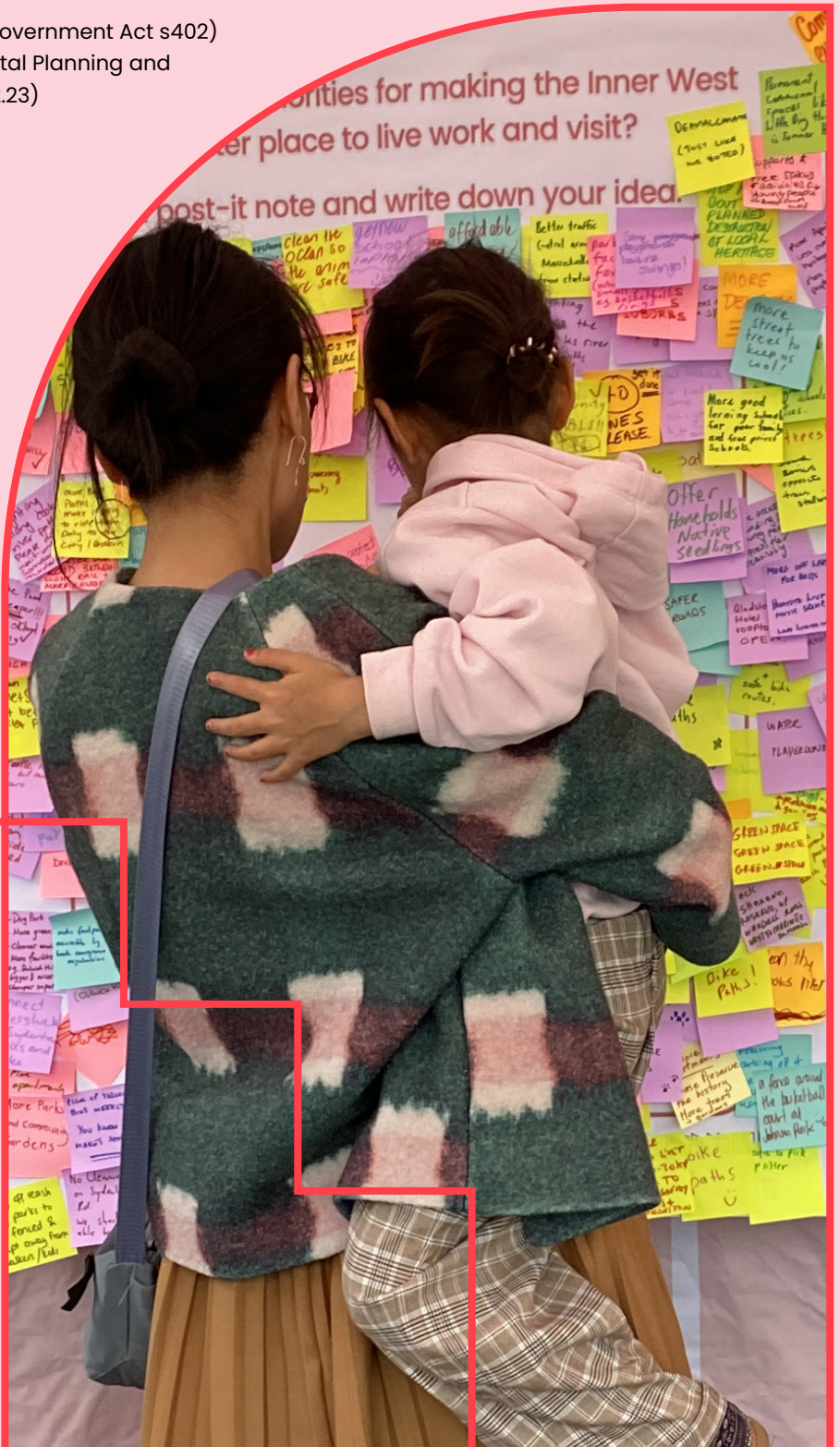


Community Engagement Strategy 2025-29

This document contains Council's:

