

## **Project Scope - Redfern Community Centre Open Space, Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve**

**File No: X031129**

### **Summary**

This report provides an update on the Redfern Waterloo Public Domain Plan and outlines the proposed project scope for parks located next to the Redfern Community Centre which includes Redfern Community Centre Open Space, Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve.

The parks are in a neighbourhood that is the site of Australia's oldest urban settlement of First Nations people (the Block) and the centre of Sydney's contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community life. This project presents a unique opportunity to deliver on key actions outlined in the City's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

The project scope has been informed by a comprehensive engagement process which took place between late 2022 and December 2023. Key project principles, developed with the local community, includes the creation of places that celebrate Aboriginal culture and history; creation of places that are green and cool with native trees and plants; creation of places where communities can come together to socialise and celebrate and where people feel a sense of connection and belonging.

The project scope will deliver three upgraded parks that meet the future needs of the local community. Key outcomes include the expansion of turfed areas for play and community events, a new playground that caters to multiple age groups, more seating opportunities, better lighting, increased greening and tree canopy cover, a future Indigenous community garden site and an upgraded basketball court on Hugo Street with noise mitigation measures. The project will also undertake base building upgrade works to facilitate the future activation of Redfern Terrace.

This report recommends that Council note the ongoing development of the Redfern Waterloo Public Domain Plan and endorse the proposed scope of work for Redfern Community Centre Open Space, Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve upgrades.

## Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) note that the development of the Redfern Waterloo Public Domain Plan is ongoing;
- (B) endorse the scope of works for Redfern Community Centre Open Space, Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve upgrades as described in the subject report for progression to tender, design development, documentation, approvals, and construction;
- (C) note that traffic calming options for adjacent streets will be consulted on further as part of a separate, but related project; and
- (D) note the financial implication as outlined in Confidential Attachment E to the subject report.

## Attachments

- Attachment A.** Redfern Waterloo Public Domain Plan Outline
- Attachment B.** Redfern Neighbourhood Park Upgrades
- Attachment C.** Engagement Report Phase 1 - Redfern Neighbourhood Vision and Plan
- Attachment D.** Engagement Report Phase 2 and 3 - Redfern Neighbourhood Vision and Plan
- Attachment E.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

## Background

1. The suburbs of Redfern, Waterloo, Eveleigh, and Darlington are all undergoing significant change with the redevelopment of several major sites and the delivery of new transport infrastructure at Redfern Station and the new Waterloo Metro. These changes will affect the way the public domain operates with more residents, workers, and visitors walking the streets and using public space.
2. In response, the Redfern Waterloo Public Domain Plan is currently being developed by City Design to provide a coordinated response for City-delivered and third-party public domain improvements across Redfern, Waterloo, Eveleigh, and Darlington, based on the informing principles and directions set out in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.
3. Attachment A provides an outline of the future Redfern Waterloo public domain plan, that will provide oversight and coordination across individual public domain projects, illustrating key links, infrastructure gaps and public domain improvement opportunities. Public domain plans also inform best prioritisation of future capital works and developer contribution expenditure or works delivered by third parties.
4. Given the scale of the Redfern Waterloo Public Domain Plan precinct, the study area has been divided up into seven sub-precincts based on a range of distinct character traits which include built form, landform, and land use (refer Attachment A)
5. The Redfern Neighbourhood sub-precinct bounded by the Redfern rail corridor to the east, Cleveland Street to the north, Abercrombie Street to the west and Lawson Street to the south, has been prioritised in response to the completion of the State Government's Pemulwuy development, the subsequent dramatic increase in the sub-precinct's residential population and at the request of the local community, who have been asking Council for upgrades to their public realm.
6. The Redfern Neighbourhood sub-precinct is located on Gadigal land.
7. It is the site of Australia's oldest Indigenous urban settlement (the Block) and is the centre of Sydney's contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community life and the heart of a neighbourhood known for its Aboriginal activism and cultural expression.
8. Located within the neighbourhood is the Redfern Community Centre, Redfern Community Centre Open Space, Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve, Redfern Terrace, the Welcome to Redfern mural by Reko Rennie, the United we stand, divided we fail the future mural by Bronwyn Bancroft and Dale Jones-Evan with input from the local community and the recently completed Pemulwuy development.
9. The Pemulwuy development is the redevelopment of land owned by the Aboriginal Housing Company Ltd known as the Block. The development includes affordable housing for 62 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, a gymnasium, commercial and retail space, a gallery, student accommodation with 522 rooms, and a childcare centre.
10. Recreation opportunities currently offered within the Redfern neighbourhood parks include flexible play, play equipment, basketball, seating and socialising, and general landscape amenity.

11. Redfern Community Centre Park was constructed in 2003 and Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve were upgraded in 2006. The parks are due for renewal to accommodate and respond to increased population and local community demands.

