January 2018. Intercept surveys specifically targeted hard to reach groups.

The survey invited responses to these vision-related questions:

- *What do you love about the Waverley area?*
- *What needs to change in the Waverley area?*
- *What three words would you use to describe your vision for Waverley for the next 10 years?*
- *What are the most important issues facing Waverley over the next 5-10 years?*
- *Any other feedback on what you'd like reflected in the vision for Waverley?*

Then it asked for feedback on the 11 draft themes – identified as key issues around which to structure the Plan.

Have your say displays were set up in key Council buildings, providing a map of Waverley and inviting visitors to add post-it notes with their comments, responding to the questions Shape the future of Waverley: “What do you love about Waverley? What would you change in Waverley?.”

A workshop of Councillors was held to secure Councillors’ inputs on the set of themes. Two workshops were held, the second being externally facilitated.

A community organisations breakfast for government and community/non-profit organisations sought input on the set of themes. Attendees responded to the questions:

- *What does Council do well now?*
- *What opportunities and threats exist for the community services sector over the next 5 years?*
- *What are your top priorities for Council to focus on and advocate for over the next 5-10 years?*
- *How can Council work with the community to support connections, cohesion and a sense of wellbeing?*

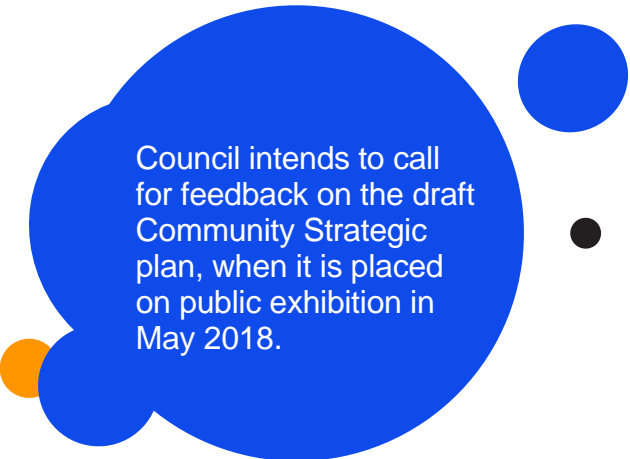
A community summit was held, using a World Café approach to invite attendees to consider the set of 11 themes.

A combined precinct committee workshop was held.

Youth consultation included focus groups with Headspace Youth Reference Group and Caretakers Cottage and a youth survey. Seven young people aged from 16 to 24 plus one staff member attended the Headspace Youth Reference Group meeting. Six young people aged 13 to 18 plus one staff member attended the Caretakers Cottage session. Seven young people responded to the survey. The competition offered a prize of Westfield Gift Vouchers for: Best Photograph, Runner Up Best Photograph and People’s Choice. It attracted 19 responses.

A school holiday activity Craft-a-palooza based at the library and early education centres invited children to draw or craft the favourite thing they like doing or what they would like their area to look like when they grow up. Participants were invited to draw or craft “Why I Love Waverley” then answer questions “What do you love about Waverley?” and “What would you change about Waverley and why?”

Q and A forums were held via social media, through which Council staff answered questions and recorded feedback on discussion papers.



