ATTACHMENT B

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY DISCUSSION PAPER: *A CITY FOR ALL: TOWARDS A SOCIALLY JUST AND RESILIENT SYDNEY*

A City for All

Towards a socially just and resilient Sydney

Social Sustainability Discussion Paper
March 2016

CITY OF SYDNEY

contents

Cover Image: NAIDOC in the City lawn library / Joseph Mayers

Lord Mayor's Message

Clover Moore
Lord Mayor

At the heart of the City's focus on delivering great services and facilities to our community is our commitment to ensure Sydney is a city for all. It drives everything we do.

We want to ensure that each and each and every one of us who lives, works, studies in or visits our fantastic city has access to the kind of opportunities that enable us to reach our potential.

As part of this social compact with our community, we put First Nation's people first. Because we recognise that the land on which this city stands is Aboriginal land – the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. One of the very first initiatives of this Council was to adopt Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols to guide our engagement with communities.

We want to ensure that for everyone in our community, irrespective of our age, income, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religious beliefs, the city is fertile ground for us to flourish and enjoy a great quality of life.

This is the essence of this Social Sustainability Discussion Paper and our new draft Social Sustainability Policy – to ensure that social justice and inclusion is the governing principle for all that we do.

This isn't just about identifying those in our society who are disadvantaged and then targeting services to support them. It's about empowering each and every one of us to strive for a better and stronger society.

In Sydney today, achieving a stronger society hinges on how we tackle urgent social issues at a time of rapid population growth and change and the widespread transformation of our city through urban renewal.

In times of change, we need to focus on the issues we all face, not just as individuals or as a diverse society, but as a community of people. It is imperative we strengthen our social fabric.

We want Sydney to be a society where everyone feels they have a 'fair go.' Where people naturally pull together and support each other in tough times.

So today, through this renewed focus on social sustainability, we are aspiring to strengthen our society in a range of ways.

We're looking at how we can address the impacts of the growing gap between rich and poor – like working to ensure that there is housing and services in our city affordable to people on a range of incomes.

It's about ensuring we can all share in the benefits of prosperity that flow from the success of our global city's economy, including through businesses getting involved in local social issues.

It's about better responding to the needs of the people who are sleeping rough on our city streets by working with other levels of government, the private and not-for-profit sectors and our wider community to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place.

It's about how we all need to share responsibility for the tough social issues we face.

Social sustainability is about recognising that a problem for one of us is really a problem for all of us. Community means that we are all in this together and we need to work together to create a better society.

Building a strong and inclusive society that provides opportunities for all doesn't happen by accident. It requires ongoing focus. Sometimes it needs very deliberate strategies.

Building social connectedness in our communities starts with saying hello to our neighbours and offering to lend a hand.

Building liveable neighbourhoods relies on great quality parks and community centres, where we can meet and mingle and enjoy healthy lifestyles. It means making sure our city streets are safe and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

Ultimately, it's about how we engage with you, our community so that you can contribute to making Sydney a city for all. We look forward to your ideas on how we can work together to deliver this vision.

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Welcome from Gadigal Elder, Uncle Charles 'Chicka' Madden

The modern city we now call Sydney stretches across the Eora Nation, starting in the south at Port Jackson, it reaches the Eora lands of the Wangul and the Cammeraygal people in the north.

But the heart, the centre of Sydney, sits on the land of the Gadigal.

Like my ancestors and their ancestors before them, I stand here on Gadigal land.

I pay respect to the traditional people, both past and present, and welcome you to Sydney – the land of the Gadigal of the Eora Nation.

The City of Sydney includes the suburbs of Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo to the east, Pyrmont and Glebe to the west, Redfern and Waterloo to the south, and is bound by the mighty Sydney Harbour in the north.

Explore our country and global city. But remember the people before us and share their respect for our country.

By acknowledging our shared past, we are laying the groundwork for a future which embraces all Australians, a future based on mutual respect and shared responsibility for our land.

Image by Helen Price

Social Sustainability Taskforce

Our work on this paper has been guided by an independent taskforce, whose time and expertise we greatly appreciate: it has contributed to and deepened our thinking on a range of issues.

David Cant

CEO, Brisbane Housing Company

David is the CEO of Brisbane Housing Company, an independent, not-for-profit organisation providing affordable rental housing and market for sale product throughout Brisbane.

Dr Susan Goodwin

Associate Professor, Policy Studies, University of Sydney

Dr Susan Goodwin teaches social policy at the University of Sydney. Her areas of research include gender, social policy, social justice and community capacity building policies and practices.

Tracy Howe

CEO, Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS)

Tracy Howe is former CEO at Domestic Violence NSW (formerly Women's Refuge Movement NSW). Tracy is committed to human rights advocacy, addressing community disadvantage and gender inequality.

Lachlan McDaniel

Senior Indigenous Affairs Advisor, Telstra

Lachlan McDaniel is a Wiradjuri man who grew up in South-West Sydney. He is a member of the City of Sydney's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, which provides advice to the City on matters of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Michael Perusco

CEO, Yarra Community Housing
Former CEO, St Vincent de Paul Society (NSW)

Michael has worked across corporate, community and government sectors. In government, he has focused on social inclusion and not-for-profit reform agendas. Michael is an appointee to the Federal Government's Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Board.

The Hon. Susan Ryan AO

Age and Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission

A human rights campaigner, the Hon. Susan Ryan is Women's Ambassador and Chair of ActionAid Australia. A pioneering woman in politics, Susan was Senator for the ACT 1975–88, becoming the first woman to hold a Cabinet post in a federal Labor Government. In 1990, she was appointed Officer of the Order of Australia for her contribution to Parliament.

Roderick Simpson

**Associate Professor, Urban Design and Urbanism Programs, University of Sydney
Environment Commissioner, Greater Sydney Commission**

Associate Professor Roderick Simpson, urban design director at the University of Sydney, and urban designer, architect and principal of simpson+wilson. His practice has received widespread acknowledgement as leaders in sustainable design and socially aware architecture.

Dr Tim Soutphommasane

Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission

Dr Tim Soutphommasane is Race Discrimination Commissioner. Prior to joining the Australian Human Rights Commission, he was a political philosopher at the University of Sydney. His thinking on multiculturalism and national identity has been influential in shaping debates in Australia and Britain.

Professor Frank Stilwell

Emeritus Professor, University of Sydney Political Economy Department

Frank Stilwell is a notable Australian political economist and emeritus professor at the University of Sydney, and previous head of the Political Economy Department. He is an advocate of alternative economic strategies that prioritise social justice and economic sustainability.

Tim Wilson

Former Human Rights Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission

Tim Wilson is Australia's former Human Rights Commissioner, focused on promoting and advancing traditional human rights and freedoms, including free speech, freedom of association, worship and movement and property rights.

Summary

A city for all: everyone thrives in a socially sustainable city

The most successful global cities across the world today are characterised by high levels of social wellbeing, not just high national incomes. They are cities committed to social justice and inclusion: cities for all.

Enlightened global city governments are meeting urban challenges proactively through strategies to strengthen cities' social fabric and liveability.

They are tackling critical issues like rising inequality, poverty, and human right abuses – so everyone thrives.

Improving collective wellbeing brings a wealth of benefits to our city. A strong inclusive society is increasingly recognised as integral to a strong economy and healthy natural environment.

This is an issue not only for governments, but for businesses and the wider community. We all benefit from being a part of, and playing our part in, building a socially sustainable City of Sydney.

Strengthening our city's wellbeing

The City of Sydney has prepared this discussion paper to share ideas with our community for how to make our city more socially sustainable through improving our shared wellbeing and resilience.

We want Sydney to be a city for all – a socially just and resilient city that offers everyone a great quality of life and the opportunity to realise their potential as part of a flourishing society.

This paper supports the development of the City's Social Sustainability Policy. To inform this work and shape our shared future, we want to hear your ideas for strengthening Sydney's society.

Towards a socially just and resilient Sydney

We've identified four strategic directions for a socially just and resilient Sydney and used these to create a roadmap for strengthening our city:

– **An inclusive city:** social justice and opportunity
– **A connected city:** diverse, cohesive communities
– **A liveable city:** quality places and spaces
– **An engaged city:** good governance and active participation.

This paper explores the current state of our city under each of these strategic directions. It explores what the City of Sydney is already doing in these areas and what more we could do to improve our collective wellbeing.

1. An inclusive city: social justice and opportunity

An inclusive city offers everyone an equal chance in life. Social justice is a guiding principle for city governance. People have pathways to prosperity through inclusive economic growth and diverse, quality job opportunities. There is a mix of housing for every budget. People have access to essential services and facilities, along with affordable community events and activities. Local services work together in partnership with the community to build on its strengths so it can flourish in the good times and grow stronger through the bad.

2. A connected city: diverse, cohesive communities

A connected city has diverse and cohesive communities who share a sense of connection – to each other and to the city. There is a rich and vibrant mix of people from diverse backgrounds, who respect each other and live peacefully together. People trust each other and help each other out. Neighbours know each other and welcome new residents – so everyone feels 'at home.'

Adam Hollingworth

3. A liveable city: quality places and spaces

A liveable city has great quality places and spaces that are planned and designed with people of all ages and abilities in mind. Residents, workers and visitors can access jobs, services and facilities in vibrant local centres and distinctive neighbourhoods through well-connected transport networks. People can live healthy, active and safe lives, with ample quality green open spaces in harmony with the natural environment.

4. An engaged city: good governance and active participation

An engaged city is one where people actively participate in shaping their community. Governments are trustworthy and operate in the community's best interests. People have the capacity and the opportunity to get involved in, and influence, local decision-making and community life. People want to participate in shaping the city's future because they share a sense of civic values and responsibility.

The social fabric of our city today

The City of Sydney is a thriving global city. Each day there are an estimated 1.2 million people in our local area – residents, workers, students and visitors. All of these people are part of our city's community.

Our resident population is around 200,000 and growing rapidly. Around half of our residents were born overseas. By 2031 the City's population is forecast to grow to approximately 270,000 residents.

We've got great strengths to build on

Sydney is renowned as a highly liveable, cosmopolitan city. Our strengths include our rich social and cultural diversity; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures; healthy and highly-educated resident population; increasing incomes and wealth; strong and diversified local economy with growing jobs and employment opportunities; great liveability with a healthy beautiful natural environment and climate; safety and security, and opportunities for democratic civic participation.

We're also facing big challenges

Sydney, like other global cities, is undergoing significant growth and change that is set to continue well into the next decade.

Our challenges include our rapidly growing population putting pressure on social cohesion as well as local services and infrastructure; high population mobility and lone-person households at risk of social isolation; rising cost of living; a housing affordability crisis and a decline in social housing; increasing homelessness; entrenched poverty and growing inequality; casualisation of the workforce, and adapting to the urban impacts of rapid technological changes and our changing climate.

We're all responsible for strengthening wellbeing

The City of Sydney has an important role in putting people at the heart of our city to improve wellbeing. As a strong global city government, we plan for jobs and growth, and provide community facilities, parks and open spaces, social programs and services, community grants and sponsorships, cultural and creative festivals and events. But social sustainability – ensuring Sydney is a city for all – is a shared responsibility for governments, businesses, community organisations and individuals.

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NAIDOC in the City lawn library / Joseph Mayers

Many of the issues affecting people's quality of life – including housing, education, and incomes – are beyond the City of Sydney's direct control.

We work collaboratively and advocate with a range of government and non-government organisations on behalf of our community to address these issues.

What are your ideas for strengthening Sydney's wellbeing?

We want to hear your ideas on how we can improve our social wellbeing and together work towards a socially sustainable City of Sydney:

– **What is your vision for a socially just and resilient Sydney?**

– **Do you agree with our four strategic directions to create a more socially sustainable city?**

– **What do you think of the actions we have proposed for each strategic direction?**

  • **How can we make our city more socially just and inclusive so everyone has a fair go?**

  • **How can we make our city more connected so we have a diverse and cohesive community?**

  • **How can we make our city more liveable and improve the quality of our places and spaces for people?**

  • **How can we make our city more engaged so people can have their say in local decision-making?**

– **What role can you play, and how can the City of Sydney work with you, to create a more socially just and inclusive Sydney?**

Towards a Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan

We will undertake an extensive community engagement on this discussion paper and draft Social Sustainability Policy over the coming months. Details will be posted on the *Sydney Your Say* website.

Your feedback will inform the finalisation of the City's Social Sustainability Policy and subsequent development of an Action Plan to implement it. This will govern how we work together to improve our community's wellbeing over the next 10 years and beyond.

How to have your say

The City welcomes feedback on this discussion paper and draft policy from **29 March to 12 May 2016.**

Submissions can be made by post, email or online. Details on how to make a submission are provided over the page.

Let's share our ideas for making Sydney a city for all

How we developed this paper

In developing this discussion paper, we commissioned research and analysed evidence on the key social strengths and challenges facing our community and best practice ways to address them.

We engaged with our residents and businesses about life in their area, through community-wide surveys, focus groups and online. We also engaged an independent taskforce to advise us on social sustainability issues and guide the development of this discussion paper. Taskforce members include experts from The University of Sydney, Australian Human Rights Commission, and peak not-for-profit organisations and service providers. You can read more about our Social Sustainability Taskforce on page 6.

Have your say on improving our wellbeing

The City wants our stakeholders and community members to tell us their vision for a more socially just and inclusive Sydney and how we can work together to ensure Sydney is a city for all.

We invite you to provide us with your comments on the issues and ideas explored in this discussion paper and our draft policy, along with anything you think we have missed.

