

# **Attachment B2**

**Draft Resourcing Strategy 2024 – Part 2**



# Draft People Strategy 2022-2026

## 2024 update

The City of Sydney acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of our local area.

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
To 2030 and beyond	3
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
Insights informing development of the People Strategy	4
Alignment to our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	6
<b>People Strategy 2022-26</b>	<b>7</b>
Objective 1: Foster a People First Culture	8
Objective 2: Adapt our ways of working	9
Objective 3: Strengthen our value proposition and recruitment experience	11
<b>Supporting Documents</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Our Workforce Profile 2023</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan</b>	<b>19</b>
Our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	20
Background	21
Developing the Action Plan	24
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>29</b>

# Executive Summary

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## To 2030 and beyond

The City's Community Strategic Plan – Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030 – 2050 sets out the plan to build on the work undertaken thus far to realise Sustainable Sydney 2030. The new community strategic plan has 10 revised strategic directions and 6 guiding principles. The achievement of the aspirations and projects set out in that plan will be possible largely due to the committed efforts of our people – our employees and managers.

Our people are in a strong position to contribute to a resilient Sydney by embracing the challenges and opportunities articulated in the community strategic plan and the delivery plan.

However, in the last 3 years, since our People Strategy (2019 – 21) was developed, we have experienced some of the most unpredictable, challenging times in recent memory due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This period saw our organisation and people adapt to deliver unprecedented responses, leaving us with significant learnings to draw on as we move forward.

We also know that the future will continue to see considerable disruption, which means that we must develop and implement proactive strategies now to shape the future of our workforce, in service of the City of Sydney community.

People Strategy 2022 – 2026 outlines the key issues impacting the City's workforce and will guide people related decision making, priorities and investment to support the outcomes in the community strategic plan.

The People Strategy forms an important part of our integrated resource planning, ensuring that we can deliver on our business goals and are future-ready. The People Strategy recognises evolving community needs and the skills our people require to address the social, economic, and environmental sustainability challenges ahead.

It builds on the solid foundations established in the prior people strategy. Though the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the implementation of the 2019 – 21 People Strategy, progress was made in key areas such as flexible working, innovation, employee wellbeing, and workforce agility.

The People Strategy 2022 – 26 has 3 core objectives:

1. Energising our people and our workplaces by fostering a 'people first' culture<sup>1</sup>. If we do this well, we will support our employees to be their best selves, acting in the best interests of the community that we serve

Building on this foundation, we will ensure that our organisation, practices, and capability keep pace and embrace the new world of work. This includes:

2. Adapting our ways of working<sup>1</sup> for the future
3. Strengthening our value proposition<sup>1</sup> and recruitment experience to attract and retain diverse, skilled people.

<sup>1</sup> Definitions included in the Glossary

# Introduction

## Insights informing development of the People Strategy

The People Strategy 2022 – 26 forms an important part of our resource planning, ensuring that we can deliver on our business goals and are future-ready. The strategy recognises evolving community needs and the skills our people require to address the social, economic and environmental sustainability challenges ahead.

Analysis of internal and external data sources generated insights that informed the development of our 2022 – 26 People Strategy. Specifically:

- Staff surveys
- Stakeholder and leadership interviews
- Staff focus groups
- Workforce data
- External employee experience insights (LinkedIn, Seek, Glassdoor)
- External talent trends in the context of local government and relevant sectors
- Executive workshops.



**Figure 1.** City of Sydney staff at Gunyama Park Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Zetland – Photo by Chris Southwood/ City of Sydney

## **Feedback helped us understand where we are now, and where we want to be in the future**

Consistently, staff told us that the City of Sydney has many strengths as an employer. People feel safe at work, connected to their teams, and supported with the information, tools and resources to perform their roles.

The Covid experience for employees has been varied. With limited opportunities for social interaction, this period has weakened ties between many colleagues at work and eroded informal organisational connections.

We heard that there are opportunities to better attract, engage and grow current and future employees. This includes strengthening the connection between individual and organisational purpose, providing an attractive, clear and holistic value proposition, and evolving our ways of working to support better collaboration and inclusive flexibility.

## **We are operating in a changing environment**

To remain a progressive force and leader within a dynamic external environment, we have to foresee what is coming and shape our direction in anticipation.

Mercer's Global Talent Trends 2022 and other significant future of work research publications (e.g. Microsoft Work Trends Index 2021) points to the need for organisations to support employees to reclaim a sense of energy, joy and autonomy as they reshape their lives post-pandemic. Amplifying energy in the workforce will require an ongoing focus on managing wellbeing and mental health. It will also require a focus on enhancing employee experience by understanding differences in what motivates and inspires purpose in individuals.

Additionally, in the context of the acceleration toward virtual and digitised ways of working, there is now a need to build upon the strong bonds within teams to drive greater cross-team connections.

Finally, there are number of global trends that will have considerable influence on the future of the City of Sydney. These include (but are not limited to) the climate emergency, rapid urbanisation, disease and health impacts, and exponential technology advancement. To lead change in this context, we will be required to effectively harness the concerns, ideas, and aspirations of our communities as we develop local solutions. It will also require us to be an effective partner with other local government, private sector and civil society organisations. With this in mind, our organisation needs to be equipped with the right culture, skills and experiences to remain responsive and ensure the future success of our City.



**Figure 2.** City of Sydney Ranger – Photo by Abril Felman/ City of Sydney

## **The 2022 – 26 People Strategy sets the scene for our deliberate evolution**

In the context of Covid recovery, analysis of internal and external insights helped us frame 3 critical questions that informed development of our people strategy. These were:

1. How can we re-boot our organisation, workplace culture<sup>1</sup> and employee experience to build back stronger, amplify our collective and individual energy and strengthen inclusion and belonging?
2. How can we embed and adopt new ways of working and foster the capabilities required for the new world of work?
3. How can we advance our value proposition and recruitment experience to address skill shortages in a competitive market?

These questions guided us as we reflected upon the fundamental ways in which expectations of work and workplaces have dramatically changed.

The People Strategy 2022 – 26 recognises that we have the opportunity to be deliberate in what we do next – for and with our people. We know that this will not be an easy task as changes will require sustained attention over the next 4 years, and beyond. However, as an organisation, we are committed to leading this evolution, and resourcing it appropriately to ensure committed, deliberate focus on driving action and implementation to see it brought to life.

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## **Alignment to our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan**

Equal Employment Opportunity, and Diversity and Inclusion<sup>1</sup> principles inform all that we do.

The 2022 – 26 People Strategy is built upon a commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace that is free of discrimination. We understand that having a diverse and inclusive workforce improves organisational performance, innovation and service quality.

Our EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 26 is a supplementary document to this People Strategy. It recognises that promoting workplace equity, diversity and inclusion is more than a legislative requirement – it is essential to our success as a local government organisation that caters to the diverse communities who live, work in and visit the City of Sydney.

We want the City of Sydney to be an organisation where everyone has an equal chance to work with us and the opportunity to realise their potential and progress their careers.

# People Strategy 2022-26

Our People Strategy 2022 – 26 has 3 key objectives, which together recognise that change is the 'new normal', and that we need to continuously evolve and adapt to keep pace with the changing environment and the 'new world of work'.



**Figure 3.** Diagram of People Strategy objectives





**Figure 4.** Volunteers packing Hampers of Hope – Photo by Chris Southwood/ City of Sydney

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## Objective 1: Foster a People First Culture

The vision for a Sustainable Sydney 2030 has driven a strong sense of purpose and progress over the last 10 years. This powerful vision was a strong attractor for new employees and a motivating force for existing employees.

While a compelling vision remains important, the world of work as we know it, has changed significantly since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Community and employee expectations have changed. We know that the community need us to be even more responsive, future focused and representative of the diverse people we serve. At the same time, we know that employees increasingly expect work to provide experiences that are empathetic, efficient and enriching.

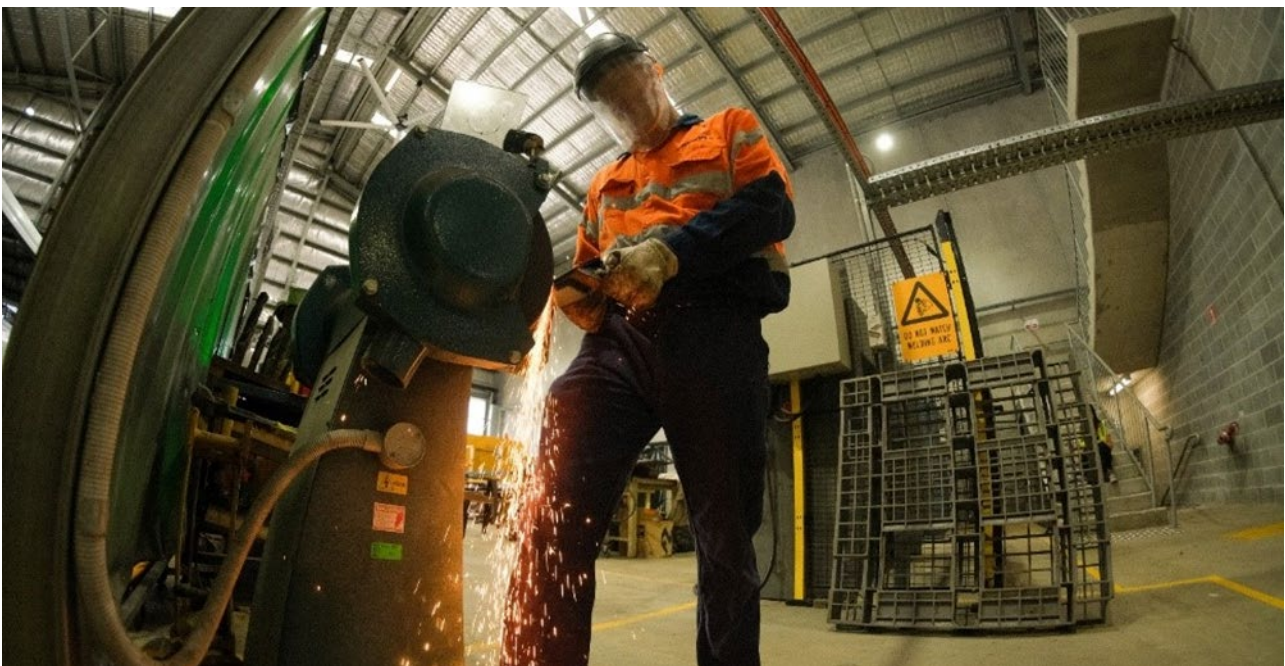
In this context, we recognise a need to reenergise our people and our workplaces and to strengthen a sense of purpose and engagement in our employees and managers. The next phase of our journey toward 2050, Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision, provides us with an opportunity to foster this, as we also adapt, innovate and transform to meet new expectations.

At the core of our strategy, objective one paves the way for a strengthened connection between our internal people experience and the experience of the community we serve. Put simply, the people we serve will reap the benefits of a highly energised workforce, made up of employees who find sources of joy and inspiration through their connection to the purpose of the organisation and the communities we serve.

Our workplace culture and practices need to both enhance our collective drive and ‘meet people and their individual needs where they are’. To do this, we will focus on reconnecting employees with the organisation’s vision and values and build capability in our leaders to lead with empathy, and role model collaboration, inclusion and individual accountability in the new world of work. If we create a ‘People first’ culture, we will support our people be their best selves, acting in the best interest of our communities.

### Priority actions

- Strengthen employee’s connection to our purpose and vision to drive energy and engagement
- Strengthen connections between our community and employees to amplify a strong sense of purpose
- Rebuild social connections in the workplace to connect people across teams and business areas
- Support individuals to strengthen their own wellbeing and reinvigorate energy
- Implement the City’s mentally healthy workplace plan to support workplace wellbeing.
- Build and strengthen leadership capabilities for the new world of work, including:
  - Managing teams in the context of digitisation and new ways of working
  - Stakeholder engagement and collaboration
  - Building a diverse workforce and inclusive ways of working.



**Figure 5.** Alexandria Canal depot staff at work

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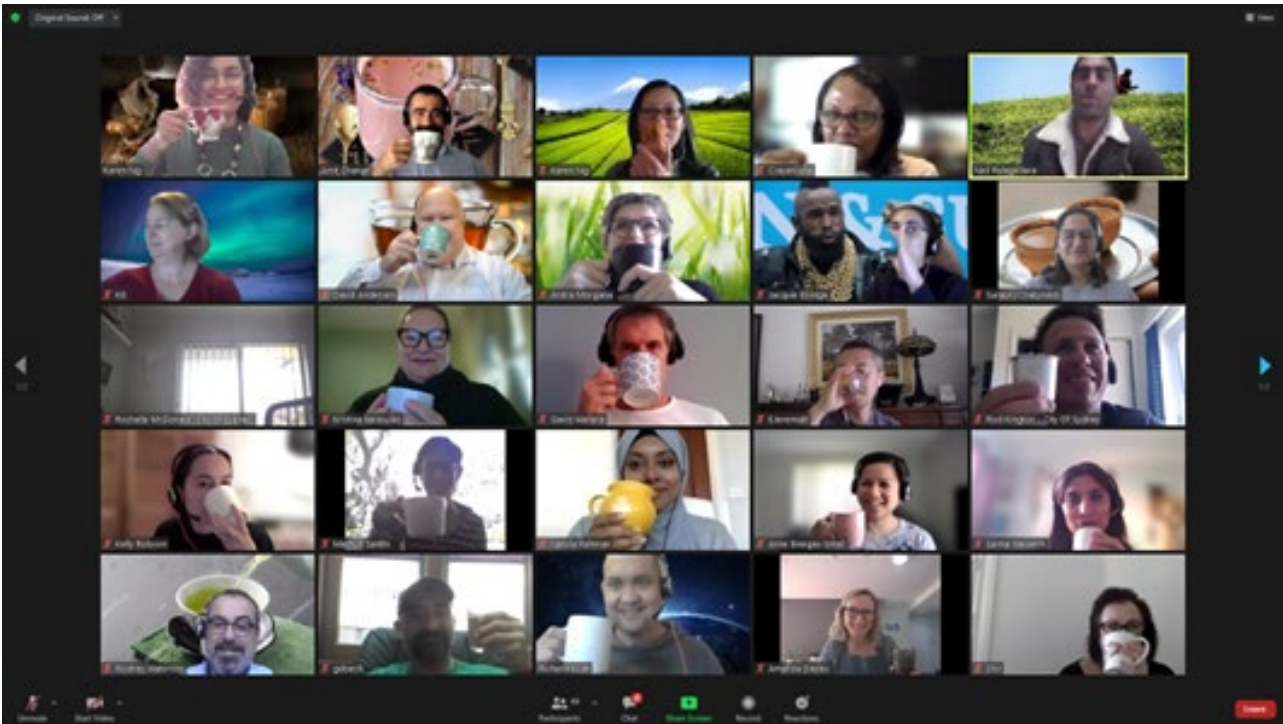
## Objective 2: Adapt our ways of working

With a strong workplace culture and experience at the core, we will focus our attention on keeping pace and embracing the new world of work.

Community expectations are changing. Our local businesses, residents and visitors are changing how they use online services and interact socially – they expect information and services to be easy to access and use, and always available. To develop seamless, community-centric solutions and services, collaboration across the organisation is critical.

The expectations of employees are also changing as the pandemic has rapidly accelerated shifts in hybrid and flexible ways of working. Many Australian employees expect that work tasks can be performed digitally at any time and from anywhere.

To remain a leading employer and a role model in government, we will reshape our ways of working. To do this, we will redefine and enable ways of working that align to our desired culture and unlock collaboration and cooperation at all levels in the organisation. This includes articulating a new vision for ways of working, elevating cross functional success stories, and resetting inclusive flexible and hybrid working<sup>1</sup> to ensure that practices support different segments of our workforce.



**Figure 6.** Online staff networking zoom event, during lockdown – Photo by Harleen Oberoi/ City of Sydney

We also recognise that resetting for the future includes fostering the development of strong, cutting edge skillsets required to drive progress and remain responsive to an increasingly digital world. We will do this by developing digital and data literacy<sup>1</sup>, and technical skills across the workforce, as well as embedding a human centric mindset<sup>1</sup> in all employees to ensure we design services with the user at the forefront.

We will also support our leaders to be adaptive, empathic, and skilled in navigating change and complexity.

If we deliver on this, we will ensure enriching, connected and skilled ways of working for our people that will ultimately deliver better outcomes for our community.

### **Priority actions**

- Equip managers to lead in the new environment of hybrid and flexible ways of working
- Optimise City’s hybrid working practices to drive stronger collaboration and strengthen social capital across the workforce
- Foster the development of strong skillsets required to drive progress and remain responsive to an increasingly digital world
- Embed a human centric mindset<sup>1</sup> in all employees to ensure we design services with the user at the forefront
- Support our leaders to be adaptive, empathic, and skilled in navigating change and complexity.

## Objective 3: Strengthen our value proposition and recruitment experience

To succeed in having the desired impact in our community, the City of Sydney needs the right people, with a diverse set of skills and experiences. We know that within the broader employment market, there are wide-spread resource shortages making access to people from the external market very competitive and challenging.

Additionally, talented people will always have career choices, so as an employer we need a compelling Value Proposition (which means the rewards, benefits, and experiences that we can offer to our employees). We recognise that to stay competitive, the recruitment experience has to present the best of what a career at City of Sydney can offer to attract talented people to the organisation.

We also know that we must equip our leaders and managers with the right insights and resources to make strategic hiring decisions that ensure we have the right people, in the right roles at the right time.



**Figure 7.** City staff with our first electric truck – Photo by Jennifer Leahy / Silversalt

This means optimising our internal processes to enhance candidate and hiring manager experience, redefining our value proposition and partnering with other organisations to attract diverse, skilled people to careers in the local government sector. It also means building capability in managers and leaders to make evidence-based recruitment decisions.

We understand that to retain our existing employees we need to deliver on our value proposition, by enabling people to actively shape their growth and development in the workplace. We will do this by unlocking experience-based development as well as offering externally competitive formal learning opportunities.

If we are successful in this, City of Sydney will be an employer of choice for the best candidates irrespective of age, background, and abilities. Managers will also be enabled and have confidence that our processes are responsive to the emerging employment landscape.

### Priority actions

- Optimise our recruitment processes to drive speed and enhance the candidate and hiring manager experience
- Redefine our Value Proposition to attract and retain diverse, skilled people to work at the City of Sydney
- Review graduate and cadet programs to attract and retain diverse early career workers.
- Invest in skills that are of strategic priority for the future, such as:
  - Human experience design and service
  - Data analytics and insights
  - Digital literacy
  - Innovation and continuous improvement.
- Partner with other organisations to promote the Value Proposition for the local government sector and attract diverse, skilled people to careers in the local government sector.



**Figure 8.** Rosanna Barbero, Addison Road Community Organisation (left) and City of Sydney CEO Monica Barone (right) – Photo by Chris Southwood/ City of Sydney

# Supporting Documents



**Figure 9.** City of Sydney staff at Alexandra Canal depot

# Our Workforce Profile 2023

## Workforce at a glance<sup>2</sup>

- At 30 June 2023, we had 1,814 employees (excluding casuals and agency staff).
- 57.2% of employees were male, compared to 42.8% female.
- 2.9% of employees identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 2.1% of employees identified as living with a disability.
- 24.3% of employees reported that they were from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.
- 5.2% of employees identified as people of diverse sexualities and genders. Formerly referred as LGBTQI+.



Image: City of Sydney staff, June 2023

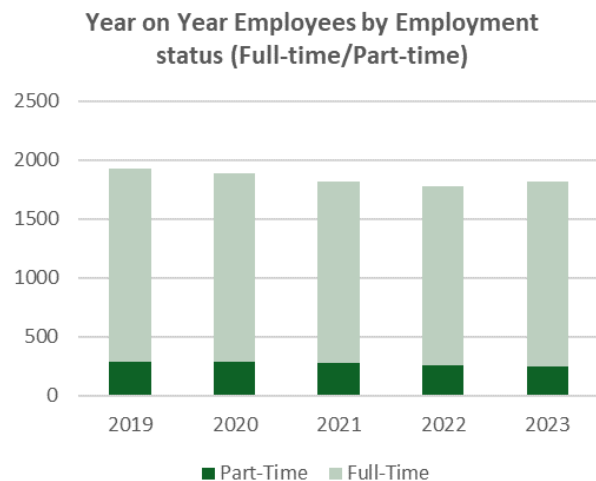
## Workforce Composition

The City's workforce consists of people employed on a continuing, fixed term and casual basis, supplemented with agency workers.

Contingent staff (casual employees and agency workers) meet fluctuating demand for seasonal work or major events such as New Year's Eve.

At 30 June 2023, there were 1,814 non-casual employees, of which 92.9% were employed on a permanent basis and 7.1% were employed on fixed terms. In addition, there were 219 casual employees.

86.1% of employees are employed full-time as shown in the graph below.



## Separations

The voluntary separation rate (also known as the employee-initiated separation rate) for non-casual employees at the City during 2022-23 was 10.8% as compared to 11.8% in 2021-22. This may be attributed to efforts made to retain employees and the settling of labour markets post Covid.

The separation rate for new employees, i.e. those that commenced during 2022-23, excluding the completion of term appointments (also known as the new starter turnover rate) was 13.8% as compared to 9.2% in last reporting period.

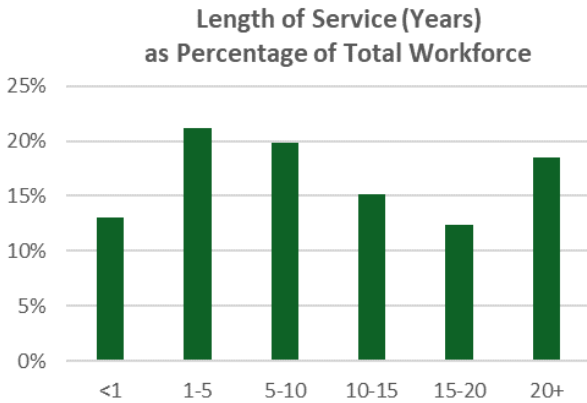
<sup>2</sup> Sourced from the City's workforce profile data as at 30 June 2023. Non casual employees include – permanent, term contracts, apprentices.

### Length of service

The median length of service of non-casual employees at the City on 30 June 2023 was 8 years, compared to the median length of service of 7 years in NSW public sector agencies<sup>3</sup>.

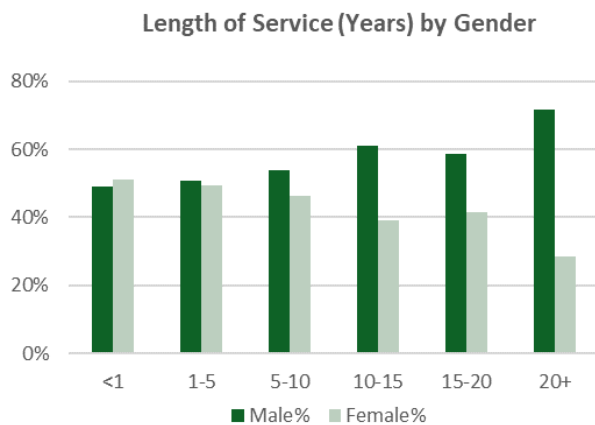
Overall, 29.2% of employees had less than three years of service and 40.2% had less than five years of service.

The graph below shows length of service in years.



Source: Workforce Profile extract as at June 2023

Further analysis shows fewer women as service tenure increases. In contrast, men have longer lengths of service at the City, particularly at 20+ years of service.



### Age

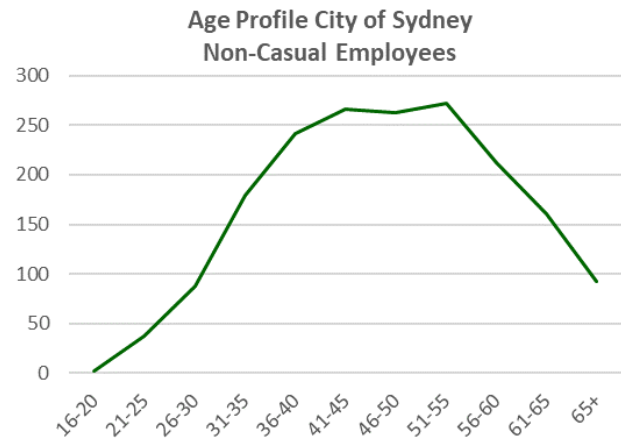
At 30 June 2023 the average age of non-casual employees was 47.2 years. This compares to the average age of 43 years in NSW public sector agencies.

The majority of the City’s employees are aged between 36 to 55 years old, representing 57.5% of the City’s workforce.

16.9% of employees were aged under 35 years.

Overall, 25.6% of City of Sydney employees were aged over 55 years. In comparison, 22.0% of employees in NSW public sector agencies were aged 55 years and over at 30 June 2023<sup>4</sup>.

The graph below shows the number of employees in each of the age groups.



Source: Workforce Profile extract as at June 2023

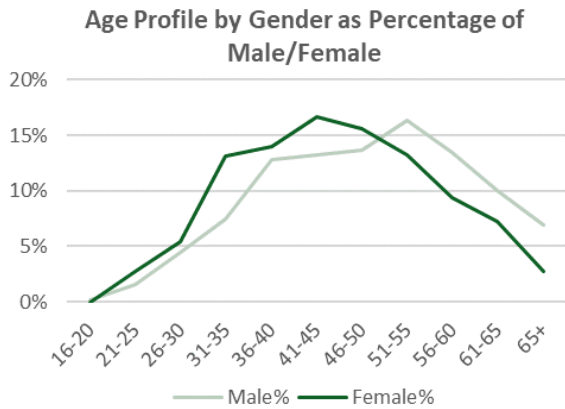
The age profile for male employees is older than for female employees. 63.8% of non-casual females are aged under 50 years compared to 50.6% of males.

The next graph shows the age profile of employees by gender.

<sup>3</sup> NSW Public Service Commission Workforce Profile Report 2023.

<sup>4</sup> NSW Public Service Commission Workforce Profile Report 2023.





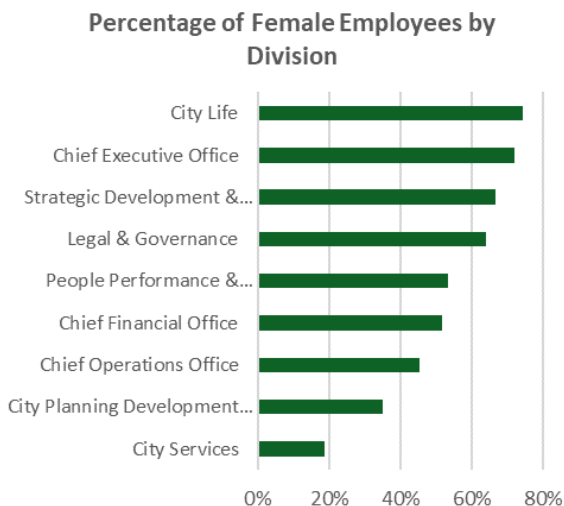
Source: Workforce Profile extract as at June 2023

**Gender**

At 30 June 2023, 57.2% of non-casual employees were male, compared to 42.8% female.