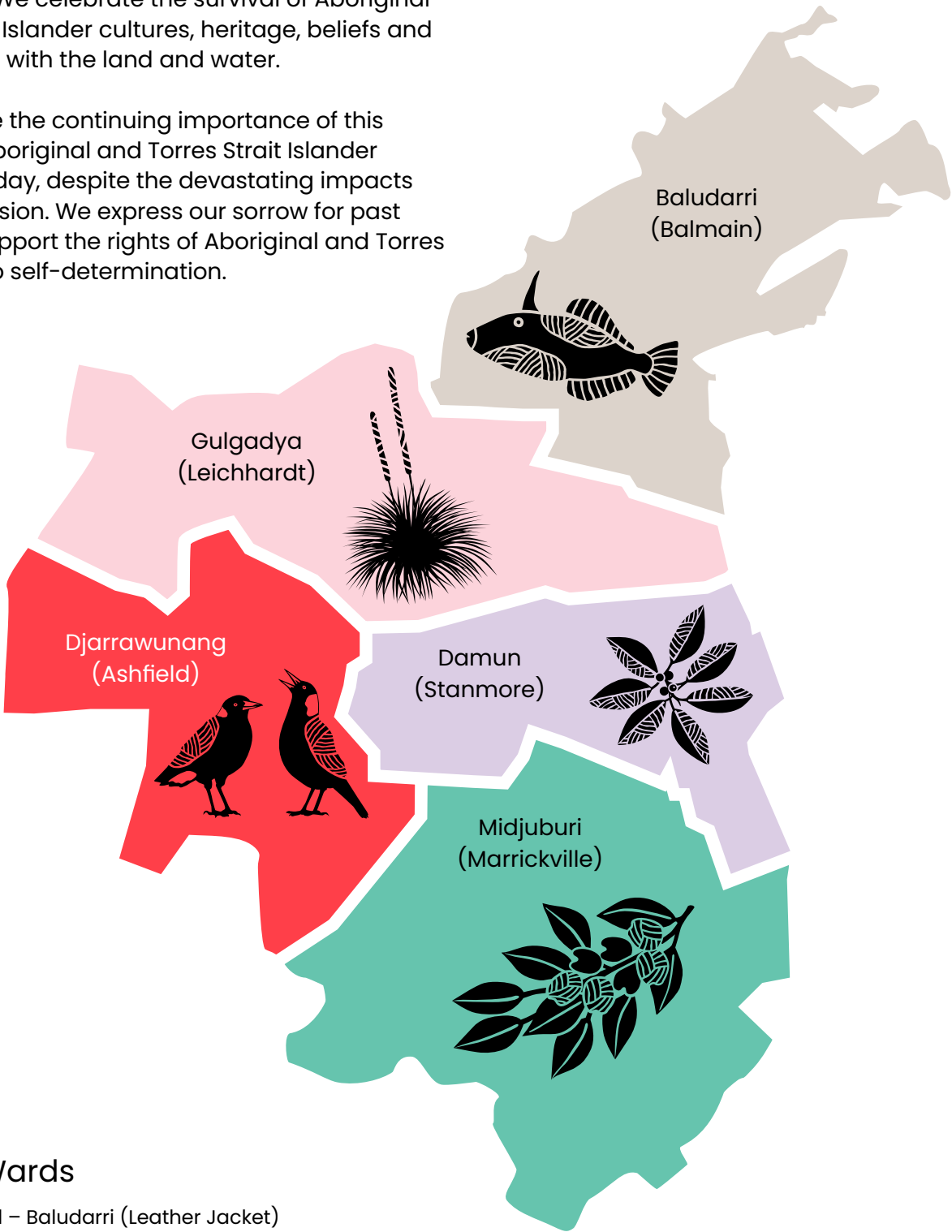
- Community Engagement Strategy (Local Government Act s402)
- Community Participation Plan (Environmental Planning and Assessment Act Part 2 Division 2.6 Section 2.23)



Acknowledgement of Country

Council acknowledges the Gadigal and Wangal peoples of the Eora Nation, who are the traditional custodians of the lands in which the Inner West Local Government Area is situated. We celebrate the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, beliefs and their relationship with the land and water.

We acknowledge the continuing importance of this relationship to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living today, despite the devastating impacts of European invasion. We express our sorrow for past injustices and support the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to self-determination.



Inner West Wards

- Balmain Ward – Baludarri (Leather Jacket)
- Leichhardt Ward – Gulgadya (Grass Tree)
- Ashfield Ward – Djarrawunang (Magpie)
- Stanmore Ward – Damun (Port Jackson Fig)
- Marrickville Ward – Midjuburi (Lillypilly)

About this strategy

This document contains Council’s:

- Community Engagement Strategy (Local Government Act s402)
- Community Participation Plan (Environmental Planning and Assessment Act Part 2 Division 2.6 Section 2.23)

Alternative formats

This document contains important information about Council’s community engagement.

If you would like information supplied in another language or format, please contact us Monday to Friday, 9am–4pm via these free community services.

Free interpreter via TIS National: 131 450

Voice Relay: 1300 555 727

TTY: 133 677

SMS Relay: 0423 677 767

You will need to provide our contact number: 02 9392 5000

Community languages

Talk free with an interpreter call 131 450

Chinese Simplified	我们说普通话。如需免费传译服务，请致电131 450，然后请传译员致电 02 9392 5000 接通 Inner West市政府。
Traditional Chinese	我們能說您的語言。如需免費傳譯服務，請致電131 450，然後請傳譯員致電 02 9392 5000 接通 Inner West市政府。
Greek	Μιλάμε τη γλώσσα σας. Για να μιλήσετε δωρεάν σε διερμηνέα καλέστε το 131 450. Ζητήστε τους να καλέσουν το Δήμο Inner West Council στο 02 9392 5000.
Italian	Parliamo la vostra lingua. Per parlare gratuitamente con un interprete chiamate il numero 131 450. Chiedetegli di chiamare il Comune di Inner West al numero 02 9392 5000.
Vietnamese	Chúng tôi nói ngôn ngữ của quý vị. Muốn nói chuyện có thông dịch viên miễn phí, hãy gọi số 131 450. Yêu cầu họ gọi cho Hội đồng Thành phố Inner West qua số 02 9392 5000.

Contact us

innerwest.nsw.gov.au

Phone: 02 9392 5000 | Email: council@innerwest.nsw.gov.au

Facebook: /innerwestcouncil | Twitter: /IWCouncil | Instagram: @innerwestcouncil

This page will be updated after the Community Strategic Plan is adopted

Our purpose and values

Our purpose and values drive the culture of the organisation and how we connect with the Inner West community. The Community Engagement Strategy is designed to align directly with our purpose and values

Our purpose

We are here to be of service to our local community and make the Inner West a great place to be.