We will use the feedback we receive from our community and stakeholders during the public exhibition of these documents to finalise the City's Social Sustainability Policy in 2016 and develop an associated Action Plan.

For further information about this discussion paper or social sustainability matters, contact:

Allison Heller, Manager Social Strategy, City of Sydney on 02 9288 5929 or socialstrategy@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Guide to making submissions

The City welcomes feedback on this discussion paper and draft policy from **Tuesday 29 March to Thursday 12 May 2016.**

Please provide your name and address or the details of the organisation you represent. We will not distribute your personal information without your consent.

Submissions can be made to:
Allison Heller
Manager Social Strategy
City of Sydney, Town Hall House
456 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Email: socialstrategy@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

We also welcome comments on **sydneyyoursay.com.au**

Progress to Policy and Action Plan 2016

Step 1
Discussion Paper and draft Policy published

Step 2
Community & stakeholder engagement

Step 3
Community & stakeholder feedback analysed

Step 4
Social Sustainability Policy to Council for adoption
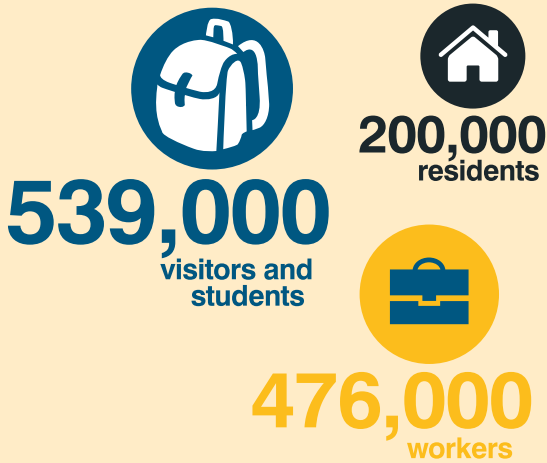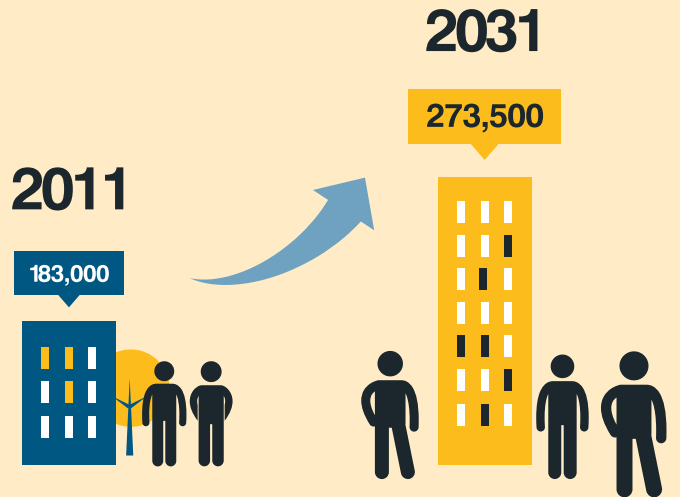
Step 5
Social Sustainability Action Plan developed and implemented

Snapshot of our city today

Our city and community is growing and changing rapidly

Who's in our city on an average day?

539,000 visitors and students

200,000 residents

476,000 workers

City of Sydney's residential population is forecast to grow by 50%, 2011–2031

2011
183,000

2031
273,500

Our city has got great strengths to build on

We have a very diverse community, and we value diversity…

Residents who think it is a good thing for society to be made up of people from different cultures and communities

85% Agreed or strongly agreed

11% Neutral

4% Disagreed or strongly disagreed
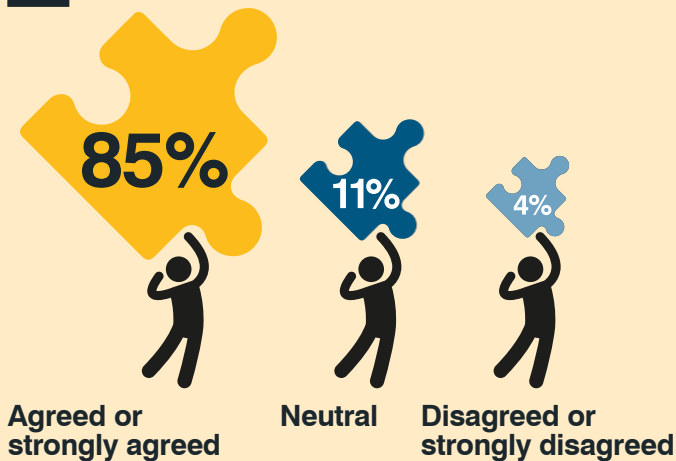
We have a strong and diverse economy, with strong jobs growth and a highly educated resident population…

Forecast workforce growth in the city

2016
476,000 workers

2030
560,000 workers

12
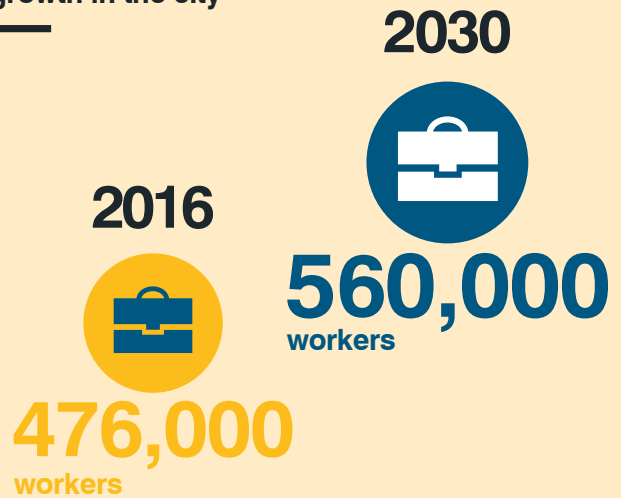
We're also facing big challenges

40% of our residents live alone and the majority of households are living at high-density…

High-density living

75%

of households living at high-density

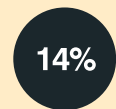**Less than half of residents are satisfied with feeling part of the community…**

Feeling part of the community

49%
Very satisfied or satisfied

37%
Neutral

14%
Unsatisfied or very unsatisfied

Some of our residents are experiencing financial stress and food insecurity...

Financial stress

Over
24%
of residents surveyed could not raise $2,000 in two days in an emergency

Food insecurity

8%
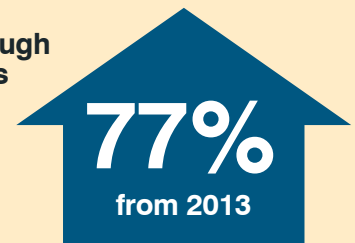of residents surveyed had run out of food and couldn't afford to buy more

A third of our residents are experiencing housing stress – as are 84% of lower income earners, and homelessness in the city is growing…

486
People sleeping rough on the city's streets (Feb 2016)

77%
from 2013

This paper sets out our way of approaching these issues and strengthening community wellbeing and resilience.

"The enduring strength of cities reflects the profoundly social nature of humanity.

Our ability to connect with one another is one of the defining characteristics of our species. We built civilisations and culture together, constantly learning from one another and from the past.

New technologies from the book to Google have failed to change our fundamentally social nature. They've made it easier to learn some things without meeting face-to-face, but that hasn't eliminated the extra edge that comes from interacting in person.

Whether in the high rises of Hong Kong or the dusty workspaces of Dharavi, our culture, our prosperity, and our freedom are all ultimately gifts of people living, working and thinking together – the ultimate triumph of the city."

Edward Glaeser – *Triumph of the City*[2]

Strengthening our global city's society

"The evidence suggests that we need to shift our attention away from increasing material wealth, to the social environment and the quality of social relations in our societies."

The Equality Trust, a UK non-profit organisation working to improve quality of life[4]

Successful global cities are cities for all

Enlightened global city governments recognise the need to meet urban challenges proactively through strategies to strengthen cities' social fabric and liveability.

They understand that social sustainability is critical to cities' ongoing competitiveness and success; that it is inseparable from other aspects of sustainability.

A flourishing society depends heavily on a strong and inclusive economy, which in turn benefits from good governance and a healthy natural environment.

The evidence is clear: cities that commit to social justice and inclusion do better – and everyone benefits. Cities that tackle critical issues like rising inequality, poverty, and human rights abuses are cities in which everyone thrives.

Urbanisation pressures on global cities

The City of Sydney faces myriad challenges and opportunities shared by global cities across the world, yet uniquely reflected in our local neighbourhoods.

Urban populations are growing rapidly. The magnetic pull of cities, attributed to the strength and vibrancy of their economies and societies, is continuing to intensify the trend towards urbanisation. Even in our digitally connected world, the power of face-to-face interaction is enduring.

This is particularly so in Australia – one of the world's most urbanised nations. More than a third of our country's population lives in our two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne.[3] This trend is forecast to continue, driving rapid population growth and change and bringing with it pressures on infrastructure and social cohesion.

Today Sydney faces many challenges, such as declining housing affordability, rising inequality, economic fluctuations, and adapting to technological and climate change.

Social sustainability is a framework for putting people at the heart of our cities

Social sustainability is about strengthening our collective wellbeing and resilience. It puts people at the heart of our cities – as places where all people have the opportunity to live, work, learn, play, and grow, and participate in shaping our shared future.

It recognises that we are social beings: our personal wellbeing impacts on, and is impacted by, our collective wellbeing as a community.

So if we address the needs of those who are most disadvantaged in our society, if we respect human rights and social justice for all people, we all benefit.

Towards a socially just and resilient Sydney

This discussion paper sets out the City of Sydney's plan for a socially just and resilient Sydney – a city for all.

It sets out our proposed vision, principles, and a roadmap for actions to tackle our current and future challenges.

Through this work the City of Sydney is committed to meeting our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

We are committed to putting First Nations people first, as a respectful society that recognises 40,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' living cultures and connections to country. We recognise our shared past and our shared future.

Ultimately, we are committed to strengthening our global city's society to build resilience, so our city will have the capacity to thrive, even in the face of future challenges.

NAIDOC 2015 / Sharon Hickey

Putting First Nations people first

You've got to know where you're from, to know where you're going

How deep would your connection to a place be if you and more than 2,000 generations of your family had lived there for more than 40,000 years?

Aboriginal people's dreaming says they have lived in Australia since time immemorial.

The world's oldest continuing culture

Aboriginal Australians are the world's oldest continuing cultures. They have survived in this country through enormous adversity and change. This makes them one of the most sustainable, resilient and innovative peoples in the world.

They have developed complex systems of understanding the land, the world around them and their place in its ecology. Their occupation and association with this region is unbroken and ongoing.

When the First Fleet arrived Aboriginal people camped, hunted and fished in and around the coves and bays of Port Jackson. Some had well documented engagements with the colonialists and are now characters in our history; Bennelong, Bungaree, Colbee, Barangaroo and Patyegarang.

A strong and changing connection to our city

Many more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from around the country work, live or visit Sydney.

Census figures state that Indigenous Australians make up 1.3 per cent of the city's population or just over 2,000 people. Many Indigenous leaders would say this figure belies a much stronger engagement with the city.

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land

The birthplace of Indigenous political action

Successive government policies since settlement has led to high levels of disadvantage and Sydney is often identified as a birthplace of Indigenous political action.

For contemporary Indigenous leaders today, the 1950s and 1960s is a key period when they came to Sydney seeking work. They recount stories of gathering in communities on the fringes of Sydney from shared similar circumstances of being in a new and strange place, often being discriminated against for housing and jobs. These circumstances led to civil action for the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights.

The suburb of Redfern became a special place where political struggles were fought and won. As a result Redfern is home to the first Aboriginal services to address their housing, health, family, employment and legal needs.

Model of the City and key Aboriginal cultural heritage sites / Paul Patterson

"Changes need to be made in the cities because that is where political decisions are made. We can help people in the remote regions by fighting the fights in the city. Racism needs to be tackled and governments only patronize and pay lip service to Indigenous rights."

Millie Ingram, Wiradjuri Elder

Disadvantage has arisen from government policies

There is still a vast disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians that is highlighted by their low socio-economic indicators, low home ownership and housing levels, educational attainment, poor health and wellbeing, and high youth unemployment and incarceration statistics. Successive Indigenous leaders and Elders state this disadvantage is a result of poor treatment by successive government policies that has led to intergenerational trauma.

For future sustainability Indigenous Australians want governments to honour, respect and support the inherent capacity of their people and their unique cultures.

Wellbeing arises from empowerment

For many years Indigenous Australians have said the key to better wellbeing lies in empowerment, equality and self-determination; in short, the recognition of their human rights and allocating resources to meet their needs.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still come to live, work, play or visit Sydney for opportunities such as business, education, sporting, arts and cultural activities or entertainment. Those individuals, families, communities, organisations and businesses are urban and contemporary peoples who recognise the opportunities that the city facilitates for them today.

Community aspirations towards resilience

Beyond recognition and rights, forums and discussion hosted by the City of Sydney with Indigenous community leaders shows that what is important for their communities is similar to that of other Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples want access to jobs, housing, education, health services, legal and financial advice, business support and to have healthy, resilient and sustainable communities, just as they had before 1788.

Like other Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want to make their own unique contribution to the ongoing development of an excellent Australian nation, one that is inclusive of all.

Feature by Nancia Guivarra, Member of the City of Sydney's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel

Our vision for Sydney: a city for all

Our vision for a socially just and resilient Sydney

The City's vision for a socially sustainable Sydney is a city for all. It is a socially just and resilient city where people from all walks of life can live, work, learn, play and grow.

It's a city that puts First Nations people first – recognising 40,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures.

It's a city that offers people opportunities to realise their full potential and enjoy a great quality of life.