Female employment has increased over the past years, from 39.2% in 2012, to the current level of 42.8%.

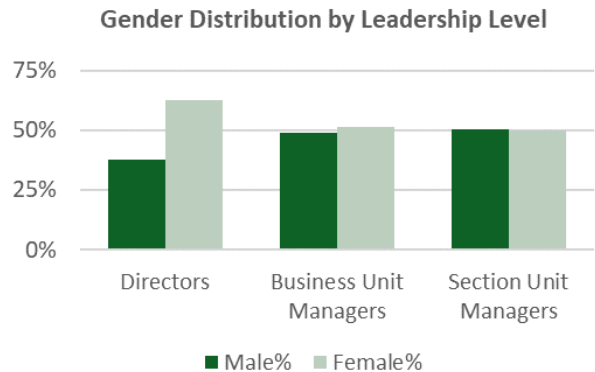
The percentage of female employees varies across the City. Amongst the divisions, the City Life division has the highest percentage of female non-casual employees (74%), followed by Strategic Development & Engagement division (67%).



Source: Workforce Profile extract June 2023

At 30 June 2023, the overall proportion of female employees performing managerial and supervisory roles at the City of Sydney was 53.7% as compared to 41.8% in 2014. This is higher than the overall percentage of female employees at the City (42.8%).

The next graph shows that in 2023, the proportion of women at director level was 62.5%, at the business unit manager level was 51.1% and at section manager level was 49.7%.



Source: Workforce Profile extract June 2023

**Pay Equity**

In 2023 the City undertook its eighth gender pay equity review guided by the Workforce Gender Equality Agency framework.

The City calculated its gender pay gap (the gap between the average total remuneration of women and men across the City) on two measures of pay - 'total remuneration' (base pay plus variable pay including overtime) and 'base salary'.

The City's total remuneration gender pay gap was 3.2 per cent in favour of women compared to WGEA total remuneration national pay gap of 21.7 per cent in favour of men.

The base salary gender pay gap was 8.6 per cent in favour of women. This compares with the national gender pay gap of 12.0 per cent in favour of men and the public sector pay gap of 11.6 per cent<sup>5</sup> in favour of men.

<sup>5</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap>

**Diversity and Inclusion**

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees**

At 30 June 2023, 2.9% of the City's non-casual employees identified as being a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. This compares to 3.9% reported in the NSW Public Sector Workforce Profile, 2023<sup>6</sup>.

The City is working towards its Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan employment target of 3.4% by 2025.

The City Services division has the highest percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (4.6%), followed by City Life (3.5).

**Employees with Disability**

At 30 June 2023, 2.1% of the City's non-casual employees reported having one or more limitations or restrictions associated with a disability. This compares to 2.6% of employees reported in the NSW Public Sector Workforce Profile, 2023<sup>7</sup>.

The City is working to increase the participation of people with disability in its workforce in line with its Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan.

**Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employees**

As at 30 June 2023, 24.3% of employees identified as a part of culturally or linguistically diverse (CALD) group.

The City has implemented the Diversity Council Australia's Counting Culture methodology, which has improved the data capture for culturally and linguistically diverse employees.

**Employees with diverse sexualities and genders**

In 2017, the City of Sydney became one of the first councils to collect information for employees who identify as being LGBTIQ+ employees. Currently 5.2% of City employees identify as being people with diverse sexualities and genders.

The table below shows changes over the last four years.

Employee Group	2020	2021	2022	2023
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees	2.3%	2.5%	2.8%	2.9%
Employees with a disability	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	2.1%
Culturally and linguistically diverse employees	18.8%	19.7%	21.1%	24.3%
Employees with diverse sexualities and genders	3.5%	3.9%	4.4%	5.2%

The City acknowledges there are many factors influencing whether employees report their individual diversity data, and that these may contribute to under-reporting. The City continues to encourage employees to self-identify as being a part of a diversity group, to build a more accurate picture of the workforce and to provide more support to employees.

<sup>6</sup> NSW Public Service Commission Workforce Profile Report 2023.

<sup>7</sup> NSW Public Service Commission Workforce Profile Report 2023.

### Where do the City of Sydney’s employees live?

At 30 June 2023, an estimated 12.8% of non-casual employees lived within the City of Sydney Local Government Area. This represents the largest group of City of Sydney employees. In addition to proximity to the workplace, the City of Sydney has supported the direct employment of people who live in the LGA particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents.

The heat map below shows the residential locations for our employees.



# EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan



**Figure 10.** Creative hoardings covering the Woolworths Building during its renovation, April 2022 - Photo by Abril Felman/ City of Sydney

## Our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

At City of Sydney, we recognise that promoting workplace equity, diversity and inclusion is more than a legislative requirement – it is essential to our success as a local government organisation that caters to the diverse communities who live, work in and visit the City of Sydney. We also understand that having a diverse and inclusive workforce improves organisational performance, innovation, engagement and service quality.

**Diversity and inclusion make good business sense because they deliver a range of positive organisational, team and individual outcomes. (Diversity Council of Australia, 2021)**

We understand that a broad range of perspectives, approaches and ideas make us better in delivering business outcomes as well as working collaboratively with Sydney’s multicultural society with its varied cultures, abilities, gender identities, languages, traditions, religious and spiritual practices.

We demonstrate our commitment to diversity and inclusion by respecting our employees, and, treating employees fairly and equitably. We strive to eliminate discrimination, to actively remove barriers to inclusive employment and to promote workplace relationships that are based on understanding and respect. We want to foster a safe environment where people feel valued for who they are.

We want the City of Sydney to be an inclusive organisation – one in which employees trust they will be treated fairly, feel diversity is valued and respected, and report that top leaders demonstrate a genuine, visible commitment to diversity and inclusion.



**Figure 11.** City of Sydney staff participating in Mardi Gras parade, March 2022 – Photo by Abril Felman/ City of Sydney

Our commitment to these diversity and inclusion is reflected in the following plans and programs:

- Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (2020 – 2023)
- Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan (2021 – 2025)
- Participation in the Human Rights Commission’s IncludeAbility program
- Disability Confident Employer status (from the Australian Network on Disability Network)
- Our annual Gender Pay Gap reporting.

The commitments in these plans and programs will not be repeated in this document.

This Action Plan demonstrates our ongoing commitment to action. It outlines our high-level and aspirational goals for 2022–26 and the ways we will monitor and review our progress.

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## Background

The City of Sydney (the City) aims to provide a work environment that supports equity, diversity, and inclusion, and is free from discrimination, harassment, and vilification as determined by legislation. The City believes that a diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves and represents, is better equipped to understand and meet their needs.

The City is committed to meeting the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) obligations outlined in Section 344 of the Local Government Act 1993:

- a. Eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, marital or domestic status and disability in councils, and
- b. Promote equal employment opportunity for women, members of racial minorities and persons with disabilities in councils.

### State Alignment

In addition to the Local Government Act (NSW) 1993, this plan also considers other state-level policy and legislation, including:

- *Anti-Discrimination Act (NSW) 1977*
- *Multicultural Act (NSW) 2000*
- *Disability Inclusion Act (NSW) 2014*
- *Carer Recognition Act (NSW) 2010*

### National Alignment

The preparation of this plan also considers national policy and legislation, including:

- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*

### City Alignment

This EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is informed by the City’s community strategic plan. It supports the vision for Sydney to be a highly connected city – that is, a city that is diverse, welcoming and inclusive; one that will be resilient with the capacity to adapt to change and withstand adversity.

This plan also aligns with other City initiatives, including:

- Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (2020 – 2023)
- Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan (2021 – 2025)
- Human Rights Commission’s IncludeAbility program
- Disability Confident Employer status
- Annual Gender Pay Gap reporting.

Moreover, the plan supports Sydney becoming a city for people – a socially supportive community that is safe, and inclusive. Feeling safe is associated with being free from discrimination based on gender, ethnicity or origin, culture, language, relationship status, pregnancy, sexuality, race, medical conditions or disability, age and political or religious belief.

### Key Deliverables

This Action Plan sets out the key deliverables that address the City’s commitment to EEO principles and which together provide a roadmap for a diverse and inclusive workplace. These include actions to:

- Deliver the workforce commitments within the City’s Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2020 – 23
- Implement the workforce actions within the Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2021 – 25
- Report on gender equity as part of an annual workforce reporting process and implement initiatives to improve gender equity
- Embed the principles of diversity and inclusion in the City’s core people management processes (recruitment, learning, development, performance) and leadership and employee capabilities and related programs
- Develop initiatives to further support workplace diversity and inclusion including among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, women, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people (including refugees and asylum seekers), LGBTIQ+ people, young workers, mature age workers, and carers.



**Figure 12.** Yabun Festival celebration in Victoria Park, Camperdown – Photo by Joseph Mayers / Joseph Mayers Photography

## Our achievements

We recognise we still have much work to do.

However, we are building upon a strong foundation and have a lot to celebrate, including:

- Achieving accreditation from the Australian Network on Disability to become a ‘Disability Confident Recruiter’
- Becoming a member of the Australian Human Rights Commission’s IncludeAbility employers’ network
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees from 1.6% of our workforce in 2016 to 2.7% in 2022
- Achieving the Gender Equality target of 50% female representation in leadership roles
- Being one of very few organisations to have a positive pay gap in favour of women, reflecting a high number of women in management roles
- Becoming one of the few organisations to collect data and report on the workforce participation of LGBTIQ+ staff
- Sponsoring the ‘Counting Culture’ Research – an Australian first approach for defining, measuring, and reporting on workforce cultural diversity in a respectful, accurate and inclusive way by Diversity Council Australia (DCA) and the University of Sydney Business School
- Establishing Executive level sponsors to promote workplace diversity and inclusion
- Maintaining active employee reference groups – City Women, City Pride, DiverCity and the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander staff network
- Establishing targeted mental health awareness and mental health first aid training for staff and management.



**Figure 13.** Beginners tai chi class focusing on physical and mental wellbeing – Photo by Katherine Griffiths/ City of Sydney



Our work has also been recognised by others:

- 2020 Ministers' Award for Women in Local Government – Employment Diversity – Metropolitan
- 2019 Australian HR Award for 'Best Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Program'
- 2019 Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) Finalist 'Diversity and Inclusion Champion'
- 2018 Local Government NSW Award for 'Best Diversity and Inclusion Program'
- 2018 and 2019 Ministers' Award for Women in Local Government – 'Women in non-traditional roles'
- 2018 Australian LGBTIQ+ Awards – Finalist 'Best New Employee Network'.

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## Developing the Action Plan

### Planning

The City undertakes diversity and inclusion action planning through annual and longer-term management plans linked to the business planning cycle. This integrated approach ensures diversity actions are incorporated in workforce planning and major business change initiatives.

### Responsibility

A commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion at the City starts with the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive. Overall corporate responsibility for monitoring workforce diversity and inclusion lies with the Director People, Performance and Technology. Managers and staff throughout the City are responsible for implementing EEO principles and supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of equity, diversity and inclusion performance is a regular part of the annual business planning and reporting cycle. The City is required to periodically report progress against equity, diversity and statistics to the Council and other government bodies in addition to ad hoc requests from other government agencies.

### Informing

The EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 26 includes actions to ensure staff are kept informed of the initiatives and of their EEO rights and responsibilities in the workplace. Information is shared through:

- Online communication including intranet, email and online resources
- Specific Diversity and EEO related training programs and inclusion of Diversity and EEO topics in a wide range of general training programs
- Leadership and staff briefings/information forums
- Induction training
- Diversity network meetings.

### Review of Policies and Practices

The City's policies and practices are monitored to ensure they are consistent with equity, diversity and inclusion objectives and EEO legislation and are informed by best practice research and resources. Equity, diversity and inclusion principles are considered in major projects, when developing new or changed work practices and when creating and reviewing relevant policies.

The EEO Policy applies to all City staff, agency staff, consultants, job applicants, contractors, volunteers, trainees and work experience participants. The City, being the responsible employer, is legally accountable for discrimination in employment matters. The City's programs are informed by

the EEO (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987 [the Act]. The Act requires organisations to have programs that:

- Promote the employment of designated disadvantaged groups (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and women)
- Facilitate the elimination of all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

The Act also requires annual reporting on progress against program objectives, which the City does each year in its Annual Report.

### Focussing our efforts on 3 strategic goals

#### 1. Build a more diverse workforce

Build on our strengths and learn from others to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and invest in leadership diversity.

#### 2. Foster inclusion and belonging

Maintain a workplace that is safe, collaborative, and accountable - one in which employees trust they will be treated fairly, see that diversity is valued and feel as if they belong.

#### 3. Create awareness and build effective measures

Build awareness and skills in diversity and inclusion. Strengthen workforce data and evidence to inform effective decision making and programs

### 1. Build a more diverse workforce

Build on our strengths and learn from others to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and invest in leadership diversity.

Diversity refers to the mix of people in an organisation – that is, the differences between people in how they identify in relation to their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, disability status, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, and socio-economic background<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Diversity Council Australia, <https://www.dca.org.au/di-planning/getting-started-di/diversity-inclusion-explained>

These identities may shape the way people view and perceive their world and workplace – as well as how others view and treat them.

We understand that a broad range of perspectives, approaches and ideas make us better in delivering business outcomes as well as working collaboratively with Sydney's multicultural society with its varied cultures, abilities, gender identities, languages, religious and spiritual practices.

At the City we see diversity and inclusion as critical business enablers. Helping us attract and retain high potential employees, to futureproof our relevance and capacity to solve complex real-world problems, to be leaders in the local government space, change agents, to develop our capability to lead on matters of national and global importance and to connect respectfully with our citizens and places.

We also accept that we have a social responsibility to advance the employment of people who are unfairly excluded or disadvantaged in the workforce.

We strive to embrace diversity and inclusion at all stages of the employment cycle, from attraction, recruitment, and selection to access to training, promotional and development opportunities. Not only do we want to attract new talent from different backgrounds, we want to support our existing employees to develop their skills and careers at the City and achieve their best.

We will achieve this by:

- Promoting the City of Sydney as an inclusive employer of choice, that values and supports diversity in its workforce
- Partnering with specialist employment agencies to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates and candidates with disability to work for the City of Sydney
- Reviewing our entry-level programs to help create a diverse talent pool for the future – this involves ensuring our programs include strategies to create pathways to permanent positions
- Streamlining our recruitment and selection processes to support the objectives of this plan, remove barriers and reduce the risk of unconscious bias
- Improving diversity in our selection and interview panels
- Analysing retention trends of employees from under-represented groups to identify and mitigate issues, if any
- Broadening our pool of diverse leaders across the organisation.

## **2. Foster inclusion and belonging**

Maintain a workplace that is safe, collaborative, and accountable – one in which employees trust they will be treated fairly, see that diversity is valued and feel as if they belong.

Inclusion refers to getting the diverse mix of people in an organisation to work together to improve performance and wellbeing. Inclusion in a workplace is achieved when people from diverse backgrounds feel that they are:

- Respected for who they are and able to be themselves
- Connected to their colleagues and feel they belong
- Contributing their perspectives and talents to the workplace and
- Progressing in their career at work<sup>9</sup>.

An inclusive organisation contributes to greater psychological safety and wellbeing, and a stronger sense of belonging. People are more likely to feel their contributions are valued and are more comfortable raising their ideas and concerns.

The City aspires to be a place where all people are valued and respected, have equal access to opportunities and are encouraged to fulfil their talents and potential. We understand that in order to

<sup>9</sup> Diversity Council Australia, <https://www.dca.org.au/di-planning/getting-started-di/diversity-inclusion-explained>

reap the benefits of a diverse workforce we must create and cultivate a workplace that enables diverse perspectives to be heard and empowers all employees to participate and contribute. To become a recognised leader in diversity and inclusion, we must foster a culture of respect, transparency and accountability and demonstrate this through measured and reported actions.

It has never been more important for the City to prioritise inclusion and belonging. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected our city and community in many ways, with significant impacts on parents and carers, access for people with disabilities, new mental health challenges, and financial hardship. Building a culture of belonging in this context is critical to our reset and rebound to the future.

We also acknowledge that in order to succeed, this plan must be driven from the top. Without visible leadership engagement and accountability there's a risk that diversity and inclusion will be considered a secondary "nice to have" rather than the strategic priority that we believe, it is. We have established leadership commitment and processes to ensure accountability for diversity and inclusion outcomes.

We will achieve this by:

- Engaging and empowering our diverse employees through our employee network groups.
- Implementing the City's mentally healthy workplace plan to support workplace belonging and wellbeing.
- Addressing factors contributing to psychological safety for diverse employees and action mitigation strategies to address any systemic barriers.
- Ensuring our internal policies support an inclusive working environment.
- Strengthening leadership and manager capabilities to build a diverse workforce and manage inclusive ways of working.
- Strengthening our leadership engagement and accountability for diversity and inclusion outcomes.
- Developing and implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy to support the recruitment, retention, support, and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Implementing a Cultural Inclusion Strategy.
- Learning from and sharing good practices, experiences and lessons learned across business areas and with our external partners.

### **3. Create awareness and build effective measures**

Build awareness and skills in diversity and inclusion. Strengthen workforce data and evidence to inform effective decision making and programs.

"Diversity and Inclusion is everyone's responsibility" – and that's why it is the actions and behaviours of employees and managers at all levels of our organisation that will determine how successful we are in creating an inclusive culture. We believe that all our employees are responsible for creating an inclusive and supporting environment within their sphere of influence.

As a large and complex organisation, communication and engagement can sometimes be challenging. Strategic communications and stakeholder engagement will encourage buy-in to our goals through consistent, clear, and honest messaging. We will support awareness raising through appropriate workplace education and training.

We will regularly monitor our progress and evaluate the effectiveness of our strategies and initiatives. Progress measures will include the collection of workforce diversity data, employee engagement, evaluation of learning activities, and diversity performance compared to benchmarks.

Overall progress against the goals and targets in this plan will be reported bi-annually to the City's leadership team throughout the duration of the plan.

We will achieve this by:

- Increasing our employees' awareness and appreciation of diversity and inclusion through targeted engagement and learning activities.
- Continuing to monitor the diversity of our job candidates and employees in order to understand the make-up of our workforce and to identify barriers which may be affecting the recruitment, progression or experience of diverse candidates and employees.
- Developing and delivering diversity and inclusion training aimed at addressing unconscious bias in the workplace and promoting inclusive leadership and management practices.
- Educating hiring managers and key decision makers on embracing diversity in recruitment and selection.
- Regularly reporting on the diversity dashboards and other workforce planning analytics metrics.
- Promoting voluntary equal employment opportunity identification (including questions from Counting Culture research) to measure and better understand the diversity of our workforce. This will be supported by an internal communication explaining the importance of collecting this information.
- Monitoring the workplace experiences of diverse segments of our workforce.
- Deploying effective communication channels to promote understanding of lived experiences of diverse employees.

# Glossary

**Belonging:** the individual sense of being accepted in the workplace.

**Capabilities:** the skills, knowledge areas, behaviours and mindsets needed at an individual level to adapt and to succeed in the context of continuously emerging changes at work.

**Collaboration:** a working practice whereby individuals work together for a common purpose to achieve an outcome.

**Data analytics:** use of data-informed methods to improve planning, decision making and management.

**Digital literacy:** having the capabilities to learn and work in an environment where communication and access to information is increasingly through digital technologies, which includes internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices.

**Employee experience:** the intersection of an employee's expectations (including needs, wants and values), their environment (including culture, people and leaders, work, programs and processes and workplace / tech) and the events (including life, career and organisation) that shape their journey within an organisation.

**Human centric mindset:** a mental disposition / attitude that cultivates deep empathy for the core needs of individuals. In the context of solving problems, a human centric mindset means balancing the needs of the organisation with the needs of users, customers and the community.

**Hybrid working:** a flexible working model where employees work partly between the physical workplace, and partly remotely – at home or from another workspace.

**Inclusion:** the achievement of a work environment where all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully and provided of equal access to opportunities and resources to ensure they can contribute fully.

**Organisational culture:** a “pattern of shared basic assumptions” (Schein, 1992) that guide how work gets done within an organisation. It includes the organisation's vision, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, environment, location, beliefs and habits.

**‘People first’ culture:** a culture that actively considers and fulfils the needs of all people, including the community and employees. Within the organisation, a ‘people first’ culture ensures that people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities belong and are given the opportunity to thrive.

**Skills:** the ability to perform a certain task / activity or to manage a certain tool, technology or process.

**Value Proposition:** the collection of rewards and benefits that a company can offer its employees, in return for the capabilities and experiences that they bring to the company.

**Ways of working:** the set of principles, practices and processes that determine how a team / organisation collaborates to deliver outcomes.

**Workforce planning:** the process through which an organisation analyses and plans for the workforce and capabilities it needs in the future to ensure it has the right people, in the right place, at the right time.





# Information and Technology Strategy 2022-2026

The City of Sydney acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of our local area.



# Contents

Summary	3
Developing community focused services	4
Current trends that have influenced this strategy	4
Strategic statements	6
Priority actions	6
Managing information and data for public good	8
Trends that have influenced this strategy	8
Priority actions	10
Optimising technology and communications infrastructure	11
Trends that have influenced this strategy	11
Strategic statements	14
Priority actions	15
Governance, management and risk	16

**Cover image:** Sydney city at night with technology theme overlay depicting a connected city – Photo by Abril Felman / City of Sydney

# Summary

This strategy outlines how the City of Sydney plans to develop and use information and technology services over the next 4 years.

It responds to growing community, client, and workforce expectations that life and work tasks can be performed digitally at any time and from anywhere.

Our local businesses are rapidly embracing new capabilities into their service delivery models. And our residents and visitors are changing how they use online services and interact socially. As a local government agency, we need to meet these expectations, make the most of new technologies and make the right services easily available.

With the ever-growing presence of technology, we also need to ensure the right controls are in place for privacy, security, and the ethical management of personal information.

This strategy forms part of the City of Sydney's Resourcing Strategy and aligns with our community strategic plan, Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050.

This strategy does not describe our work on influencing the digital economy of Sydney and enhancing the digital literacy and inclusion of our communities – that work is detailed in other City of Sydney documents, including the community strategic plan. Our previous information and technology strategy in 2017 set the foundations for a new generation of service delivery systems and best practice management and governance of technology, information and data.

This strategy builds on our earlier work and sets actions that will transform our capability in digitalised services and the use of data and information. It sets these out in 3 key areas of focus.

## **Focus area 1:** Developing community centric services

Our community expects a high standard for digital services. In the next 4 years we will increase the range and quality of our digital services and ensure a consistent and connected experience across our services. We will extend our digital channels to make it easier for our community to provide comments, share ideas and take part in consultation activities. We will also increase community access to digital equipment.

## **Focus area 2:** Managing information and data for public good

Information and data present enormous opportunity for community and societal benefit. In the next 4 years we will continue to improve data quality, governance, management, and record keeping. We will publish open data to the City of Sydney's data hub and develop a document publishing hub that facilitates easier access to information.

## **Focus area 3:** Optimising technology and communications infrastructure for service delivery

Digital systems and their supporting networks have become a core local government capability – they are essential resources and tools to run the City of Sydney's operations. We will review how we manage our foundational systems and technology to support changing business requirements, further improve cyber security and monitor advances in emerging and sensing technologies for our assets and services. We will also collaborate with stakeholders developing the Tech Central precinct to optimise placement and access to digital infrastructure.

# Developing community focused services

Our residents, business and communities are at the centre of our work to transform the City of Sydney's digital services.

The digital systems and processes in local government have traditionally been property centric, focused on managing land, planning, property, public infrastructure and associated regulatory services. While this work remains a core responsibility, this strategy reframes digital services by placing the needs of our communities – our residents, businesses, and the other agencies we interact with, first.

Our new service systems will integrate how we manage incoming service requests across all areas of service delivery. For example, if a community member chooses to email us about a topic, make a follow up phone call, and message us on social media, we will be better able to coordinate these points of contact and our response.

We also want to move a majority of our information and transactional services onto digital channels to make doing business with us faster, simpler, more personalised and accessible.

This will allow our communities to interact with us easily and in real time, see the relevance in the services and information we provide, receive timely alerts and notifications, and have better mechanisms to give feedback on our services.

## Current trends that have influenced this strategy

### **Our community expects a high standard for digital services**

Community expectations for digital services have escalated in the last decade. We have seen rapid digital services development in e-health, e-commerce, remote learning, entertainment, the arts, social services, and events. These expectations have been amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Greater Sydney Commission reports:

**“A 700% increase in telehealth services and large-scale increases in collaborative work and social platforms since the pandemic was declared and a 300% increase in library e-loans illustrate how the pandemic is accelerating the digitisation of all areas of life. Over the last 10 years the proportion of households in NSW with access to the internet increased from around 70% to around 85% across all categories of households”.**

(Source: Greater Sydney Commission, 2020, City-shaping impacts of COVID-19)

People's food and shopping decisions are also more likely to be digital. Around 82% of Australian households shopped online in 2020 and total purchases were higher by 48.5% on 2019 levels. (Source: Inside Australian Online Shopping eCommerce update, December 2021)

### **Expectations of clear and consistent government communications are growing**

In 2019 the City of Sydney's research into customer service needs identified that across all age groups, between 68% to 81% of our communities wanted to access our services all in one place online.

Our communities expect us to provide information upfront and once only, minimise unnecessary interactions with them, protect their personal and transactional data, and keep them informed to a level they choose, and in a communications style they prefer.

They want connected services that meet their needs and account for the context of their interests and circumstances. For example, the range of connected services needed for a life event like moving house, or for a stage of life such as children needing childcare and holiday activities, or for entertainment.

They also want rapid end-to-end transactions. These include being able to book, pay and receive a receipt in real time, and access to high-quality automated chat assistance to provide general and transaction-specific information.

Customer experience (CX) has grown as an industry and practice in the business sector over the past decade. And people now expect similar business grade services from government agencies. The NSW Government has made substantial progress toward this goal, making connected services accessible through the Service NSW online portal.

The City of Sydney also needs to provide responsive digital services that are easy to access and use, and to a quality that matches or exceeds people's everyday experiences and expectations.

### **Our digital channels are designed to support equity and inclusion**

The City of Sydney targets WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards as the preferred standard for our digital properties and we work to influence third party providers to meet this benchmark.

Our digital channels will support equity and inclusion, reaching more people more quickly and easily than in-person services. Language accessibility and translation services are becoming increasingly viable.

We are using insights on how people respond to our digital services to learn more about needs and preferences and better target these services over time.

We also know that some people will require or prefer in person or phone services. As more transactions and general enquiries are fulfilled through online services, we will be able to free up capacity to help people with more complex needs.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we gained stronger insights into the need for public access to the information technology available in our libraries and community centres. Access to digital equipment remains an issue for some members of our community.