Innovation

We foster creativity and the open exchange of ideas

We value and seek out new ways of doing things and explore opportunities

We pursue excellence in everything we do

We honour what we have while seeking to improve

We adapt and change creatively

We adapt our services for future generations

Our values



Integrity

We are responsive, accountable and will follow through for each other and the community

We are transparent and open about the reasons for our decisions and actions

We create a safe and trusting environment by walking our talk

We are fair and ethical in everything we do

We do what we say we are going to do



Compassion

We treat each other with care and keep each other safe

We approach each other and our community with empathy and ask how we can help

We acknowledge our differences and empower each other to succeed

We care about each other and our community's concerns

We nurture relationships and cultivate inclusiveness and unity

We proactively listen to, respond to and support each other



Respect

We treat everyone equitably and fairly

We embrace diversity

We acknowledge and value the needs of everyone

We actively seek to listen and understand each other's point of view

We value our environment and always consider our impact

We value feedback from our community and will respond in a timely manner

We actively engage with and deliver for our community



Collaboration

We evolve by working together and learning from each other

We grow by sharing our time and ideas

We celebrate each other's achievements

We work together to achieve our common purpose

"Community engagement is crucial to having a voice in local matters."

Participant at Deliberative Forum



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1. Introduction



'I'm proud to be from the Inner West; it's a community that I love, and to be able to have my say is really valuable'

Participant at Deliberative Forum

Why community engagement is important

The community is at the heart of everything Council does. Council's commitment to engaging our community is embedded in our purpose, "We are here to be of service to our local community and make the Inner West a great place to be" and in our values of integrity, respect, collaboration, compassion and innovation.

Community engagement provides opportunities for the Inner West's broad and diverse community to participate in and influence Council's decision-making, direction and activities. Local knowledge, ideas and feedback from the community are essential to ensure Council's decisions and actions improve community wellbeing and long-term sustainability.

Community engagement is the basis for understanding decisions, sharing perspectives, improving outcomes and building trust between Council, the community, and other partners. It encourages open dialogue, ensures Council understands community needs and expectations, identifies critical issues and opportunities early and fosters local problem-solving.

Legislation

The key Acts that guide Council's community engagement are:

NSW Local Government Act: Councils prepare a Community Engagement Strategy to engage the local community when developing Council's plans, policies and programs, and in determining our activities. The Community Engagement Strategy is part of our strategic framework.

NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act: Councils also prepare a Community Participation Plan which sets out public exhibition and notification requirements for land-use planning matters such as development applications. See section 3 of this document.

Other legislation guides community engagement in specific circumstances.

83% of Inner West residents rate the ability to influence Council's decisions as important or very important*

*Community Satisfaction Survey 2024

Local Democracy

Councillors

Council is governed by 15 elected representatives, called councillors. Inner West has five wards, each represented by three councillors.

The Mayor and Councillors represent the interests of the residents and ratepayers of the Inner West. Their role is defined by the NSW Local Government Act.

They provide leadership and guidance to the community and encourage communication and engagement between Council and the community.

They ensure the organisation is strategically heading towards the direction set by the Community Strategic Plan, and determine Council's policies, services and budgets.

Every four years the community elects their councillors at local government elections. The councillors elect a Mayor as the leader and spokesperson for Council.

Council holds monthly public meetings to consider reports and make decisions, called Council resolutions. Community engagement outcomes are often included in reports to support councillors' decision-making.

Administration

Council's administration is made up of Council staff. Councillors appoint the General Manager who oversees operations, and ensures decisions are implemented.

Community engagement also informs Council's operations, such as service improvements, program evaluation and project implementation. It assists staff to understand local issues, needs and gaps.

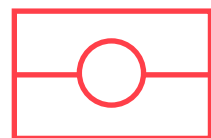


Inner West Councillors elected September 2024. From left to right:
 Cllr Fergusson, Cllr D'Arienzo, Cllr Carlisle, Cllr Tastan, Cllr Clay, Cllr Scott,
 Cllr Blake, Cllr Byrne (Mayor), Cllr Howard (Deputy Mayor), Cllr Smith,
 Cllr Antoniou, Cllr Atkins, Cllr Barlow, Cllr Raciti, Cllr Macri

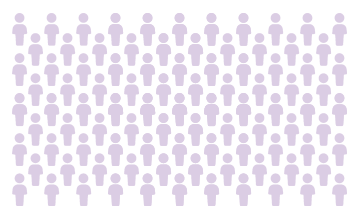
Inner West community profile



38

Median age
of residents

2,162 (1.2%)

Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
population

Population density

5,222

Persons per km2

26%

Language other than
English spoken at
home

33%

Born overseas

2.68
peopleAverage
household
size

29%

Lone households

Rent vs own

52%

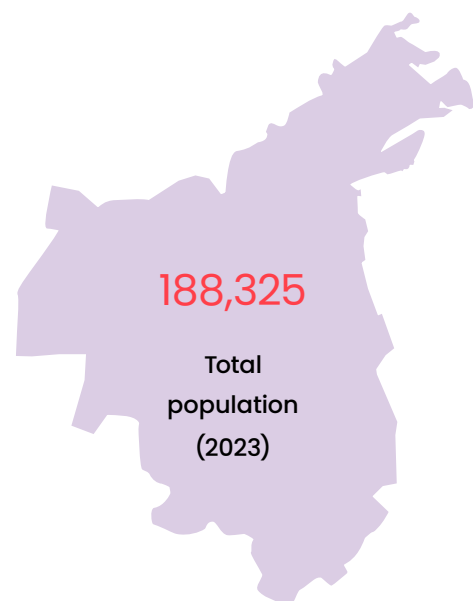
Home ownership

42.6%

Rental

3.3%

Social housing



2.24%

Same sex couples
(compared to
Greater Sydney
0.56%)

8.8%

Creative and performing arts
industry workers
(compared to Greater
Sydney 6%)

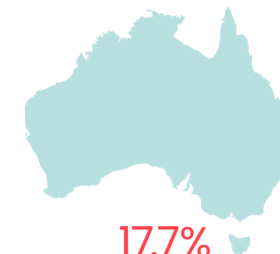
Volunteers



14.8%

compared to 11.6% in
Greater Sydney

Disability



17.7%

of the Australian population
have disability(Source: 2018 ABS Survey of
Disability, Ageing and Carers.)