It's a city where people have a shared commitment to the wellbeing of their community.

What is your vision for a socially just and resilient Sydney?

?

"Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all."

Bristol Accord on creating sustainable communities, European Union, 2005[5]

Art and About 2015 / Jamie Williams

Our framework for a socially sustainable Sydney

Principles for a city for all

We have developed a series of eight guiding principles for strengthening social sustainability in the City of Sydney.

These principles are described in our draft Social Sustainability Policy:

1. **Sydney is on Gadigal Country: we recognise First Nations people first**

2. **Sydney is a just city that respects human rights and dignity**

3. **Sydney's community's strengths are valued and supported**

4. **Sydney is a welcoming, socially connected city that embraces diversity**

5. **Sydney is a safe and accessible city for people of all ages and abilities**

6. **Sydney is a collaborative city where responsibility for community wellbeing is shared**

7. **Sydney is a democratic city where people can participate and influence local decisions**

8. **Sydney's governance is effective, balanced and accountable**

Roadmap for a socially sustainable City of Sydney

The diagram over page sets out our roadmap to a socially sustainable City of Sydney – a city that is inclusive, connected, liveable, and engaged.

These four domains provide a framework to direct our actions for making Sydney a city for all and strengthening community wellbeing and resilience.

The four aspects of this roadmap are discussed in more detail in the following pages.

'Societal progress is about improvements in the wellbeing of people and households. It requires looking not only at the functioning of the economic system but also at the diverse experiences and living conditions of people.'

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)[6]

Roadmap for a socially sustainable Sydney

A city for all: a socially just and resilient Sydney

Inclusive City	Connected City	Liveable City	Engaged City
Social justice: inclusive growth and opportunities	Supportive social networks and trust	People focused urban design and planning	Transparent, accountable governance
Diverse housing tenures and types	Sense of belonging and connection to place	Accessible places and spaces	Balanced and inclusive local decision-making
Affordable services, programs and facilities	Harmony and social cohesion	Quality natural environment and climate	Civic knowledge and skills
Strong empowered communities	Diverse thriving communities	Healthy active living	Public participation and community life
Resilience and adaptive capacity	Vibrant creative life	Safe and secure communities	Collaboration and partnerships

Direction 1 –
An inclusive city: social justice and opportunity

How can we make our city more socially just and inclusive so everyone has a fair go? **?**

What does an inclusive city look like?

An inclusive and socially just city provides everyone with an equal chance in life. It provides people with access to pathways to prosperity, irrespective of their background.

Equity is one of the key foundations of a socially just city. It's a city that offers offers everyone a 'fair go' – economic growth benefits everyone and no one is unavoidably left behind.

Economic development is recognised as a means to support greater societal wellbeing, not just an end in itself. Growth is inclusive, delivering benefits equitably across society, including through diverse job opportunities. Growth delivers public benefit along with private profits.

People have equitable access to affordable essential services and facilities, such as healthcare, education, and, public transport.

There is a diverse supply of housing for people on a range of incomes. Community events and activities are affordable so everyone has opportunities to participate in community life.

Local services work together in partnership with the community to build on its strengths. This makes the community more resilient so it can flourish in the good times and withstand the bad.

"Growth is not an end in itself. A well-managed, growing economy is a prerequisite for a prosperous society and rising living standards."

Business Council of Australia[7]

What makes a city inclusive?

Social justice: inclusive growth and opportunities

A socially sustainable economic model is built on a social justice and inclusive growth agenda. It recognises that everyone should be able to realise their potential and to share the benefits of growth and increased prosperity.

For decades, governments have implemented policies to achieve economic growth on the assumption it 'trickles down' to increase wealth and prosperity for everyone.

However evidence shows increasing national income in wealthy countries does not correlate with increased wellbeing.[8] And societies characterised by rising inequality – a large and growing gap between rich and poor – have lower levels of wellbeing and are less stable and economically productive.[9]

Achieving inclusive economic growth means managing wealth in a way that delivers opportunities equitably across all sectors of society.

Social justice can serve as a governing principle for the delivery of services, facilities and opportunities for social and economic participation for all members of society.

Noah and Aya Oseki, pop-up Library 2015 Sydney Festival Village / Jamie Williams

"When countries pursue GDP in a lopsided manner, overriding social and environmental objectives, the results often negatively impact human wellbeing."

World Happiness Report 2015[10]

Diverse employment and education opportunities

A strong and diverse business sector is one of the foundations of an inclusive, resilient city. It offers pathways to prosperity through local employment and business opportunities.

Local government can foster economic diversity through economic development initiatives and support for people who are starting their own enterprises. These can include investment in infrastructure and technology, marketing and promotions to encourage investment and business opportunities, reducing regulatory barriers to make it easier to do business, and grants and sponsorships for local initiatives and events.

Investment in human capital that promotes skills development and learning across people's lives is also important to support inclusive access to employment opportunities.

Shared value and corporate responsibility

Businesses today recognise their ongoing success and financial sustainability is connected to the wellbeing and sustainability of the communities they operate in.

Shared value is an emerging approach to sustainable business models based on the delivery of positive social impacts along with – and to support – the delivery of private profit. It recognises opportunities to deliver business as well as community benefits.

Local governments can encourage and promote businesses using a shared value approach to improve local social sustainability – including through products, services and other initiatives that address social, economic and environmental issues – in partnership with local communities.

Diverse housing for all income levels

Cities need a mix of housing options at different prices so people on a range of incomes can live there, including workers in essential services, such as teachers, police, and nurses.

Social housing, along with supported accommodation, is a vital social safety net for people who are doing it tough. Housing is linked to better health, access to jobs and improved social connections.

Governments have an important role to play in ensuring subsidised social and affordable rental housing – as well as market housing – is available in cities. This ensures people can live near where they work, and people on lower incomes are not relegated to the city's fringes, forced into long costly commutes to access employment and education opportunities and the range of services that support social wellbeing.

Surry Hills Library and Community Centre / John Gollings

Affordable services and facilities

In an inclusive city basic goods and services – healthcare, education, transport, housing and fresh food – are accessible and affordable for all.

Local councils play a significant role in early childhood education and care, and youth and family services. Ensuring universal access to early childhood education and care and quality schooling, combined with family support, lays the foundations for children to have the best start in life and prevents intergenerational disadvantage.

An inclusive city also provides affordable social and cultural infrastructure – public parks and open spaces, museums and galleries, community facilities and recreation centres – so people can enjoy a great quality of life regardless of their income.

Empowering local communities

An inclusive city also provides flexible and responsive local social programs and services to strengthen communities and support them to make positive change.

Local government, as the sphere of government closest to the community, is well positioned to implement place-based responses to local disadvantage. Councils can support early intervention and prevention, participate in or coordinate joined-up local service delivery, and increase community capacity to lead positive social change.

"Societies with smaller income differences between rich and poor are more cohesive: community life is stronger, levels of trust are higher and there is less violence. The vast majority of the population seem to benefit from greater equality."

The Equality Trust, a UK non-profit organisation working to improve quality of life[11]

Creating a resilient city that can adapt to the future

Socially sustainable communities have the capacity to cope with stresses and shocks, such as severe weather events or civil unrest, so they continue to survive and thrive. Being flexible and adaptable, with the capacity to grow and learn from experience, is essential to deal with tough times.

Local governments can help to develop community resilience through capacity building, disaster planning and adaptation strategies so people and cities respond effectively to shocks and stressors, particularly people and communities who are most vulnerable and least likely to have the capacity and resources to cope without support.

"I've lived all my adult life in the city, and from an arts point of view, I would say it is where most of the activity takes place. It's where a lot of the art community is.

I think there's big inequality in terms of affordable rental space and affordable living space. A lot of artists find it really difficult to work and find studios based in the city. That's really worrying for us because artists need an affordable space to work so they can make good work."

Samantha, gallery manager, Chippendale
Image: Sarah Rhodes

Image: Brendan Read

Where are we now?

Sydney is Australia's leading global economy

The City generates more than $108 billion annually and provides jobs to more than 437,700 people.[12] The City's industries are diverse with a strong knowledge-based sector, increasing our economic resilience in a globally competitive world. The local start-up sector is strong with opportunities for new business ventures and meaningful employment.

Not everyone has benefited from economic growth

Despite growing prosperity, poverty and disadvantage remains a feature of our city. Many people on low incomes are struggling to pay for food, medicines, rent, education, and electricity bills.[13]

An estimated 20,000 people were living in poverty in the LGA in 2011/12.[14] In 2011, almost a quarter of the City's residents experienced financial stress and 8 per cent experienced food insecurity. There were 486 people sleeping rough on the city's streets in February, 2016 – and the number of people experiencing homelessness is likely to be much higher.[15]

The gap between rich and poor is growing

While the city is becoming increasingly wealthy, communities experiencing poverty and disadvantage remain throughout the local area, concentrated in social housing communities.

Relative wealth and income inequality is growing as more higher income earners move in, and the gap between the most well-off and least well-off residents is widening. In 2011, the city had one of the highest levels of income inequality across the Sydney metropolitan area.[16] Evidence indicates this disparity is detrimental to society – to economic growth and productivity as well as social cohesion and stability.

"Australia is a prosperous nation, one of the richest in the world. However, the success of our economy has not translated well to moving people out of poverty and disadvantage."

Sarah-Jane Derby, Senior Economist, Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA)[17]

While the City is not responsible for policies affecting income inequality, such as minimum wage or taxation settings, we can play a role in advocating to other levels of government for more equitable measures so no one is left behind, and delivering affordable housing and services to mitigate the impacts of this issue.

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Redfern / Paul Patterson

City living is increasingly expensive

Greater prosperity has brought with it rising prices and increased cost of living. Sydney's success as a global city means it attracts a highly skilled and high-earning people from across Australia and overseas who want to live close to where they work. As well as bringing many benefits, this trend has also contributed to pushing up the cost of housing and other goods and services.

The city needs people from all socio-economic backgrounds to fill its jobs and maintain its rich social fabric. One of Sydney's toughest challenges is for the inner city to remain accessible and affordable for people on a range of incomes. For many people in our community, finding money to cover even the basics is a major challenge – never mind finding cash for festivals, events, or a night out. Food security – having access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food at all times – is a critical issue, typically associated with poverty.

Access to affordable fresh healthy food, childcare, education, transport, health services, and community programs and facilities can help mitigate the some of these hardships for many city residents on low incomes.

Sydney is experiencing a housing affordability crisis

Property prices in the city are increasing much faster than incomes. More than one-third of city households and 84 per cent of lower income households were in housing stress in 2011.[18] The lack of alternatives to private market housing is making this situation worse. Less than one per cent of housing in the city is affordable rental housing, and a more than 14-fold increase in supply is needed to reach the City's 2030 targets.

Lack of affordable housing driving homelessness

People sleeping rough on the city's streets are a highly visible sign of deep social and economic issues affecting individuals and our wider society.

With the number of rough sleepers in the city rising by 77 per cent to 486 people in the three years to February 2016, the City is working with a range of government agencies and not-for-profit organisations to better understand the causes of this rise in rough sleeping and how to work collaboratively to prevent it.

To better understand the vulnerability of rough sleepers in the city, including their relative health and wellbeing, reasons for their homelessness and the kind of housing and support needs they might have, a major survey was conducted in late 2015.

More than 500 people were interviewed by the City's Homelessness Unit in partnership with The Haymarket Foundation, Neami National, Homelessness NSW and the Mercy Foundation.

The rough sleepers who participated in this 'vulnerability index' had been on the streets for more than five years, on average.

Lack of affordable housing options was found to be the major cause of homelessness for the majority of people (65 per cent), many only needing short term support. Just over one-third needed longer term housing and service supports.

The City is investing $6.6 million over the next three years to operate its Homelessness Unit – the only Council in NSW with a dedicated service, which has been operating since 1984. This includes $4.2 million funding for services to reduce homelessness through NSW Family and Community Services.

Adam Hollingworth

"There is growing evidence that inequality is harmful to everyone in society and that greater social and economic inclusion is strongly associated with longer and stronger periods of sustained economic growth."

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)[19]

Coordinated local services are needed

Some of the most vulnerable people in our community experiencing multiple issues don't get the support they need until they reach crisis point. Even where services are locally available, community consultations have shown people fall through the cracks between fragmented services.

We need to make sure local services are coordinated around the needs of the people who use them. The City is well placed to facilitate collaborative service models to achieve better outcomes in partnership with our disadvantaged communities.

Building our resilience and adaptive capacity

Like other urban areas across the globe, Sydney and its community is vulnerable to the impacts of global challenges such as climate change and economic crises. The City's emergency management plans are designed to ensure our services are flexible and respond effectively to major crisis.

Longer term, we need to strengthen the city's social fabric to support vulnerable communities to adapt and thrive. Children, older people, and people experiencing poverty and disadvantage are at greater risk of experiencing harm or loss in the face of major crisis, and are generally less able to prepare for and mitigate the effects of events such as major flooding, heat waves or financial crisis.

Sydney: one of Rockefeller's 100 Resilient Cities

Sydney now has a Chief Resilience Officer who will lead the development of the Sydney Resilience Strategy for the Sydney metropolitan area.

In 2014 Sydney was selected to be one of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities.

The Rockefeller Foundation's initiative aims to help cities around the world become more resilient to the complex urban challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century so they are better able to deliver essential functions to their communities in good times and bad.[20]

The initiative was established in response to key challenges associated with urbanisation, globalisation and climate change.