### **Our role is to provide a connected end-to-end digital journey**

The City of Sydney serves residents, businesses, visitors, and partners through multiple separate systems. Examples include systems for planning and property management, rates, waste management and direct community services.

However, interacting with disparate systems can provide an inefficient and fragmented experience with respect to contemporary expectations.

We aim to create an end-to-end journey that seamlessly draws from different business systems for easier interactions. This will require integrating our internal systems and processes to enable consistent and appropriate communications and build lasting relationships with our community members.

Centralised governance supports these efforts setting standards, streamlining operations, and providing a coherent strategic direction.

### **Artificial intelligence technologies help enable responsive connected digital journey**

Our communities expect a personally customised experience as they interact with our digital channels. Artificial intelligence algorithms can help deliver this experience by using previous interactions to tailor predictive search, to power the virtual assistant and other navigations to quickly guide community members to the digital services they want, automate manual processes and data capture, and support improved real-time decision-making processes.

The City of Sydney will approach the use of this key enabler ethically, taking care to ensure our algorithms are free of biases that may generate poor or unwanted outcomes.

### **Open banking and payment options are diversifying**

With the increasing use of digital wallets and services such as PayPal, and in the context of the recent pandemic, people expect contactless payment processing options.

There has also been substantial growth in banking, payments and financial data accessibility standards that has changed the provider and consumer landscape.

The City of Sydney needs to monitor these developments and continue to integrate diversified payment methods into our digital services.

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## Strategic statements

The City of Sydney will plan and develop responsive digital services that are easy to access and use, robust, always available, and at a level that matches our users' experience of digital products and services in everyday life.

We will use human-centred service design principles, involving co-creation and testing with users during the design and development

stages of our digital products and services. This will help ensure our services match our communities' needs, are easy to use and are informed by a diverse set of perspectives.

We will apply design and development standards and techniques to ensure our products and services are accessible and inclusive.

Third party systems will provide detailed transaction processing and data storage.

We will plan, design and execute integrations between systems to create a consistent and connected experience.

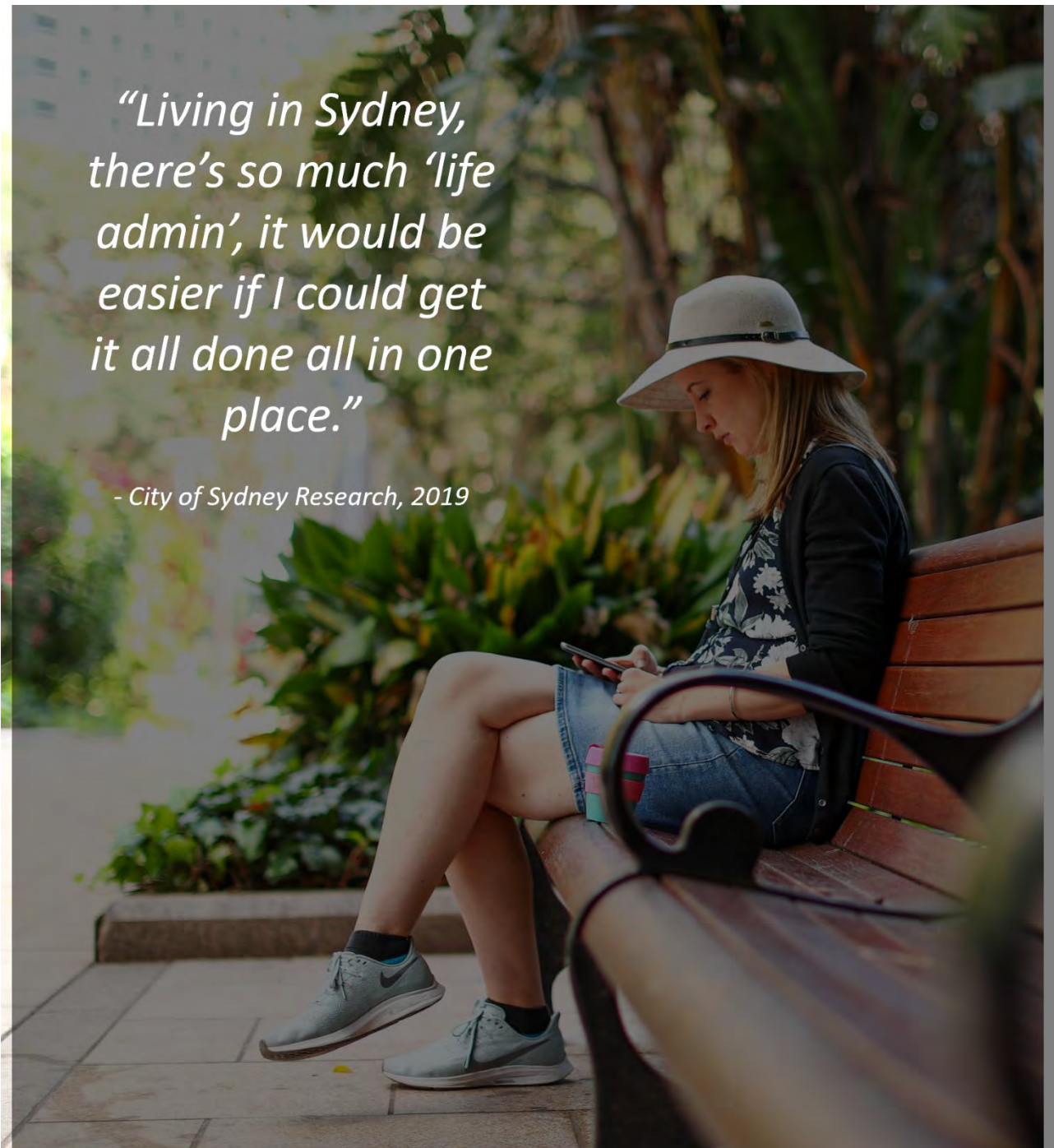
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## Priority actions

- Design and build a new, improved and richly featured customer portal and services layer (CityConnect).
- Progressively increase the range of digital services, using human-centred design practices, including co-design, and testing with our communities.
- Revise, redevelop and extend our digital channels for community engagement and consultation.
- Develop new and improved channels for booking and use of community facilities.
- Increase community access to digital equipment through focussed extensions to our public access to technology program and through partnerships with other providers in social services sector.
- Invest in integrations between systems to ensure a consistent and connected experience across our services.
- Extend our customer relationship management (CRM) solution to ensure technology works seamlessly for our communities across any channel.

*“Living in Sydney,  
there’s so much ‘life  
admin’, it would be  
easier if I could get  
it all done all in one  
place.”*

*- City of Sydney Research, 2019*



**Figure 1.** Person using mobile device on a bench in Hyde Park – Photo by Mark Metcalfe/City of Sydney

# Managing information and data for public good

Information and data are arguably the longest lasting assets of any organisation – underpinning all the City of Sydney manages and does.

The ever-increasing volume of information and data created in the digital economy present huge opportunities for community and societal benefit, but also presents considerable risks.

We need to protect information and data to ensure privacy and confidentiality, long term access to records, and preserve history for future generations.

We manage information and data in line with: *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*; *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*; *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*; and *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)*.

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## Trends that have influenced this strategy

### **Data protection and ethics have become mainstream**

Australia has long been at the vanguard of privacy, confidentiality, and data ethics. Strong privacy legislation is administered and monitored by federal and state bodies.

The City of Sydney has high standards in privacy, confidentiality, security, ethical use, and record keeping. But we need to continuously improve and remain vigilant.

At a time of exponential growth in information and data, we need to keep the principles of informed consent and data minimisation front of mind.

### **Providing public access to information and data remains essential**

Openness and transparency are the cornerstones of public sector institutions, promoting good governance, accountability, and high levels of community participation and trust. Openness also facilitates opportunities for innovation.

As a NSW public sector organisation, we must comply with the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. This law is overseen and monitored by the NSW Information and Privacy Commission, which has a mandate to contribute to social and economic wellbeing in NSW by leading effective information access and privacy.

The City of Sydney has robust practices in place to comply with this Act. These practices need to keep pace with changing community needs and expectations, with more information and data being published under our proactive disclosure program.

### Growth in big data and analytics will change how we interact with our city

Around 90% of all data in existence today was created in the past 2 years. By 2025 worldwide data is projected to reach 175 zettabytes, of which 80% will be unstructured data (video, images, sound, and documents). An estimated 90 zettabytes will be from sensors.

The astonishing growth in data and advances in technology have driven growth in data science and analytics – the application of machine learning and artificial intelligence to predict the future and help prescribe the best course of action.

Spatial intelligence and data are particularly important for local governments as it provides insights on how people interact with the built form – telling us what is working well and where improvements can be made.

Digital twins – a near-time model of a space, building, or even city – is an emerging trend underpinned by spatial data exchange, Internet of Things sensors, and spatial intelligence analytics. It has the potential to fundamentally change the way we understand, plan, and manage our area. When combined with virtual and augmented reality, the way we experience the City of Sydney area is also open to fundamental change.

### Strategic statements

The City of Sydney will ethically manage personal and confidential information to prevent harm to people and organisations.

We will provide and promote equitable public access to City of Sydney information and data to meet the spirit and requirements of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

We will contribute to the information economy to foster innovation.

We will manage data in line with record keeping and archival requirements to ensure defensible business decisions and preserve history for future generations.

We will optimise the volume of physical and digital information and data to be managed and stored to ensure continued compliance with legislation, minimise costs, and reduce environmental impacts.

We will provide business and spatial intelligence for better planning, operations, and decision making.



**Figure 2.** Building data analytics capabilities - Sydney harbour skyline – Photo by Abril Felman / City of Sydney



## Priority actions

- Establish data stewardship across the City of Sydney with a focus on data privacy, confidentiality, security, ethics, quality, and sharing.
- Engage with academia, industry, and communities about our data hub and our archives and history resources catalogue to inform, engage, educate, and improve services to the community and encourage innovation.
- Develop a document publishing hub that complements the City's data hub and facilitates easier access to information.
- Digitise business processes and improve data quality, data sharing, and records management.
- Deliver business and spatial intelligence and analytics solutions that provide actionable insights for improved planning, operations, and decision making.
- Digitise physical information for improved access to information, compliance with record keeping legislation, reduced storage, and management costs, and reduced environmental footprint.
- Educate the City of Sydney's workforce in information access, information and data governance and management, and business intelligence.

# Optimising technology and communications infrastructure

Local governments now rely on digital and communications technologies as essential infrastructure for their services. Even services that are provided face to face or involve the planning, management, and maintenance of the physical aspects of the city and public domain rely on digital systems and technologies for planning and administration. Without reliable, fit for purpose technology the City's business continuity is at risk.

This dependence on technology to provide core local government services means we need longer term planning and appropriate investment. We also need strong capabilities to achieve the necessary standards, reliability, and security of services that support Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 business outcomes.

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## Trends that have influenced this strategy

### **Digital systems and their supporting networks have become a core capability for resilient service delivery**

We depend upon an increasing asset base to provide our services digitally. This has implications for funding and investment and managing this asset base to ensure digital services are secure, integrated and continually available.

The 3 main classes of technology assets are:

- public facing service channels, information display and data collection interfaces
- internal administration and operational systems to complete transactions and store the associated data and records
- digital infrastructure including data storage, networks, cabling and switching devices.

The City of Sydney uses a mix of vendor provided products and systems spanning these asset classes. Our employees are responsible for ensuring daily availability and continuity of the technology services, for constructing integrations between systems and for assurance of vendor deliverables.

Sufficient budget is required to ensure appropriate lifecycle management of these classes of asset, including project work for major uplift and renewal, and funded programs for management and maintenance.

Planning and managing these assets also requires a skilled workforce with capability in a range of electrical engineering specialisations including infrastructure, networking, applications development and integration, cyber security, and end user computing. The City of Sydney must attract and retain a sufficiently skilled engineering workforce to effectively manage this critical and complex set of assets and providers.

The associated resource requirements are recognised in our long-term financial plan and our people strategy.

### **Working digitally has become mainstream**

In the past 2 years our expectations and capabilities to work digitally have escalated rapidly and with this our ways of working have changed. Our workforce has become more digitally adept, adopting new tools and techniques for working effectively remotely but together and for collaborating and sharing knowledge, documents and workloads.

This shift means that we have an increased need for up to date, high performance, well secured end user device fleet and an operating environment to support our employees to work digitally.

### **Australian local government systems are highly customised and a long-term asset class**

Local government services are delivered within a web of organisational and administrative arrangements. In Australia there are variations in the range of services and regulatory requirements in each state, and variation between regional and urban areas.

Local government business systems are thus highly configured and customised to meet local scope and regulations – they are bespoke and not easy to change or replace. This adds cost and limits the City of Sydney's choices.

In the scale of all business, local government is a very small sector. The vendors servicing the Australian local government market are few and are also challenged with keeping pace with consumer quality expectations.

The City of Sydney acknowledges these constraints and aims to optimise its investment in these complex long-term underpinning systems.

### **We also need to integrate with the broader government ecosystem**

There is a growing interdependency between the digital systems and services at state and local government levels and this increases the complexity of the digital systems we manage.

The NSW Government, through agencies such as Service NSW and Department of Planning and Environment, also seeks to provide connected, consistent, and accessible digital services. It has developed new services in land use, strategic planning, development, lodgement and assessment, and a range of

data transfers for building certification. Further developments are in progress or planned.

The City of Sydney will liaise with relevant agencies to understand their digital development plans and roadmaps, and this will inform our technology management and resource planning.

### **Service hosting options require periodic and in-context assessment**

There are 3 main hosting and management options for the systems and technology deployed by any organisation to deliver its services.

Pure "cloud services" are standardised services that are owned, developed, and managed by others. These are accessed with a subscription fee.

Vendor hosted services are where the provider establishes a customised system and operating environment for specific use by an organisation over an internet connection. The provider manages availability and periodic upgrades for that specific environment.

On-premises management is where a product or service is installed in the organisation's data centre under licence, and its availability, operating environment and upgrades are managed by the organisation.

The City of Sydney will continue to use a mix of all 3 service provision methods to provide a resilient and available service. The methods selected for a service depend upon several factors including product maturity, our needs for data storage, security considerations, comparative costs between methods, and needs for integration with other City of Sydney systems and services.

Many providers of generic platforms and common enterprise processes, such as collaboration platforms and tools, financial and human capital management systems, have transitioned to offer their products via cloud services. Consuming these services via subscription, transfers the cost of digital technology from a capital expenditure to an operational expenditure and this needs to be factored into long term financial planning.

### **Emerging technologies and methods require ongoing assessment**

Many industry sectors are incorporating innovative capabilities such as augmented and virtual reality, blockchain, digital twins, quantum computing and robotics into their business operations. The City of Sydney maintains awareness of the application of these technologies, to assess their beneficial applicability in relation to our business needs. Key areas include the use of augmented reality for visualisation of proposed changes in the built environment and public domain, and digital twin capabilities for modelling, mapping, and managing assets, buildings, and landform.

### **Digital infrastructure in the urban realm requires greater planning and management**

Modern global cities increasingly rely on digital infrastructure for effective and efficient operations. The data and alerts generated from sensing technologies such as cameras, probes, and meters, can potentially assist many aspects of city planning and operations. Candidate areas include kerbside management, pedestrian flow, lighting management, waste management and resource recovery, water management in relation to consumption, quality and reuse, environmental condition sensing, safety management, and building management.

Sensing technologies need access to reliable network connections, adequate computational processing power and sufficient network bandwidth to efficiently transmit data.

For example, sensors that report on the state of a service, such as water flow speed, or air quality, typically log and report small volumes of data periodically. Devices that manage traffic flow must assess large volumes of data in real-time and need a large bandwidth and/or computational processing (edge computing) close to the sensor.

These technologies require extensive planning and management that consider these factors:

- **Forward planning:** anything designed in the urban setting involves long-term planning

- **Cost management:** the cost of retrofitting technologies is far greater than designing into initial construction or planned major refurbishments. Ongoing cost of maintenance and renewal needs to be built into asset management plans
- **Jurisdiction:** who has primary responsibility for the asset. In Australia, many sensing technologies are managed by other government agencies such as transport, police and emergency services, and through everyday life such as cars, building management systems, home management systems and smartphones. These rely on our telecommunication network carriers
- **Data sources and services:** Many data aggregators already collect data from a range of sources, which can be alternate data sources for city services planning and management
- **Ethical use of data:** data from sensing technologies and third-party services must comply with privacy principles
- **Security:** data from sensing technologies must be protected from intentional and unintentional compromise in terms of its veracity and availability
- **Network density:** migration from prevalent 4G to forward network protocols including 5G, Wi-Fi and LoRaWan are increasing the density of street level equipment
- **Aesthetics and public amenity:** good planning and design is required to ensure sensing technologies and the networks they rely on do not degrade amenity in the public domain.

Our focus will be to establish policies and initiatives that encourage the business community, service delivery partners and the City of Sydney to adopt and expand infrastructure that contributes to our Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 vision.

Collaboration and partnerships with these groups will be critical to establishing the foundation for emerging and as yet, unknown capabilities across the city.



**Figure 3.** Securing digital services – Sydney Tower and skyline - photo by Abril Felman / City of Sydney

### **Cyber security issues are escalating**

The threat and volume of cyber security incursions in all areas of life and business has escalated dramatically.

The Australian Cyber Security Centre reports cybercrime increased by 13% and ransomware reports by 15% during 2021. Risk increases as our community users continue to embrace digital channels and workers work remotely.

The City of Sydney has a strong foundation of policies, processes, and controls to protect our technology assets and services from both intentional and unintentional compromise. A strong focus on cyber security protections will continue to be integral to our technology planning and management.

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## **Strategic statements**

The City of Sydney will continue to plan and maintain 4-year and 10-year outlooks for best practice lifecycle management of information and technology assets to ensure continuity of services, transition to digital channels, integrated efficient systems and effective digital working.

We will define, attract, and retain a sufficiently skilled workforce to plan, manage, assure, and maintain our digital services, systems, and infrastructure.

We will prioritise the deployment and continual upgrade of sufficiently performing network and end user devices that enable our workforce to work digitally.

We will continue to periodically assess the most appropriate hosting environment (cloud, hosted, or on premises) for our business systems and collaboration platforms to inform our project roadmaps, and also at inflexion points when we procure new products or upgrade existing facilities.

We will liaise with relevant government agencies to understand their roadmaps for digital development as inputs to our technology and resource planning.

We will optimise investment in our long-term foundational systems through effective configuration and integrations.

We will continue to monitor and advise on emerging technologies and their communications networks to assess their benefits and ensure appropriate installations in the public domain.

We will collaborate with relevant owners, regulators, and operators of infrastructure for water, energy, transport, and communications who are delivering projects for development and installation of digital infrastructure.

We will continue to extend our cyber security capability to align to industry best practice guidance, including recommendations from the Australian Cyber Security Centre(ACSC) and with reference to other key international frameworks such as National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) Cyber Security Framework and ISO27001 – Information Security Standard.

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### Priority actions

- Mature our enterprise architecture practice to govern the design and development of technology services and support the effective coordination and integration of internal and external components.
- Review and renew data centre services to respond to changing requirements for key city business systems and further strengthen the environmental performance of our infrastructure and end-user devices.
- Increasingly advocate for effective regulations to balance the interests of the public domain with the requirements for increased density of communications infrastructure.
- Monitor advances in emerging technologies, including sensors, and how they can help in the planning and management of our assets and services.
- Increase focus on reducing risks relating to vendor provided systems.
- Respond to revisions of Australian Cyber Security Centre guidance to identify any adjustments required in our approaches and programs.
- Review and confirm the long-term plan of management for our core local government business systems of record.
- Collaborate with stakeholders developing projects within the Tech Central precinct, to ensure optimised siting and access to digital infrastructure.

# Governance, management and risk

As an integrated part of the City of Sydney Resourcing Strategy, the Information and Technology Strategy guides a sustained course of action in a rapidly and ever-changing environment.

Over the term of this strategy, technology platforms and business systems that were once desirable for service delivery and business operations, will become primary channels. This means they must be treated as core and critical assets that are continuously managed through a lifecycle of planning, development or acquisition, maintenance and uplift, and/or replacement and retirement.

Governance systems need to keep pace with this change, including systems for ethics and security. We need a strong ethical framework to protect privacy and secure data. Maintaining our critical technology infrastructure to prevent cyberattacks is crucial.

The City of Sydney's executive and its budget and project management processes provide oversight of the direction and delivery of information and technology planning, service delivery and projects. They also consider and guide information and technology risk management and ensure ongoing alignment with organisational strategic priorities.

The Information Protection Coordination Group provides advice and assistance across the City of Sydney on privacy, information security, data governance, records management, and ethics.

Service delivery and performance outcomes are included in the City of Sydney's planning hierarchy of annual operational plans and 4-year delivery program, with regular progress reporting in place.

Information technology risk and audit assessments are done periodically and reported through our audit, risk and compliance committee. The City of Sydney's annual financial audit process has a strong focus on assessing the related technology and systems controls related to financial outcomes. This audit is completed by the Audit Office of NSW and reported to NSW Parliament.



**Figure 4.** Information on the go - Sydney Town Hall clock – Photo by Abril Felman / City of Sydney

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# Draft Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan 2024 update

The City of Sydney acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of our local area.

# Contents

Introduction	4
Informing our engagement approach	5
Understanding the legislative and decision-making framework	7
The communities we serve	10
Community engagement framework	15
Engagement approaches	20
Advisory groups and partnerships	29
Engaging diverse communities	34
Community participation plan for land use planning	47
Appendices	50

Front cover image: 'I am Sydney' writing workshop for the Community Strategic Plan. Photographer Damian Shaw. Copyright City of Sydney

## Acknowledgement of Country

The Council of the City of Sydney acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of our local area. We acknowledge Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to Country.

# Introduction

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## Our commitment to engage

Community participation is a guiding principle of effective and accountable local government. We are required to engage the communities that we serve – the people, organisations and businesses that have a stake in the future of Sydney and are impacted by the decisions made by the City of Sydney.

This document is a framework for how we engage communities in the decisions made at the City of Sydney. It outlines the legislative requirements, guiding principles, approaches and processes we use to ensure our engagement is clear, accountable, meaningful, inclusive and accessible. It describes the role communities play in our decisions about projects, policies, strategies, programs and services.

“To achieve our super connected city in every way, the first thing for us is good governance on all levels implemented to restore true democracy. This means for us meaningful community consultation at every stage.” Advisory panel member



Image 1. Emerging Civic Leaders program for the Community Strategic Plan Image credit: City of Sydney

# Informing our engagement approach

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## Engaging on the community strategic plan

The City of Sydney engaged with communities extensively to develop a new long-term community strategic plan to deliver Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.

The 18-month engagement process was awarded Australasian Project of the Year in 2020 by the International Association of Public Participation and was recognised as one of the top 3 projects internationally.

We started the process in 2018 by asking community members how we would know if our engagement with them was effective. We continued to ask participants for feedback on our approach throughout the process. This information has been used to improve and refine our engagement approach.

Feedback also included explicit recommendations on the importance of involving communities in decision-making for the future of Sydney.

First Nations community members asked us to be brave and be the first city to recognise cultural authority and embed it in governance structures and decision-making. People raised the importance of speaking for Country and listening to the voice of Country.

Children and young people told us about the importance of listening to their views in planning for the future – as they “will be the ones to live with the decisions we make now and they have unique perspectives and creativity.”

Businesses identified collaboration, co-working and partnerships as characterising the future. The creative sector said Sydney should strengthen its creative relationships and encourage collaboration and that communities should actively participate in shaping their own identities.

The final step in the engagement process was a Citizens’ Jury. This group of 43 randomly selected and demographically representative citizens considered the insights gathered from the community engagement process and recommended concepts to transform Sydney by 2050. The first 2 of their 8 recommendations addressed community participation in decision-making:

**Recommendation 1** – participatory governance: a new model of governance that genuinely engages citizens in decision-making on all levels which is responsive and adaptable.

**Recommendation 2** – First peoples of Australia leadership and representation: the Traditional Custodians of the land being able to play a central role in how to shape the city, through active participation in governance that is embedded and respectful.

## Resilient Sydney strategy

The Resilient Sydney strategy was developed with 33 metropolitan Sydney councils, the New South Wales (NSW) Government, business and communities in 2018. City resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, businesses and systems within a city to survive, adapt and thrive, no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

The engagement process for the strategy identified community agency as essential to community resilience. Communities have an appetite for acting in collaboration and partnership with governments and businesses. The strategy affirmed this in its first direction.

### **Direction 1: People-centred city**

We include communities in decision-making for growth and equity. We will provide our diverse communities with a genuine say in the decisions that affect them, ensuring those most impacted are included.

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## Ongoing insights

We also drew insights to inform this strategy from the City of Sydney's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel and the Disability (Inclusion) Advisory Panel and ongoing engagement with businesses and the creative sector. We spoke with City of Sydney staff who deliver services directly to communities and have expertise in working with particular groups. We evaluate our engagement and we continue to seek feedback from community members about what works for them.

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## Accessibility

There is an online [guide to council decision-making](#) which explains how the council makes decisions and how community members can be involved. This guide was developed with the Disability (Inclusion) Advisory Panel.

This community engagement strategy is also available as an [easy-English version](#).

# Understanding the legislative and decision-making framework

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## City of Sydney decision-making

The City of Sydney is a local council responsible for a range of services within its designated local area.

We seek input from communities when we develop projects, strategies and plans. These views are put to council, made up of 10 elected councillors, to discuss and vote on. We provide councillors with the outcome of community engagement to assist in their decision-making.

At the City of Sydney, issues are discussed and considered at regular council committee meetings where members of the public can speak to specific decisions before council. Then a formal decision is made at a council meeting the following week. The council can also delegate certain decisions to the Lord Mayor and to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The council committees where members of the public can address councillors are:

- Corporate, Finance, Properties and Tenders Committee
- Environment Committee
- Cultural and Community Committee
- Transport, Heritage and Planning Committee

There are the guidelines for speakers at council committee meetings.

Members of the community can also speak at meetings of the Central Sydney Planning Committee and our Local Planning Panel. The Central Sydney Planning Committee determines applications for major developments with an estimated cost of more than \$50 million. The committee was established under the City of Sydney Act 1988 and is made up of the Lord Mayor, 2 councillors and 4 members appointed by the Minister of Planning.

The Local Planning Panel is an independent committee that determines certain development applications. Set up as required by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. it has 4 members, including a community representative selected by the council.

Members of the community can also give input at meetings of the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee. This body considers the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in our area and gives technical advice to our council. It includes representatives from the City of Sydney, NSW Police, Transport for NSW, local members of the NSW Parliament, and other NSW government agencies. It is an important stakeholder mechanism to enable coordination across responsible authorities. However, it does not have decision-making powers.



Some elements of community engagement are directed by state government legislation. This includes the Local Government Act 1993 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 which both require plans outlining how the City of Sydney will engage the community to inform decisions. Others include Crown Lands Management Act 2016 and Roads Act 1993.

Appendix A includes a list of NSW legislation, standards or policies that outline requirements for community engagement.