### **Eora Journey**

12. One of the key project ideas in Sustainable Sydney 2030, the Eora Journey focused on working towards cultural, economic and social sustainability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our local area. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 - Continuing the Vision further progresses the development of the four pillars of the Eora Journey program – recognition in the public domain, a major cultural event, economic development and a culture and knowledge centre.
13. Recognition in the public domain is a significant component of the Eora Journey that aims to recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures within the city by reactivating the knowledge of specific places, people and events at key sites through public art projects.
14. A major project in the Eora Journey: Recognition in the public domain program that is relevant to the Redfern Community Centre Park is the Redfern Terrace project first proposed by Aboriginal curator Hetti Perkins and endorsed by Council in 2012. Located at the corner of Caroline and Hugo Streets, stage one of this project saw the creation of the now iconic artwork “Welcome to Redfern” by Aboriginal artist Reko Rennie who developed the artwork with local Aboriginal youth.
15. The second stage of the Redfern Terrace project envisages the terrace becoming a “living museum” that may include the display of historical material of Aboriginal people living on The Block and include the opportunity for First Nations artists to develop temporary projects with the present Aboriginal community related to the site and the history of the local area.
16. The planned Redfern Community Centre Park upgrade and the second stage of the Eora Journey Redfern Terrace project present a significant opportunity to celebrate the strength and resilience of the local Aboriginal community for future generations.
17. To achieve this ambition the Redfern Community Centre Park will include the Redfern Terrace in its scope of works including a new entry into the Redfern Terrace from the park with an all-weather canopy to facilitate greater activation of the terrace.
18. In addition, teams will be invited that include First Nations artists, architects, and cultural advisors to collaborate with landscape architects and architects to further develop the vision of the “living museum” determining the necessary fit out for the terrace to enable future programming with the community creating a co-ordinated approach and integrated design for the park and Redfern Terrace.

## Redfern Community Centre Open Space, Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve concept plan

19. In December 2022, the City commenced an engagement process to prepare a Redfern Neighbourhood Public Domain Plan that included draft concept designs for Redfern Community Centre Open Space, Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve. Key design principles developed with the community includes the creation of places:
  - (a) that celebrate their Aboriginal history and culture;
  - (b) that are green and cool with native tree and plants;
  - (c) where communities can come together to socialise and celebrate;
  - (d) where people feel a sense of connection and belonging; and
  - (e) that are safe to move around in and play, and are accessible.
20. The draft concept plan for the Redfern Community Centre Open Space, Yellomundee Park and Hugo Street Reserve can be seen in Attachment B.
21. The proposal for Redfern Community Centre Open Space includes the following:
  - (a) a new larger playground with nature/ adventure play equipment integrated into the landscape with a range of play affordances catering to multiple age groups, potable waterplay elements and more seating and lighting;
  - (b) a new larger uninterrupted and flatter lawn area for informal play and events;
  - (c) a new shaded BBQ and community table area near the community centre main entry;
  - (d) a renovated and activated Redfern Terrace, transforming it into a 'living museum' to celebrate stories that make up Redfern and The Block;
  - (e) a new shaded area in front of Redfern Terrace with hardstand areas and power supply for event infrastructure;
  - (f) a larger Out of Hours School Care (OOSH) entry terrace with an awning over and storage under the terrace;
  - (g) low wall seating around the perimeter of the park which directs pedestrian traffic around the lawn area while functioning as an obstacle, requiring children playing on the lawn to stop and assess vehicle dangers before entering the street; and
  - (h) more accessible seating, lighting, bins, and bubblers.
22. The proposal for Yellomundee Park includes the following:
  - (a) lawn areas which designate potential community garden plots containing bush tucker and vegetation used in the production and practice of culture;
  - (b) a new path through the potential community garden sites tracing a desire line between residences on Hugo and Caroline streets and the Redfern Community Centre Open Space;

- (c) a new outdoor gathering space at the centre of the park which could be used by the OOSH or other community members to share culture and knowledge should they choose to; and
  - (d) more accessible seating, lighting, bins, and bubblers.
23. The proposal for Hugo Street Reserve includes the following:
- (a) a new upgraded off-leash dog area on the southern end of the park with new accessible seating, lighting, bins, bubblers, more greening and trees, and new lawn and path surfaces;
  - (b) a new upgraded garden and lawn area on the northern end of the park with new accessible seating, lighting, bins, bubblers, more greening and trees, and new lawn and path surfaces;
  - (c) a wider footpath along Hugo Street;
  - (d) a new upgraded basketball court surface new infrastructure and multiple mitigation measures designed to reduced noise as much as possible, improving the amenity of residents living next to the reserve; and
  - (e) review the structural state of the 'United we Stand, divided we fail the future' mural by Bronwyn Bancroft and Dale Jones Evans (with the local community) to determine whether it needs renewal, decommissioning and/ or reinterpretation as part of this project. The local community values this piece.
24. Existing tree protection, management and planting is proposed as part of the project.
25. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan will be prepared to inform the detailed design and ensure appropriate construction methodology near existing trees and when new pavement and furniture is being installed.
26. A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and any other required approvals will be lodged for the park upgrades in accordance with the Environmental Planning Assessment Act (1979).
27. A multi-disciplinary design team led by an experienced landscape architect with design leadership from an Aboriginal cultural specialist with experience in community co-design will be engaged to design the project with the local community.
28. Project procurement will also consider ways in which we can ensure employment and engagement opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated businesses and workers throughout construction and post-construction/ park maintenance.