Urban resilience describes the capacity of cities to function, so that the people living and working in cities – particularly the poor and vulnerable – continue to thrive no matter what stresses or shocks they encounter.[49]

Sydney's resilience strategy will address a range of social, economic and environmental issues including infrastructure capacity, housing affordability, and poverty and inequality.

Rose Kwiatek, Glebe library / Sharon Hickey

What is the City doing already?

Promoting sustainable economic growth, education and employment opportunities

– Building a resilient and sustainable local economy by growing new, emerging sectors, such as the tech start-up sector, to support economic diversity with increased enterprise and employment opportunities.

– Supporting equitable access to education, training and employment, through the Reconciliation Action Plan and the development of an Eora Journey Economic Development Plan that aims to support Aboriginal people with employment, training, higher education, and business ownership.

– Supporting skills development and community capacity building through education and other programs and initiatives in local libraries and community centres.

Tackling housing affordability

– Advocating for an integrated plan across all levels of government, the private and community sectors to address housing affordability in Sydney.

– Facilitating the supply of social and affordable rental housing for lower income earners through a range of levies, subsidies, and other direct actions and advocacy to meet our targets of 7.5 per cent affordable rental housing supply and 7.5 per cent social housing supply for the city.

Providing affordable facilities and services

– Providing and funding free or low cost events, such as NAIDOC in the city, Christmas Concerts & Tree Lighting, and Sydney Chinese New Year Festival.

– Supporting people experiencing disadvantage by providing social programs and services, including a dedicated homelessness team, youth programs, childcare and Out of School Hours Care (OOSHC), meals services, community transport and social support.

– Subsidising fees and charges for a range of Council services and facilities, including subsidised Council rates for concession card holders, discounted pool/gym access for low-income earners, and free access to a range of our facilities and services for refugee and asylum seekers.

– Investing in early childhood education and care to meet the growing demand for childcare places, subsidised leases for not-for-profit providers, subsidised leases for not-for-profit providers of education and care, and facilitating supply through the planning system.

Strengthening local communities

– Providing grants and sponsoring organisations to deliver community programs or projects that help increase equality in the city and develop resilient, adaptive communities by addressing unmet need or trialling innovative services and programs.

– Working with local communities to build capacity through a range of programs and initiatives, such as working directly with people living in social housing, establishing a Community Leadership Program to build the capacity of elected precinct tenant representatives, and providing training to community organisations.

– Participating in service delivery reform and collaborative partnerships to improve the coordination and delivery of services in the local community, in areas such as housing, homelessness, health, and community safety.

Building resilience and adaptive capacity

– Building the city's resilience and capacity to deal with urban challenges by planning for natural and man-made emergencies, and employing a Chief Resilience Officer to develop a resilience strategy for Sydney.

– Getting ready for climate change through a climate adaptation strategy and plan of actions to safeguard Sydney against the threat of soaring temperatures, worsening storms and rising sea level.

Gary Radler

Upcoming priorities to improve social justice and opportunity

Deliver new affordable and supported housing developments in the inner city

Addressing the housing needs of lower income earners and people experiencing homelessness is fundamental to sustaining a socially just and inclusive city.

The City will seek to partner with NSW government and housing and support services to deliver new supported housing for people experiencing homelessness as well as social and affordable rental housing for people on lower incomes.

Schemes would be designed to reduce homelessness by providing long term, stable accommodation together with on-site social services to support people to successfully maintain their tenancies. This 'Housing First' model recognises that a secure home is a fundamental basis for people to access opportunities and improve their wellbeing.

– Strengthen the social impact of business in the local area through working collaboratively on shared social responsibility and local investment priorities.

– Maximise the City's corporate social responsibility by implementing best practice in sustainable procurement, equitable employment, workforce diversity and inclusion, staff wellbeing, volunteering, and workplace giving schemes.

– Increase access to the City's facilities and services for people experiencing financial hardship through opportunities to provide fee waivers.

– Improve access to local arts and cultural events for people on low incomes through the City's festivals and events sponsorship program, and improve community information about subsidised tickets and discount programs in the local area.

– Promote economic participation and social inclusion for refugees and asylum seekers through introducing an internship program at the City and developing employment forums and other initiatives in partnership with the Asylum Seeker Centre NSW.

– Strengthen community capacity in socially and economically disadvantaged areas through introducing a community leadership program to help build skills and capabilities.

– Support vulnerable local communities – including older people and people experiencing poverty – to adapt to the impacts of climate change through analysing who is most at risk and delivering programs, services and targeted initiatives to assist them to prepare and adapt.

OzHarvest

Case study

Nutritious food for all

Food insecurity is an issue for many people on low incomes, including City of Sydney residents.[21] In response, some local areas have developed food strategies, including Blacktown, Macarthur and the Illawarra.

The City funds food nutrition and education programs run by Secondbite and Oz Harvest. Started in Sydney, OzHarvest is a food rescue organisation that collects excess food from commercial outlets and delivers it to people in need. Over 38 million meals have been delivered nationally since OzHarvest was established in 2004, saving 11,000 tonnes of food from landfill.

In Melbourne, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre has established a social enterprise, the Food Justice Truck. The mobile fresh food market sells locally-sourced produce to the public and uses the profits to subsidise a 75% discount for people seeking asylum.[22] In New York City, MOVE Systems and the City Council will provide 100 war veterans with free energy-efficient food carts under a pilot to provide cleaner, healthier and safer food carts.[23]

Case study

Building capacity to address local disadvantage – council and non-government organisations learning together

Ignite Small Business Start-ups enables people primarily from a refugee background to start their own business or expand an existing one. Many recently arrived refugees face significant barriers to employment, in particular during the early stages of their settlement. The program is a NSW-based initiative of Settlement Services International (SSI).

Ignite Small Business Start-ups are mentored by a Resource Team, made up of local business owners, local council representatives, community organisations and chambers of commerce. The Resource Team provide their expertise, business knowledge and skills to the fledgling entrepreneurs with the aim of broadening their knowledge and understanding of issues including local laws, suppliers and business networks.

The model is based on a person-centred approach to community and economic development established by the Sirolli Institute. The training provides a collaborative learning opportunity for organisations to experiment.

Since 2014, the program has worked with over 20 newly arrived entrepreneurs across Sydney.

Tony Kennedy, photographed by Sarah Rhodes

"The real solution to the inequality crisis lies in focusing on community rather than simply on self-interest – both community as a means to prosperity and as a goal in its own right…Communities help those who are less fortunate among them."

Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Prize-winning economist[24]

Case study

Helping rough sleepers access sustainable housing and support – City of Sydney

In late 2014 the Walla Mulla Park in Woolloomooloo had an increase in people sleeping rough, anti-social behaviour, and illegal dumping in public spaces. The City identified many of the people sleeping rough at Walla Mulla Park had not been directly linked with appropriate support services.

In response, the City of Sydney's Homelessness Unit brought together NSW Police, Specialist Homelessness Services, NSW Department of Family and Community Services, local non-government organisations and health services to facilitate a collaborative action plan. The plan outlined actions to improve the local amenity, increase support provided to people sleeping rough and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Monthly case coordination meetings were held with all the partners to assist rough sleepers exit homelessness. The group identified barriers for rough sleepers, such as a large number of people who could not access services as they had no identification. In response, local police agreed to write personal references using their ID database and Housing NSW then agreed to accept the referrals.

Through this collaborative process several rough sleepers have been supported to access long term sustainable housing with support. The City's Public Space Liaison Officers also visit the park daily and have fostered positive relationships with people sleeping rough in the area, linking them to specialist homelessness services and other support.

There has also been a reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area since the collaborative intervention. Crime has decreased and the amenity of the area has significantly improved with less waste, graffiti and vandalism.

Century development / Brisbane Housing Company Ltd

Case study

Delivering diverse communities through housing mix – Brisbane Housing Company Ltd

The Brisbane Housing Company Limited (BHCL) is an independent not-for-profit community housing provider, which works in partnership with local communities, the private and not-for-profit sectors to deliver developments that directly support social diversity by providing a mix of housing affordable to people on a range of incomes.

BHCL was established in 2002 through a partnership formed and financed by the Queensland Department of Housing and Brisbane City Council. It has since developed more than 1,500 homes in prime locations across Brisbane, many of which it also manages.

The company pioneered mixed-tenure development in Queensland: a model combining private homes for sale and a mix of boarding houses and apartments priced at or below 74.9% of market rent for lower income households, along with retail and commercial floorspace.

Headed by CEO David Cant, state and city governments remain the company's major shareholders, along with community shareholders.

Social sustainability underpins the company's vision and business value proposition: the creation of 'thriving, diverse and liveable communities' delivered through its mixed tenure development model. It's also committed to environmental sustainability: buildings are six-star environmentally rated and designed to 'complement their environment, provide ambience, comfort and excellent design.'

Major funding commitments from all levels of government have enabled the realisation of BHCL: more than $100 million from state government, $18 million from Brisbane City Council, and around $95 million in federal government funding (through the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan). The company has a $50 million credit facility through Westpac, and revenue generated from property sales and rents are reinvested in further growth and development.

The quality of BHCL schemes are well recognised: last year its Green Square Close development was a finalist in the World Architecture Festival awards.

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Direction 2-
A connected city: diverse, cohesive communities

How can we make our city more connected so we have a diverse and cohesive community?

What does a connected city look like?

A connected city has a vibrant mix of people from diverse backgrounds who respect each other and live peacefully together. Neighbours know each other and they help each other out. Residents feel they belong and share a sense of place because their culture and history is reflected in the local neighbourhood.

The combination of relationships, trust and cohesion – the social capital – is the glue that helps communities function well. They flourish in good times and pull together in the bad. A thriving, connected community with high levels of social capital is essential for a socially sustainable city.

What makes a city connected?

A sense of community doesn't happen by accident – generating and maintaining a cohesive community spirit requires ongoing efforts to build trust and respectful relationships, facilitate social networks, and create connections to place.

"A 'good life' is not lived in isolation or in the pursuit of independent goals; a good life is lived at the heart of a thriving community, among people we trust, and within an environment of mutual respect."

Hugh Mackay, Australian social researcher[25]

Good neighbour relations and social cohesion

Living harmoniously as part of a local community requires mutual understanding, respect and social compromises. It requires us to have consideration for others, negotiate differences, and be tolerant of others.

Local governments can support communities to live well together by facilitating education initiatives that promote neighbourliness, tolerance and consideration. This is particularly important for high-density living.

Opportunities to build trust and form social networks

Neighbourhoods are important places in which social relationships can form and grow. Local governments play an important role in providing all kinds of opportunities for people to come together and build connections to each other through their local community and other communities of interest.

Chinese New Year celebrations / Damian Shaw

Community events and activities – such as farmers markets, festivals, sports events, and cultural celebrations – give people from all walks of life the opportunity to meet and connect. This builds trust and mutual understanding which provides the basis for establishing social relationships.

Research highlights the importance of local initiatives to build social connectedness that go beyond one-off events to foster everyday interactions between people in the community, such as local residents and retailers.[26]

With social and technological changes, local governments need to respond and connect with people through new forms of community, including online or virtual communities.

Connections with First Nations people and living cultures

Sydney is home to the world's oldest living cultures. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from many different clans around Australia have been gathering on Gadigal country to commemorate and celebrate cultural traditions and practices for over 40,000 years. Elders past and present have held together the fabric of the community through times of adversity and profound change.

The City recognises the First Peoples of this country, drawing on tens of thousands of years of unbroken cultural traditions and ceremony. Today, Sydney is a modern day corrobboree ground that enables the practicing, preservation, teaching and sharing of First Nations cultures with all Australians in this global city.

The City plays a role in supporting connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, including through recognition in the public domain, public art, festivals, and social and economic development initiatives.

> **"The capacity of a community to respond effectively to challenges is dependent upon positive social connections and the ability of community members to draw together."**
>
> **Australian Institute of Family Studies, a government research body**[27]

Fostering diverse cultural connections

Respecting and celebrating connections to the many cultures that are part of Sydney's diverse community is an important aspect of cultural connectedness. Nearly half our residents were born overseas.

Local governments can support social cohesion among Sydney's diverse cultures through celebrating diversity and promoting shared understanding. This includes through social programs, education and awareness-raising initiatives, opportunities for sharing cultural knowledge and traditions in local communities, public art and festivals.

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Green Park/ David Clare

"Since occupants of higher density housing mostly do not have the opportunity to interact 'over the back fence', shared facilities – of good quality in particular – are particularly important for engendering social interaction."

City Futures, University of New South Wales urban policy research centre[28]

Fostering harmonious high density communities

More than three quarters of households in the city live in high-density apartments. These are typically governed by management companies and resident strata committees.

A four-pronged approach has been proven to be effective in building connected, tolerant high-density communities:[29]

– *For estate agents and building managers:* Help people find a scheme that suits their needs and lifestyles by providing information on 'liveability factors' upfront and schemes' characteristics in terms of lifestyle; spirit; space (internal and common areas); people, and communication.[30]

– *For building managers, strata committees:* Engage with residents through positive communications focused on fostering fun and social connectedness. Provide multiple engagement channels for residents to communicate and share information, including: hyper local websites/apps; online forums; mailbox drops; community noticeboards, and opportunities for residents to meet face to face, such as through resident BBQs and other informal events.

– *For local government:* Community education initiatives such as 'good neighbour guides' to help people understand the context of high density living. The City's Strata 101 workshops and welcome packs for new residents in urban renewal areas are examples of this approach, providing people with skills to negotiate shared living arrangements and minimise strata disputes.

– *For residents:* Consider a high-density environment as a contained community, requiring tolerance for neighbours and sometimes personal lifestyle compromises, especially when it comes to noise.