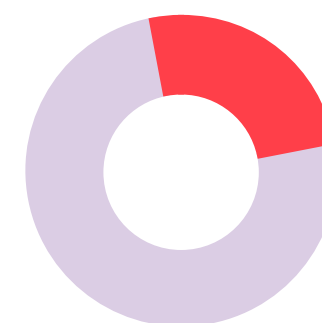
48.2%

Tertiary
educated

Inner West
has over

20,000
local businesses
providing over

76,000
local jobs



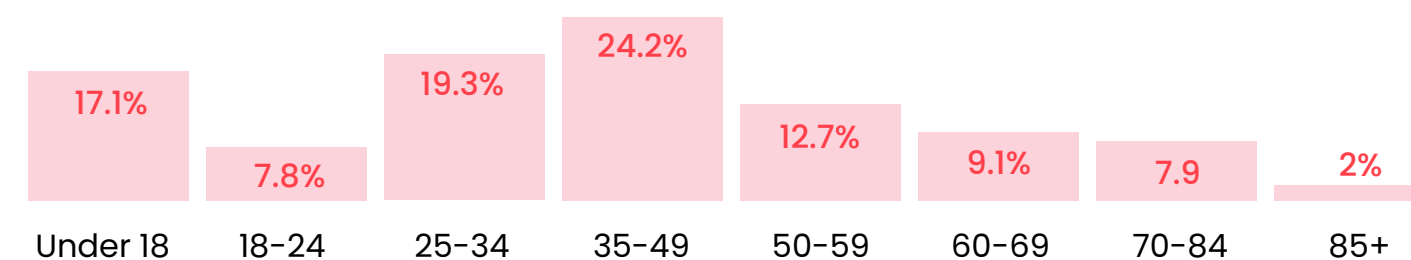
Employment location:

22% Work and live in the Inner West

75% Work outside the Inner West (41.1% in City of Sydney)

3% No fixed place of work

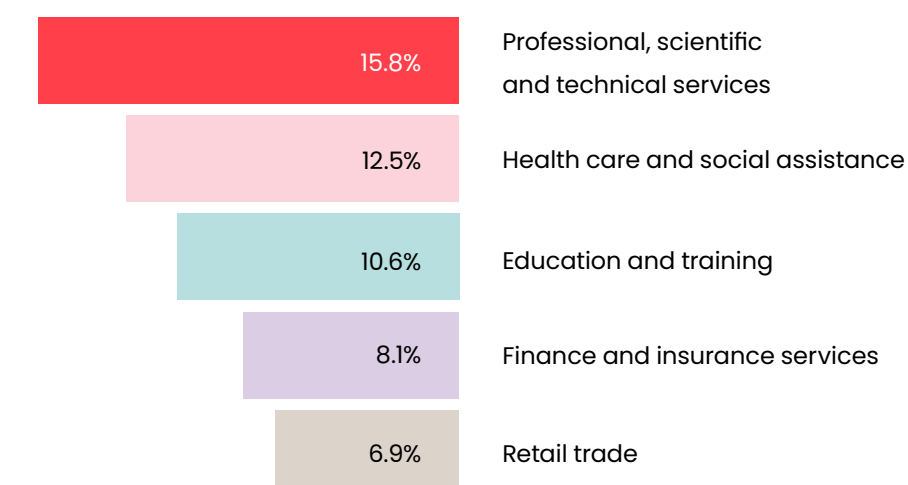
Age groups:



Top languages other than English spoken:

Mandarin	3.3%
Greek	2.7%
Italian	2.2%
Vietnamese	2%
Cantonese	1.9%
Spanish	1.5%
Arabic	1.2%
Nepali	1.1%
Portuguese	1.1%
Filipino/Tagalog	0.8%