## Key Implications

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

29. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:

- (a) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - the project will increase greening, tree canopy cover and permeable and deep soil surfaces, contributing to the creation of a cool, calm, and resilient city.
- (b) Direction 3 - Public places for all - the project will ensure Aboriginal people, their history and cultures are evident in the public domain, ensuring creativity and culture is embedded in the neighbourhood's fabric, while creating welcoming, inclusive open green spaces, playground, and sport recreation facilities that support social connection and wellbeing.
- (c) Direction 4 - Design excellence and sustainable development - the project will deliver public spaces that are high performing, well designed, inviting and inclusive.
- (d) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - the project will facilitate the respectful strengthening of partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and prioritise their cultural, social, environmental, spiritual, and economic aspirations.
- (e) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - the project has and will empower the local community to lead the change they want to see in their neighbourhood through ongoing community engagement and involvement in the design of the project.
- (f) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - the project aims to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultural practices are respected and enabled.

### **Strategic Alignment - Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan**

30. The Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan is a call to action for the City of Sydney to make a stand for reconciliation, guided by our values of collaboration, courage, innovation, integrity, quality, and respect. This project addressed the following actions outlined in the plan:
- (a) 1. Action: Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the City's projects and decision-making process.
  - (b) 7. Action: Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and achievements in Sydney through the Eora Journey: Recognition in the Public Domain.
  - (c) 7.2 Select an artist or artist team for Stage 2 of the Redfern Terrace project to provide opportunities for artists working with community members to share stories of Redfern and the Block.
  - (d) 7.3 Develop a Redfern Community Centre precinct plan that respectfully incorporates Aboriginal cultural knowledge in the Redfern Community Centre Precinct.
  - (e) 7.5 Implement the concept of Designing with Country, including a specific focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and cultural expression.

**Organisational Impact**

31. The project will renew and improve park amenity and facilities for all community members visiting, using, and living next to the parks. All three assets will require ongoing maintenance.

**Risks**

32. Not implementing the project scope could result in the potential failure of park and play infrastructure in the future and risk to the community. Inspections are carried out currently by the City per the standard parks and playground maintenance operations to ensure safety.
33. Not implementing the project scope will result in a failure to meet community expectations for park upgrades and mutually agreed upon principles for mitigating noise generated on the Hugo Street Reserve basketball court.
34. Planning approval requirements identified as detailed designs are developed may affect project delivery and program.

**Social / Cultural / Community**

35. The project scope will deliver local open spaces that respond to the neighbourhood vision developed with the local community and provide opportunities for design and connecting with Country.
36. An Indigenous planting scheme across the three parks will create opportunities for healing and connecting with Country. Inclusion of bushtucker and plants used for cultural practice/ production will enable the local Aboriginal Community to practice culture in place should they chose to.
37. Upgrades to the Redfern Community Centre Open Space will deliver:
  - (a) a larger open area for community events;
  - (b) a larger more user-friendly turf space for informal play and ball games;
  - (c) a larger playground area with improved and integrated play infrastructure that offers play affordances for a range of age groups; and
  - (d) a shaded BBQ area communal table and seating for people to gather, facilitating community cohesion.
38. The project scope includes activating the Redfern Terrace, realising the full potential of this community asset.
39. Upgrades to Yellomundee Park will deliver:
  - (a) space for a potential community garden which can become the genesis for community cohesion; and
  - (b) a gathering space or outdoor classroom which could become a place for knowledge sharing linked to the community garden and the Redfern Out of Hours School Care.



40. Measures to mitigate noise generated by play on the Hugo Street reserve basketball court will improve the amenity of neighbouring residents. It is anticipated that this will improve social cohesion between neighbouring residents and court users.
41. Project procurement could look at ways within the purview of the Local Government Act 1993, in which employment and engagement opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated businesses and workers are facilitated throughout the design, construction and post-construction/ park maintenance project phases.