There are many other occasions where we seek community insights and involvement in the development and delivery of projects, strategies, programs and services. In some cases, community engagement is required to inform a decision of council and at other times input from the community is incorporated into the project, program or service in implementation.

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## Local Government Act and integrated planning and reporting

All councils are required to have a community strategic plan that sets long-term goals and outcomes. This plan, along with a long-term financial plan and delivery program ensures the needs of the local area and communities are planned for and met. These documents along with other mechanisms, including a community engagement strategy, make up the integrated planning and reporting framework.

The Local Government Act identifies community participation as a guiding principle of local government. It states that councils should actively engage with their local communities, through the use of the integrated planning and reporting framework and other measures.

The Act also requires councils to “establish and implement a community engagement strategy for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters).”

The Office of Local Government has guidelines specifying the community engagement strategy should be reviewed and adopted by council every 4 years. This document aligns with the Office of Local Government guidelines and standards.

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## Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and community participation plan

We apply a community participation plan in carrying out our planning functions. This plan meets the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which specifies community planning panels and mandates community consultation in planning matters for all councils in the Greater Sydney region and other specified areas. It describes mandatory requirements that the City of Sydney must meet for public exhibition and notification processes for land use planning matters.

The City of Sydney’s community participation plan is included in this document to make it easier for community members to understand. However, it can read as a stand-alone plan that responds to the requirements of the Act.

There are mandatory statutory timeframes for the public exhibition of planning related documents and applications including planning proposals, planning agreements and development applications. These are set out in the Act and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021.

Mandatory public exhibition timeframes for relevant planning matters and the associated notification processes are described in the chapter on land use planning and in appendices C, D and E which make up the community participation plan.

Both the community engagement strategy and the community participation plan follow the guiding principles identified in this document (chapter 5). These are additional to the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and but reflect good practice in engagement and the City of Sydney's overall approach.

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## Privacy

The City of Sydney is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information we collect from our community. Our Privacy Management Plan explains how we manage personal and health information under NSW privacy laws including the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. It includes information on how to access and amend personal information. It also guides our employees on how to comply with the NSW Information Protection Principles and Health Privacy Principles when we collect, store, use or disclose personal information.

We collect personal information in a variety of ways in order to perform services and functions. We assess the appropriate level of personal information to be collected on a case-by-case basis with a view to minimising the amount of personal information we collect and manage. We use personal information for the purpose for which it was collected and may use it as is necessary for the exercise of other council functions.

We actively engage with our communities through a range of methods outlined in this strategy. We use personal information, such as contact details, in different ways to interact with community members depending on the nature of the project, strategy or service.

Where legislation requires us to inform and engage our communities, we use personal information, including rates records, that we already hold for other purposes to contact people.

We also use personal information provided to us by individual members of our community, such as email addresses, to involve them on other issues that we think might be of interest or relevance to them and to better meet our community engagement commitment. For example, we may email participants who have provided feedback on previous community consultation initiatives (through Sydney Your Say) about new plans for their area. We may invite specific program attendees to subscribe to a program newsletter or attend other information sessions.

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## Non-residential rolls

In September 2023, the NSW Government amended the City of Sydney Act 1988, making it no longer compulsory for us to maintain a register with details of people and corporations that may be entitled to vote as non-residents in our local government elections. Non-residents are owners, occupiers and rate-paying lessees of rateable property in the City of Sydney local government area, or their nominees, who are enrolled to vote in another local government area. Since the change to legislation, it is not compulsory for non-residents in the City of Sydney to vote, but eligible non-residents can voluntarily make a claim to be on the non-residential roll.

# The communities we serve

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## Defining community

The Local Government Act requires councils to engage their “local community”. Defining the local communities the City of Sydney serves is complex.

We have over one million people – residents, workers, students, businesses and visitors who spend time in the local area, every day. A mix of cultural organisations, educational institutions, international tourism sector, corporate headquarters, peak bodies, advocacy groups and government departments are based in the local area because of Sydney’s role as a capital and global city. We also have non-resident property owners and occupiers – with properties, both large and small.

These communities are diverse. The people who rely on Sydney as the place they live, work, study, do business, access services or visit are also connected to other places around the world. The City of Sydney recognises our responsibilities that are created through these connections of our communities to other communities.

Our local communities are all of these people and organisations that have a stake in the decisions the City of Sydney makes.

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## Recognising diverse communities

One way to understand the complexity of the communities in the City of Sydney is through how communities of people relate to an issue or decision. The types of communities described below overlap and intersect.

### **Communities of place**

Many of our projects aim to improve places. Often the most interested and impacted communities are those that live or work around these projects. For example, when consulting on improvements to a neighbourhood park, we aim to reach the local residents, property owners, schools or childcare services and nearby businesses.

Communities of place also include groups of people who hold a particular connection to a place because of its historical or cultural significance, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to Redfern; LGBTIQ+ people who identify with Oxford Street and the Chinese business community in Chinatown. People may also closely associate with the activities that take place there, for example members of sporting, community garden or cultural groups. They might belong to less formal groups, such as skaters who use a skate park or people using the local library or community centre.

### **Communities of interest**

Communities of interest organise around an issue or activity. These may include:

- different business sectors, such as tech startups or hospitality
- large corporates or owners of small local businesses
- professions we engage with such as architects and urban planners
- peak bodies, advocacy and industry groups, like NSW Council of Social Services, People with Disability Australia, Property Council or Committee for Sydney
- not-for-profit organisations and services with a common purpose such as sustainability or affordable housing.

Communities of interest may form advocacy groups and networks that the City of Sydney can tap into, such as business chambers, resident action groups and interagency networks. Such communities may also convene around a shared activity – sporting or recreational clubs, bush care and gardening groups, cultural and creative communities and people involved in informal activities like dog walking.

### **Communities of identity**

These communities define themselves. They include First Nations communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Within communities there may be smaller groups, such as trans and gender diverse communities. It is important to remember that there is diversity within these communities.

They may gather around cultural and religious beliefs. Communities of identity may associate by age, for example groups of young people or older people. Sometimes these groups form as a result of shared experiences, for example social housing tenants who live in a particular neighbourhood.

### **Communities of need**

The Covid-19 pandemic reminded us that the needs of people must take priority. For example, in 2020 the City of Sydney community recovery plan found that 74% of people surveyed agreed it was “very important that we support people that are vulnerable during the pandemic”.

These may be people who face food insecurity, housing stress or homelessness and economic hardship. They may have difficulty accessing services, including digital information channels.

These are people who need the City of Sydney to work in a way that understands and addresses their vulnerability, so they can participate in daily life and our decision-making processes.

### **Communities of the future**

Perhaps the most important communities to consider in our decision-making are the communities of the future. Their perspectives are often difficult to consider. Two ways we can try to include the perspectives of communities of the future in our engagement are:

- consult children and young people who will live with the impacts of our decision-making the longest
- ask the people who we consult to consider the needs and perspectives of those who will be part of their communities in the future.

**“We are the ones who are going to have to live through the things we choose right now” Youth Summit participant**



Image 2. Children's Summit for the Community Strategic Plan. Image credit: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

### **Government and institutional stakeholders**

The City of Sydney works within an environment of other levels of government that have overlapping or complimentary responsibilities. We consult each other in our strategy and project development and implementation. State government agencies also consult communities in our local area. In these circumstances, it is important that people are clear about who and which level of government – local, state or federal – is responsible for making the decisions.

We have Principles of Cooperation with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council respecting their status under the Land Rights Act 1983.

We engage with educational institutions, including the tertiary sector, schools and early learning centres which are important nodes of community connection in our local area. One example is our memorandums of understanding with the University of Technology Sydney and Sydney University.

Increasingly we are working with health providers to understand community needs, to respond to urgent situations – such as the pandemic – and to plan for the needs of future communities.

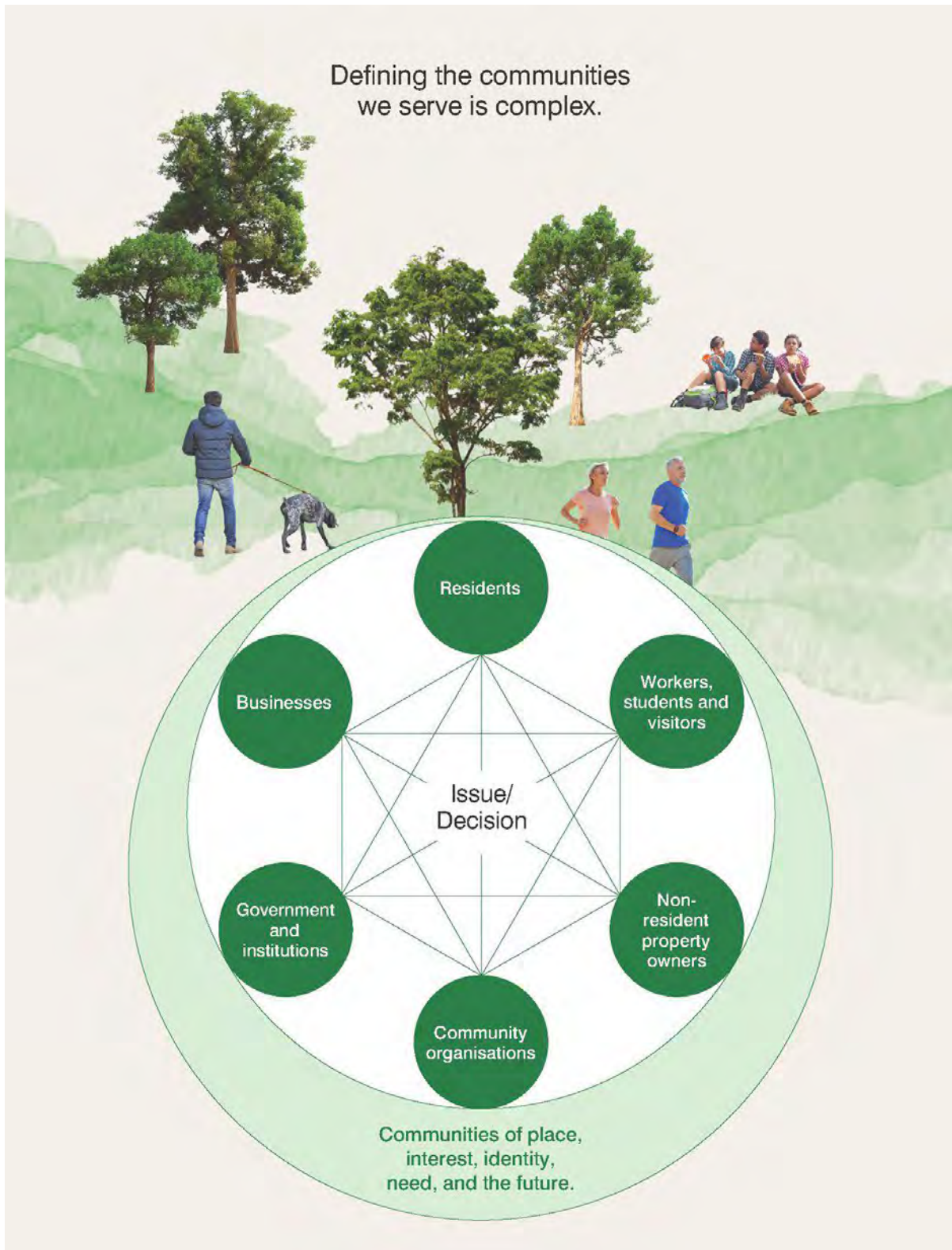
We work collaboratively with state government agencies and local services in developing shared approaches to support social housing community members across the city and to ensure that these residents' voices are heard and their needs are realised in urban renewal projects.

The City of Sydney works with surrounding metropolitan councils on issues that cross our local government areas, on the Resilient Sydney strategy and program and on economic or cultural development.

And we work with state government agencies to inform the Greater Sydney and state level policies, plans and strategies they develop. We champion engagement with communities to better inform approaches to land-use planning, infrastructure provision, program development and city-wide targets and benchmarking.

We are a member of national and international groups, including the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, global Resilient Cities Network and C40 Cities Climate Change Leadership Group.

Figure 1. Defining community



## A snapshot of our city in 2024

By June 2022 the City of Sydney local government area was home to an estimated 218,096 residents. There were an estimated 505,400 jobs located in our area.

The City of Sydney's gross regional product is estimated at \$146 billion (2023), which represents 21.4% of the gross state product.

### Demographic profile

City of Sydney residents are relatively young, with a median age of around 34 years (2021). This compares with a median age of around 37 years in Greater Sydney residents.

Over 22% of residents live alone in one person households. Nearly 63% or nearly two thirds of city residents live in family households with a partner and/or children or other relatives. Group households accommodate another 15% of residents.

City of Sydney residents are well-educated with 53% of those aged 15 and over holding bachelor or higher degree and 11% attending university. This compares with 33% with bachelor or higher qualifications across Greater Sydney and 6% attending university.

Higher educational attainment is also represented in the 2021 employment profile of our residents. A total of 42% of employed City of Sydney residents were professionals – more than any other category – while 19% were managers – the second highest occupational group. In comparison in Greater Sydney 29% were professionals and 15% managers – the next highest occupational group.

### Cultural diversity

Almost half of our area's residents were born overseas, with 35% of the overseas-born residents arriving in Australia between 2016 and 2021. Residents born in Asia comprise one-quarter of the population of the city.

More than one-third of city residents speak a language other than English at home, the most prevalent of which is Mandarin followed by Cantonese, Thai, Spanish, Indonesian, and Vietnamese.

### Work and transport

There was a 69% labour force participation rate among City of Sydney residents in 2021. This represents the number of people working or looking for work as a percentage of the total residential population aged over 15 years. Of this group, 94% were employed and 6% were looking for work.

Almost two thirds – 64% – of City of Sydney's resident workers were employed locally.

On the 2021 census day (during Covid-19 lockdown), 63% of resident workers either worked at home or did not go to work, compared to 11% in 2016.

### Housing

A total of 54% of City of Sydney residents were renting their home privately. A further 31% of households were purchasing or fully owned their home and 7% lived in social housing (2021). The balance did not state their tenure.

# Community engagement framework

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## What is community engagement?

Community engagement or public participation is the process of involving people in the decisions that affect their lives.

Community engagement strengthens our planning and delivery of projects and services by helping to:

- create a vision and new ways of thinking
- understand the needs and aspirations of communities
- challenge our assumptions
- check that we are on the right track
- refine and implement projects, programs and services
- empower communities to act.

It enables good governance and informed decision-making by promoting shared responsibilities for decisions. It supports an open approach to managing risk by providing a strong foundation for understanding decisions and building trust within our community about the decision-making process.

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## Engagement outcomes

Community engagement at the City of Sydney aims to:

- create better solutions for our local area. Drawing on local knowledge from a diverse group creates solutions that are practical, effective and responsive to needs.
- increase trust in our governance and decision-making processes. Working together improves communication and understanding.
- develop sustained collaboration, partnerships and new ways to involve and empower communities to achieve Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. Engaged and active communities will drive change.



## The process of community engagement

One way to understand different types of engagement with the community is through a continuum from informing through to empowerment.

**Informing** takes place when a decision has already been made or action is required, and we need to make sure that those affected are aware of the facts. *We are keeping you informed*

**Consulting** takes place when a project requires some input or feedback before part of the project or decision is progressed. *We care about what you think.*

**Involving** takes place when we work with the community to develop alternatives and identify preferred approaches. *You are helping us think and act differently about the issue.*

**Collaborating** takes place when we partner with stakeholder or community groups to work out what needs to be done and to develop and implement solutions. *Your leadership and expertise is critical to how we address this issue*

**Empowering** takes place when final decision is put in the hands of the public. *We will implement what you decide.*

All engagement processes need to inform and will have some level of consultation. Some projects will require community involvement and collaboration. On a few occasions, the City of Sydney is able to delegate decision-making to members of the community on all or parts of a project.

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## Engagement principles

The City of Sydney's approach to community engagement is guided by the following principles:

These principles are informed by the core values of the International Association of Public Participation. They apply to everyone who participates in the City of Sydney's engagement process no matter what their age, gender, views, interest in the outcome, wealth or cultural background.

### **Our engagement processes have integrity.**

We will make sure our engagement is clear in scope and purpose. Our engagement will be timely, accessible, well-planned and meaningful.

### **Our engagement activities are inclusive and accessible.**

We will strive to capture a range of values and perspectives. We will design engagement activities that overcome barriers to people being able to participate. We will strengthen the capacity of our communities to participate in decision-making.

### **Our engagement is two-way.**

When we engage, we will promote dialogue and open up genuine discussion. We will support people with accurate information and create a space to weigh up options and develop common understanding.

### **Our engagement influences the decisions we make.**

We will publicly report the outcomes of community engagement and show how these influenced the decision. We will provide feedback to participants on the results of their contribution. People will be able to see and understand the impact of their involvement.

These principles are informed by the core values of the [International Association of Public Participation](#). They apply to everyone who participates in the City of Sydney's engagement process no matter what their age, gender, views, interest in the outcome, wealth or cultural background.

## Planning engagement that is fit for purpose

There is no single perfect approach to engagement. The City of Sydney delivers a range of different strategies, projects, programs and services. It is important that the community engagement process matches in each case and is fit for purpose.

When we plan engagement on a project, strategy, program or service we consider:

### **Impacts**

Who are the people who will be impacted by the decision? How many people will be impacted? And what are the impacts?

### **Context**

Why are we doing the project? What is the history of the project? What other issues may impact that community? What constraints do we have, such as timeframes set by other levels of government?

### **Scope**

How much influence can the community have on the outcome? What are the negotiables and non-negotiables? What is the scale of the project? What is its budget?

Based on the answers to these questions, engagement can range from simple to complex. Our analysis shows us when we should engage deeply with communities or simply inform them.

The amount of effort we apply to an engagement process fits the requirements of the decisions being made. This informs the combination of engagement activities we use each time.

We list types of engagement activity in appendix B.

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## Reporting the results of engagement

The information we collect through community engagement helps our staff and councillors make decisions. It is also important that the community can easily access the outcomes of community engagement.

The City of Sydney publicly reports the details and outcomes including:

- consultation activities undertaken
- activities to promote participation in the consultation (for example letterbox drops)
- number of people and organisations who participated and key demographic information
- feedback from our communities (for example survey results and workshop outcomes)
- summaries of key issues and themes raised and how we intend to respond to each of these
- online engagement activity, such as number of visitors, document downloads, video views and comments and social media statistics.

Engagement reports can be found as supporting documents to council papers and we share the results on the consultation pages of the City of Sydney's website. People who participated in the engagement and provided contact details are always notified when results are available.

Using developments in digital technology, we will increase the channels and tools we use to report the outcomes of community engagement.

## Evaluating engagement

We evaluate our community engagement against our guiding principles and in line with the complexity of the engagement process. We use the knowledge gained through evaluation to continue to improve our engagement practice.

We use community feedback, insights from project teams, information from our website and the demographic information we collect to understand how well our engagement activity measures up against our guiding principles.

### Value: Integrity

Goal	Measure
The project is clear in scope and purpose.	Feedback gathered through engagement is relevant and useful.
The project is well designed and implemented.	Engagement plans are developed identifying impacted communities.
Communities are informed	Projects are publicised and materials are viewed.

### Value: Inclusiveness

Goal	Measure
We capture a range of perspectives from different people.	Feedback is received from a diverse range of people identified in the engagement plan.
The participation experience is accessible.	Activities are accessible and suitable for diverse communities.

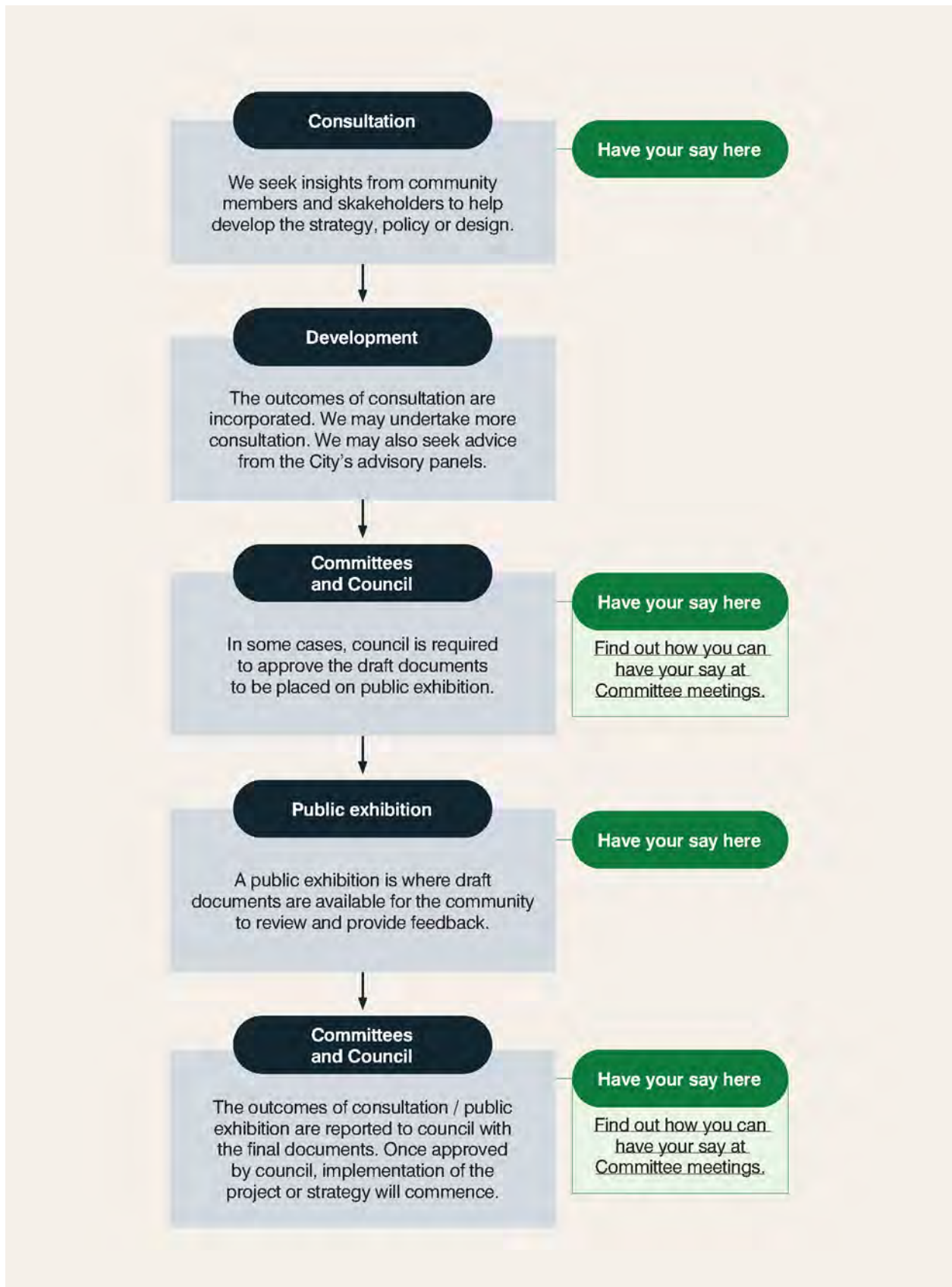
### Value: Dialogue

Goal	Measure
We make space for people to exchange views.	Techniques promote a two-way conversation, providing an opportunity for people to hear each other.
We listen to people.	People tell us they feel listened to.

### Value: Influence

Goal	Measure
People can see and understand the impact of their involvement.	Engagement reports are published detailing the feedback from the community. Council reports explain how feedback has influenced the decision.

Figure 2. When can I have my say?



Find out how you can have your say at Committee meetings  
[cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/guides/guidelines-for-speakers-at-council-committees](https://cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/guides/guidelines-for-speakers-at-council-committees)

# Engagement approaches

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## People-centred engagement

### Listening and respecting

Participating in engagement should be an enjoyable and worthwhile experience. It should be delivered in a respectful and welcoming way. It should create an environment where all people feel they can share their ideas without fear, while listening to and respecting the views of others.

“People were welcoming and respectful and wanted to hear what a young person had to say.” Workshop participant

### Information channels

Individuals relate to different forms of information – visual, audio and written mediums. People also like different amounts of information. To provide information in a way that best suits different people we use summaries and long-form documents, easy read versions, translations, images, videos, data maps, virtual reality experiences, workshops and presentations. Using different formats helps overcome barriers to participation.

### Strengthening civic efficacy

Positive and effective engagement invests in the civic efficacy of society. It builds people’s sense of empowerment and belief in their own ability to participate and make a difference. Effective engagement communicates the important role communities can play in council decision-making. It also builds knowledge within communities about how decisions are made.

Evidence shows that people who participate in sustained and impactful engagement processes are likely to use those skills and sense of empowerment to become more involved in community organisations and groups.

“The workshop gave me the opportunity to comment on issues that are not always the ones that I think about a lot.” Workshop participant

## Engagement that builds relationships

Hearing the views of others builds understanding and empathy.

When evaluating our engagement, we found that 69% of respondents valued hearing the views of other people. People also spoke about the importance of conversations that crossed generations and of making sure the diversity of their community was involved. Students spoke about how much they enjoyed hearing the views of peers from other schools and of building networks and connections.

In our conversations with diverse communities – First Nations communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people facing vulnerability – we are regularly reminded of the importance of ongoing relationships between the City of Sydney and the communities we serve.

**“I’ve had a really good time collaborating with people from other schools. It’s been really, really interesting because, the future we are going to be living in 2050, we have the power to change that.” Youth Summit participant**

When people can see the results of their input and build connections within their communities, they will continue to participate in the City of Sydney’s community engagement and develop an ongoing role in democratic decision-making.

**“A happy thriving community of citizens who want to and feel like they are able to give ideas and will be listened to.” Workshop participant**



Image 3. International Students Leadership and Ambassadors Program workshop Image credit: City of Sydney

## Citizens' Jury recommendations

The City of Sydney held a Citizens' Jury as part of the consultation on our community strategic plan. This group of 43 randomly selected and demographically representative community members was convened in late 2019. The jury considered and made recommendations on concepts that should be introduced by 2050 to help realise the communities' vision for Sydney. They considered the insights gathered from our community engagement process and proposed 8 transformative concepts. The first 2 of their recommendations address community participation in decision-making:

### **Recommendation 1 – Participatory governance**

**What:** We want a new model of governance that genuinely engages citizens in decision-making on all levels and is responsive and adaptable.

**Why:** There are currently concentrated power structures making decisions for citizens, rather than citizens holding the power. We want a city influenced by diverse views, needs and wants. We want to rectify imbalances and inequities.

**How:** We can achieve this through:

- participatory budgeting
- citizens' panels of sizeable scale for true representation
- innovative online voting system
- data to be used by council to generate economic benefit, and help communities

### **Recommendation 2 – First Peoples of Australia leadership and representation**

**What:** We want the Traditional Custodians of the land to help shape the city, through active participation in governance that is embedded, respectful. We want Sydney to be a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices influence the identity, design, and functioning of Sydney (Eora).