Top industries



Our unique neighbourhoods



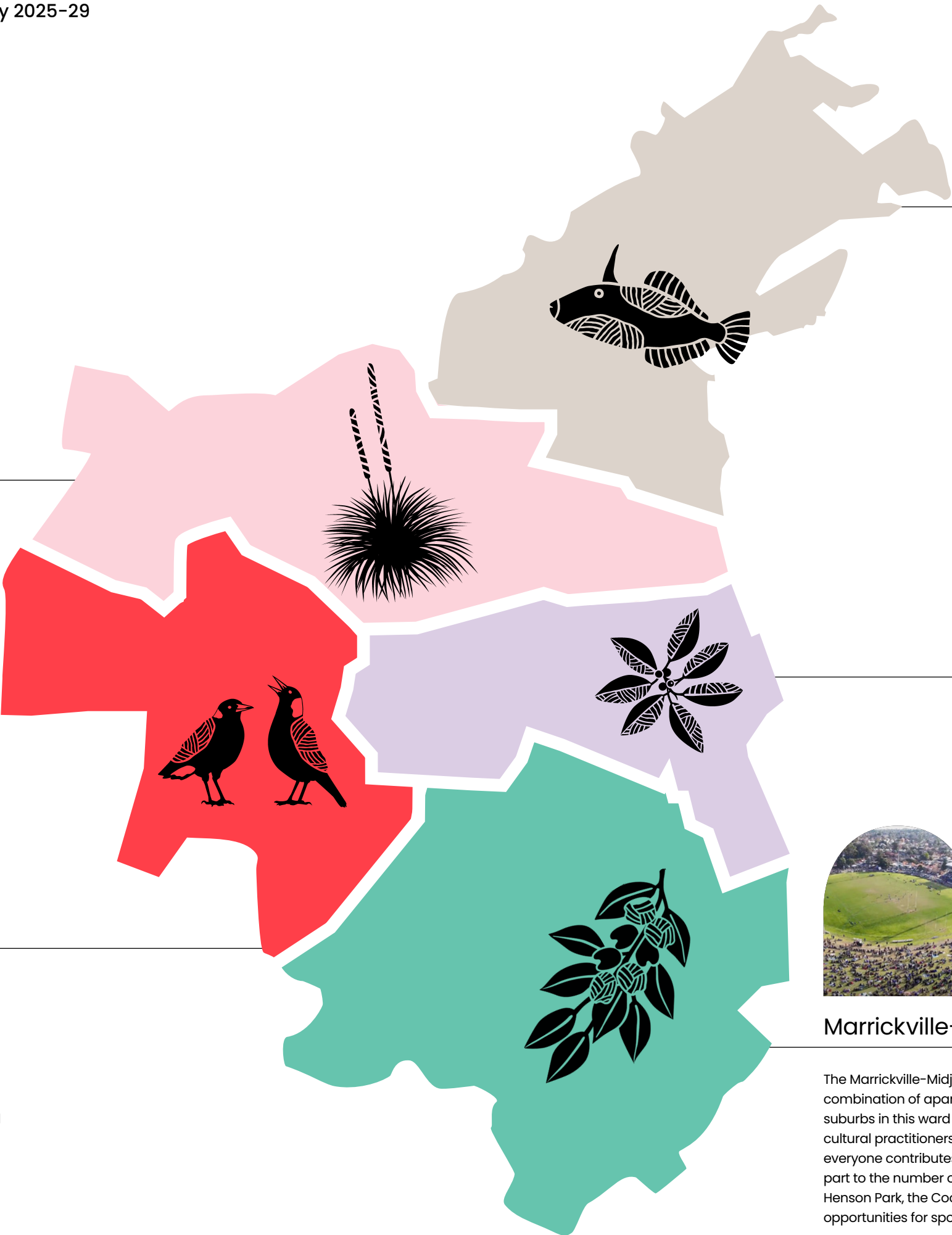
Leichhardt–Gulgadya ward

The Leichhardt–Gulgadya ward is known for its urban character, blending beautiful heritage residences with active town centres. Suburbs in this ward include Haberfield, Leichhardt and parts of Croydon and Annandale. In precincts such as Norton Street in Leichhardt and Ramsay Street in Haberfield, the residents’ Italian heritage is visible through businesses and eateries. Key green spaces in the ward include Hawthorne Canal Reserve, Pioneers Memorial Park and Richard Murden Reserve which leads to the iconic Bay Run.



Ashfield–Djarrawunang ward

The Ashfield–Djarrawunang ward is characterised by a medium–density residential environment that includes a mix of apartment buildings and traditional houses. Ashfield is known as a long–standing home for the Chinese community and the suburb boasts a variety of businesses and food establishments which reflect its rich cultural diversity. The suburbs of Dulwich Hill, Summer Hill and parts of Croydon Park are also in this ward. The area has a number of green spaces, including the formal Ashfield Park, Johnson Park in Dulwich Hill and parts of the GreenWay. Additionally, well–loved community facilities like the Ashfield Aquatic Centre contribute to the lively nature of the area.



Balmain–Baludarri ward

The Balmain–Baludarri ward blends historic heritage sites, busy commercial districts, and characterful residential neighbourhoods. Notable areas within the ward include Birchgrove, Balmain Village, Rozelle, and Lilyfield, each with its own unique feel. New development in White Bay has brought an important arts and events space to the ward in the White Bay Power Station. Balmain–Baludarri is also home to valuable green spaces such as Rozelle Parklands, Leichhardt and Callan Parks, as well as important recreation facilities such as Dawn Fraser Baths, Leichhardt Oval, Birchgrove Oval and the Leichhardt Aquatic Centre.



Stanmore–Damun ward

The Stanmore–Damun ward is characterised by its diverse residential landscape, featuring a blend of historic terraces, detached houses, and low–rise apartment buildings. Suburbs Lewisham, Petersham and Stanmore are located within the ward. It also includes Newtown, Camperdown and Enmore which are celebrated for their active nightlife and entertainment opportunities. These hubs boast an eclectic mix of shops and restaurants and are home to the Inner West Pride Centre. Key green spaces in the Stanmore–Damun ward include Enmore Park, where the Annette Kellerman Aquatic Centre is located, Camperdown Memorial Rest Park, Camperdown Park and Petersham Park.



Marrickville–Midjuburi ward

The Marrickville–Midjuburi ward is known for its mixed–density character, featuring a combination of apartment buildings, terrace houses, and fine–grained industrial areas. The suburbs in this ward besides Marrickville, are St Peters, Sydenham and Tempe. Artists and cultural practitioners work and live alongside Vietnamese and Greek communities, together everyone contributes to a rich diversity. The night–time economy is valued in this area, due in part to the number of microbreweries and distilleries located here. Home to Marrickville Library, Henson Park, the Cooks River and Tempe Recreation Reserve, these spaces provide great opportunities for sport, leisure and community events.