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Art & About 2014 / Jamie Williams

Connections to place and a sense of belonging

Local events, initiatives and community planning work can help to nurture neighbourhoods, promote social diversity and improve community cohesion.

Placemaking is an integrated, people-focused planning approach that gets government, local communities and other organisations working together for a common vision.

It uses physical design and public spaces such as parks, streetscapes and public art to strengthen character, heritage and culture, building social connectedness by fostering a sense of place and belonging.

Creating places and spaces for thriving communities

Public spaces are the key to transforming a place into a liveable neighbourhood. Parks, playgrounds, laneways, and pedestrian malls provide opportunities for casual and diverse social interaction.

Local governments can ensure appropriate design, location and cultural representation that make public spaces welcoming, inclusive and safe for all social groups.

Community facilities, such as community centres, recreation centres, historic town halls, and libraries, are valuable in supporting the social fabric of communities.

They provide spaces for people to gather, offer programs and services that bring different people together, and focal points for community activity. With the shift to apartment living, these spaces increasingly play a role as 'community living rooms' for people with smaller homes.

Adaptable spaces are important to ensure that community infrastructure continues to cater to changing community needs over time. Spaces need to be able to accommodate multiple uses by multiple groups as the population grows and changes.

Opportunities for creative and artistic expression

Creativity and the arts are another way people shape and connect with their community. Public avenues for creative and artistic expression can provide people with a more accessible, less formal platform to express their identity and beliefs. The arts can stimulate new and innovative ideas to address local social issues and promote collaborative working towards shared solutions.

"When neighbours know and trust each other, streets are safer, people are healthier and happier, our children do better in school, there is less bullying and less discrimination. We are simply better off in many of the ways that matter."

The Vancouver Foundation, a Canadian non-profit organisation working to improve community life[31]

"I like this place because it's so close to the city, and now we've become embedded in the community here. After 12 years of living here, we've met a whole new circle of people and it's all through parents at the school, so we've got a good social scene, and it's all within walking distance.

We know all the neighbours really well. The kids in our street know that if there's any problem they can knock on any door to get help.

We use the local park for get-togethers and we have picnics in Rushcutters Bay and go to a lot of the events there like the Christmas carols... We go and do some mingling – it's really great."

Emma, local resident, Darlinghurst
Image: Sarah Rhodes

Art & About 2014 / Jamie Williams

Where are we now?

Sydney is a cohesive, cosmopolitan city

Diversity is one of Sydney's defining characteristics. Our community includes people from many nationalities and cultures, and of different ages, incomes, and sexual orientations. This diversity is a valuable asset that makes the city such a rich and vibrant place to work, live and visit.

On the whole, our community coexists together peacefully, and Sydney is internationally recognised as a very safe city.[32] Every day, there are more than 1.2 million people in our city – each with different needs, priorities and expectations. The city's wide mix of uses and activities can be a source of social tension if not carefully planned and managed.

The community is growing rapidly

Sydney, along with many other cities, faces the challenges of a rapidly growing and changing community.

Between 2011 and 2031, the city's population is forecast to increase by 50 per cent to 270,000. By 2018, the Green Square urban renewal area in our city's south alone will have 10,000 new residents, forecast to grow to a total population of more than 61,000 residents by 2030.

This scale and pace of growth and change brings challenges to social cohesion, along with opportunities to nurture distinctive new neighbourhoods.

The resident population changes frequently

Our population is not only growing, but it changes frequently: around half of our residents had lived in the city for less than five years, at the time of the 2011 Census. There are many new residents moving in, from other parts of the country or from overseas.

The City's research shows only half of our residents feel they are part of the community. We need to find ways to strengthen people's connections to their communities and to each other.

High density living brings social pressures

In the future around 90 per cent of our households are forecast to be living in apartments, up from 75 per cent in 2011. This kind of density brings everyday challenges – over noise, parking, and pets – especially when people are used to living in larger detached houses.

Maintaining social cohesion into the future means adapting well to living in close proximity and successfully managing the challenges that denser living conditions inevitably bring.

Social networks may be online

Increasingly we are socialising in new ways and through different social networks, rather than over the back fence as in the past. More of us are fostering social relationships online. Digital technology and social media can be a resource to support community connections.

Opportunities to strengthen the social fabric

In the face of these changes and inevitable challenges, come great opportunities to build more connected communities in which people can enjoy diverse social relationships and experiences in unique local neighbourhoods.

Dancestry dance troupe, NAIDOC 2014 / Joseph Mayers

What is the City of Sydney doing already?

Facilitating social connectedness and trust

– Supporting the social and cultural life of the city through social services and programs, and by providing grants and sponsorship for community programs and projects that connect people and build diverse, cohesive communities. Funding is also available for festivals and events that celebrate, develop, and engage the City's communities, such as NAIDOC week, and Sydney's Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras.

Growing connections to place and a sense of belonging

– Fostering a sense of community with our placemaking strategies, public art program, and initiatives such as the City's Good Neighbourhood BBQ program.

– Creating vibrant local communities in our city villages that are focal points for community life, encourage a sense of belonging, and provide an opportunity for residents to be involved in community planning at the local level.

Strengthening social cohesion in local communities

– Building community capacity for apartment living, including through online advice and free strata skills workshops.

– Providing opportunities for lifelong learning and skills development through programs and services delivered through local libraries and community centres.

– Linking neighbours together and supporting social connectedness in urban renewal sites through our Community Development Coordinator.

Creating places and spaces for thriving communities

– Providing spaces and places for people to interact with local communities and communities of interest, including over 90 community facilities such as libraries, childcare centres, theatres, creative studios, indoor sports facilities, pools, community centres centres, historic town halls, and venues for hire, and around 400 parks, off-leash parks, sporting fields and playgrounds.

– Moving to an area-based model of community facilities and programs that responds to diverse community needs.

Promoting diversity and harmony

– Celebrating cultural events such as Chinese New Year, building tolerance and cohesion with programs such as the Living in Harmony Festival and the International Student Leadership and Ambassador Program, and ongoing engagement with our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community.

– Promoting reconciliation and celebrating the living culture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Sydney through our arts, history, and heritage programs, the City's Reconciliation Action Plan, and implementing a multi-dimensional cultural, economic and social project, the Eora Journey.

– Developing our workplace by embedding principles of diversity, inclusion and workforce wellbeing, commencing reporting on gender equity, implementing workforce commitments within the City's Reconciliation Action Plan, and introducing policies, programs and initiatives to support staff wellbeing – such as R U OK? Day, the 'Racism. It stops with me' campaign, and supporting mature aged workers who wish to stay in the workforce.

A vibrant creative life

– Creating a vibrant, distinctive and memorable city that celebrates creativity through projects that enhance the public domain and offer opportunities for creative participation, providing affordable studios and work spaces, and cultural events such as the Sydney Christmas celebrations and Art About Sydney.

Sine, Jayne and Antoinette relaxing in Redfern Park / Sarah Rhodes

Upcoming priorities to strengthen diverse, cohesive communities

Support community connectedness through digital inclusion

The City is committed to Sydney becoming a more digitally connected and inclusive city and ensuring no one is unavoidably left behind in this goal, whether because they lack access to technology, may not be able to afford to use technology, or lack the skills and capability to use it.

Providing free Wi-Fi opportunities in the public domain, such as squares and parks, is an effective way to make online connections accessible to a cross-section of society, given the widespread use of mobile phones that can be used for internet access.

The City is exploring opportunities to provide more free Wi-Fi hotspots in community centres and in the public domain across selected parts of the city. The City is also increasing communities' free access to computers and Wi-Fi through technology upgrades and the installation of new computers across our local libraries.

Other global cities that are delivering similar initiatives to support digital inclusion and community connectedness have focused initially on pedestrian hotspots. New York City is trialling a free public Wi-Fi network along Third Avenue – LinkNYC – with a consortium of private investors.

– Support residents in new high density developments to feel more connected to each other and their neighbourhood through a community-strengthening and capacity-building program delivered in partnership with strata managers and committees.

– Support communities' connection to place and sense of belonging through increasing active participation in the City's public art program and collection, including through dedicated programs, guided and self-guided public art tours.

– Provide opportunities for young people to directly shape the urban environment by involving teenagers in the design and creation of temporary public artworks, through the City's public art program.

– Provide opportunities for diverse people and communities to meet and connect with each other through a greater range of broad-based social programs and initiatives.

– Ensure our community facilities continue to respond to changing community needs and preferences over time, through analysing user trends, emerging unmet demands and opportunities to improve delivery.

Case study

Promoting cross-cultural leadership and learning – City of Sydney's International Student Leadership and Ambassador (ISLA) program

The City of Sydney's international student leadership and ambassador (ISLA) program creates opportunities for students to better integrate and learn about local culture, and to break down language barriers and social isolation. It is part of the City's commitment to providing support to the international student community, to help them make the most of their experience in Sydney.

The students participate in six months training and volunteer work experience. As ambassadors they work with the City to develop and implement projects for international students, including promoting the City's events, projects and resources to international students studying in Sydney.

Participants develop connections with other international students, build social networks and make friends locally. More than half of participants in 2014 said the program helped them find work in Sydney.

The (ISLA) program won the 2014 NSW International Student Community Engagement Awards for supporting international students connect with the broader community.

Pictured above are some of the City of Sydney's International Student Ambassadors at the graduation ceremony in December 2014 at the Sydney Town Hall.

Case study

Creating neighbourhood connections through the shared language of food – Joiningthedots Welcome Dinner project

New residents get the opportunity to connect with their neighbours over a shared meal and dinner conversation through the Welcome Dinner project.

Initiated by Joiningthedots,[33] a grassroots social change organisation, the pot-luck-style dinners aims to create a platform for meaningful connection, sparking friendships between people of diverse cultures who are living in close proximity to one another but have not had an opportunity to connect in a supported environment.

It increases social cohesion by involving the broader community in building a welcoming Australian society, one that embraces and celebrates diversity.

The average dinner has eight established residents together with eight newly arrived people, as well as two trained facilitators who assist each of the parties to organise the dinner and support them on the night. Everyone brings a dish to share.

Since March 2013 over 70 welcome dinners have been held in Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart, Launceston, Perth and Darwin.

The City has collaborated with Joining the Dots to hold welcome dinners at Redfern Community Centre and Green Square Community Hall.

Sydney Writers' Festival/ Prudence Upton / City of Sydney

Case study

Streets for People – supporting social connectedness through transforming streets

Cities around the world are undertaking projects to transform their streets into public spaces for people. Paris held its first car-free day on 27 September 2015, banning private vehicles from the city's main areas to encourage people to reclaim the streets.[34] Other cities like Brussels, Kuala Lumpur, and Bogota all have regular car-free days where inner city streets are closed off on Sunday mornings for people to walk, jog, cycle or skate.

In Singapore, the community is supported to create car-free zones and transform local streets into spaces for people to enjoy through the *Streets for People* programme. The programme provides residents with up to $5,000 seed funding and helps them to activate car-free zones and provide public amenities to enhance their neighbourhood.[35] These initiatives not only make cities greener, it makes their communities more vibrant, safe and healthy.

"We forget that society starts in our own street and in our own workplace…

The thing to do is dream of the kind of society you want to live in and then start living in your street as if it's that kind of society."

Hugh Mackay, Australian social researcher

Direction 3 – A liveable city: quality places and spaces

How can we make our city more liveable and improve the quality of our places and spaces for people?

?

What does a liveable city look like?

A liveable city is designed and planned with people in mind so it offers a great quality of life and is accessible for all ages and abilities.

Liveable cities are well planned and designed. They have vibrant, engaging centres and distinctive local neighbourhoods, which provide a great range of facilities and services.

People are supported to maintain healthy active lifestyles. There are quality green, open spaces and opportunities for people to connect with nature.

Residents and workers are connected to jobs, schools and shops by integrated transport networks.

Communities are safe during the day and at night.

What makes a city liveable?

Designing with people in mind

Our physical environment strongly shapes our lives. If we understand how people live, we can use urban design and planning to create cities that help people live well. Local governments have an important role in planning and managing land use in their local areas.

"The way we build and organise our cities can help or hinder social connection — the wrong approach, for example, can 'build in isolation'."

The Grattan Institute, an Australian public policy think tank[36]

Involving the community in the planning and development process is a critical way to ensure their needs are understood and addressed.[24]

As cities grow, the scale, size, and density of development must be guided by the community's wellbeing. Public spaces must be accessible to people of all ages and abilities and offer opportunities for unstructured place for children. Social planning frameworks such as child and age friendly cities and universal design standards can help improve public spaces in this way. The physical environment needs to offer respite from the impacts of climate change, including in extreme weather events.

Delivering infrastructure that supports growth

Integrated planning is important so new housing and commercial buildings are developed along with adequate infrastructure such as transport and utilities. It also ensures communities have access to local services and facilities such as shops, schools, medical centres, parks and playgrounds.

Local governments have a role to plan and manage integrated development in their communities. They must work with other levels of government to coordinate the delivery of significant urban renewal and development that meets future community needs.

Observatory Hill / Chris Bennett

"Social sustainability cannot be prescribed in the same way as standards for environmental sustainability; it requires planners, local agencies and developers to consider and respond to local needs and circumstances."

The Young Foundation, a UK social policy think tank[37]

Quality places and spaces for flourishing lives

Physical design plays an important role in successful high-density neighbourhoods. Higher-density housing offers benefits, including the opportunity to live close to jobs, transport and many services and facilities. But it must be designed and managed well to make it work.