03

What the community values most



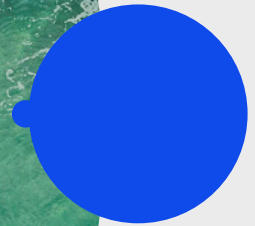
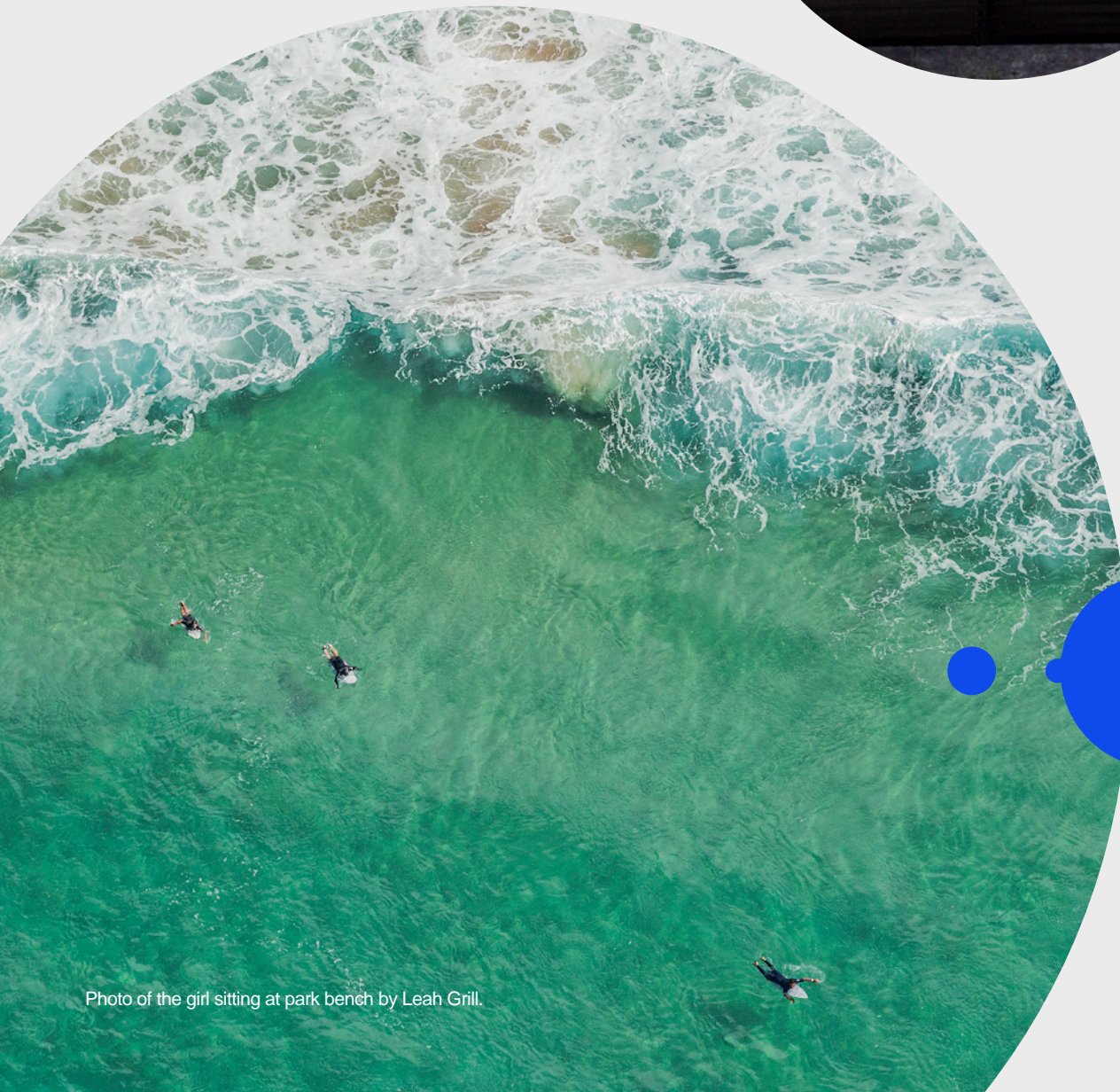
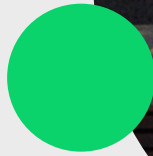


Photo of the girl sitting at park bench by Leah Grill.



Key elements that participants value most about the Waverley Local Government Area are:

- Beaches
- Clean and well maintained public spaces
- Parks/green spaces
- Strong community and village environment
- Easy access to public transport
- Flora and fauna
- Sustainability

Other elements are:

- Heritage buildings and local amenities
- Cosmopolitan
- Breeze
- Shops
- Bondi Pavilion
- Bondi Junction
- Diversity of the community
- Ocean pools

04

What needs to change?



Key issues for participants are:

Avoid overdevelopment and high rise

Public cleansing standards

Traffic congestion

Litter on streets and beaches

More open green space or preserve what is there

Inadequate parking, charging residents for parking and parking restrictions

Other issues for respondents are:

- More public transport and cycle ways
- Make better use of Bondi Pavilion, including more events/activities at night
- More affordable housing
- More night time dining options
- Noise from hotels and private parties
- More trees

The issue of perceived overdevelopment was very strong throughout the feedback.

Discussion

Participants commented on overcrowding, congestion, traffic impacts, loss of privacy, loss of heritage and connections with the past and loss of amenity arising from high rise and overdevelopment. These concerns are reported to be linked with mixed understanding of the development approval system, the role that Waverley Council is expected to play in accommodating projected Sydney-wide population growth and potential benefits that might accrue to constituents from development. Several inconsistencies emerged across the feedback. Some praise the public transport and others are seeking more – potentially influenced by where in the LGA the respondent lives and their individual transport needs. Feedback included proposed relaxation of regulations and enforcement of drinking in public places while others sought stronger enforcement.