2. Community Engagement Strategy



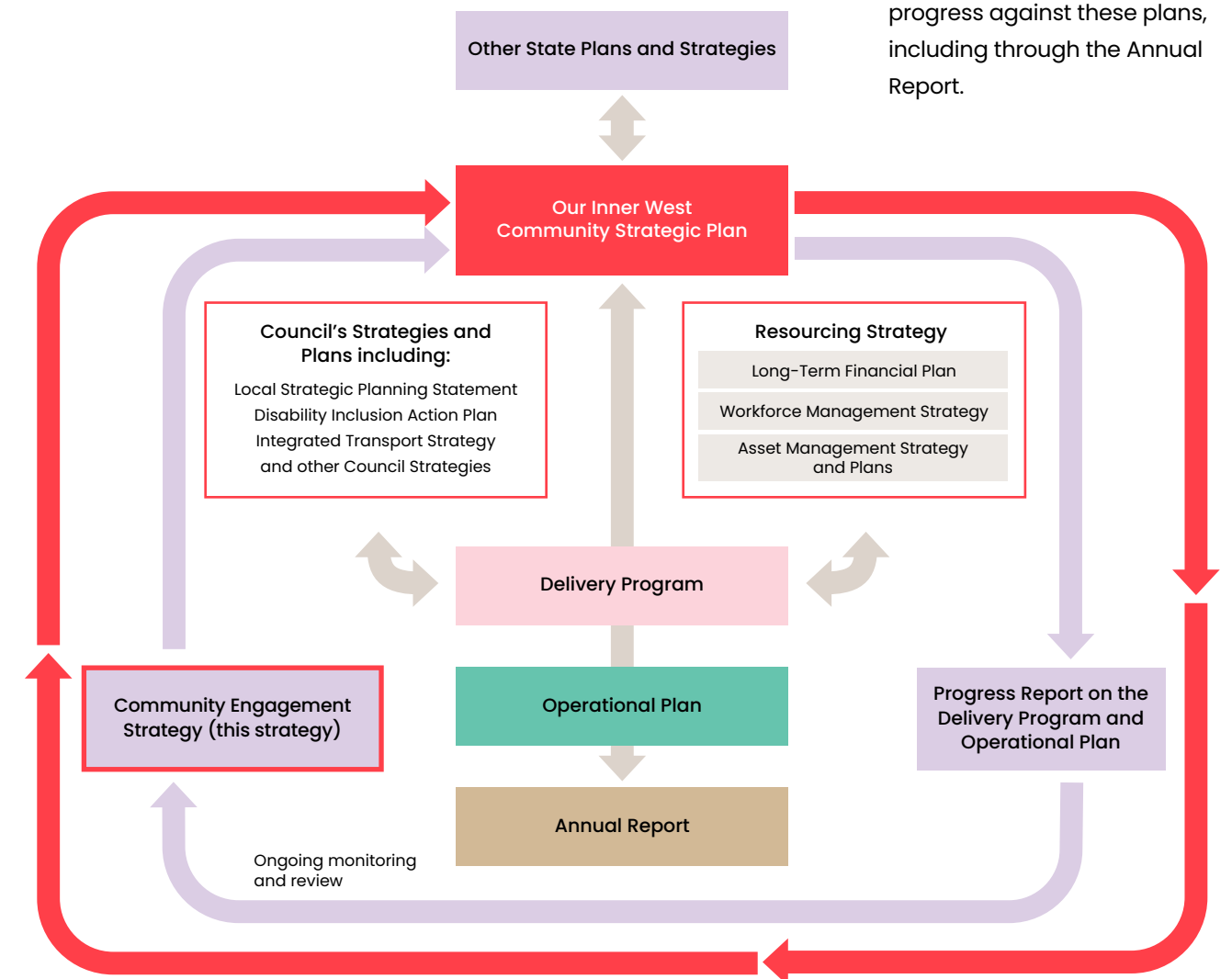
Our strategic framework

Under the NSW Local Government Act, all local councils plan and report to their communities through the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

This framework includes:

- Community Strategic Plan – sets out the community's vision for at least 10 years into the future and how to get there
- Delivery Program – four-year plan that sets out the activities that each elected Council commits to deliver in its term to achieve the vision
- Operational Plan – annual plan and budget with detailed actions

- Resourcing Strategy – the Long-Term Financial Plan, Workforce Management Plan and Asset Management Strategy that guides the money, people, and equipment needed to deliver the community's vision
- Community Engagement Strategy (this strategy) – guides community involvement in Council's planning and delivery of services and infrastructure. Council reports regularly on progress against these plans, including through the Annual Report.





How we developed the strategy

All NSW councils have a Community Engagement Strategy which is required to be reviewed following local government elections. Inner West's previous Community Engagement Strategy 2022-24 was reviewed following the election of the current Council in September 2024.

In 2024, the review included:

- Benchmarking against similar sized councils and the NSW Office of Local Government's Good, Better, Best standards
- Incorporation of new Councillor priorities
- An innovative Deliberative Forum consisting of 99 representative residents who were randomly selected to provide input into Council's approach to community engagement (see the Case Studies section in this document for more information).
- Pop-up stalls across the Inner West

Community feedback during the review included strong support for Council's engagement principles, support for using both online and in-person methods and a range of options for Council to report back on engagement outcomes. We received suggestions for improvements such as communicating how community input was used to shape a project or decision and more promotion of opportunities to participate.