### **Environmental**

42. The project will implement environmental initiatives that include:
  - (a) use of more efficient LED lighting technologies and careful material selection to reduce the projects carbon footprint (direct, indirect, and embodied carbon); and
  - (b) increased greening and tree canopy cover to help cool the neighbourhood, and more permeable ground surface to help mitigate the effects of stormwater flooding during severe storm events.

### **Economic**

43. Through the procurement process, there is an opportunity to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design and construction professionals and workers in leadership and team member positions within the purview of the Local Government Act 1993. Employment and training opportunities generated by this project has the potential to build capacity and skill within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities creating flow-on economic benefits.

### **Financial Implications**

44. There are sufficient funds within the draft 2024/25 capital works budget and Long Term Financial Plan to deliver the project. Current cost estimates and financial implications are detailed in Confidential Attachment E. Note this does not include budget for the future community garden.

### **Relevant Legislation**

45. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
46. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises the discussion of information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
47. Attachment E to the subject report contains confidential information which, if disclosed would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
48. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.

49. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and relevant environmental planning instruments . A consultant planner will review the scope of works to assess planning consent requirements for the project under the EPA Act.

### **Critical Dates / Time Frames**

50. Current programs dates are:
  - (a) Council approval of concept design May 2024
  - (b) Tender Documentation finalised July 2024
  - (c) Engage head contractor Nov 2024
  - (d) Detailed design complete and construction starts Late 2025
  - (e) Construction complete Early 2027

### **Public Consultation**

51. Community consultation for public domain upgrades across the Redfern neighbourhood occurred over three phases. For a detailed description of the consultation process and findings to date, refer to Attachments C and D.
52. Phase 1 consultation took place between 15 November and 16 December 2022. During this phase we asked the local community to help us develop a vision and plan for the Redfern Neighbourhood public domain.
53. Phase 1 consultation activities included a workshop held at Redfern OOSH with 40 children, a workshop held at Redfern Youth Connect with 15 young people, a pop-up stall at the Edward Street Fair on 28 November 2022, a community drop-in session attended by 200 people and the Redfern Community Centre end of year celebration.
54. Over 200 pieces of feedback were received during phase 1 consultation. The feedback told us what people value about the neighbourhood, what they want for the future public domain and how they think it can be achieved.
55. Phase 2 consultation took place between 29 June and 20 July 2023. The purpose of this consultation was to report back to the community on the outcomes of phase 1 consultation, present the neighbourhood public domain vision and draft concept plans for Redfern Community Centre open space, Yellomundee Park, Hugo Street Reserve, traffic calming and greening of local neighbourhood streets and seek feedback on the concepts.

56. Phase 2 consultation activities included a community workshop with 60 people in attendance hosted by the Lord Mayor Clover Moore AO at the Redfern Community Centre on 29 June 2023 and 120 people provided feedback in the subsequent three weeks via hardcopy and online surveys and emails.
57. Most community responses did not support the draft concept designs for the Redfern Community Centre open space and Hugo Street Reserve. The proposal to move the basketball court from its current location in Hugo Street Reserve to Redfern Community Centre open space was the largest single source of contention. This prompted changes to the designs for Phase 3, including retention of the basketball court in Hugo Street Reserve and investigations into mitigation measures to reduce noise created by people playing basketball.
58. The Community did however support the larger open lawn space, larger playground area, and BBQ area with a community table in the community centre open space, space for a community garden in Yellomundee Park, and more seating, lighting, bins and bubblers across all three parks.
59. The community reiterated that traffic calming and greening across the Redfern Neighbourhood is important to the community. However, feedback recommended that the traffic management of the Redfern Neighbourhood should be co-ordinated with the wider area, specifically with Transport for NSW projects close by on little Eveleigh Street.
60. The City will be undertaking a broader traffic management plan in response to the community's concerns in parallel with park upgrades.
61. The community generally supported more greening and traffic calming, but not at the expense of parking.
62. Phase 3 consultation took place between 12 October and 27 October 2023. Phase 3 provided the community with an opportunity to view and provide comment on revised concept plans for the parks based on feedback gathered in Phase 2.
63. Forty seven people attended a community meeting hosted by the Lord Mayor at the Redfern Community centre on 12 October. Feedback was collected at the meeting and in the subsequent two weeks via 10 email submissions.
64. Most of the Phase 3 comments at the community meeting were positive regarding the redesigned park concept plans and most written submissions via email expressed overall support for the redesigned park concept plans.
65. Retention of the basketball court with noise mitigation measures in place was predominantly well received.
66. The Community again supported the larger open lawn space, larger playground area, a BBQ area with a community table, space for a community garden in Yellomundee Park, and more seating, lighting, bins and bubblers across all three parks.

67. Community feedback is broken down in the Engagement Report for phases 2 and 3 (Attachment D).
68. The draft concept plans have been presented to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, Design Advisory Panel and Public Art Advisory Panel.
69. The draft concept plan can be seen in Attachment B.

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