**Why:** We recognise that our history has displaced the First Peoples of Australia, and that current systems do not adequately allow First Nations' perspectives, values and priorities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities possess wisdom and knowledge that must be valued in shaping how we care for our Country and our communities – in governance, planning, education and health. This has the capacity to enhance social and emotional wellbeing for all. We must recognise the cultural authority of the First Peoples of Australia. We want a society that shares the respect for and connection to this land that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had for 60 000 years.

**How:** We need to promote First Nations' self-determination and empowerment so that ideas are not imposed on people and we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. In line with the principles of reconciliation, we want to place responsibility on non-Indigenous people to adapt their systems and practices to value and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and encourage discourse and community reflection. We need a process of truth telling and recognition that deals with the impacts of invasion and colonisation.

### **The City of Sydney's response**

The recommendations of the Citizens' Jury were reported to council in December 2019. The 8 transformative concepts have informed the project ideas and principles in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and the outcomes in our Community Strategic Plan.

We acknowledge the intent of the transformative concepts to deepen and expand the ways government works with communities on decision-making. The City of Sydney will continue to explore these approaches to help realise the communities' vision for 2050.

## Deliberative approaches

### Depth versus breadth

Many of the City of Sydney's engagement activities reach out and target input from as large and diverse a group of interested community members as possible. This delivers lots of opinions and ideas from the community to the decision-makers. A high level of participation in engagement is important to us in terms of understanding the needs and aspiration of our communities, providing confidence in decisions and building relationships.

However, in some cases, considering an issue in depth is the priority. The issue may be very polarised, complex or have significant trade-offs. Sometimes we may be at the point of the process when we need to decide between options. In these scenarios, a small group of community members who deliberate on an issue can help the City of Sydney arrive at the right decision.



Image 4. Citizens Jury on Sydney in 2050 Image credit: Brett Boardman / City of Sydney

### What is deliberation?

The ways we engage when trying to arrive at a decision are:

- debate: seek to persuade by arguing a position
- dialogue: seek to understand through respectful and constructive exchange
- deliberation: seek to find common ground and consensus.

A deliberative process will likely include both debate – for example experts presenting their position – and dialogue – for example participants discussing and exploring each other's views. A deliberative process aims to reach a consensus decision of the group.

Deliberation encourages constructive exchange and active listening. It also promotes critical thinking and challenges unconscious bias. It poses choices that the members of the group must collectively make.

Deliberation requires that participants become well informed about the topic and consider different perspectives in order to arrive at a public judgement (not opinion) about "what we can strongly agree on". The group is not just considering what its members want, but also what trade-offs they can accept.



## **Features of a deliberative engagement process**

### *Random selection*

A group of community members (usually between 12 and 50) is randomly selected. This group is selected to match the demographics of the population, effectively forming a mini-public. People are not selected to participate because they are vocal advocates or experts. These people may be involved in the process by presenting their position in a debate for the participants to consider.

### *Time*

The group is given the time to consider, research, learn, exchange ideas and arrive at agreed responses to the questions they are posed. This is unlike many engagement processes where time is limited. The City of Sydney has run deliberative engagement processes that extended over a couple of weeks through to citizens' juries that considered issues over several months.

### *Information*

The group is provided with extensive information on the issue and are encouraged to seek out their own sources of information. A citizens' jury should involve an opportunity for jurors to call their own expert witnesses.

### *Remit and authority*

The group is given a clear remit to deliberate on. The council has made it clear that they will act on the recommendations of the group.

## **Use of deliberative approaches to engagement**

Community members are generally willing to invest the time and effort required to participate in a deliberative process because they have trust in the process, care about the outcomes for their communities and can see that their effort will have impact.

A process like a citizens' jury also requires considerable investment from the organisation. It requires expert facilitation, councillors to not just listen but relinquish some of their authority and staff to resource the process with information and expertise.

The principles of a deliberative approach, such as random selection and time to consider issues in depth, can also be used in scaled down and more simple engagement projects. The City of Sydney has run a small number of large-scale deliberative processes as well as smaller deliberative workshops.

**“It was inspiring to see that a random group of citizens from diverse backgrounds, could collaborate with empathy and keen willingness to understand and support each other, and discover we had so much more in common.” Citizens' juror**

## Digital engagement

Over the past 10 years, community engagement has undergone a digital transformation, moving from letters, workshops, town hall meetings and email submissions to a model of engagement where most feedback is collected using digital tools.

The Covid-19 pandemic further accelerated this shift to digital engagement. In response, we have strengthened our digital toolkit and tested alternative approaches, such as online workshops.

The smart city strategic framework describes how the City of Sydney will transform how we engage and support connected and empowered communities through smart, ethical and secure use of data and technology.

We will use developments in digital technology to increase inclusion and access to the City of Sydney's democratic process, provide ways for communities to connect with us and each other, deliver a more personalised experience, and improve the reporting of consultation outcomes.

Face-to-face activities will continue to be a crucial part of how we engage. However, developments in digital technology mean in-person engagement techniques can now be used in more targeted ways.

Digital engagement has also significantly enhanced the data we can share with the community members to ensure their input is informed and meaningful. The City of Sydney is increasingly using data maps and stories as an interactive visual mechanism to support engagement.

### Understanding who is participating

There are two ways to ensure we are reaching a diverse cross-section of the community.

1. Target communities: specific networks, forums and engagement activities along with targeted marketing and databases. Examples of how we reach different groups are outlined in the next chapter.

Digital marketing can also help increase exposure to particular audiences. For example, targeted social media marketing was used to increase the percentage of people under 30 who completed the Sydney 2050 survey.

2. Collecting demographic information about the people who participate in our engagement.

When we survey people, we ask basic demographic information. This information provides a picture of who we are speaking to and how views within communities change based on age, gender, place of residence among other things.



Image 5. Youth Summit for the Community Strategic Plan Image credit: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

### **Next steps in digital engagement**

We are continuing to develop our digital engagement experience through a range of tools and techniques, including quick polls, surveys, consensus tools and interactive mapping. This will strengthen our ability to hear from communities through digital channels, allow people to connect with the views of others in their community, and easily follow the issues they care about. A sign-in process will be implemented, asking some basic demographic information about the people participating. This will help us understand whether we are capturing the views and perspectives of a range of people. It will also allow a more personalised experience where the user can see projects happening in their area and keep updated on progress.

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## **Surveys**

Surveys have become a fundamental tool in community engagement and have increased as more engagement takes place online. Most consultations include an online survey.

The City of Sydney also undertakes regular surveys of:

- wellbeing for all our area's residents (every 4 years)
- business needs survey (annually)
- community satisfaction survey (every 4 years)
- service users feedback (continuous).

These surveys provide essential data to understand community needs, measure progress on strategies and evaluate services.

There are three main types of survey techniques that the City of Sydney uses:

1. Online surveys that anyone can choose to do. These provide an effective way for us to collect information from lots of participants. We aim to get as large a sample as possible and we ask for demographic information to check that a range of people are participating. Social media marketing and other promotional activities can be used to encourage underrepresented groups to participate. The City of Sydney's surveys regularly attract over 1000 respondents.
2. Randomly selected phone or online surveys deliver views from a demographic sample. These surveys are usually conducted by a social research company. They provide robust, demographically matched data that allow us to understand the different perspectives between demographic groups. They also overcome any bias that may exist in self-selecting surveys we host on our website. They are an important checking mechanism particularly when there are polarised opinions on an issue. They are also useful when it is hard to achieve widespread community interest and we need to be confident that we are hearing a range of perspectives.
3. Intercept surveys are usually undertaken to capture the views of people who spend time in a particular place, use a service or are at an event. These provide a random sample of the people who value this place, event or service.

Our surveys provide quantitative data that we can test and explore through other engagement activities such as workshops and focus groups.

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## Coordinated community relations

Coordinated community relations provides a change management approach to support communities through major urban redevelopment projects. This approach has made an important contribution to the successful redevelopment of the Green Square area.

In these neighbourhoods, affected communities face a series of decisions about upgrades to local streets, building new community infrastructure (including parks, recreational, community and cultural facilities) as well as planning changes and development applications. Among these ongoing decisions, communities also face impacts from construction on multiple projects. In an environment of change, small decisions during construction, such as temporary removal of parking or nightworks have a cumulative effect.

The City of Sydney supports these communities through a coordinated community relations approach, which includes dedicated webpages and development maps; regular notifications and communication; and construction liaison group meetings that cover multiple projects delivered by different parties (for example the City of Sydney, Department of Education and various developers).



Image 6. Have your say day at Green Square Image credit: City of Sydney

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## Petitions

Community members can also petition the City of Sydney on issues of concern to them. Petitions can be tabled by a councillor at a council meeting or provided to the CEO and staff for a response. Petitions that are received about a project while it is open for consultation, will be considered as one submission item and included in the engagement outcomes report. The City of Sydney guidelines on petitions can be found in Appendix F.

# Advisory groups and partnerships

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## Advisory panels, committees and working groups

The City of Sydney has established community and sector advisory panels, committees and working groups to provide ongoing, specialist advice on complex issues affecting specific communities or areas of expertise. They do not have decision-making powers. These advisory panels are critical to implementing our long-term strategic vision and also addressing key challenges such as recovery from the pandemic.

These panels are appointed by us and have terms of reference to ensure clarity of purpose and process for appointment. Some are appointed through a public expression of interest while others are by invitation.

Within each panel, the City of Sydney aims to gather a diversity of expertise, experience and perspectives including young people, individuals with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel**

The primary role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel is to provide input that can inform the policies of the City of Sydney on matters important to these communities.

Established in 2008, the panel consists of community and industry professionals, including Elders, leaders, artists and young people, who live, work or study in our local area. The terms of reference specify that young people and Elders need to be represented on the panel.

Each member brings a wealth of knowledge and skills in providing advice on key issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Panel members contribute a diverse range of views to help build our relationships with Indigenous communities. The panel also provides important advice about cultural protocols, Eora journey projects and our reconciliation action plan.

### **Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel**

The City of Sydney's Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel provides strategic, expert and impartial advice to us on our policies, strategies and plans to advance the inclusion of people with disability. As part of its role, the panel monitors and provides advice on the implementation of our Inclusion (disability) action plan 2021-2025.

Established in 2012, the panel reflects the diversity of the disability sector and members were chosen for their expertise in areas such as inclusion and accessibility, government policy and strategy development, planning and design and disability-related legislation. They advise us on a wide range of issues relevant to people with disability, including access to mental health services, legislative reform, housing, transport, employment, advocacy, arts, culture and events, media and communication.

### **Multicultural Advisory Panel**

The Multicultural Advisory Panel advocates on behalf of culturally diverse communities to promote greater understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, equity and inclusion. Established in 2022 we consult this panel on issues, strategies, plans, policies, programs and events that nurture cultural diversity and capacity building, increased community connections and combat racism and discrimination. The panel provides expert advice on matters of importance to culturally diverse communities including their needs and major strategies, such the community strategic plan. We get input from them on cultural events and programming; plus policies and projects which are likely to impact on multicultural communities and businesses.

With the aid of this panel, the City of Sydney will support and empower multicultural communities including employees, residents, visitors, international students, refugees, and asylum seekers, and furthermore preserve and celebrate the histories, heritage, and contributions of the City's multicultural communities so everyone feels safe, welcomed, and able to fully participate in what the city has to offer.

### **Housing for All Working Group**

The Housing for All Working Group brings together industry leaders and experts to share knowledge and provide advice to the City of Sydney on the development of strategies and initiatives to increase the supply of affordable and diverse housing, including social housing.

Established in 2022, the group includes stakeholders and organisations from the affordable and diverse housing sector plus peak bodies and agencies that represent the interests of Sydney's diverse communities. There are also community representatives who live in affordable and diverse housing.

The City of Sydney actively encourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing groups or peak bodies to put forward nominees for membership of the working group.

### **Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel**

The Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel provide high-level independent expert advice to us on the implementation of the City of Sydney's economic strategy and support for city businesses to ensure a sustainable recovery from the pandemic. It sets the pathway over the medium term for recovery of our local economy, particularly in heavily impacted central Sydney– NSW's most significant economic centre in a post Covid-19 environment.

Established in 2022, the panel include members who are highly recognised in relevant professional fields and who have demonstrated experience, seniority and knowledge of a range of economic areas.

### **Creative and Cultural Sector Recovery Advisory Panel**

The Creative and Cultural Sector Recovery Advisory Panel provides strategic advice on making space for culture. It focuses on addressing the loss of floor space for people employed in creative industries in Sydney – a critical issue that has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The panel helps guide our contribution over the medium term to cultural infrastructure programs and sustainable recovery of the City of Sydney's creative and cultural life.

The Cultural and Creative Sector Panel includes a broad range of members who are highly recognised in relevant professional fields and have demonstrated experience and knowledge in the arts, culture and creativity. Members include practitioners, business owners and people with related specialist expertise.

It replaced the Nightlife and Creative Sector Panel in 2022.

### **Design Advisory Panel**

The Design Advisory Panel is an independent panel of experts that helps the City of Sydney continually improve the quality of private development and our own urban design and public projects. It advises us about urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, art and sustainability. Established in 2007, the panel provides advice to staff and decision-makers when determining the direction of major projects.

### **Public Art Advisory Panel**

The Public Art Advisory Panel comprises professional artists, curators and architects who provide advice to the City of Sydney on matters relating to public art. The advice informs the development, approval and implementation of public art projects and is provided to staff and decision-makers.

The panel was established in 2007.

### **Cycling Advisory Committee**

The Cycling Advisory Committee's role is to monitor progress and give advice on implementation of our cycling strategy and action plan. This committee provides a consultation and feedback forum for our area's key cycling stakeholders as part of the City of Sydney's ongoing commitment to cycling.

Established in 2007, the committee includes the Lord Mayor (or delegate), representatives of Bicycle NSW, Bike East, Bike Sydney and Transport for NSW.

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## **Sector partnerships**

### **Better Buildings Partnership**

Led by the City of Sydney, the Better Buildings Partnership aims to address the challenges facing the commercial property sector and help Sydney become one of the world's top sustainable cities.

Formed in 2010, the Better Buildings Partnership is a collaboration between leading property owners and industry influencers who are improving sustainability and rolling out green infrastructure in our area. They control or manage over half the office floorspace across Sydney's city centre. These commercial landlords have played an important role in improving the energy, water and waste efficiency of Sydney's existing buildings.

The members are Brookfield Office Properties Australia, Charter Hall, City of Sydney, DEXUS Property Group, Frasers Property, The GPT Group, Investa Property Group, Lendlease, Mirvac, Stockland, and the University of Technology Sydney.

### **Sustainable Destination Partnership**

The Sustainable Destination Partnership is a collaboration between leading hotel groups, hostels, serviced apartment owners, cultural institutions, entertainment venues and industry influencers working together to make Sydney a sustainable destination.

The partnership represents over half the hotel rooms in the city in addition to all major entertainment venues. These operations create 47% of Sydney's commercial waste, 21% of its carbon emissions and consume 14% of its drinking water.

The members include hotel chains Hilton, Hyatt, Accor and TFE Hotels; Star Entertainment Group, Fox Studios, International Convention Centre and all the government-owned cultural institutions including Sydney Opera House.



### **Tech Central innovation precinct**

Innovation will power Sydney's economic recovery and growth. It is key to raising economic productivity. Innovation requires a healthy tech start-up ecosystem, a high intensity of creativity, a strong pipeline of current and future talent, active research and commercialisation, large-scale investment and a big volume of knowledge-based jobs.

An ideal environment for innovation to flourish is in a vibrant and connected precinct where collaboration is enabled through the co-location of education, industry, talent, infrastructure and investment.

In our local area, the Tech Central innovation precinct encompasses six neighbourhoods which have all the elements for a successful innovation precinct. They are Haymarket, Ultimo, Surry Hills, Camperdown, South Darlington and Eveleigh (including North Eveleigh).

The City of Sydney is an active partner in the Tech Central precinct and is a member of the new leadership group called the Tech Central Interim Governance Leadership Group. This group comprises anchor tenants across the private sector, academia, local and state governments to realise the vision for Tech Central to be recognised as Australia's innovation and technology capital. Membership of the interim governance group includes City of Sydney, Investment NSW, University of Technology Sydney, University of Sydney, Sydney Local Health District, Inner West Council, and representatives from the tech ecosystem operating within the precinct including Atlassian and Stone and Chalk.

### **Resilience**

Resilient Sydney is a collaboration of all 33 local governments of Greater Sydney aiming to improve disaster preparedness and reduce disaster risk to the residents, economy and environment of Greater Sydney. The Resilient Sydney program began in 2015 as a city member of the international 100 Resilient Cities initiative, and Sydney remains a member of the global Resilient Cities Network.

The program and Resilient Sydney office are hosted by the City of Sydney. Funded by the metropolitan local governments, the program is governed by a metropolitan-level steering committee – engaging key senior executives from local and state government, business and community sectors.

The program operates as a hub of networks, engaging councils and partners to participate in the actions and directions of the Resilient Sydney strategy (2018). Through engagement with residents, businesses and governments of metropolitan Sydney, the key resilience challenges were identified and noted in the strategy.



Image 7. Resilient Sydney Strategy Launch Image credit: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

# Engaging diverse communities

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## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Our stretch reconciliation action plan (RAP) outlines the need for the City of Sydney to be inclusive, innovative and committed in its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need to be empowered with real and genuine connections, not just symbolism. This will be achieved through active participation in governance that is embedded, and most of all, respectful. The City of Sydney will listen to and elevate the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The RAP commits to developing a framework for engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and also specifically children and young community members.

The RAP seeks to:

- establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations
- engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the City of Sydney’s projects and decision-making processes.

The Sydney 2050 First Nations Dialogue Forum held in 2019 asked the City of Sydney to recognise cultural authority and embed it in its governance structures and in decisions-making.

The City of Sydney will look at ways to further empower and centre First Nations voices including through agreement-making. This also aligns with the Australian Local Government Association’s Closing the gap implementation plan that commits local governments to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in making shared decisions that accelerate progress towards equality.

### Guiding principles

Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must be guided by the City of Sydney’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols and respect cultural practices and Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights. It should:

- elevate and centre First Nations voices in our decisions
- respect cultural and community protocols
- understand the diversity of experiences, perspectives and expertise within First Nations communities
- nurture ongoing relationships - ensuring there is the time, flexibility and responsiveness in our approach to build trust.



Image 8. First Nations Dialogue Forum Image credit: Mark Metcalfe / City of Sydney

### Who we engage

Among groups and people that we engage with are:

- Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Elders, community leaders and residents in Redfern, Waterloo, Woolloomooloo and Glebe and other communities in the local area
- Cultural knowledge holders
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, students and visitors
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, artists, writers, designers, performers and cultural practitioners
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-controlled organisations, including community services, cultural organisations, religious groups, health and wellbeing organisations and sporting groups
- Indigenous media
- Indigenous businesses
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in government agencies and cultural institutions such as Aboriginal Affairs NSW, the government architect, curators, neighbouring councils
- community advocacy groups and campaigns
- service providers and interagency networks.

## **Delivering engagement**

The role of Aboriginal staff is critical to nurturing and navigating the City of Sydney's ongoing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We have a specialist business unit – Indigenous Leadership and Engagement – to guide this area of work. However, the whole organisation must demonstrate a level of cultural capability supported through cultural training and appropriate engagement tools.

We also procure community engagement expertise from Indigenous consultancies, as well as project specific cultural experts, for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curators, artists, writers, architects and designers.

All the City of Sydney's engagement activities will be respectful and welcoming to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

Our targeted engagement includes:

- regular meetings with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council
- seeking advice from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel
- meetings with Elders, Cultural knowledge holders and local organisations
- dialogue forums with invited community members
- pop-up stalls and surveys at community events such as Yabun Festival and NAIDOC Week, in collaboration with the event organisers
- workshops with school students and youth groups
- partnerships with cultural and community organisations on major projects such as the Eora Journey
- call outs via Indigenous media, such as Koori Radio
- interagency networks
- collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at the City of Sydney, in other councils, government agencies and education and cultural institutions

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## **Children and young people**

### **Commitment to authentic engagement**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines 54 central rights that all children should have around the world. Article 12 states: "Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account."

Our engagement upholds this right by empowering children and young people to express their views and ideas about the City of Sydney's strategies, projects and programs and to have those views and ideas considered alongside those of adults. We will apply the same guiding principles to engaging young people as we do everyone else. This includes conducting meaningful engagement with children and young people, analysing their responses, incorporating this into the relevant project, strategy or service and reporting the results to council.

This approach is consistent with the NSW Child Safe Standards which provide core components to ensure organisations provide a child safe environment. Standard 2 states: "Children participate in decisions that affect them and are taken seriously."

“Kids today are tomorrow’s adults and if kids are listened to now it will make a big difference for the future.” Children’s Summit participant

### **Creating empowering environments for children and young people**

It is critical that children and young people know they are welcome to contribute their ideas. To achieve this we will:

- create engagement spaces where children and young people feel respected and can express themselves
- go to where children and young people are through our relationships with schools and services and places like skateparks, libraries and community centres
- ensure that our engagement activities do not present age barriers and that children and young people are welcome at our community workshops.

It is also important to recognise that children and young people come from diverse backgrounds. The City of Sydney needs to ensure we engage in ways that are culturally respectful and actively reach a diverse group of young people. We commit to ensuring the voices of First Nations and culturally diverse children and young people are heard in our decision-making processes.

Our stretch reconciliation action plan highlights the importance of a framework for engaging with and supporting the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

We acknowledge the importance of the trusted relationships between staff, children, young people and families in our early learning centres, out-of-school-hours care and youth services.



Image 9. Children’s workshop at Cook + Phillip Park Image credit: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

## **Types of engagement with children and young people**

### *Engaging on strategies and projects*

The City of Sydney has a long record of consulting children and young people on the design of playgrounds and parks, including skate and recreational facilities. We always inform local schools and children's services when upgrading parks and offer engagement activities for their students.

We also engage children and young people in strategy development. Some of the ways we do this include providing class discussion guides and data maps online, holding workshops with students' representative councils and inviting schools to send representatives to student forums and summits.

### *Reviewing and developing services and programs*

We seek feedback when we evaluate and review services and programs for children and young people. This feedback guides future offerings. The flexible self-direction and feedback built into our sessions also ensures that our approach responds to the interests, needs and ideas of children and young people. Providing opportunities for the younger generation to participate in self-directed learning and play can then provide the basis for relevant future program development.

### *Involving children, young people and families in service design and operational policies*

The NSW Safe Child Standards states: "Families and communities are informed and involved". As part of the delivery of services and programs the City of Sydney will:

- engage families and communities on new services and programs, or changes to existing services and programs
- engage in open, two-way communication with families and communities about our child safety approach and make sure relevant information is accessible
- ensure families and communities have a say in our child safety policies and practices
- ensure families and communities are informed about our operations and governance including how to give feedback on services and raise issues of concern.

## **Engaging through school and child services**

School and child services are pivotal nodes of local community connection. Holding consultations in classrooms ensures a diverse range of local children and young people can participate.

However, schools and early learning centres are busy places. To build ongoing relationships between the City of Sydney and schools, it is important we have a sustained, coordinated approach and work within their systems and programming.

When engaging within schools and early learning centres we will ensure our activities support the learning outcomes in the curriculum. Our approach aligns with the philosophy of civics and citizenship that underpins the Australian national curriculum. Engagement activities offer students authentic learning experiences and opportunities to build knowledge about how their community and government works.

As well as class-based workshops, the City of Sydney also provides consultation kits with discussion questions that students' representative councils (SRCs) and teachers can run themselves and return to us as part of the consultation.

During the Sydney 2050 engagement we heard that schools are looking for opportunities for the SRCs to participate in. This included both in-school activities and City of Sydney hosted summits and workshops that students can attend with students from other schools. This is a powerful approach when working on development of big-picture strategies.

**“I enjoyed meeting with other schools, talking with them and hearing what they have to say about the environment and the future of the city.” Children’s Summit participant**

### **Working with youth networks and interest groups**

The structure of our engagement activities should facilitate the sharing of ideas between children and young people and not just with the City of Sydney.

Students we engaged through the Sydney 2050 engagement spoke about how important it was to have the opportunity to exchange ideas and collaborate with peers from other schools on issues that matter to them.

We support the local youth services sector by leading and convening the City of Sydney Youth Interagency and actively participate in other interagency groups and networks, such as the Woolloomooloo Youth Working Group and the NSW Multicultural Youth Affairs Network. We also use Wear it Purple and Youth Week to promote youth engagement.

Our initiatives help connect and empower young people. Civic engagement programs involve young people as active citizens and amplify their voices in community decision-making. International students make up a large part of our population of young people.

The City of Sydney’s International Student Leadership and Ambassador Program builds the capacity of international students to co-design programs to address the needs of our culturally diverse communities.

Many services and organisations have youth advisory groups and representatives and these provide another avenue for engaging young people in the City of Sydney’s decision-making. Pathways such as YarnUp, provide important opportunities to engage diverse communities, including First Nations young people.

The youth are organising around issues that are important to them. We need to actively listen and engage with these self-organised groups, including climate activist groups. By working with networks of young people, we open the opportunity for engagement to be led by young people.

**“Young people care and they want to be involved, and we think this a great way to help them be active citizens in their local communities.” Emerging Civic Leaders participant**

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## **People living with disability**

It is important that everyone has equitable and dignified opportunities to engage in community life and have a say on matters that affect them. We strive to make all our engagement activities inclusive and accessible. We also acknowledge it is important to have targeted conversations to properly understand how decisions impact different people.

The City of Sydney’s Inclusion (disability) action plan commits to providing equitable access to mainstream services, including making sure that people with disability are informed, consulted and actively participate in our decision-making processes. The action plan commits to identifying and implementing ways to inform people with disability about how they can be involved in our decision-making.



The City of Sydney's Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel provides expert insights on experiences and needs of people with disability. We also acknowledge the important role of carers and advocacy groups and the insights that they can bring to our engagement.

Our staff guidelines for engaging people with disability outline minimum requirements for online and in-person consultation and give advice on inclusive and accessible community engagement.

We have an [easy English version](#) of this strategy available on our website.

### **Accessible information**

We use plain English in all engagement materials, avoiding jargon and clearly explaining processes.

People have told us information in alternative formats is important. Where we believe it is required, for example when consulting on the inclusion (disability) action plan, we provide a range of different formats: easy read versions, Auslan, video explainers, live captioning and large print to help make our information as accessible as possible. Community members can also request braille, audio, large text or easy English versions of any information on our website.

We have guidelines to assist staff in creating accessible digital and print documents, to procure inclusive and accessible materials such as easy read versions of documents and to guide staff in communicating with people with disability.



Image 10. Advisory panel workshop for the Community Strategic Plan Image credit: Katherine Griffiths

## Digital engagement

People have told us that they really value digital engagement. It enables the convenience of engaging at home and can make participating more accessible. People with disability have told us that they would like us to share information online, particularly through social media, our website and e-newsletters.