New sections of the Community Engagement Strategy 2025-29 include information about how Council will engage on various types of projects, how we engage diverse members of the community, updated case studies to include recent engagements, and more graphics to aid comprehension. The Priorities 2025-29 section contains more information about the new priorities for this term and how Council is responding to the community feedback.



Nearly 400,000 views and over 17,000 contributions to engagement projects from the community



21
Local Matters
Forums held



Improved
evaluation and
measurement
of community
engagement

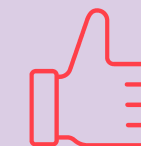


Deliberative
Forum held
with 99
representative
residents

Highlights from
the previous
Community
Engagement
Strategy 2022-24

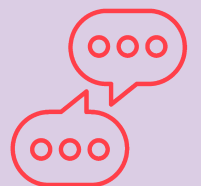


Community
input influenced
decision-making
on 162 projects



People who rate Council's
community engagement
as 'good to excellent'
increased from 60% to
65% from 2021 to 2024

Source: Community Satisfaction Survey 2024



13
Local
Democracy
Groups
convened

Principles of Engagement

Five core principles drive Council’s approach to engaging the community. A principles-based approach recognises that we engage the community for a range of purposes and specific circumstances.

Authentic

We value local knowledge, ideas and feedback and encourage dialogue

We explain why we are engaging and how we will use community input

We provide adequate notice and time for community response

Planned

We engage as early as possible to identify critical issues and opportunities

We coordinate engagement to guard against ‘engagement fatigue’ where people feel over-consulted

Tailored

We use a range of tools and techniques appropriate to each engagement

We offer face-to-face and online opportunities

Inclusive

We recognise and value community diversity

We support participation e.g. community language translations, accessible venues and formats

Transparent

We provide clear and relevant information without jargon

We publish a summary of community feedback and how it was considered

We communicate a decision or outcome to people who participated in the process

The four social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights also apply to all Council’s planning and service delivery.



Who we engage




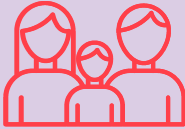




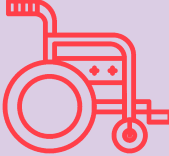
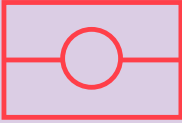

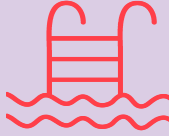





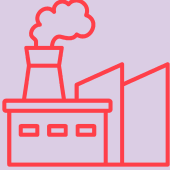




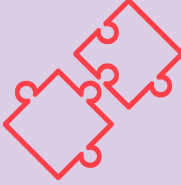


The community is everyone who lives, works, plays, studies, conducts business, owns property, visits or uses the services, facilities and public spaces of the Inner West. The community is not a singular entity but is made up of individuals and groups connected by geography, interest, identity, or affiliation.

Communities can be formal or informal. People will be members of many communities within the Inner West.

'I feel Inner West Council do take residents thoughts and feedback seriously when compared to other Sydney councils. Keep up the good work.'

Feedback received through Your Say Inner West survey evaluation

Stakeholders

 Residents	 People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	 Future community	 Children and families	 Council staff
 Councillors	 Schools and Early Learning Centres	 Cultural institutions and neighborhood centres	 People with a disability	 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 Young people	 Service/facility users	 Ratepayers	 Non-government organisations (NGOs) and service providers	 LGBTQ+ people
 Seniors	 State and Federal Government departments and agencies	 Business and Industry	 Community groups	 Students
 Interagencies	 Other Councils	 People connected by a common interest or by a place	 Council's Local Democracy Groups	 Visitors





How we engage

Council's work is shaped by constant feedback from the community. Our engagement can be:

- ongoing dialogue with stakeholders such as residents, businesses, local not for profits, community groups or ratepayers
- about specific projects such as improving infrastructure or developing a strategy

Local Matters Forums

Local Matters Forums bring Council to the community. They are held 10 times per year, twice in each ward, with ward councillors and Executive staff in attendance. They are open to all members of the community to attend and hear information about local projects, ask questions and raise concerns.

Customer service stalls

A mobile customer service stall is held five days per week (Tuesdays to Saturdays) in locations across the Inner West including main streets, aquatic centres and libraries. Residents can lodge or follow up requests and receive information about Council.

Satisfaction surveys

Council regularly surveys the community and users of our services to gather feedback on satisfaction and opportunities for improvements. For example, each year we undertake a parent/carers satisfaction survey for our Early Learning Centres, and we survey our Aquatics members and users on their experiences.

We also commission a regular Community Satisfaction Survey through an independent research organisation, which targets a representative sample of the community to inform service and strategic planning.

Local Democracy Groups

Council's Local Democracy Groups are an important part of the Community Engagement Strategy. They comprise community members with subject matter expertise or lived experience, who are selected by an open expression of interest process to provide input to support Council's decision-making and actions.

The new Council, elected in September 2024, renewed the Local Democracy Groups and created additional groups in the areas of customer experience, small business and housing (incorporating housing, heritage, planning and renters' rights) to ensure Council is responding to local issues and interests. There are fourteen groups in total:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Arts and Culture
- Access
- Bicycle
- Customer Experience
- Environment
- Housing for all
- LGBTQ+
- Multicultural
- Small business
- Social Strategy
- Seniors
- Transport
- Young Leaders

Each of the 14 groups meet at least four times per year. Council brings members of the Local Democracy Groups together at least twice a year to collaborate.

The groups contribute to achieving community outcomes as set out in the Inner West Community Strategic Plan and support Council to implement its four-year Delivery Program. They also provide input into development and implementation of Inner West policies, strategic plans and programs in their area of expertise.