There is a tension/misunderstanding of the link between the provision of more parking and the impact of this on traffic congestion.

There is also a tension between the aversion to “overdevelopment” and the desire for the provision of more affordable housing.



05

Vision



Following are the key concepts that arose from the invitation to provide three words to describe vision:

- Natural amenity: beach parks, beauty
- Community and connection to place
- Diversity, including multiculturalism
- Sustainable (frequent response – type of sustainability not stated)
- Clean
- Green – trees
- Environmentally friendly
- Transport hierarchy (including pedestrian/cycling), congestion and parking
- Culture
- Progressive
- Accessible

- Creative
- Heritage rich
- Safe
- Council to be innovative, progressive and representative of the community

Some respondents want the Waverley LGA not to change.

Some want to plan and prepare for growth; others want to avoid population growth.

Feedback also sought a more bike-friendly environment, although some respondents also wanted bikes off footpaths/roads.

Feedback included a tension between an aversion to overdevelopment and a desire for affordable housing and good, integrated transport. A precinct-based planning scheme potentially with elements of transport-oriented development, protecting character areas while providing for higher densities in defined areas near transport, might manage that tension.





06

Engagement findings: themes



Waverley Council established a set of 11 themes to guide participants during the engagement period. The themes are:

1. Arts and Culture
2. Community Services and Well-being
3. Recreation and Public spaces
4. Local Economy
5. Planning, Development and Heritage
6. Transport, Pedestrians and Parking
7. Buildings and Infrastructure
8. Sustainable Environment
9. Sustainable Waste Management
10. Corporate Leadership and Engagement
11. Knowledge and Innovation

Lead and other issues and opportunities have been identified, based upon the frequency of each issue raised. These are set out below for each theme. The commentary for each theme reflects the Centre for Local Government's observations, based on its review of all feedback received.





6.1
Arts and culture

Lead issues and opportunities



The library is highly valued, along with its programs and its value in providing community connections.

Other issues and opportunities

- Encourage Indigenous arts and culture and incorporate it into the landscape
- Convene more out of season cultural activities
- Spaces for performing arts
- Encourage arts and cultural activities, including cross-cultural activities

Commentary




Respondents indicated that the library is highly valued and report high levels of satisfaction with its role in the community.

There is some contradictory feedback around encouraging more arts and cultural activities due to concerns about visitor impacts.



6.2 Community services and wellbeing

Lead issues and opportunities

- 
 Address gaps arising from the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), including facilities upgrades
- 
 Support for seniors, in relation to carers, dealing with dementia and social isolation
- 
 Support and activities for young people, youth and families

Other issues and opportunities

- Need for increased funding for the NGO sector
- Support for the homeless
- Housing affordability, including the concern that low cost housing is taken up by backpackers
- Mill Hill Community Centre: respondents want more space and say in how it is run
- Promote diversity and inclusion
- Concern about safety in public areas, particularly at night in summer

Commentary

A large volume of feedback was received for this theme, augmented by the NGO sector engagement summit.

Key issues for people with disabilities are:

- Assistance with gaps arising from the transition to NDIS
- Proximity of support space – closest is Mosman

Key issues for aged people are:

- Support for families dealing with dementia
- Social isolation
- Older respondents objected to being included in a category with people with disabilities or assumptions made about their capabilities on the basis of their age

Key issues for young people and families are:

- More school holiday programs
- Adequate child care and schools, particularly a secondary school

Other key issues:

- Support for migrants and refugees and social cohesion

6.3 Recreation and public spaces



Lead issues and opportunities



The beaches and parks are highly valued by the community



Upgrade recreation facilities (e.g. Bronte Beach toilets/change room, sports courts lighting, storage, Niblick Street Reserve)



Improve maintenance of open space and facilities, e.g. litter on beaches and public space



Improve availability of venues for events



Provide activities for children and youth

Commentary

The participants are proud of their beaches and are keen for them to be maintained to a standard commensurate with their international standing.

Parks are also very highly valued and there was strong concern about the risk of diminution of open space. This is from both a recreational perspective and an environmental perspective.

More broadly, the feedback strongly reflected community values around greenspace, recreation and the environment.