In 2019 the City of Sydney collaborated with Vision Australia to update our digital and print accessibility policy and procedures to comply with current standards for accessible digital and print information. Our websites and web applications must be compatible with assistive technologies (screen readers and magnification software) and comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1.

The updated policy also provides a guide to choosing alternative formats for documents based on the audience and the type of document being produced. Providing transcripts of audio content, captions for video content, and different channels for submissions and feedback (written or by phone) broadens access to online engagement.

## Inclusive and accessible events

Our inclusive and accessible event guidelines for staff outline key access and inclusion considerations for planning and delivering outdoor events.

We provide accessible seating, hearing loops and a continuous accessible path of travel to support inclusive participation at face-to-face events. Simple adaptations to the design of workshops, for example smaller table groups, can make a significant difference to how inclusive these are.

To make events more accessible, we provide information to help people plan to attend, including accurate venue information and details of access features that will be available at the event.

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## Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

The City of Sydney is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse parts of Australia. Almost 50% of our residents were born overseas and 36.7% of people speak a language other than English at home. Most commonly spoken languages include Mandarin, Cantonese, Thai, Spanish, Indonesian, and Vietnamese.



Image 11. Mandarin community session for the Community Strategic Plan Image credit: Katherine Griffiths

Culturally diverse communities have told us they value ongoing communication with City of Sydney, and that they get information through media and social media in their own-languages as well as through trusted groups like community and faith-based organisations. People need easily accessible information in plain English or in their first language, to understand what we are doing and how to participate.

We actively work with our culturally and linguistically diverse communities to identify communication gaps and barriers and develop strategies to ensure our information and services are accessible. We provide information in plain English and translations into community languages when needed. We acknowledge the importance of culturally welcoming and inclusive customer experiences. We leverage the knowledge and skills of our culturally diverse workforce and recognise the importance of building cultural competency of staff through training.

Channels that establish the relationship and ongoing engagement that we engage through include:

- our Multicultural Advisory Panel
- cultural groups that meet at our community centres
- International Students Leadership and Ambassador Program
- memorandums of understanding with universities
- library programs (bilingual storytime and other programs)
- Mandarin and Cantonese translators attending info days in Green Square
- translated materials and surveys to support major engagement projects such as a Vision for Haymarket
- wellbeing survey translated into community languages (traditional and simplified Chinese, Korean, Indonesian and Thai)
- longitudinal survey in Green Square, in partnership with University of New South Wales, available in simplified Chinese
- relationships with community leaders, organisations, service providers
- relationships with associate event providers for Lunar New Year.

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## People who are vulnerable

People experience vulnerability at different times and for different reasons. City of Sydney staff are committed to the value of respect. This means considering and valuing the views of others, showing empathy and treating all people equally and with courtesy.

It is important for us to recognise when people need extra support to participate in our decision-making processes and to tailor our engagement approach to make sure that everyone impacted by the project has the opportunity to be heard. Sometimes this includes overcoming barriers, such as a lack of access to digital channels or difficulty attending City of Sydney's standard face-to-face events.

Some of the ways we overcome these barriers include:

- going to where people feel safe, in the places and services they use every day
- creating an environment that is comfortable and welcoming, for example having a cup of tea at the community centre or facilitating conversations through trusted staff and service providers
- adapting consultation materials and online surveys so they are shorter or easier to complete and conducting them face-to-face as an interview
- taking the time to listen, not rushing people and expecting everything to be completed at once.

We reach out to impacted community members through existing forums, like neighbourhood associations, social housing neighbourhood advisory board meetings, community programs and services. We consult with trusted community representatives. The City of Sydney also organises regular local meetings such as the Lord Mayor's social housing forums.

The Covid-19 pandemic helped to strengthen a collaborative approach to engaging with people facing vulnerability. The pandemic response to support homeless communities and facilitate the vaccine roll-out required the City of Sydney, state government agencies and community organisations and services to work together and share resources and expertise. Regular communication through local services and networks, distributed via printed materials and community radio were very effective. The lessons learned and relationship built through this emergency response approach will inform our engagement into the future.

Some guiding principles to ensure people who face vulnerability can participate in our engagement processes include:

- always provide alternatives to digital communications
- meet in places that are familiar and local
- take the time to build trust
- consider engaging in small groups or one-to-one
- maintain communication to continue to build trust and get back to people about the project through the same channels.

Some of the community channels and places we use include:

- community centres
- libraries
- schools
- our services, including child and youth services, homelessness and safe city services and Meals on Wheels
- social housing forums
- interagency networks with local services providers, not-for-profit organisations and government agencies
- local services and advocacy groups.

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## Business sector

Sydney is recognised as a global city and the leading knowledge-based region in the nation. In 2018-19, (before the Covid-19 pandemic) around \$146 billion was generated within our area representing over 7% of Australia's economy. This provided over half a million jobs across all skills levels offering diverse opportunities for our communities.

Many aspects of the economy rely on the legislative frameworks and financial investment of state and federal governments. However, the City of Sydney makes important and direct contributions to promote an environment that facilitates economic growth. We have an important role to play in land use and transport planning, public domain improvements, connecting business networks and advocacy. City of Sydney is guided by a community vision that includes a vibrant, future-focused and diverse economy.

Among key industry sectors we interact with are retail; tourism; nightlife; green economy; tech startups, creative industries, international education and Indigenous businesses. We engage with multinational corporations and international hospitality and cultural venues. We also work with local business chambers and networks and individual businesses who may be impacted by a local project.

We work with peak organisations, industry groups and state government agencies. These include interactions with the Committee for Sydney, Night-time Industries Association, Property Council of Australia, Tech Council, Australian Fashion Council, Restaurant & Catering Association, Chambers of Commerce, Destination NSW, Australian Retailers Association and Business Sydney.

The City of Sydney has a dedicated team that works closely with the business sector to ensure our initiatives, grants and education programs are developed appropriately. We use a variety of channels to engage with the business sector including:

- our Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory panel
- regular briefings on programs, projects and issues
- notifications, surveys, doorknocking and one-on-one meetings with businesses during local projects such as street upgrades
- digital newsletters and updates
- listening sessions with business chambers, industry associations and business representatives
- customer service business concierge providing information to business owners on a one-on-one basis
- quarterly economic insights report and annual business needs survey
- relationship management with grants recipients.

### *Challenges*

The Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing economic conditions has impacted business and economic growth. It has also changed the way businesses engage. The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of new technology and has changed patterns of work. This has implications for the exchange of knowledge and business innovation. The City of Sydney is responding to these challenges and is actively engaging with this sector to meet their needs.

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## Creative sector

The City of Sydney is committed to supporting Sydney's cultural life. We recognise the intrinsic and instrumental value of creative activity as a cultural, economic and social force. Culture is an essential component of all aspects of life. It gives our city its character and creates a shared identity for our diverse and growing population. It is fundamental to an inclusive society, which helps our communities remain connected in times of change. For our city to succeed, we must value our unique, eclectic and diverse people by welcoming new ideas and forms of expression.

A city that aspires to a strong cultural life needs to value its artists, musicians, writers, filmmakers, designers and other creative practitioners. We need to harness the full potential of our creative practitioners and apply their thinking city-wide, integrating it into every aspect of the city and its long-term vision.

We provide a range of accessible opportunities for cultural organisations, artists, and the broader community to provide input into the City of Sydney's vision, priority issues and programs.



Image 12. Creative Sector workshop for the Community Strategic Plan Image credit: Jessica Lindsay

We actively engage with the creative sector during:

- policy and strategy development such as Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision, cultural strategies, grants and policy reviews and development control plans
- public exhibition of policies, strategies or planning proposals that may impact the cultural life of the City of Sydney.

Channels used by us to engage with the creative sector include:

- our Creative and Cultural Sector Recovery Advisory Panel
- direct in-person engagements
- public briefings and question and answer sessions where communities learn about our programs and are invited to speak with staff
- online webinars and forums
- attendance by invitation to forums, conferences and events organised and hosted by others in the sector
- liaising through our advisory panels

Challenges faced by the City of Sydney when engaging with the sector include reaching the right mix of cultural, creative and business operators as well as culturally diverse communities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

*Cultural sector challenges*

The growth of the City of Sydney area and rising property prices have had unintended consequences for our cultural life, impacting the viability of venues for live music, small theatres, galleries, studios and rehearsal spaces. There are significantly fewer spaces available where creative professionals can work and live.

These challenges were exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic. Creative industries were one of the first sectors to close and may be among the last to return to pre-Covid levels of activity.

To help address these challenges, we recently established a Creative and Cultural Sector Recovery Advisory Panel (formerly the Nightlife and Creative Sector Advisory Panel).

# Community participation plan for land use planning

The City of Sydney is required to have a community participation plan which describes the public exhibition and notification processes for land use planning matters in terms of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*.

Areas covered by this chapter include strategic planning and plan-making, planning agreements and development assessment. It should be read in conjunction with the following appendices:

- Appendix C – land use planning notification and submission requirements
- Appendix D – land use planning consultation matrix
- Appendix E – glossary of terms.

This chapter and appendices constitute the City's community participation plan.

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## Strategic planning

Strategic planning involves preparing long-term plans to guide the city's growth and change and setting planning controls to guide development.

The City of Sydney's strategic land use planning is informed by the NSW Government's regional and district plans and our Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050.

These plans set the foundations for the Local Strategic Planning Statement: City Plan 2036 which sets the 20 year land use planning vision; planning controls in our Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan; and Contributions Plans which provide funding local infrastructure.

The City reviews and amends these plans in consultation with the community to ensure they contribute to agreed state and local planning objectives.

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## Development assessment

Development assessment, or statutory planning, involves assessing a proposal for development (development application) to use land or undertake building works against planning controls.

Development applications can be determined by delegated City of Sydney staff; by the Local Planning Panel; or by the Central Sydney Planning Committee, where the cost of works exceeds \$50 million.



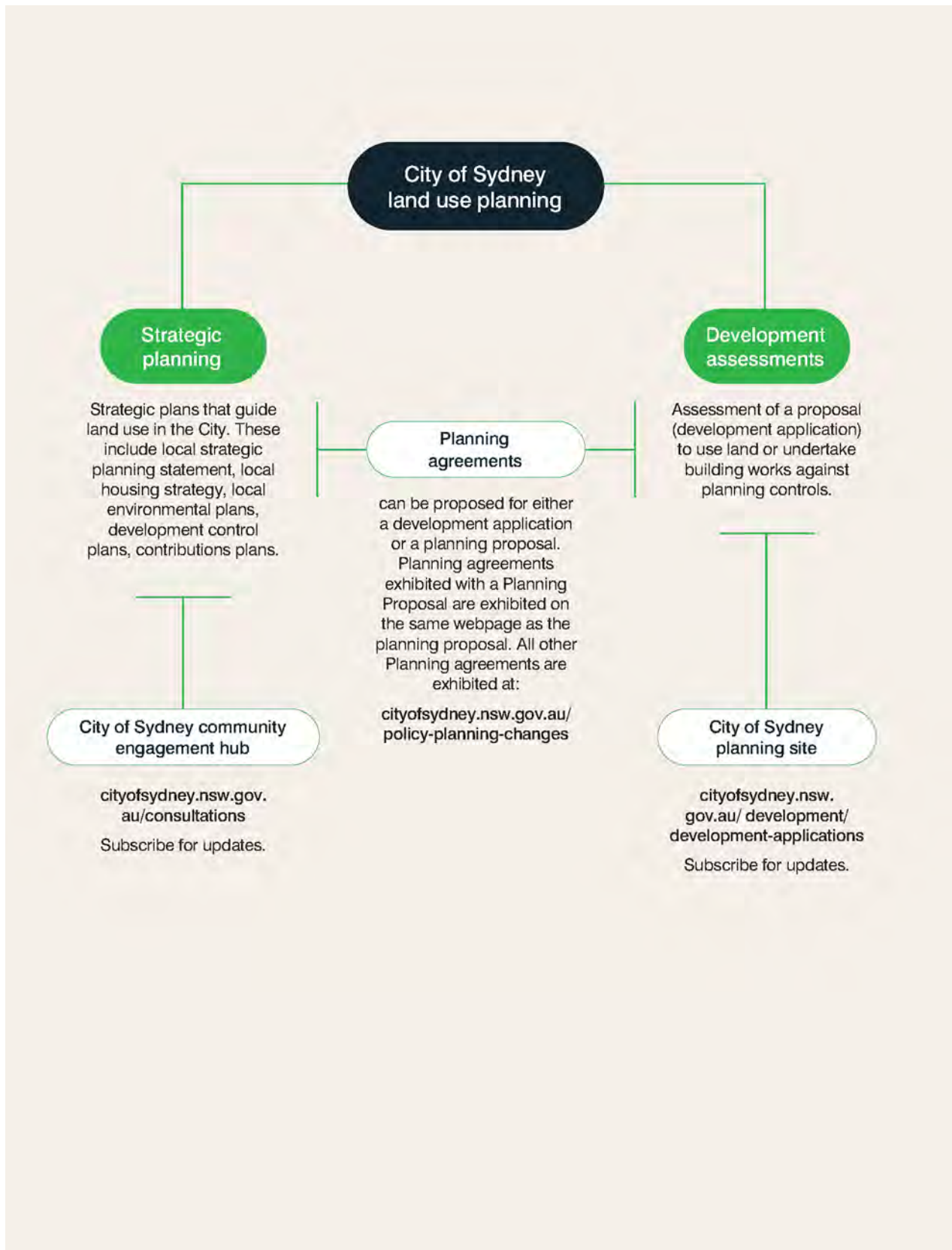
At the City of Sydney, the majority of development and footway applications are assessed against:

- the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012
- the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012
- relevant state environmental planning policies
- other relevant legislation, such as the *Local Government Act 1993*, the *Roads Act 1993* and the *City of Sydney Act 1988*.

There are some limited circumstances where historical local environmental plans and development control plans may apply.

Examples of the types of applications the City of Sydney receives and assesses include development applications, footway applications, section 4.55 and 4.56 modification applications, division 8.2 application reviews, Council-related applications, environmental impact statements, designated development, integrated development and state significant development. Definitions of each can be found in Appendix E.

Figure 3. How to engage on land use planning matters



Notification and submission requirements, maps, timeframes, engagement activities and glossary of planning terms are detailed in appendix C, D and E.

# Appendices

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## Appendix A: list of legislation

### Legislation or standards

Local Government Act 1993

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021

Crown Land Management Act 2016

Roads Act 1993

City of Sydney Act 1988

Multicultural NSW Act 2000

Disability Inclusion Act 2014

Children's Guardian Act 2019

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

Geographical Names Act 1966

Geographical Names Board policies and manuals

NSW Child Safe Standards

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## Appendix B: list of engagement activities

This list is not exhaustive. The City will assess each project in line with the principles of the Community Engagement Strategy to decide on the tools and activities used.

Activity
Website – <a href="http://sydneyyoursay.com.au">sydneyyoursay.com.au</a>
Surveys (online, intercept, randomly selected)
Online interactive maps
Videos, animations, flythroughs
Artist impressions, images and designs
Community discussion guides
School activities kits
Data stories
Advisory panels, committees and groups
Partnership and networks
Summits
CityTalks
Stakeholder briefings
Community workshops
Deliberative workshops
Citizens juries

Activity
Focus groups
Stakeholder meetings
In depth interviews
Social housing meetings
Creative writing workshops
Door knocking
On-site pop-ups
Walking tours
Site visits
Information stalls
Community letters
Social media
E-newsletters
Stakeholder emails
Signage in the public domain

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## Appendix C: land use planning notification and submission requirements (community participation plan)

The City will publicly exhibit development applications and draft plans (including development control plans, contributions plans, local strategic planning statements, community participation plans, and planning proposals) on the website for the dates and duration set out in the notice.

The notification process will:

- ✓ adhere to the community participation plan for land use planning
- ✓ be consistent in the notification of similar applications
- ✓ clearly identify circumstances where a notification is not required (see appendix D)
- ✓ facilitate the efficient processing of applications without compromising the opportunity for public participation
- ✓ identify exhibition period and letter notification area (see appendix C and D).
- ✓ exclude the period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) from the calculation of the public exhibition (should the timing of the application fall over the traditional holiday period of Christmas and New Years Day)
- ✓ extend the notification closure date to the next business day if a notification period finishes on a weekend or a public holiday

### Notifications for development applications

The information contained in notifications for development applications is required by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021. This information includes:

- the general nature and purpose of the development proposal;
- the address of the proposed development;
- the name of the applicant;
- the application reference number;
- where and when the DA can be inspected;
- the period during which submissions can be made;
- Council's contact details including address, telephone and email;
- a statement outlining the privacy rights of any person making a submission to Council;
- a statement outlining the requirement for a submitter to a development application to make a public disclosure of any donation to a Councillor and/or gift to a Councillor or Council employee in the previous two (2) years. Failure to disclose relevant information is an offence under the Act. It is also an offence to make a false disclosure statement. Further information, including a 'Political Donation and Gifts Disclosure Statement' form and a glossary of terms, is available online or in person at any of Council's office locations;
- the date of the notification letter, with the notification period commencing one day after the date of the notification letter.

### Site notices

Site notices as required by this plan will be placed on the main frontage(s) (not service lanes, except where significant development is proposed on that service lane) of the site(s) in a position where it will be able to be read from a public place.

### *Changes or exceptions to notification procedures*

The City has the discretion to alter the procedures in appendix D for a particular application if the nature of the development, its location or the history of site development warrants a different form of consultation. In such circumstances the notification period may be increased up to 40 days.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is determined the nature or circumstances of the development do not require or allow for notification in accordance with the procedures in appendix D, the Director of City Planning, Development and Transport may consider reduced notification.

The City may write to affected and adjoining landowners and occupants, depending on the nature, scale, potential environmental impact of the proposal and practicality of carrying out the notification. For example, the City may not issue written notifications where a citywide administrative amendment has no material impact on the community.

Where a development is not listed in appendix D, the City will determine the most appropriate notification procedure using appendix D as a guide.

An applicant may apply for an amendment to the development application at anytime prior to determination under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*. The application may be re-notified matching the original exhibition period, or the City may reduce or remove the re-notification period if the amendment does not result in significant additional environmental impact.

An application for a review of a determination of an application, under Division 8.2 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, will be notified in the same manner as the original application. Anyone who made a submission to the original application will be notified.

For an application to modify an existing development consent, under sections 4.55(2) & 4.56(1) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, where the original development application was for designated development, State significant development, nominated integrated development or threatened species development, anyone who made a submission to the original application will be notified, or reasonable attempts will be made, by sending written notice to the last address known to the City of the submitter.

For an existing development consent that is modified or revoked, under section 4.57 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, as a consequence of a proposed Local Environmental Plan amendment, notice will be provided to those who are considered to be adversely affected by the revocation or modification of the consent.

Requirements outlined in appendices C and D do not apply to permits for works to trees. Schedule 8 of the Sydney DCP 2012 establishes procedures for notification of neighbours when a tree is to be removed.

### *Deficient development applications*

The Council may not notify a development application which is considered incomplete or inadequate.

### **Notifications for draft plans**

*The Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* requires the City, when consulting on draft Development Control Plans and draft Contributions Plans, to publicly exhibit a copy of the draft plan and a copy of any supporting documents on the dates and during the times set out in the notice. Draft Local Strategic Planning Statements, draft Community Participation Plans and Planning Proposals (LEP amendments) are exhibited and notified in the same way. Planning Proposals are also exhibited in accordance with requirements of a Gateway Determination.

For draft plans, the City may also write to affected and adjoining land owners and occupants, depending on the nature, scale, potential impact of the change and practicality of carrying out the notification. For example, the City may not issue written notifications where a citywide administrative amendment has no material impact on the community.

Draft plans are notified for at least the minimum period set out in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The City exhibits all draft plans on its website. All written notices will:

- give a brief description of the draft plan or its objectives and intended outcomes
- indicate the land affected by the draft plan
- state where the draft plan can be viewed online
- provide contact details for the receipt of submissions
- indicate the last date for submissions, and
- in relation to Planning Proposals (LEP Amendments), confirm whether authorisation for making the plan has been issued to Council.

### **Notification of planning agreements**

A planning agreement cannot be entered into, amended or revoked unless public notice is given and the planning agreement is first made publicly available for inspection for a minimum period of 28 days.

If the planning agreement is in connection with a development application, the public notice will be given as soon as possible after a draft agreement has been prepared and agreed by the parties, in the same manner as any public notice of the relevant development application that is required under this plan and the Act.

If the planning agreement is in connection with a planning proposal, the public notice will be given, if practicable, as part of and concurrently with, and in the same manner as, any public notice of the relevant planning proposal that is required under this plan.

Where it is not practicable to give public notice at such times, the Regulation requires that it be given as soon as practicable as determined by Council.

Any material changes proposed to be made to a planning agreement after a public notice has been given should be subject to renotification if the changes would materially affect:

- how any of the matters specified in section 7.4 of the Act are dealt with by the planning agreement;
- other key terms and conditions of the planning agreement;
- the Council's interests or public interest under the planning agreement;
- whether a non-involved member of the community would have made a submission objecting to the change if it had been publicly notified.

### **Submissions**

In making, considering and responding to submissions for development applications and draft plans, the following procedures apply:

- anyone may make a submission regardless of whether they received a notification letter
- anonymous submissions will not be considered or acknowledged
- submissions are not confidential and are open to public access under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)
- all submissions received within the notification period will be considered and summarised in assessment or engagement reports
- submissions received will be acknowledged as soon as practicable
- submissions must be made in writing, must include the development address or application number and must be delivered to the Council either personally, by post or electronic mail.

Planning staff may discuss applications over the phone, but these conversations do not constitute a submission.

- submissions must include contact details including a return address (postal or email address). This will allow acknowledgement letters to be sent.
- illegible submissions will not be acknowledged.
- where the submission comprises a petition, the acknowledgement and all future contact will be sent to the head petitioner or, where not nominated, the first petitioner supplying contact details.
- best endeavours will be made to contact people prior to the applicable meeting of the Council or the Central Sydney Planning Committee. However the onus remains on the person to seek information about meeting dates from the officer dealing with the application or the City website.
- for development applications, acknowledgement letters will include advice that if the person making the submission wishes to be notified of the Local Planning Panel or Central Sydney Planning Committee meeting where the development application is to be considered, they must provide daytime contact details.
- following the determination of a development application, anyone who made a submission will be notified in writing of the decision.

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## Notification distribution – development applications

In addition to placing applications on its website, the Council notifies an application by sending a letter to surrounding property owners and occupiers.

- ✓ 25m for development notified for 14 days;
- ✓ 50m for development notified for 21 days; and
- ✓ 75m for development notified for 28 days.

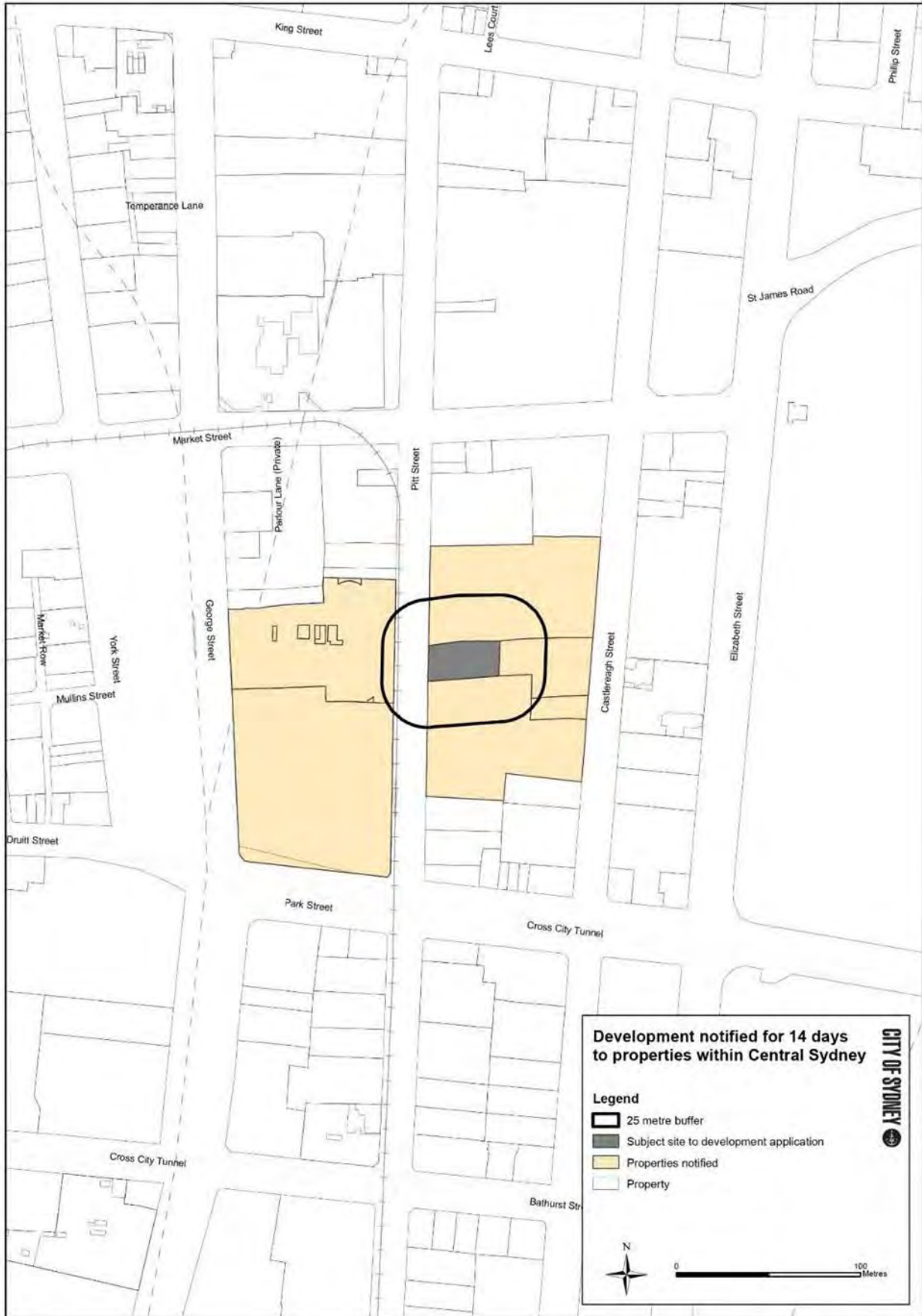
The notification area may be altered based on the nature and the likely impact of the development proposal, as explained in the subsection 'Changes or exceptions to notification procedures' in Appendix C. Council-related development applications may be notified for 28 days over a 25m radius in circumstances where the application is assessed as falling into the 'Low Risk' level of risk category pursuant to the Council-related Development Applications Policy.

Properties in adjoining local government areas within the minimum radius detailed above will be notified in accordance with these provisions if the adjoining local government authority provides the City of Sydney with the relevant property details within 48 hours of making a request.