Housing needs to be well constructed and meet the needs of diverse households, ages and interest. Shared indoor and outside spaces and facilities such as event-hire rooms, gyms, and barbecues, contributes to a stronger sense of community.[38]

Public life occurs in the spaces within and between buildings. Well-designed spaces provide places where people from all walks of life can connect.

Local governments can foster lively local precincts with places to meet, shop, learn, create and work that provide a focal point for community life. They can create inviting public spaces, such as laneways with quality street furniture, landscaping and public art, which encourage people to stop rather than pass through.

Leafy green environments for connecting with nature

Open space and access to the natural environment is important to our physical and mental health and wellbeing.[39]

People socialise, exercise, play and relax in green open spaces. Parks provide spaces for rest, respite and quiet contemplation, as well as sport and play. Areas of protected natural wildlife provide opportunities for people to connect with and explore urban ecology – the animals, plants and other living organisms that live in our city and the ecosystems they form.

Green corridors and people-friendly streets encourage physical activity and provide a safe, affordable, and pleasant way to move about the city. They also play a vital role in combating the effects of climate change.

Local governments have a critical role to protect the natural environment and ensure it is not compromised by development. They can also support the community's access to greenery and quality open spaces and urban biodiversity.

45

Ride to School Day, Bourke Street Public School / Jamie Williams

Promoting healthy active living

A liveable city offers people the opportunity to lead active, healthy and connected lives. Good urban design and local public health initiatives can support good physical and mental health.

Local governments can support healthy active living for people of all ages and abilities in a range of ways, such as well-designed local environments that encourage walking and cycling, providing sports and recreation facilities, community education and facilitating access to fresh healthy food through fresh food markets.

Improving safety and preventing crime

Safety is an important element of a city's liveability.

Local government has a key role in crime prevention, preventing community harm and strengthening community safety. Local government can build safer cities by applying principles to reduce crime such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). They also have an important role in crime prevention programs as well as initiatives to keep the community safe and well, including harm minimisation, road safety, and drug and alcohol programs.

Building community connectedness and creating a more inclusive community are also important factors in creating a safer city – as discussed in Strategic Directions 1 and 2.

"Our urban environment is so central to our lifestyles that our postcode has become a key determinant of our prospect for living a healthy life.

Good design and people-friendly spaces and places all add to how liveable a community is and help to promote active lifestyles by encouraging walking, cycling, public transport and active recreation."

Adjunct A/Professor Trevor Shilton, National Heart Foundation of Australia[40]

"I moved to Sydney because it's a bigger city with more opportunities to get a job, although there's also a lot of competition.

I think we have a very good community in Green Square – you have regular events at the library and you can meet other mothers. I've made a lot of friends from that place. Even if you go to the park, people are very friendly here… this is our community.

It's not too difficult for me to find friends – maybe because I'm Indonesian and at the church and the community centre there are some other Indonesian mothers, so we can share our experience.

We have the same struggles, like raising kids in this country, which is not our original country. We can share this."

Citra, local resident, Green Square
Image: Sarah Rhodes
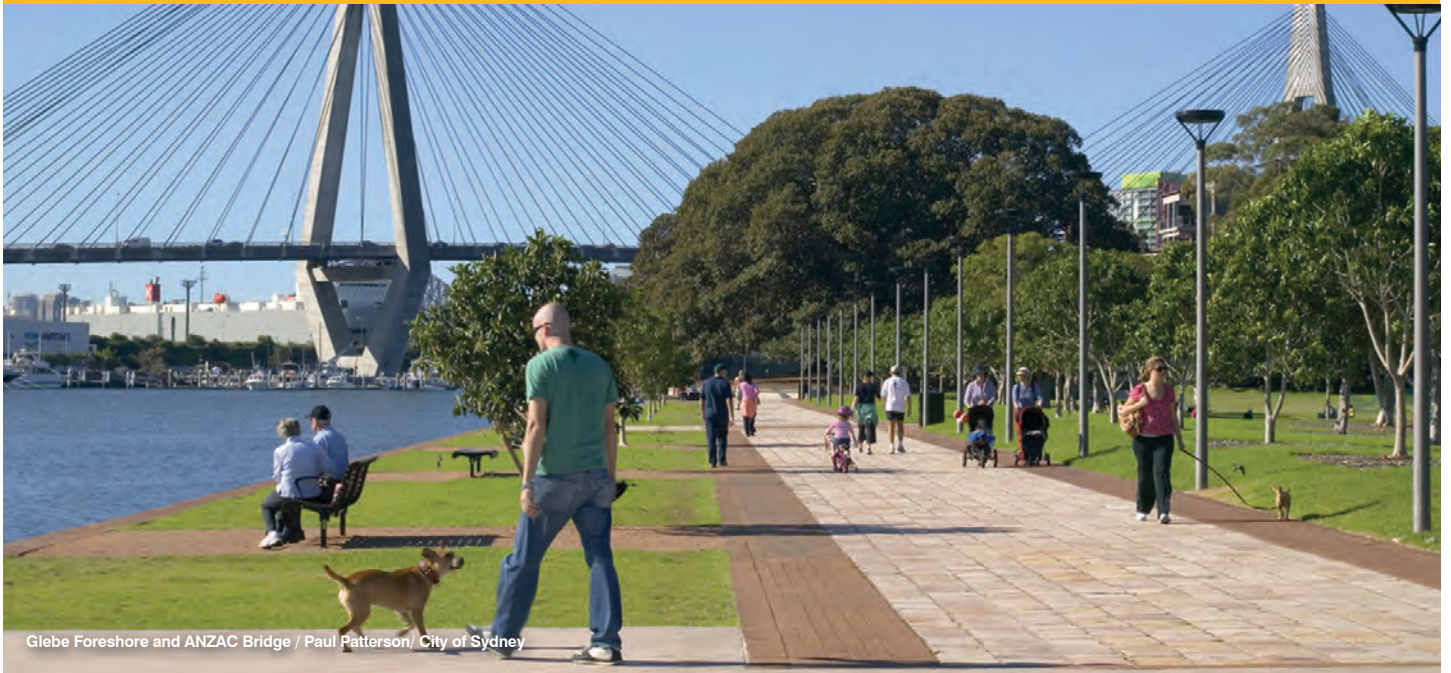
Glebe Foreshore and ANZAC Bridge / Paul Patterson/ City of Sydney

Where are we now?

Sydney is a highly liveable city

The City of Sydney area rates well internationally as a liveable global city. Sydney is recognised for offering a good quality of life, healthcare, employment and education opportunities, ease of doing business, cultural vibrancy, safety, and a beautiful natural environment.

But Sydney typically ranks poorly on the quality of transport infrastructure and housing affordability. These issues are undermining our city's liveability, particularly given current rapid population growth.

Our city is undergoing growth and transformation

The city is undergoing urban renewal on a major scale across large tracts of land including Green Square, Barangaroo, Darling Harbour, Redfern-Waterloo and the Bays Precinct – many of which the state government controls and manages.

These sites provide opportunities to build high-quality urban environments with community facilities, affordable housing and infrastructure that will support community wellbeing if they are planned and delivered well.

Shared governance affects integrated planning

The NSW Government sets the overarching planning framework for our city and is largely responsible for transport infrastructure, schools, hospitals and other essential services. It also owns over half the green open space in the city.

The split governance of our city between state and local governments requires strong collaboration to achieve integrated planning for effective delivery of infrastructure and services. Collaboration with other levels of government and the private sector is important to ensure our city's liveability is improved through the urban renewal process.

A growing population needs more infrastructure

The city already has a shortage of public transport, schools and affordable housing – and demand will grow as our population increases. So we need to continue to increase the supply and quality of infrastructure to meet our community's needs.

As well as through advocacy with state government, the City needs to directly invest in continuously renewing and expanding our local network of community facilities over time to meet the needs of our growing and changing population.

Land pressures present quality of life challenges

Providing new public open spaces is a challenge given current pressures on the limited supply of land. Open space per capita has decreased over the past decade and will continue to do so with increased population growth. Innovative ways to improve the quality and quantity of open spaces and greenery are vital to our community's health and wellbeing and the city's liveability.

Paddington Reservoir Gardens / Josef Nalevanksy

What is the City of Sydney doing already?

People-focused urban design and planning

– Leading sustainable development, renewal and design by undertaking long-term planning for the city's future growth, improving development controls with more robust guidelines for public domain, promoting design excellence with competitive processes for public buildings, and undertaking world-class urban renewals such as Green Square, with an investment of $540 million.

– Engaging renowned architect Jan Gehl to advise the City on ways to transform our city's urban environment, to make it more people-friendly.

– Planning and advocating for an integrated and sustainable transport system that offers a variety of effective and affordable transport options.

– Proving community-based matching grants to enable community members to access funding for initiatives to improve their local neighbourhoods, including through cultural projects, community building ideas, cycling-related projects, community gardens, public art projects, multicultural programs, and neighbourhood events and activities.

Quality accessible places and spaces

– Creating a lively and engaging city centre by investing in major programs and civic improvements, such as the light rail in George Street, to unlock our city centre's potential and make it a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

– Bringing life and vitality into our public spaces by improving the public domain of the City's streets, squares, parks and open spaces, including a program of public art, and addressing barriers so our public domain is more accessible.

– Linking the city's streets, parks, and open spaces through a Liveable Green Network (LGN) – a safe and attractive walking and cycling network.

– Incorporating placemaking techniques and strategies (See Green Square urban renewal over page) into our major urban renewal projects and community facilities planning to help ensure social outcomes are achieved through these processes.

– Improving wayfinding throughout the city by installing a new network of more than 2,000 braille and tactile street signs across every signalised pedestrian crossing, making it safer and easier for people of all abilities to navigate our streets. This tactile sign network, part of the City's legible Sydney wayfinding system, also includes pedestrian-friendly maps, information pylons, new signs and digital technology.

Natural environment and climate

– Leading on environmental sustainability by adopting ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, working towards a sustainable future for the City's use of water, energy and waste. We have also prepared a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

– Restoring and conserving the city's urban biodiversity – the animals, plants and other living organisms that live in our city and the ecosystems they form – through the development and implementation of an Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan (March 2014). This includes initiatives to educate and involve residents in local biodiversity conservation and resilience-building.

– Greening the city by providing shade, water treatment, urban cooling and creating pleasant human spaces.

– Providing over 400 parks and open spaces, including Hyde Park, local parks, off-leash dog parks, playgrounds and sporting fields.

– Developing a comprehensive plan for the City's parks and open space to guide the acquisition and provision of quality green space to support the health and wellbeing of the community.

Design for Gunyama Park and Green Square Aquatic Centre / Andrew Burges Architects with Grimshaw and T.C.L.

A healthy active community

– Enhancing community health through smoke-free trials in public places, drug and alcohol safety strategies, supporting mental health initiatives, domestic violence initiatives such as White Ribbon, road and street safety campaigns, environmental health management, and planning for natural and man-made emergencies.

– Increasing understanding of the importance of providing affordable and accessible food through education and awareness raising initiatives.

– Providing and supporting active recreation programs at our community facilities and parks.

Safe and secure communities

– Taking a whole-of-community approach to addressing crime and safety, focused on preventative strategies that strengthen communities' social wellbeing.

– Making the city safer by incorporating 'safer by design' principles in strategic planning instruments, development assessments, and public domain projects

– Ensuring community safety by undertaking multifaceted programs and initiatives, including the Good Neighbourhood BBQ program, coordinating the Community Sharps Management Program, delivering safety forums for international students, and strategic safety planning for major festivals and events.

– Making the city a safer place for people to enjoy at night by delivering late night area management plans, managing alcohol free zones and funding the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador Program. Safe Space Sydney is operated by The Salvos Street Teams and funded in partnership with NSW State Government, Macquarie Group Foundation, Crown Resorts Foundation, Packer Family Foundation and Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation to help vulnerable intoxicated young people get home safely.

Green Square urban renewal

The $13 billion Green Square project is transforming the southern precinct of the City's local area into a vibrant and sustainable urban environment. From its industrial past, Green Square is emerging as a place of innovative housing design, bespoke business and retail. It is home to both longstanding and emerging creative, engaged, multicultural and inclusive communities proud of their area's past and future.

The City's role in Green Square is to ensure planning controls for the new town centre and nearby precincts allow for growth and development that is sustainable, innovative and respects the character of existing neighbourhoods.

At the heart of the Green Square development is the new town centre, a major new residential, retail and cultural hub. The City has committed $540 million to deliver quality infrastructure and community facilities such as the new library, plaza, and aquatic centre as well as parks, a childcare centre, public art and community creative hub to create a welcome, exciting and connected neighbourhood.

Green Square is set to become a true exemplar of green living with developments linked to recycled water, people linked to shops, parks, gardens and entertainment with bike and walking routes, and public transport. More than 340 affordable rental housing units are being developed by City West Housing throughout the area to support socio-economic diversity.

Prince Alfred Park pool / Josef Nalevansky

Upcoming priorities to deliver quality places and spaces

Improve the city's accessibility for children and families through a new city centre play space in the CBD

The City aims to develop a new city centre inclusive play space, providing a play-friendly environment in the heart of our city. This CBD play space would create a brand new destination for both local children and visitors to the city. It would provide extended recreation and play opportunities in a convenient location, subject to finding a site supported by city residents and businesses.

Ensuring the CBD is welcoming and accessible for people of all ages and abilities is a critical focus for the City, particularly given the growing numbers of families with children living in the city. The popularity of the existing Darling Quarter family playground demonstrates the demand for additional free-of-charge play spaces for visitors and residents in the city centre.

– Increase the social benefits of new developments through a 'liveability toolkit' promoting best practice design approaches to ensure the city continues to be safe, welcoming and accessible for people of all ages and abilities, and enables healthy active lifestyles.