6.4 Local economy

Lead issues and opportunities



Foster tourism through tourist information, eco-tourism, a diverse night-time economy and improved service and food offerings



Residents seek a diverse nightlife in Bondi Beach and Bondi Junction, more restaurants open late and night markets



Support viability of village shopping strips and local shopping centres



Foster a mixed local economy

Other issues and opportunities

- Support start-up businesses, e.g. through co-share spaces, innovation hub, etc.
- Innovation grants to support youth contribution to business
- Retain public service jobs in the area
- Bondi Junction as a business and tourism hub
- Ensure locals are not squeezed out by visitors

Commentary

Participants supported a diverse, cosmopolitan, mixed economy, including the viability of small local shopping strips and centres to service residents.

Comment was received about ensuring that the mix of shops included offerings geared to locals as well as tourists.

Some mixed views about tourism are apparent: some participants focus on the economic opportunities while others focus on potential impacts such as congestion, traffic, litter, noise and anti-social behaviour.

Photo above by Alexandra Slater.

6.5 Planning development and heritage



Lead issues and opportunities



Avoid further high rise development and “overdevelopment” in general



Develop a holistic vision for the LGA with respect to sustainable growth and development



Protect heritage buildings, in particular Waverley cemetery and the Boot Factory



More social and affordable housing provision is needed



Additional public schools in the LGA, particularly secondary

Other issues and opportunities

- Concern about the impacts of Airbnb activities (noise, parking) – seeking regulation and management

Commentary

Participants addressed population growth in several ways: some sought avoidance of any further growth in the LGA of a “sustainable” population target; others sought a housing mix that would support a growing population. Related issues include housing costs, congestion, traffic and pollution.

A strong concern about high rise development was evident. This links to concerns about congestion, traffic and excessive population growth. It is in tension with aspirations for affordable housing and community diversity.

Several respondents expressed concern about the cost of housing.

Some commented on difficulties with managing the precinct committees. One suggested fewer, larger precincts, e.g. per wards and that each has an online/ social media presence.

Some comments expressed concern about the transparency of planning processes and also compliance/ enforcement of planning rules and regulations.

A strong desire for more public schools was expressed. CLOSEast made an extensive submission advocating for a co-educational public high school.

One respondent sought a higher profile for Indigenous culture in the Community Strategic Plan.

One respondent proposed analysis of service and infrastructure implications of long-term population growth and demographic change.



6.6 Transport, pedestrians and parking

Lead issues and opportunities



Inadequate parking is the lead issue of concern, including requests for improved access/free parking for residents



Improve public transport



Integrated transport plan is needed, having regard to social, economic and environmental factors



Encourage fewer cars to reduce congestion



Develop/improve a network of safe bike/walking trails to ease access to the beaches, parklands, employment and other precincts

Other issues and opportunities

- Easier public transport to the city
- Concern about management of share bikes
- Provide more commuter parking near Bondi Junction
- Prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over cars
- Free shuttle services for seniors and youth and improve the shuttle from Bondi Junction to Bondi Beach
- Educate residents about cycling and walking more
- Improve road maintenance
- Improve visibility of pedestrian crossings, particularly near Clovelly Public School
- Provide charging stations for electric cars

Commentary

There was some concern that attention to parking would translate to supporting unsustainable levels of car dependency. Some constituents seek to discourage car use for environmental purposes.

Some respondents sought arrangement for parking concessions for residents, including 15 minutes free, parking vouchers or parking limited to residents only either in certain streets or across the LGA.

Several respondents directly expressed concern about traffic congestion and others alluded to the issue.

Several comments throughout the feedback suggested an underground carpark with greenspace on top, to service Bondi Beach.

Some respondents wanted more motorcycle parking.

Contradictory positions are held regarding the provision of parking and its impacts on traffic movements, car dependency and encouraging car use. Education about the links between these issues would be useful.

An integrated transport plan would have regard to social, economic and environmental factors, as well as all modes of transport: private vehicle, public transport, cycling and pedestrian.

6.7 Buildings and infrastructure



Lead issues and opportunities



Improve sporting facilities



Improve maintenance of public assets
and spaces



Preserve heritage buildings

Other issues and opportunities

- Improve maintenance of footpaths
- Upgrade Bondi beach area commensurate with its international reputation and maintaining its natural beauty
- Avoid or manage population increase
- Change rooms and toilets at some facilities

Commentary

A strong view about avoiding over-development and high-rise has emerged from the engagement process, along with concerns about protection of heritage and avoidance or management of population increase. The positions reported are contradictory in some respects (e.g. desire for more parking while being concerned about traffic impacts) and further, informed conversations with the community including to develop a policy position from Council to inform these discussions.