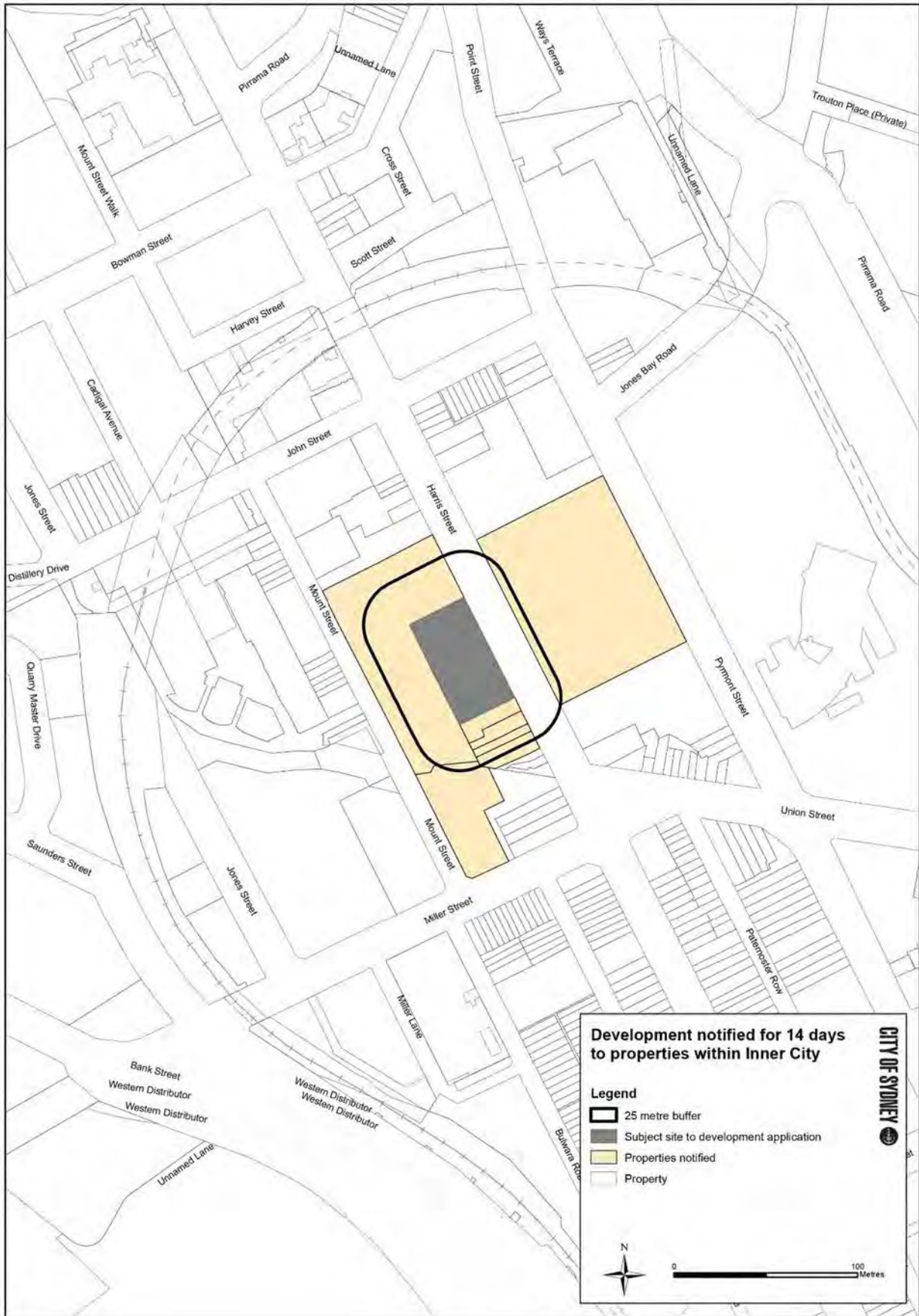
Where a surrounding property is in single ownership, including properties owned by a single company, the letter will be addressed to that owner. Where a surrounding property has multiple owners but is not under strata or community title (i.e. more than one individual owner or more than one company owner), letters will be addressed to all owners. Where a surrounding property is in strata or community title, letters will be addressed to the Owners Corporation and to individual owners of strata units.



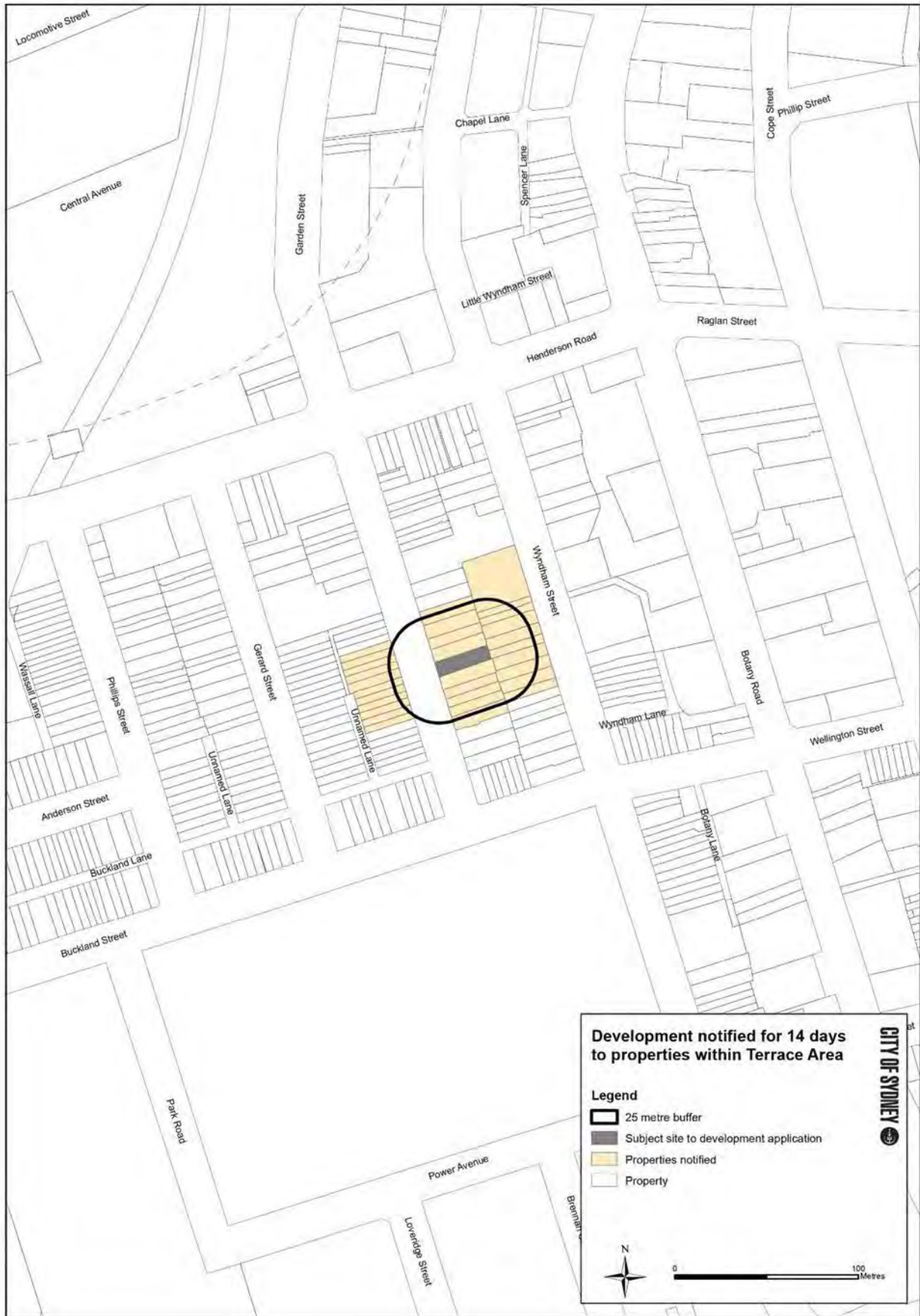
**Development notified for 14 days to properties within Central Sydney**



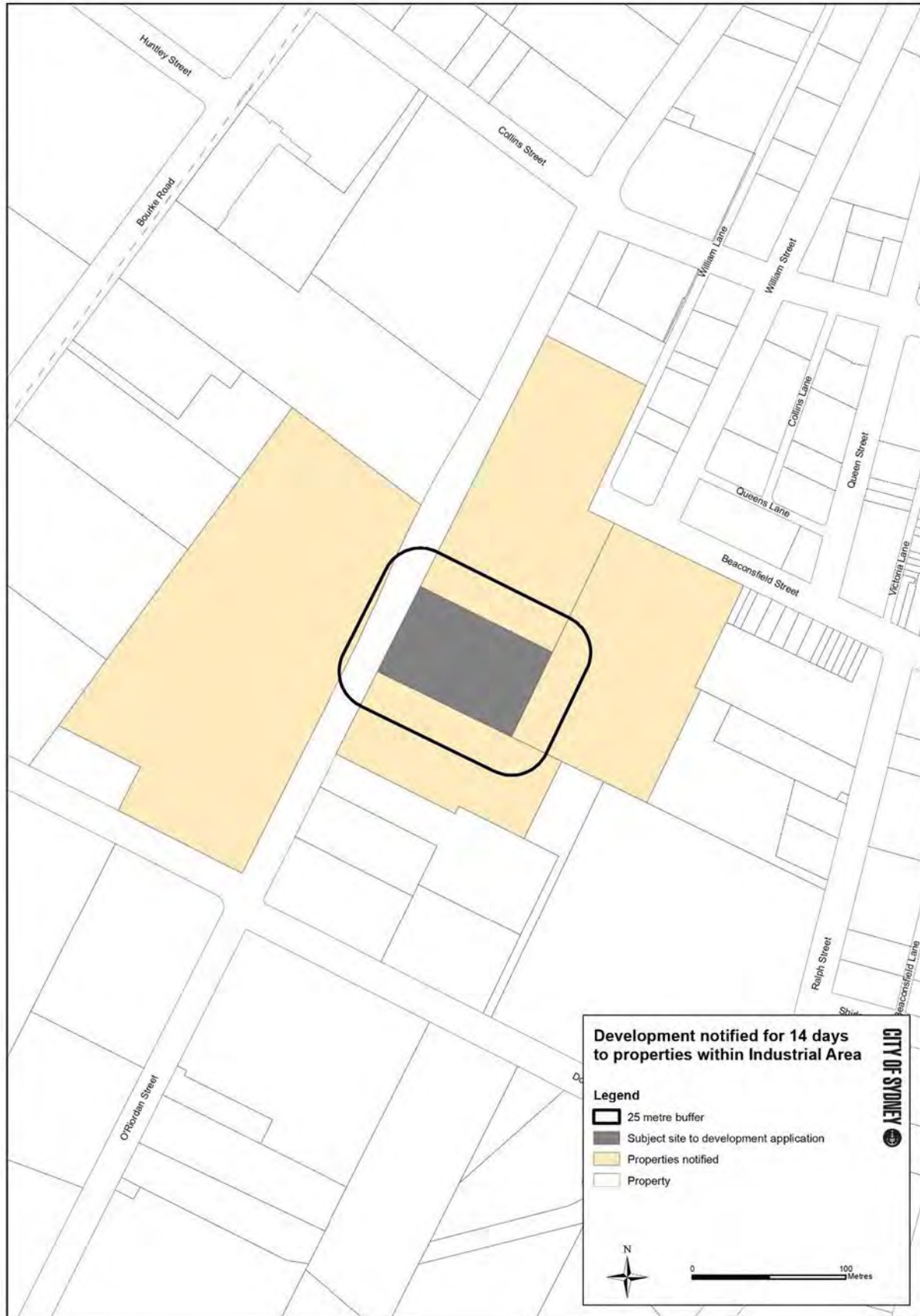
Development notified for 14 days to properties within Inner City



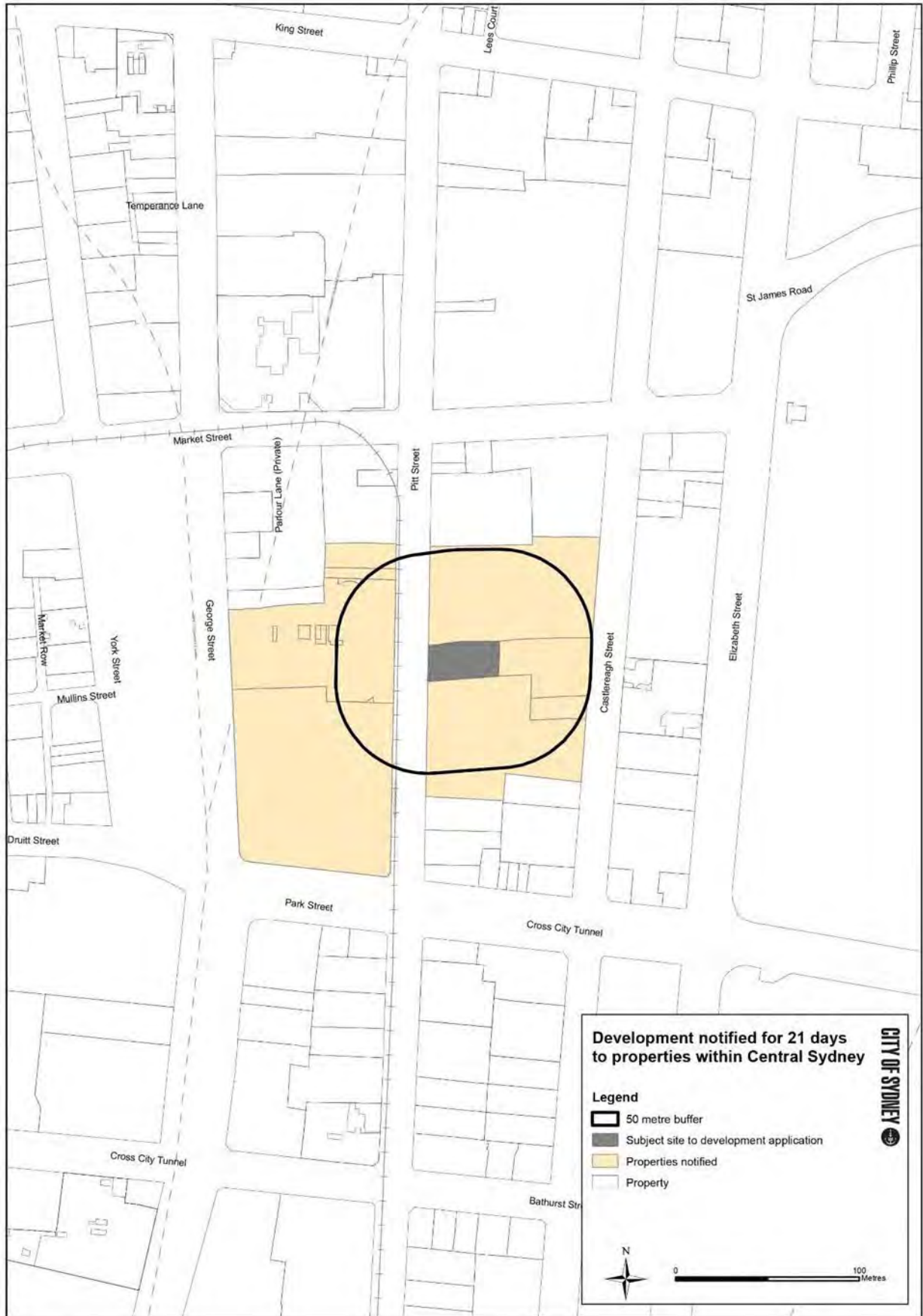
**Development notified for 14 days to properties within Terrace Area**



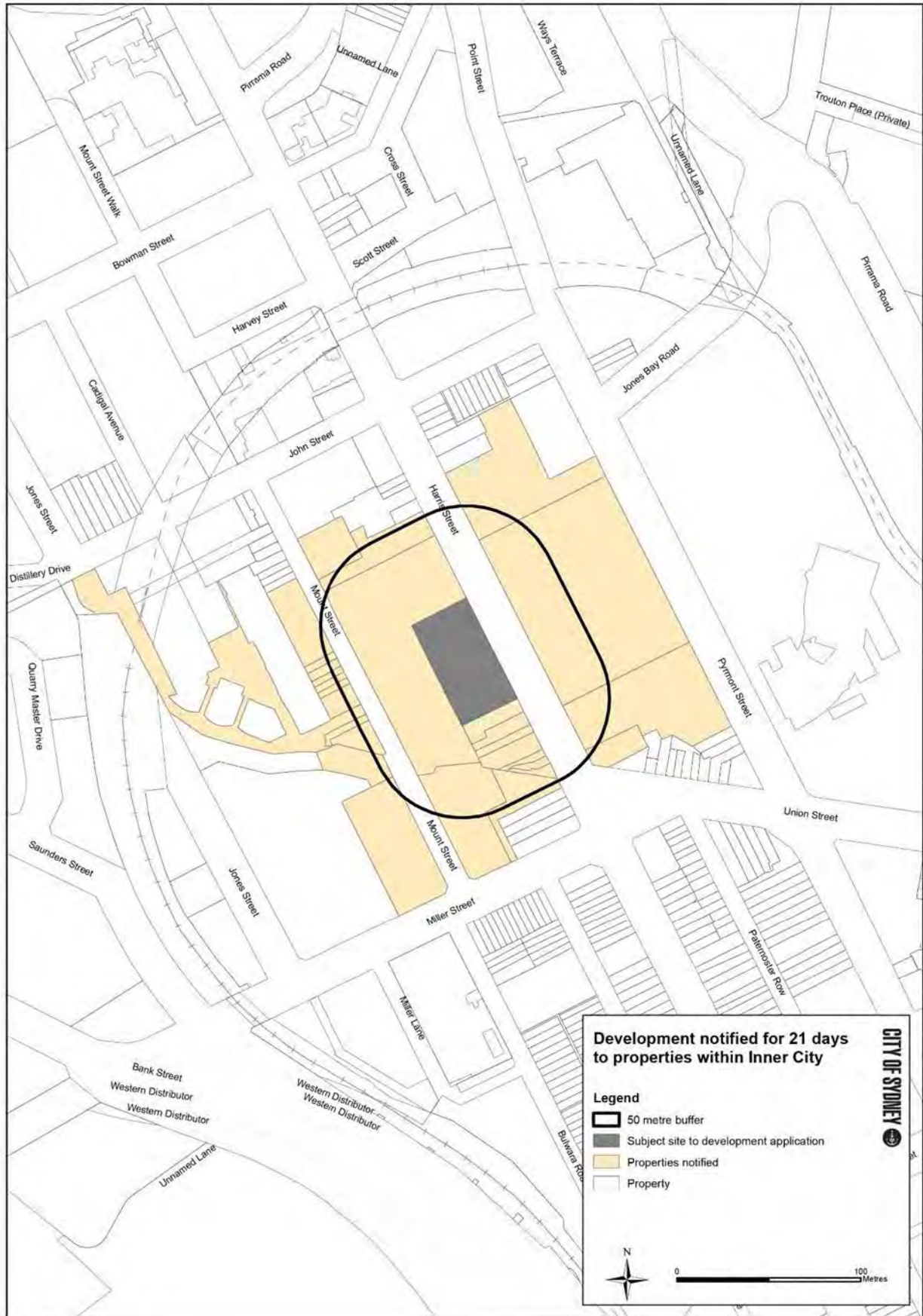
**Development notified for 14 days to properties within Industrial Area**



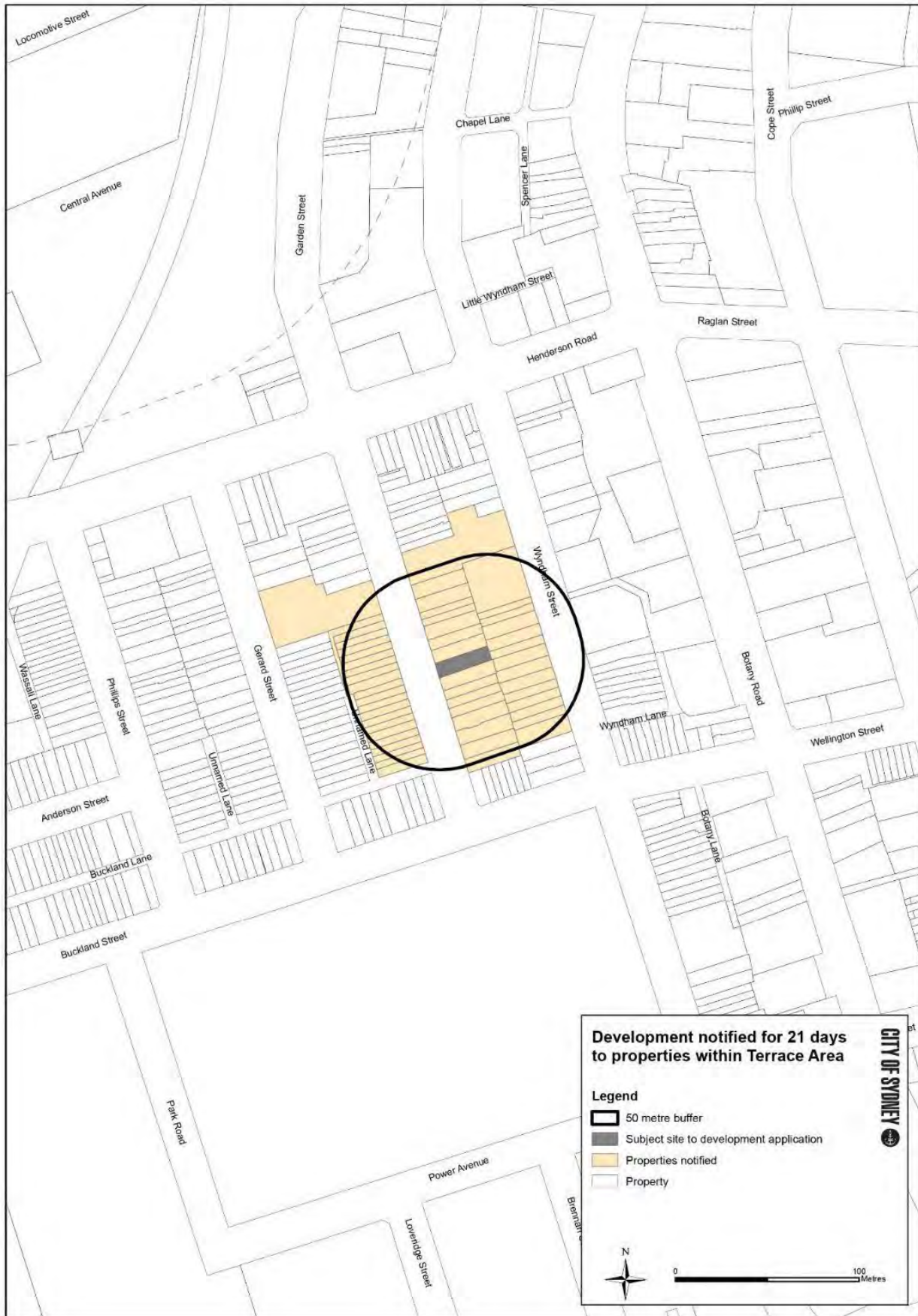
**Development notified for 21 days to properties within Central Sydney**



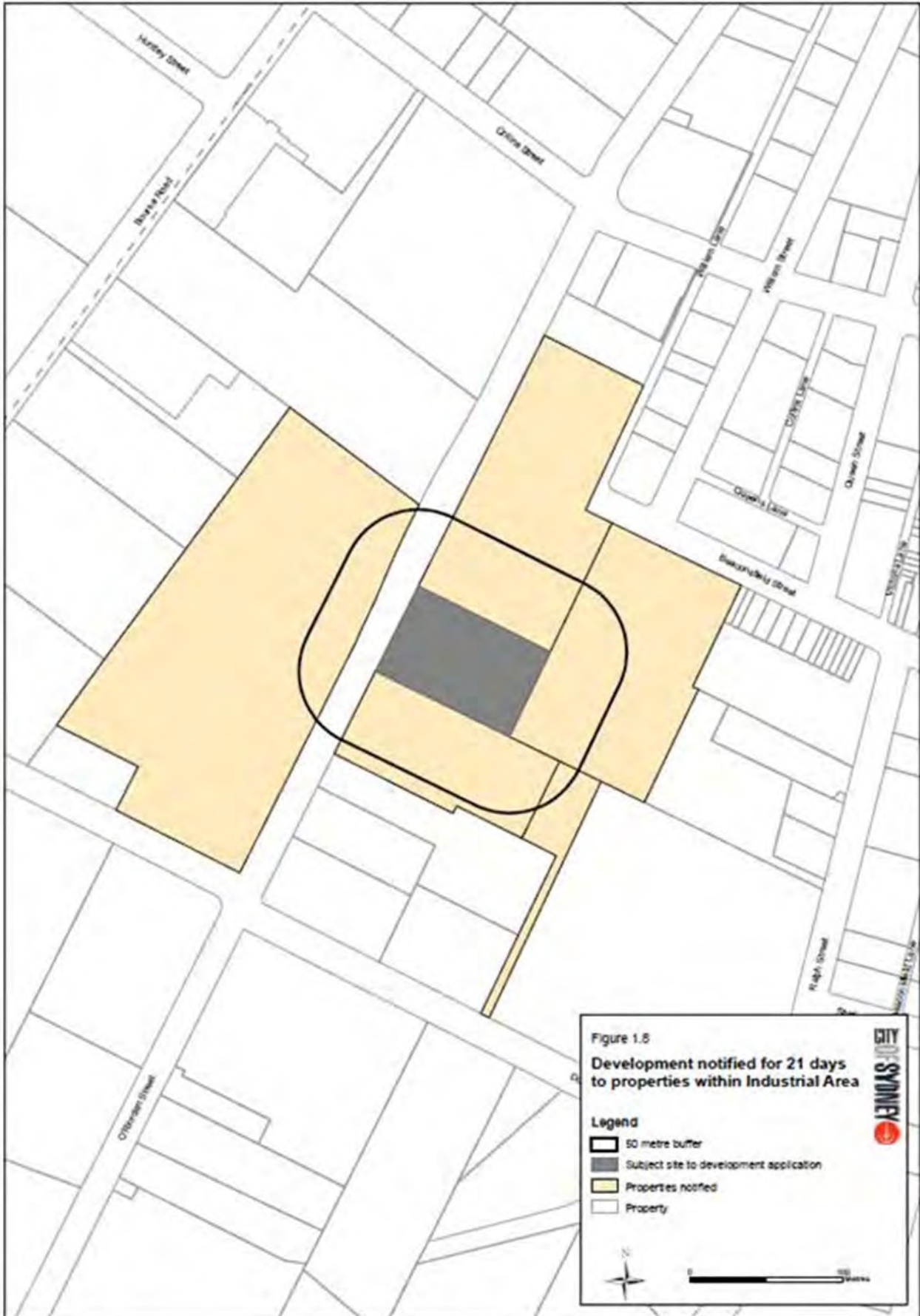
**Development notified for 21 days to properties within Inner City**