– Increase the availability of information in the public domain, such as current events and live updates, through investigating new ways to provide digital signage in selected locations in central Sydney.

– Ensure people can safely and easily navigate the city through new and emerging technologies that complement the City's wayfinding system, such as apps to assist people with a vision impairment.

– Increase community access to open spaces not managed by the City through partnerships and formal agreements with other institutions, such as schools, that can accommodate sports field recreation uses after hours and on weekends.

– Improve communities' access to local health facilities and services through collaborating with NSW Government on inner city delivery strategies.

Andrew F. Kazmierski / Shutterstock.com

Case study

Creating environments for a healthy, sustainable community – Kiama Council

Kiama Council, south of Sydney, sees the health of the local community as a shared responsibility in which they have a vital role to play.

It undertakes programs and initiatives that support residents having access to fresh, nutritious, safe and sustainable food, physical activity, smoke-free zones, and community connections.

The council's strategies to promote health and wellbeing and disease prevention are outlined in the Kiama Health Plan, Creating Environments for Health and Sustainable Living 2011–2017. It is designed to influence how sections of council can work together to develop a healthier community within the municipality.[41]

A joint community and Council advisory committee oversees the health plan implementation. The committee aims to ensure a coordinated, community based approach to the development, implementation and evaluation of initiatives.

Kiama Council has been recognised nationally and internationally for its health planning and programs. Kiama was recognised as a Healthy City by the World Health Organisation in 2008.

Case study

People-led urban renewal – New York City's High Line project

A disused elevated railway scheduled for demolition in New York City was used to create The High Line – a walkway with gardens, spaces to sit and view the city, and places for eating and socialising. The 'High Line' (thehighline.org) is a successful embodiment of the people-focused renewal of urban spaces.

The design of the High Line was tendered through a design competition. Through the process, the High Line space has been revitalised and re-imagined from an industrial space to a green space open for all New Yorkers and visitors.

A dedicated team of volunteers manages the gardens on the High Line year-round. The High Line's permanent team of volunteers partners with private businesses for specific projects such as the annual spring cutback of High Line vegetation.

By improving the physical fabric of the city, High Line also improved the city's social fabric by providing increased opportunities for social interaction, as well as economic benefits for the community, attracting around 20 million visitors per year and over 450 public programs.[42]

S-F / Shutterstock.com

Case study

Embedding liveability principles in planning tools – Copenhagen's Metropolis for People initiative

In 2009, the City of Copenhagen published A Metropolis for People with a vision to become 'the world's most liveable city'.[43] Supported by renowed architect Jan Gehl and his firm Gehl Architects (who have assisted the City of Sydney in similar processes), the city government set out to ensure that people and their wellbeing was central to their city planning and management processes.

The policy sets out a strong vision: We will become the world's most liveable city: a sustainable city with urban space inviting people to a unique and varied urban life. We will become a metropolis for people.

The City of Copenhagen is working on a range of specific goals to achieve that vision: increasing vitality and urban activation through making spaces and places better for pedestrians; providing a supporting environment for newcomers to the city; providing more opportunities for people to meet and socialise, walk and cycle; ensuring 'urban life is good for everybody,' 'a city for play and movement,' leafy and green.

Specific targets include: 'By 2015, Copenhageners will spend 20 per cent more time in urban space than they do today.' The City of Copenhagen is measuring urban life and its patterns on a daily basis as it implements the strategy.

"From politicians to department heads, project managers and citizens – the notion of 'people first' and 'life, space, buildings' has infiltrated all aspects of making Copenhagen what it is today."

Tina Saaby, City Architect Copenhagen, 2013[44]

Kolenkit participation project / Cascoland

Case study

Community-led liveability – Cascoland Kolenkitbuurt, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Kolenkitbuurt is a neighbourhood in Amsterdam, which had a bad reputation: characterised by poor urban design and low socioeconomic indicators, including unemployment and poverty.

It was prioritised by government for investment to improve social and economic outcomes through 'bottom-up urbanism.'

An open tender call was put to the community for urban interventions to improve liveability.

The tender was won by Cascoland[45] – a small organisation of local resident community artists. Their plan was for an open participatory process based on activation and involving the the local community.

The Cascoland Collective was funded to run a pilot project over eight months and provided premises to operate from. Two to three artists worked in neighbourhoods for months and engaged local residents on their needs and ambitions through weekly workshops. They held an open neighbourhood dinner to discuss ideas for small local changes to improve quality of life.

Interventions were implemented through artists working with local residents. They included fun interactive installations in a local park; chicken coups installed on local vacant land which residents maintain, development of a new public BBQ area and picnic tables, which became a 'valuable social asset in the neighbourhood.'

Cascoland successfully applied for funding to continue and since 2010 more than 20 distinct interventions have been implemented, each with its own "purpose, planning, management and financing process and different collaborations of residents and artists."[46]

Bottom-up urbanism can highlight local communities' creativity and encourage entrepreneurship. Identified success factors for the approach:

– Experienced artist collective working with local community members.

– Availability of land for implementing ideas.

– Collaborative processes to engage local residents, providing them a sense of empowerment and responsibility in delivering outcomes.

– Activations based on temporary use, which means they're less heavily regulated than permanent interventions.

– Separate budget and accountabilities for each intervention.

– Ongoing evaluation and reporting on value based on delivery of agreed outcomes.

Direction 4 –
An engaged city: active participation and good governance

How can we make our city more engaged so people can have their say in local decision-making?

"An inclusive society must have the institutions, structures, and processes that empower local communities, so they can hold their governments accountable. It also requires the participation of all groups in society in decision-making processes."

World Bank[47]

What does an engaged city look like?

An engaged city is one where people actively participate in shaping their community, supported by good local governance. Governments should be democratic, transparent and accountable, so they operate efficiently and effectively in the community's best interests.

People need the information, knowledge and skills to get involved in local decision-making and in community life. People want to shape the city's future because they share a sense of civic values, pride in their city and shared responsibility for wellbeing of the community as a whole or 'common public good.'

They are empowered to do so because they understand civic and democratic processes, have meaningful opportunities to participate, and are informed about the outcomes of their involvement.

Giving people a say in local decisions that affect their lives can enable them to shape their community, and in so doing, support their own wellbeing. It also leads to better quality decisions, more effective programs and services, and greater public trust in government.

What makes a city engaged?

Transparent and accountable governance

Governance is about the systems, policies and procedures that guide how government operates and makes decisions. Good governance helps create public trust and ensures government functions effectively.

Local governments have an important role to provide community leadership and to represent and protect their community's interests. Good governance means they make the best use of their resources and comply with legal obligations.

Importantly, good governance means being open and transparent about how and why decisions are made, and being accountable to the community for the consequences of those decisions.

NAIDOC in the City lawn library / Joseph Mayers

"**We live in a world of structural change and decidedly complex problems… Give people responsibility and fully inform them of the options and they will respond rationally, and not just in their self-interest.**"

Geoff Gallop – the newDemocracy Foundation, an Australian research organisation[48]

Balanced and inclusive local decision-making

Local governments have a responsibility to ensure all views in the community are heard and equally considered when making decisions. Some social groups can be under-represented in formal processes, and equally some voices in the community can be heard more loudly than others.

Local government can facilitate fairer participation by building people's capacity to participate, using inclusive participation methods and tailoring engagement activities. Importantly, governments must go to where the people are, rather than expecting people to come to them.

Empowering people through information and knowledge

People need to understand how local government works and know their civic rights and responsibilities so they are empowered to be active citizens. Building community capacity enables people to take greater control over their lives and local environments to make positive changes in their community.

As well as providing people with meaningful opportunities to participate, local governments have an important role to educate and inform their local communities and equip them with the skills to participate in local democratic processes and opportunities to shape their area.

Public participation in local governance

People have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them, and governments have a responsibility to provide meaningful opportunities for people to have a say in shaping their community.

There is no 'one size fits all' model for public participation. Who participates and how they participate depends on the issue and the context for the decision. Deliberative engagement methods can allow a deeper conversation with the community, such as citizen juries and public policy co-production.

Good practice participation engages people early in the decision-making process. It gives them sufficient information about the issue and time for feedback so they can make considered decisions. It's also important that once governments make a decision, they tell participants how their input influenced the outcome.

National Tree Day, Sydney Park / Adam Hollingworth

Participation in community life

Community participation builds connected and engaged communities. People participate in their communities in different ways, such as helping out at their local school, bush-care group, community centre, sporting club, book club, or religious group. This is the glue that binds communities together and makes them more vibrant and resilient.

Volunteers are vital to the health and wellbeing of local communities. While volunteering provides substantial benefits to society, it also benefits the volunteers themselves. Local governments can foster volunteering by providing fulfilling opportunities and embedding an organisational culture and systems to support and recognise volunteers' contribution.

Sharing responsibility: we're all in it together

A community is greater than the sum of its individual parts. Everyone – individuals, community groups, businesses and governments – has a part to play in making a community great and shaping our city's future.

As community members, we not only share civic rights but we also have shared responsibilities. That includes abiding by the law and voting in elections. We also have social obligations to act honestly and treat people fairly and respectfully.

We all have a role in co-creating the society we want to live in. Community-led action is important to build local leadership and encourage a shared sense of responsibility for the future of the community and its wellbeing.

Local governments can support informal 'bottom-up' activity through resourcing and processes that are flexible and responsive, and by coordinating local activities to leverage benefit for the whole community.

Local governments also play an important role in leading and promoting a sense of shared civic values and responsibility, as well as community pride.

"A growing body of research supports the assertion that community and neighbourhood empowerment – giving residents the opportunity to take part in collective activities that influence the areas they live in – contribute to the wellbeing of residents and communities."

Social Life, a UK research and innovation centre[49]
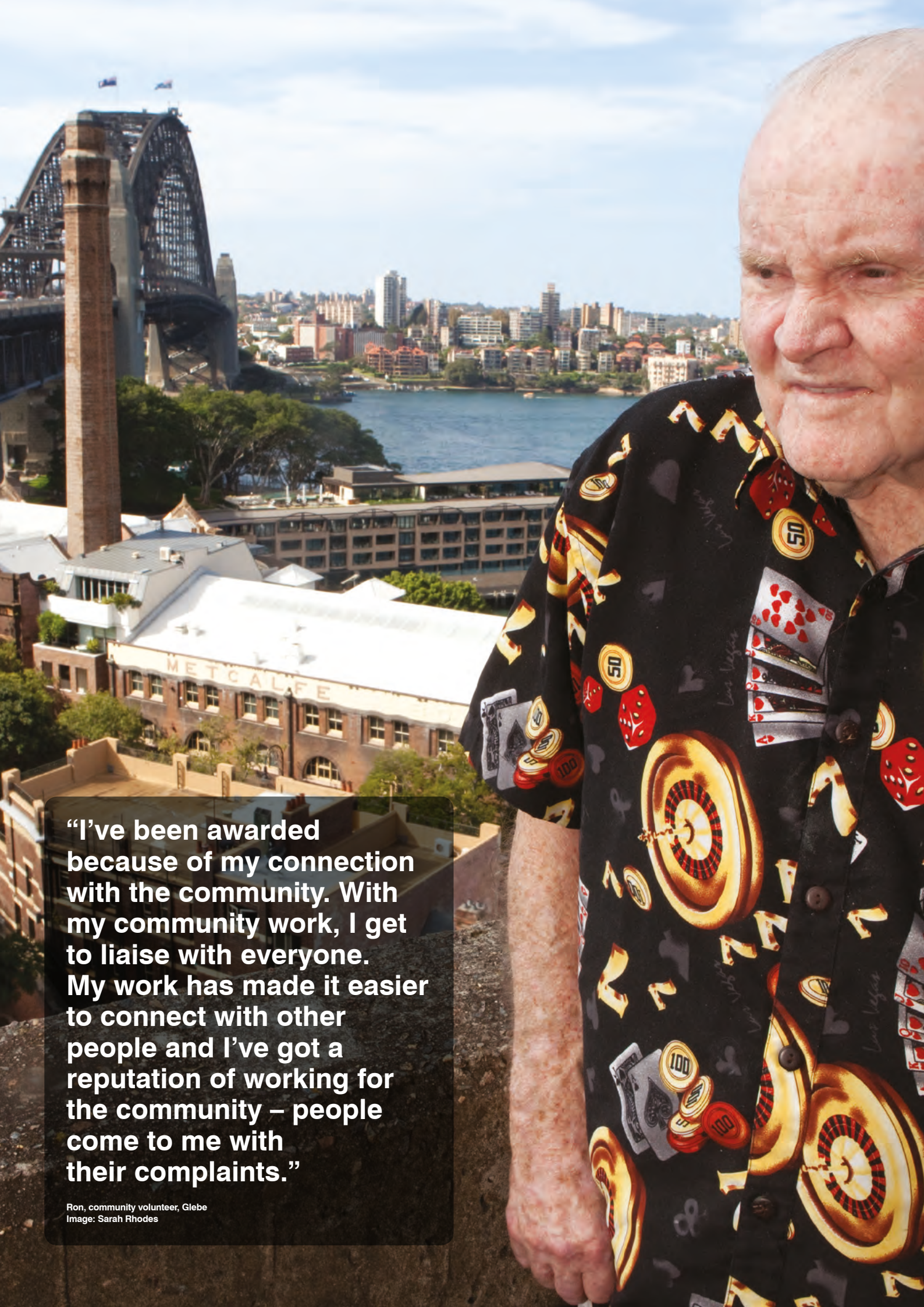
"I've been awarded because of my connection with the community. With my community work, I get to liaise with everyone. My work has made it easier to connect with other people and I've got a reputation of working for the community – people come to me with their complaints."