6.8 Sustainable environment

Lead issues and opportunities



Undertake initiatives to promote a clean green LGA: a holistic approach to climate change, biodiversity and recycling



Retain and add to green spaces across the LGA



Retain and add to green spaces across the LGA



Buy local (one benefit of this being a reduction in food miles)

Other issues and opportunities

- Protection of the ocean from pollutants and waste
- Zero carbon/carbon neutral aspirations
- Investigate establishment of a high temperature incinerator
- More soft (pervious) surfaces
- Occasional beach clean-ups

Commentary

Strong community values about the environment and green spaces emerged from the feedback. Suggestions included green walls, solar panels, encouraging businesses to use reusable packaging, more trees, “adopt a tree” program, fruit trees in public spaces, green corridors for biodiversity, planting to encourage birdlife, address flora fauna and fox problems, bee hives, limit plastic bag use and coffee cups, promote local produce, recycling centres and consider climate change and sea level rise in planning,

One respondent proposed continuous monitoring of progress towards environmental targets and continuing to raise the bar.

6.9 Sustainable waste management



Lead issues and opportunities



Improve public cleansing across the LGA



Improve collection of green waste and encourage/facilitate composting



Concern about the issue of waste/litter impacts the environment and washing into the ocean and onto beaches



Concern about plastic bags



Enforce smoke-free environments, especially on the beach



Educate residents and visitors about recycling

Other issues and opportunities

- Product lifecycle management to reduce waste
- Recycling centres
- Container deposit scheme
- Install more bins to reduce littering
- Facilitate recycling, including through bottle refunds
- Improve waste management for apartment buildings
- Ban or discourage use of single use plastics, coffee cups

Commentary

A keen interest in the role of effective waste management in overall environmental sustainability was apparent in the feedback, which is strongly linked with concerns about the standards of cleansing of public areas.



6.10 Corporate leadership and engagement

Lead issues and opportunities



Introduce more opportunities to engage with Council and access information, e.g. kiosks or at events such as Sculpture by the Sea



Financial sustainability of the Council

Other issues and opportunities

- Scenario planning the implications of economic, social and environmental disrupters for Council and the community for example driverless cars and public transport, decentralised energy, water and waste systems, the Internet of Things, and circular economy
- Greater understanding of how different segments of the community derive benefit and value from Council, and what their needs are across Council's service and infrastructure domains
- Engage with neighbouring councils
- Improve maintenance of information on Council's website

Commentary

Limited feedback was received on this theme. A desire for ongoing engagement emerged. The limited focus on governance perhaps suggests that it is not an issue about which Council's constituents have concerns.

Some feedback scattered throughout relates to a concern about transparency in Council. It is possible that this relates to a lack of understanding of the planning/development approval system, the roles of State and Local Government in different types or scales of development and opportunities for the public to comment. One respondent wanted Council's website to list names and titles of key Council staff, to facilitate direct contact on issues.

Another proposal from the councillor session was to forecast the service and infrastructure delivery implications of long-term population change (growth and demographics).





6.11 Knowledge and innovation

Lead issues and opportunities



Foster digital innovation, e.g. through youth, hackathons, etc.



Improve NBN and wifi access



Improve utilisation of Mill Hill to support innovation



Develop innovation hubs


Other issues and opportunities

- Council should use communication technologies progressively
- Council should improve maintenance of its website and social media
- Use multiple channels (digital and non-digital) to communicate with, engage with and inform residents
- Ensure library keeps pace with knowledge economy
- Offer digital training to community members

Commentary

The library is highly valued by the community and to ensure that it keeps pace with technology.

There is strong support for fostering innovation, e.g. through innovation hubs, incubators and improved NBN and wifi access.



Feedback consistently encourages Council to embrace information technology and social media platforms, however, cautioned against diminishing human-delivered advice and service for those who need it.



07

**Most important
issues over
5-10 years**

The key issues identified were:

Parking

Beautification and public amenity

Density and overdevelopment

Pollution and litter

Road congestion

Development quality and aesthetics

Public transport

Maintaining the quality of beaches and open space

Housing affordability

Secondary school capacity

Environmental, social and economic sustainability

Council financial sustainability

One respondent raised the need to plan for long-term sea level rise and increasing frequency of severe storms.

This report has been prepared, independently of Council by the University of Technology Sydney's Centre for Local Government (CLG) at the University of Technology Sydney. CLG facilitated some of the engagement and distilled feedback in this report to identify key issues. The detailed feedback from all sources has been collated, by engagement activity, into a separate document, for Council's reference in future planning.

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