**Development notified for 21 days to properties within Terrace Area**

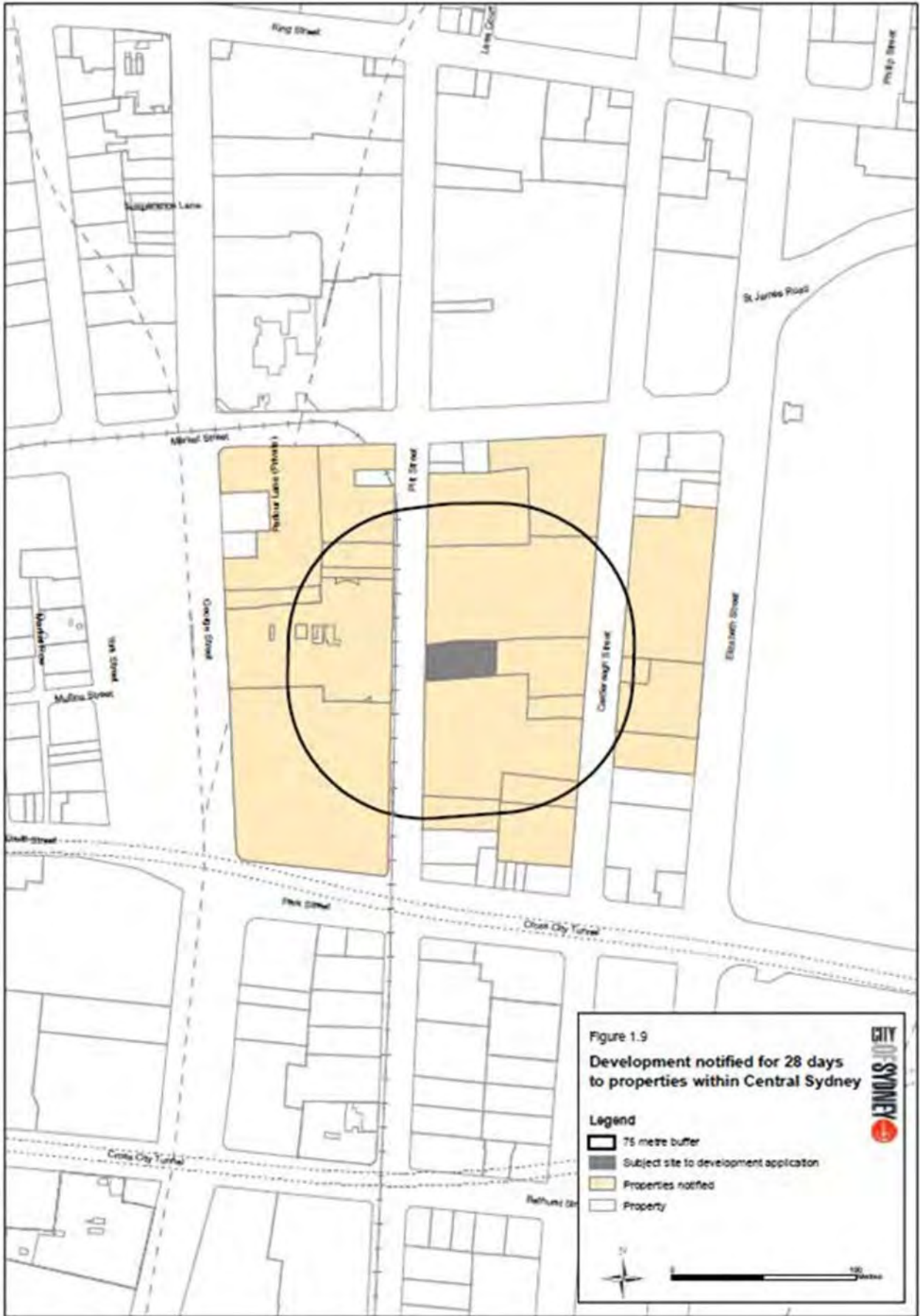


**Development notified for 21 days to properties within Industrial Area**

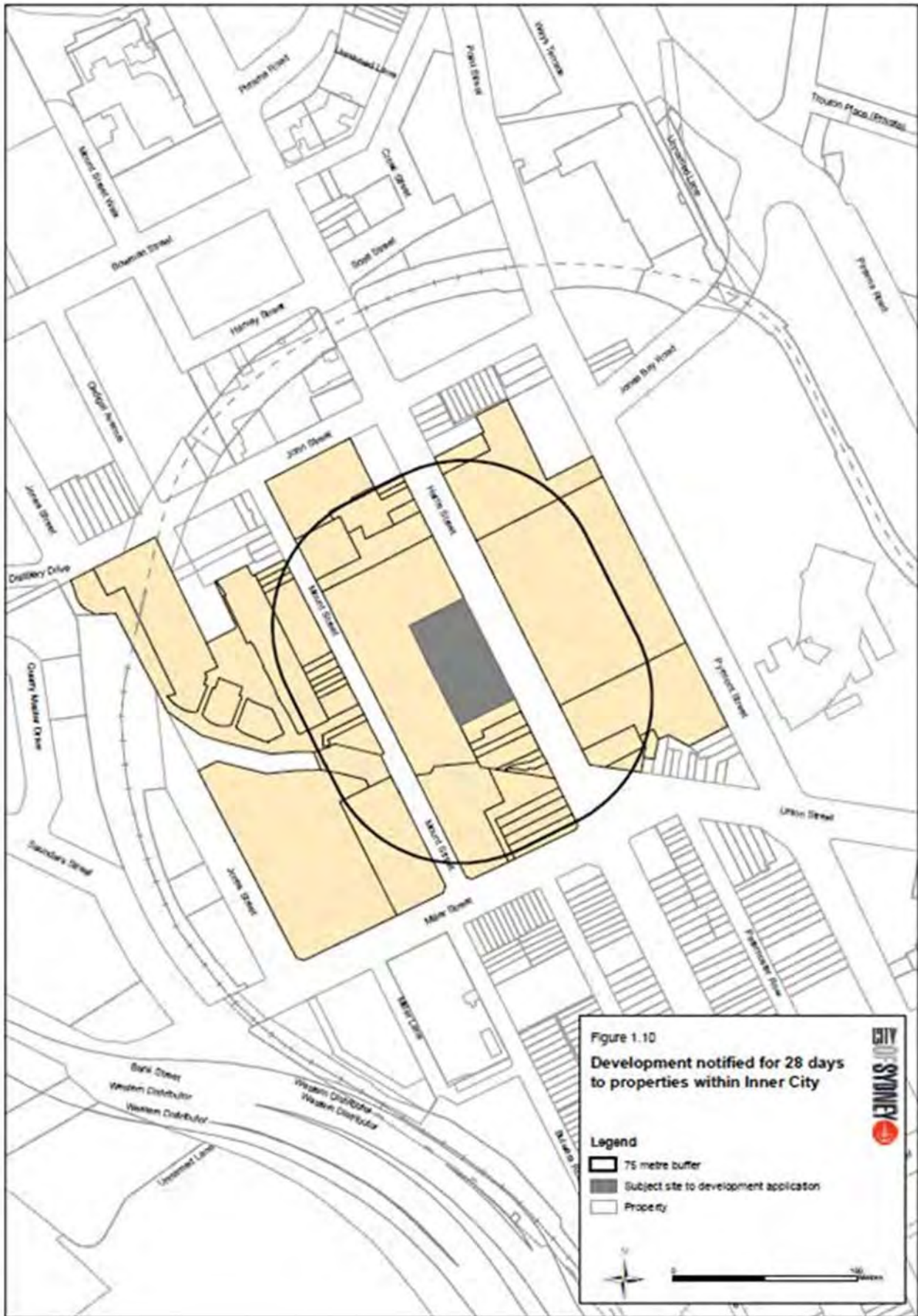




Development notified for 28 days to properties within Central Sydney



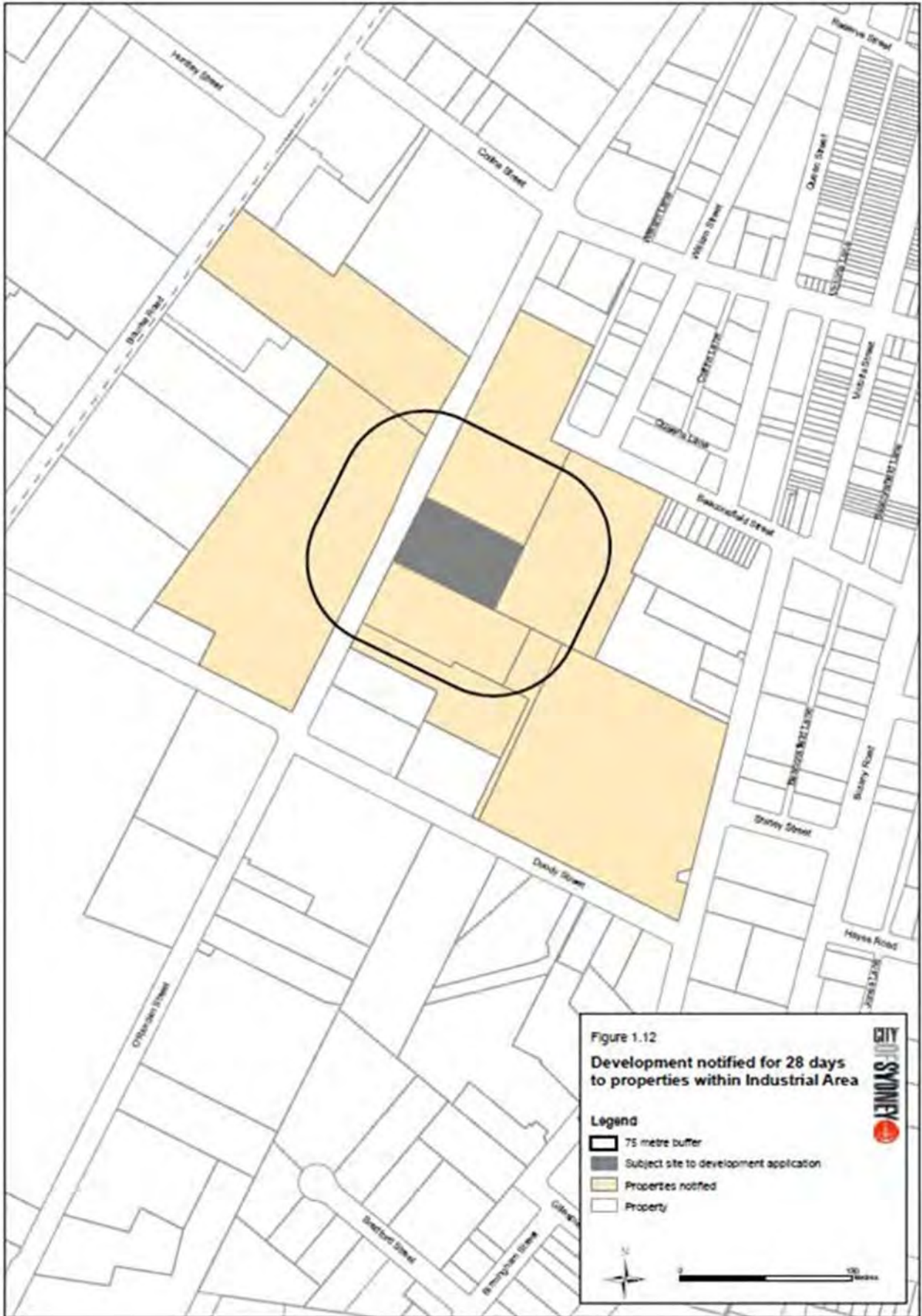
**Development notified for 28 days to properties within Inner City**



Development notified for 28 days to properties within Terrace Area



**Development notified for 28 days to properties within Industrial Area**



## Appendix D: land use planning consultation matrix (community participation plan)

X = activity required under legislation

\* = may be required by State Government

Category	Type	DA category	DA category detail	30 days exhibition period	28 days exhibition period	21 days exhibition period	14 days exhibition period	No notification	Site notice	City of Sydney consultation hub	City of Sydney planning site	Letter notification	Distribution 75 metre buffer	Distribution 50 metre buffer	Distribution 25 metre buffer
Strategic planning	Local Strategic Planning Statement				X					X		*			
Strategic planning	Community Participation Plan				X					X		*			
Strategic planning	Local Environmental Plans and amendments (Planning Proposals) <sup>a</sup>				X					X		*			
Strategic planning	Development Control Plans				X					X		*			
Strategic planning	Contribution Plans				X					X		*			
Strategic planning	Application for retrospective award of Heritage Floor Space				X					X		X	X		
Development assessments	Designated development				X				X		X	X			
Development assessments	Integrated development <sup>b</sup>				X				X		X	X			
Development assessments	State significant development				X				X		X	X			
Development assessments	Environmental impact statement			X							X				
Planning agreements	Planning agreements				X						X	X			
Development assessments	Development applications	Accommodation for aged and disabled persons provided under the Seniors Living SEPP				X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Boarding houses (new)				X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Category 1 Remediation work under SEPP 55 [SEPP (Resilience and Hazards)]			X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Change of use	from a dwelling to another use			X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Change of use	to a non-residential use in a residential zone			X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Change of use	convenience stores; sex industry premises; places of public entertainment; pubs; night clubs; bars; amusement arcades and the like			X			X		X	X		X	

Draft Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan 2024 update

Category	Type	DA category	DA category detail	30 days exhibition period	28 days exhibition period	21 days exhibition period	14 days exhibition period	No notification	Site notice	City of Sydney consultation hub	City of Sydney planning site	Letter notification	Distribution 75 metre buffer	Distribution 50 metre buffer	Distribution 25 metre buffer
Development assessments	Development applications	Change of use	of a whole multi-storey building			X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Child care centres				X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Commercial/retail and other non-residential buildings	new buildings & additions less than 3 storeys				X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Commercial/retail and other non-residential buildings	new buildings & additions 3 or more storeys			X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Community centres / facilities				X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Community events					X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Council-related development applications	low-risk <sup>c</sup>		X				X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Council-related development applications	medium or high risk <sup>c</sup>		X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Development where value of work exceeds \$50 million			X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Educational establishments (e.g. schools, higher education institutions)				X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Food and drink premises (e.g. cafes, restaurants)	not in residential zones				X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Food and drink premises (e.g. cafes, restaurants)	in residential zones			X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Heritage	applications for award of Heritage Floor Space		X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Heritage	minor external alterations or additions to a Heritage Item				X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Heritage	minor external alterations or additions to a building within a Heritage Conservation Area				X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Heritage	significant alterations or additions to a Heritage Item		X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Heritage	significant alterations or additions, or new buildings, or full demolition of a contributory building within a Heritage Conservation Area		X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Home industry					X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Industrial development	less than 500sqm new floor area				X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Industrial development	500sqm to 1000sqm new floor area			X			X		X	X		X	

Draft Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan 2024 update

Category	Type	DA category	DA category detail	30 days exhibition period	28 days exhibition period	21 days exhibition period	14 days exhibition period	No notification	Site notice	City of Sydney consultation hub	City of Sydney planning site	Letter notification	Distribution 75 metre buffer	Distribution 50 metre buffer	Distribution 25 metre buffer
Development assessments	Development applications	Industrial development	over 1000sqm new floor area		X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Modifications to consent which will not impact upon surrounding land uses or increase impacts in comparison with the previous approval(s)						X			X				
Development assessments	Development applications	Place of Public Worship				X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Professional consulting rooms					X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Outdoor café seating and/or coffee carts on footways							X		X	X			
Development assessments	Development applications	Residential flat buildings	new buildings & additions less than 3 storeys				X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Residential flat buildings	new buildings & additions 3 or more storeys			X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Significant development or use of the public domain			X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Signs over 10sqm in area					X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Single dwellings, including ancillary structures, involving construction; demolition; additions and/or alterations					X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Subdivision – creation of new lots				X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Telecommunications facilities (non-low impact facilities)			X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Threatened species development <sup>d</sup>			X				X		X	X	X		
Development assessments	Development applications	Visitor and tourist accommodation (including bed & breakfast premises that are not complying development, backpacker accommodation, motels and hotels)				X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Trading hours	after 10 pm or 24 hour trading			X			X		X	X		X	
Development assessments	Development applications	Trading hours	extension of trial periods				X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Modification applications	Section 4.55(1) application (i.e. correction of minor error)					X							X

## Draft Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan 2024 update

Category	Type	DA category	DA category detail	30 days exhibition period	28 days exhibition period	21 days exhibition period	14 days exhibition period	No notification	Site notice	City of Sydney consultation hub	City of Sydney planning site	Letter notification	Distribution 75 metre buffer	Distribution 50 metre buffer	Distribution 25 metre buffer
Development assessments	Development applications	Modification applications	Section 4.55(1A) application (i.e. involving minimal environmental impacts)					X							X
Development assessments	Development applications	Modification applications	Section 4.56 application (i.e. in relation to consents granted by the Land and Environment Court)				X		X		X	X			X
Development assessments	Development applications	Modification applications	Section 4.55(2) application (i.e. other modifications)				X		X		X	X			X

*Note regarding Christmas, New Years, weekends and public holidays:*

Should the timing of the application fall over the traditional holiday period of Christmas and New Years Day, the period between 20 December and 10 January. If a notification period finishes on a weekend or a public holiday, it will be extended to the next business day.

- a. The exhibition periods and methods of notification for Planning Proposals can be extended, reduced, or amended by the Gateway determination of the Department of Planning.
- b. Re-notification of an application to modify a nominated integrated development application may not be required under section 108 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021.
- c. As defined in the Council-related Development Applications Policy.
- d. Re-notification of an application to modify a threatened species development application may not be required under section 108 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021.



## Appendix E: glossary of terms – land use planning (community participation plan)

Term	Description
<b>Local strategic planning statement</b>	A long term land use planning vision, priorities and actions for the council area. It links the NSW Government’s strategic plans and the City’s Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 to the planning controls that guide development in the city.
<b>Community participation plan</b>	The plan that outlines consultation requirements for land use planning. It consists of chapters titled: Community participation plan for land use planning and appendices C, D and E.
<b>Contributions plans</b>	Prepared by councils to levy new development to fund additional or improved local, public infrastructure needed by the development and used by the whole community.
<b>Local environmental plans (planning proposals)</b>	The local planning laws prepared by councils but approved by the NSW Government. They set out what development can take place where, the maximum height and density of development, and what places need to be protected for their heritage value. They are amended by preparing a planning proposal.
<b>Development control plans</b>	Guidelines prepared by councils that describe the preferred way to undertake development that is enabled by a local environmental plan to get good planning and design outcomes and manage impacts.
<b>Development applications</b>	Development applications are required for development which is identified in an environmental planning instrument as development requiring consent, which is not identified that is not ‘exempt’ or ‘complying’ development. They can range from small scale proposals to renovate and extend a house, to new multi storey commercial towers.
<b>Planning agreements</b>	<p>Planning agreements are voluntary agreements entered into by the City and a person, usually a developer, to deliver public benefits.</p> <p>Public benefits may include the dedication of land to Council, monetary contributions, public infrastructure, community facilities, affordable housing, any other material public benefit or any combination of these. Planning agreements are prepared under the Act in relation to either a planning proposal or a development application.</p>
<b>Footway applications</b>	Outdoor dining within the local government area requires approval to use public land. Footway applications are assessed against various pieces of legislation, including but not limited to the Roads Act 1993 and Outdoor Dining Guidelines. Footway approvals set out how much of the public footpath outside a premises can be taken up by outdoor dining.
<b>Section 4.55 modification applications</b>	<p>Under Section 4.55 of the Act, development consents can be modified. Applications to modify a development consent are split into three categories, based on the extent of environmental impact:</p> <p>Section 4.55(1) – modifications involving minor error, misdescription or miscalculation;</p> <p>Section 4.55(1A) – modifications involving minimal environmental impact; and</p> <p>Section 4.55(2) – other modifications</p>

## Appendix F: Petitions guidelines

The City of Sydney welcomes petitions as one way in which people can let us know their concerns. We set out below how council will respond to petitions that are sent to us.

### What is a petition?

Council will treat as a petition for the purposes of these guidelines any communication that is either identified as being a petition, or which it seems to us is intended to be a petition.

Petitions can be sent directly to councillors or to:

City of Sydney Town Hall House  
456 Kent Street  
Sydney NSW 2001

### Who can submit a petition?

Anyone can sign or organise a petition.

### What are the guidelines for submitting a petition?

Petitions on the following matters will be considered by City of Sydney in accordance with these guidelines:

- issues relating to council's responsibilities
- issues which affect the City of Sydney or communities in our area, as long as Council is in a position to exercise some degree of influence.

If your petition is about something over which council has no direct control (for example the local railway or school), we will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. The City of Sydney works with a large number of local partners and where possible will work with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are not able to do this for any reason (for example, if what the petition calls for conflicts with council policy), then we will set out the reasons for this to petitioners.

Where a petition relates to a matter over which council has no responsibility or influence, council will return the petition to the main petition contact with an explanation for that decision (and will wherever possible give petitioners any information that council has available as to where the petition should be redirected). If your petition is about something that a different council or other public authority is responsible for, we will ask the main petition contact whether they would like us to redirect the petition to the other authority.

Petitions submitted to council must include:

- a clear and concise statement covering the subject matter of the petition. It should state what action petitioners want the council to take
- the name and address and signature (or email address in the case of electronic petitions) of any person supporting the petition.

A petition should contain the name and address and contact details of the main petition contact. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. If the petition does not identify a main petition contact, we will assume the first signatory is the main petition contact. The address may be where the signatory to the petition lives, works or studies. City of Sydney has the discretion to verify the name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition should we consider it necessary for any reason.

If you want your petition to be tabled at a meeting of council, you must send it to a councillor for them to consider tabling it.

State legislation may affect council's ability to respond to some petitions, including those related to development assessment, tendering or electoral laws. In the period immediately before an election, council may need to deal with your petition differently or in a different timeframe, and if this is the case council will contact the main petition contact to explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale that will apply.

Before submitting a petition, you may first wish to check with councillors or with City of Sydney to see if we are already acting on your concerns and to confirm that council is the most appropriate body to receive your petition, as sometimes your petition may be more appropriate for another public body.

### **Types of petition**

For the purposes of the council's petition guidelines all petitions that are received by council (that are considered to fall within the scope of these guidelines) will be treated as falling within one of the two different types of petitions, described below.

#### **Petitions for tabling**

These are petitions that have been sent to a councillor so that they can consider tabling it at a council meeting. If the councillor wishes council to debate the petition, they are required to submit it to the CEO (or their delegate) by 12 noon on the Tuesday in the week preceding council meeting. The motion that shall accompany tabled petitions whether notice has been given or not is: "That the petition be received and noted."

Where notice has not been given, a councillor may request that the petition be listed on the agenda for the next meeting to enable it to be debated.

#### **Petitions**

These are petitions that have been sent to the CEO or to city staff, either directly or via councillors or the Lord Mayor.

#### **What happens when a petition is received?**

Within 15 working days of receipt by the CEO or city staff, we will acknowledge receipt to the main petition contact and will advise the main petition contact:

- whether we consider that the petition falls within the scope of council's petition guidelines
- the identity of the person or body within City of Sydney to whom the petition will be reported for consideration
- where we consider that the petition does not fall within these guidelines, we will advise all petitioners of the reason for this decision

At the same time as responding to the main petition contact, we will notify the relevant City of Sydney director with responsibility for the matter to which the petition relates and all councillors of receipt of the petition.

In the event that the subject of a petition falls within the remit of more than one director, the petition will be reported to both directors, who will be asked to nominate one of them as the lead for the matter.

In some cases, we may be able to resolve the petitioner's request directly, by requesting the relevant council officer to take appropriate action. Where this is done, we will advise all signatories, where valid addresses have been provided, that we consider that the matter is resolved and explain how it has been resolved.

If any signatory is not satisfied with the outcome they may appeal to the CEO in accordance with the procedure set out below. In all other cases, within 3 months of receipt of a petition (or sooner where possible), we will provide a substantive response to the signatories giving information about what steps we have taken or propose to take in response to the petition and our reasons for doing so.

When we receive a petition, our response will depend on what a petition asks for and may include one or more of the following:

- giving effect to the request in the petition
- considering the petition at a meeting of council
- research or consultation
- giving a written response to all signatories setting out our views about the request in the petition.

In addition to these steps, City of Sydney will consider all of the specific actions that it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in the petition.

### **What will happen to a petition for tabling?**

If a councillor to whom the petition is sent submits it to the CEO in accordance with the procedure for notifying petitions, the petition will be debated by council at its next ordinary meeting. This means that the issue(s) raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting at which all councillors can attend.

Petitions will not be considered at extraordinary meetings of council unless it is convened to consider the subject matter of the petition.

The procedure to be followed during the petition debate is the same as for debate on any other motion and is set out in council's code of meeting practice.

Following consideration by council of a petition for tabling, council may make a decision on the subject matter of the petition if a notice of motion has been received, may request that it be listed on the agenda for the next council meeting to enable debate or may refer the petition to the CEO to respond as per petitions received directly.

### **What can I do if I feel my petition has not been dealt with properly?**

If any signatory is not satisfied with the outcome of council's consideration of their petition, they may appeal to the CEO setting out the reasons for their dissatisfaction. The CEO may choose to instigate an investigation, make recommendations to the executive, or arrange for the matter to be considered at a meeting of council. Once the appeal has been considered the CEO will provide the person who has appealed with written confirmation of the outcome.

### **Excluded petitions**

Council's petition scheme does not apply to the types of petition listed below. If council receives a petition that it considers to be an excluded petition, we will contact the main petition contact to advise them that we do not consider that their petition falls within the scope of council's petition guidelines and the reasons for this decision.

### **Petitions excluded by statutory consultation, review or appeal rights**

In order not to duplicate procedures where established processes already exist for people to voice their opinions, the following matters are excluded from the scope of council's petition guidelines:

- any matter relating to a planning decision that has already been made by council or city staff;  
or
- any matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or a right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment.

However, a petition that alleges a systematic failure to deliver services in the above areas is within the scope of council's petition guidelines. For example, while a petition on an individual planning application would be an excluded petition, a petition about council's failure to deliver an effective service for planning applications would be within the scope of these guidelines.

**Petitions that are vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate**

If, in the opinion of City of Sydney, a petition is vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate, we will acknowledge receipt of the petition to the main petition contact. We will explain to them the reason why we consider that the petition is vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate and that we will not be taking any further action in respect of the petition. Please note that petitions which raise issues of possible councillor misconduct will be taken as complaints arising under council's code of conduct, rather than considered under these guidelines.

**Repeat petitions**

A petition will not normally be considered where it is received within 24 months of another petition being considered by council on the same matter. When a petition is received on a similar issue to a previous petition, petitioners will be notified of the outcome of the previous petition if City of Sydney considers that the issues raised have been addressed.

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