Ron, community volunteer, Glebe
Image: Sarah Rhodes

Green Square community consultation / Jamie Williams

"Just as cities and the economy have changed a lot over the past 50 years, there have been big changes in how we live our lives and how we connect with others.

Many of us frequently use social media. But we're less likely to get social connection today from belonging to organised groups such as sporting clubs, churches, school parents' and citizens' groups, volunteer organisations, political parties, trade unions or business associates than people were 50 years ago."

The Grattan Institute, an Australian public policy think tank[50]

Where are we now?

Communities want more opportunities to have a say

The City of Sydney has a strong commitment to social sustainability supported by a robust governance system; yet there are increasing community expectations about the role of government and their ability to have a say.

We face the challenge of broader dissatisfaction in the community with the Australian democratic system of government.[51] Locally, our community has indicated they want more opportunities to have a say on issues that matter. We need to continue to find more effective ways of promoting our community engagement opportunities, particularly to reach our younger residents.

We have a dedicated community engagement team and are trialling innovative ways to better engage our community, such as citizens' juries.

We face complex policy challenges

The City faces many complex policy and planning issues, such as housing affordability, that are not easily solved. A challenge for the City is to promote a sophisticated public understanding of these issues and enable informed public debate, to support communities to reach a consensus on the best way to address them.

The City's Climate Adaption Citizen's Panel in 2014 successfully showed how the community can grapple with complex information and reach robust, shared decisions. We need to embed more deliberative participatory methods that are demonstrated to work and our community has said they want.

Gary Radler

Communities may have competing priorities

The City is responsible for making decisions in the interests of the whole community – our residents, workers, students and visitors. We often have to mediate diverse and competing priorities, and our staff need to be skilled mediators and facilitators. Our decision-making must be fair, open and transparent, so people know and understand the reasons for our decisions.

Communities' capacity to participate is mixed

The City has a relatively high proportion of residents from countries with different political systems so we must continue to work with our community to increase civic knowledge and participation skills. In a survey of Green Square residents, less than two-thirds (63 per cent) said they understood local, state and federal government responsibilities, and only half (51 per cent) understood their right to have a say in urban development and planning. We also need to continue to build the capacity of our future leaders – our growing population of children and young people.

Digital technology opens up new chanels

Digital technology in particular is opening up new avenues for service provision and civic participation. We need to embrace new technologies so we are well-positioned to meet evolving community needs and expectations about how we deliver our services and programs.

The City's Sydney Your Say is an online consultation platform for the community and stakeholders to stay informed and participate in decisions on projects, policies, programs and Council decisions. The platform forms part of the City's Community Engagement core activities.

Sydney Your Say aims to build awareness, trust and legitimacy as the 'go to' digital platform that allows communities and stakeholders to participate online in decisions that shape the future of Sydney towards 2030 and beyond.

Through Sydney Your Say, the City aims to provide a strong foundation for understanding and working with the community – promoting a shared responsibility for decisions and trust in the decision-making process. The tool is shaped by three guiding principles: integrity, inclusiveness and dialogue.

Building trust with new residents

The City's fast-growing and changing population means it is important we actively establish and maintain a trusted relationship with our residents. We need to provide our residents with opportunities to shape their neighbourhoods, such as designing local parks and playgrounds and running their own community projects.

We need to work together

Many problems in our local area can't be tackled by the City alone – collaboration is essential.

A lack of effective coordination between different levels of government makes metropolitan planning, infrastructure and service provision difficult. As a capital city council, the City has an important role to advocate for a more strategic agenda across all levels of government. We can also facilitate more effective place-management by leading or participating in joined-up service delivery.

Monitoring social change to improve governance

The City has a framework for measuring our community's wellbeing in the general context. However there are opportunities for us to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of our social sustainability programs and services. We need to get better at using this information to guide governance and service delivery.

Green Square community information hub / Jamie Williams

What is the City of Sydney doing already?

Good governance towards a sustainable City by 2030

– Delivering the community's vision and the city's commitment to a Green, Global and Connected city by implementing our social, cultural, economic, and environmental program outlined in Sustainable Sydney 2030.

– Strengthening our organisational capacity to deliver on the City's purpose to Lead, Govern and Serve our community by continuing to build an agile and skilled workforce, regularly reviewing our policies and procedures, and implementing best practice processes and systems across our operations.

– Researching the current and future social needs of our community through regular resident surveys and biannual reports on the community wellbeing to inform our policies, programs and services.

Empowering communities through knowledge and skills

– Holding seminars and talks on a diverse range of topics such as inequality and sustainability to inspire, educate, and engage the community about significant global, national and city issues.

– Providing free governance training to culturally and linguistically diverse community organisations through our Connect Sydney program to help them operate sustainably and effectively.

Supporting inclusive participation

– Facilitating participation and input into the City's policies, programs, and services by convening panels, such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel and Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel.

– Reaching out to diverse communities with accessible online content, print material in community languages and free telephone interpreting services to ensure everyone has fair access to information and opportunities to have their say.

– Providing equitable opportunities for people with a disability to participate in the social and civic life of the city through consultation, improving access to the city's facilities as they are upgraded and renewed, providing better quality information about the accessibility of our facilities, raising awareness and building the capacity of our staff and organisations across the City on access and inclusion matters.

City Farm Day / Brendan Read

Sharon Hickey

Public participation in local decision-making

– Engaging with our community using diverse methods such as stakeholder workshops, feedback forms and surveys, online consultation hub SydneyYourSay. com.au, stakeholder reference groups, community information days, drop-in sessions, market stalls, letterbox notification and doorknocking, public exhibitions and submissions.

– Promoting more balanced, representative and effective decision-making by partnering with the community in planning, service delivery, and decision making, such as citizens policy jury on a vibrant and safe Sydney nightlife and co-design in homelessness.

Fostering participation in community life

– Providing grants and sponsoring organisations to deliver community programs or projects that ensure all community members have the opportunity to participate and engage in community life.

– Encouraging local volunteering in the community through the City's homeless street count, Meals on Wheels, tutoring/assisting at City spaces, and bushcare sessions.

"Places where communities work well and have good levels of social capital are more attractive to residents and businesses alike. Businesses benefit from more stable communities in which to embed their operations, providing a local labour pool and potential clients. Creating a social space which encourages and attracts creativity, talent, social networks, cross-sectoral working and partnerships is vital to a good economy."

Centre for Local Economic Strategies and Voluntary Sector, UK[52]

UTS Quiddich team, Prince Alfred Park / Sarah Rhodes

Upcoming priorities to achieve good governance and active participation

Increase the use of participatory engagement models for decision-making

Giving people a say in decisions that affect them and their community is fundamental to a strong, democratic society and to effective local programs and services. The City is committed to providing meaningful opportunities for people to participate in our planning, service delivery and decision-making.

The City will expand its use of innovative participatory models to more effectively engage with our community. This will include holding a deliberative people's summit about how to make our city more socially just and resilient. The summit will bring together a large number of local residents, randomly recruited. It will combine deliberative methods with interactive digital technology to co-produce a shared vision and options for strengthening Sydney's social sustainability.

Deliberative engagement models, such as citizens' juries, are designed to enable deeper engagement with the community on important and sometimes contentious issues. They can build community knowledge and skills and more robust and transparent engagement processes. The City has successfully trialled these approaches on issues such as climate change and safe city nightlife.

– Promote digital inclusion and lifelong learning through ensuring the City's future digital initiatives take into account digital literacy, access to the internet, devices and software, and relevant, quality online content.

– Improve communities' access to City information through a systematic approach to providing online and print content in community languages and accessible formats.

– Increase the community benefit of the City's social programs and services by strategically realigning them with the directions for social sustainability set out in this paper.

– Increase residents' civic knowledge and skills about how they can have a say in shaping our city through an action-learning education program in partnership with local schools and community groups.

– Provide children and young people with more opportunities to have a voice in City decision-making through engagement models such as innovation challenges and through digital engagement platforms.

– Deliver more effective responses to complex social issues in the local area, such as homelessness and community safety, through place-based collaborations with other levels of government, the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Image: Sarah Rhodes

Case study

1,000 Ideas for a better Australia

Young Australians are being supported to share their innovative ideas and develop their entrepreneurial skills through a national campaign, Innovation Nation.

Innovation Nation is an ideas challenge for young people aged 13–29 that encourages them to share and develop their ideas for a better Australia. The campaign is led by the Foundation for Young Australians in collaboration with not-for-profit, corporate and philanthropic partners.

Following a nation-wide search in early 2015, 52 young people with the best entries were selected to take part in a social innovation accelerator program with mentoring and skills development to help them turn their ideas into reality. It will culminate in the Young Social Pioneers pitching their ideas for the opportunity to secure $10,000 in seed funding to develop their project.

The program sparked a national conversation with young people about the kind of Australia they want to create. As our next generation of leaders, Innovation Nation seeks to unlock the potential of young people to drive Australia's future.[53]

Case study

Digital technology for supporting social connectedness – hyper local websites

Digital technology is providing new avenue for people to connect. With increasingly busy and often isolated modern lifestyles, social networking platforms have emerged as a new way to connect people with their local communities, online.

Neighbourhood social networks, also known as hyper-local sites, provide an online platform to connect people with other people, places and things in their local neighbourhood. The sites can have various uses. These include helping people meet their neighbours, keeping informed of local news, sharing household items such as ladders, or finding local services like babysitters.

Social networking platforms can enable users to securely post messages, access local maps and service directories, list items to buy, sell or swap, keep watch on community safety, as well as post local events listings, photos, and resources.

Local governments could use online local social networks to engage with local communities on emergency preparedness, community engagement, crime prevention and virtual crime watch.[54]

Yale MacGillivray / NCIE

Case study

Digital skills for leadership development

The National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) has transformed the site of the historic Redfern Public School into a hub for learning and skills development. By delivering life-changing programs and promoting progressive thought-leadership, NCIE aims to build capabilities and creates opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Indigenous Digital Excellence Initiative (IDX) was established at NCIE with funding from the Telstra Foundation to harness the latest digital technologies to increase wellbeing in young people and communities through digital innovation. The initiative includes programs that develop entrepreneurship skills as well as providing access to facilities and skills-building opportunities through the IDX Hub.

This recognises the growing importance of digital tools and platforms for achieving both personal and community goals, and goes beyond digital access and inclusion. It is about generating ideas and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation, practice and entrepreneurship in the digital economy.

While developing technological skills is at the heart of this agenda, there is a strong focus on nurturing creativity, learning and innovation, and generating leadership skills in young people.

Current components of IDX include:

– The IDX Hub – a collaboration and innovation space at the NCIE in Redfern;

– Digital Making Workshops – co-designed workshops that explore digital technology; and

– The Innovators Lab – helping Indigenous entrepreneurs develop their ideas.

The City of Sydney is supporting this year's IDX National Summit, which will bring people together to contribute to the development of Australia's first National Strategy for Indigenous Digital Excellence – providing a cross-sectoral vision for strengthening Indigenous digital excellence.

> "Community is a common enterprise. We can't go it alone."

Richard C. Harwood, President and Founder, Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, US[55]

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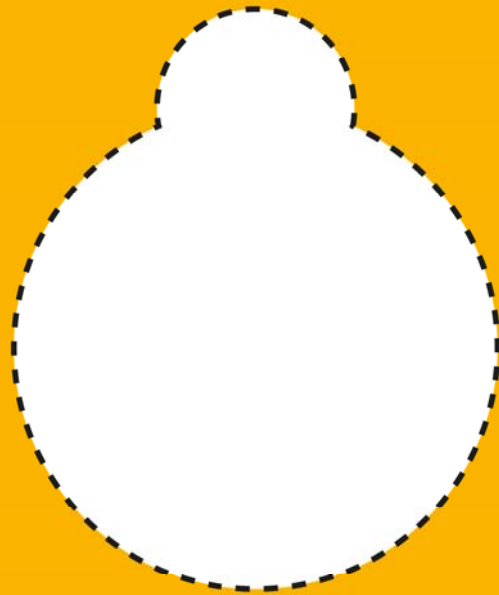
Please disturb!

Hello neighbour, if you ever need...

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let me know!

Your neighbour,

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☐ **Knock between** _____ **and** _____

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☐ **Email** _____

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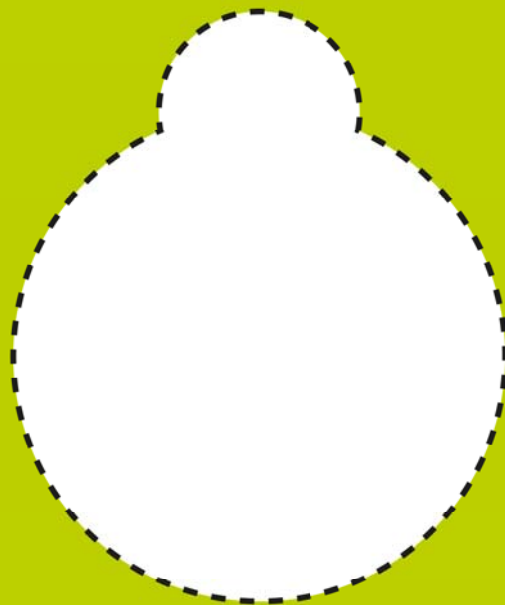
Can I borrow?

Hello neighbour, if you have...

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let me know!

Your neighbour,

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☐ **Knock between** _____ **and** _____

☐ **Call / Text** _____

☐ **Email** _____

Sydney2030/Green/Global/Connected