'Really enjoy the opportunity to input into Council's direction and actions.'

Local Democracy Group member



Deliberative engagement

Many engagement processes target large numbers of people to participate and are often one-way e.g. surveys.

Deliberative engagement processes typically target a small, representative group who come together for a particular purpose, have time to consider in-depth information, participate in dialogue where evidence and perspectives are shared, and options are considered and evaluated, before arriving at recommendations, often achieved through consensus.

Council has committed to incorporating deliberative engagement practices as part of our suite of techniques. Examples include Council's Local Democracy Groups and a deliberative forum to help develop the Community Strategic Plan and review this strategy (see case study section for more details).

Council has also established a range of reference groups that incorporate deliberative practices. Examples include a Pride Centre Reference Panel and Balmain Precinct Working Group. Opportunities to get involved are advertised through Council's communication channels.

'Thank you to all the people at Council who are prepared to initiate discussions regarding hopefully a better living environment for residents. Naturally it was hard to get consensus on such issues. Please keep community informed about this program.'

Feedback received through Your Say Inner West survey evaluation

Our guide to project engagement

The following table contains typical engagement activities and promotion for a range of projects. This list is indicative, and the methods listed may be adapted in response to specific circumstances.

Highest level strategic plans / Major projects

Examples include: Community Strategic Plan; Reconciliation Action Plan; Disability Action Plan; Parks plan of management and master plans; public domain plans; major infrastructure projects; Environmental Assessment (Review of Environmental Factors, Environmental Impact Statement); major upgrade/change to a sports ground; recreation facility or park; major new cycleway

Our engagement approach: involve/collaborate

- Guided by a comprehensive engagement plan
- Implement a minimum two-stage approach – extensive preliminary engagement plus public exhibition
- Use a range of engagement techniques, both face to face and online, tailored to the people involved. These may include deliberative techniques or a representative sample of the community
- Conduct several engagement sessions (physical or virtual)
- Engage with multiple stakeholders
- Provide multiple methods for community input
- Provide translation and interpretation as relevant
- Provide hardcopy materials at local libraries and service centres

Our promotion

- Extensive promotion in Council’s communication channels such as letter, flyer, or postcard distributed to all households; social media, website and e-news; posters, on-site signage and digital notice boards; monthly newsletter distributed to all households
- To relevant local democracy groups
- Targeted communications to key stakeholders

Medium projects

Examples include: Local Area Traffic Management plans and Parking studies; upgrade to a pocket park or neighbourhood playground; mid-size infrastructure project; local streetscape upgrade or road closure; naming and nominations; Residential Parking Schemes; Annual review of Council’s Operational Plan and Budget; Annual Financial Statements; licenses, leases and temporary hire agreements in parks

Our engagement approach: consult/involve

- Guided by a detailed engagement plan
- Implement a one or two-stage approach – moderate preliminary engagement and/or public exhibition
- Provide at least one online input method at Your Say Inner West as well as email, phone and letter
- Provide translation and interpretation as relevant
- Consider other online tools
- Conduct at least one engagement session (physical or virtual)

Our promotion

- Promotion in Council’s communication channels such as letter, flyer, or postcard distributed to all households; social media, website and e-news; posters, on-site signage and digital notice boards; monthly newsletter distributed to all households
- Targeted communications to key stakeholders

Minor projects

Examples include: Footpath – new or renewal easement; infrastructure repair; maintenance; minor road works; change to fee or charge

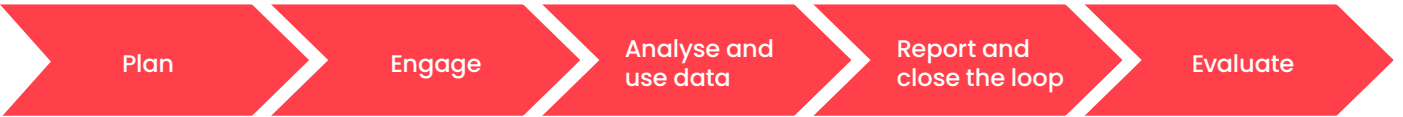
Our engagement approach: inform/notify

- Guided by a basic communications plan
- Provide an email address and contact phone number for enquiries

Our promotion

- Signage on-site
- Notify nearby residents through a letterbox drop
- Publish on website

Engagement process



Plan

We set objectives and scope (what the community can influence), map stakeholders and techniques, identify issues and opportunities, set timeline and decision-making process.

Engage

We undertake the program of engagement activities in accordance with Council’s engagement principles and the engagement plan.

Analyse and use data

We review data from all sources, summarise and theme, draw out key insights, use the data to shape the project. Sometimes community feedback is reported to the elected Council to assist a specific decision.

Report and close the loop

We create and publish an Engagement Outcomes Report online that includes the program of engagement activities, promotion, who we heard from and what we heard. We publish the result or decision and ‘close the loop’ by communicating to people who participated how their input was used.

Evaluate

We review the process and document lessons learned for continuous improvement.



Engaging our diverse communities

Inclusive engagement is one of our guiding principles and a priority of the elected Council. We are committed to supporting people to participate in our engagement and actively work to remove barriers to participation.

Engagement planning identifies appropriate methods that consider the needs of our diverse communities. These include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse people, LGBTQ+ people, children and young people, seniors, people who experience vulnerability and the business community.

Council also has specific engagement actions in supporting strategies such as our *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–25* for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, and our *Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023–26*.

Council advocacy and partnerships on local issues

There are three levels of government in Australia – federal, state and local. Council works with federal and state government agencies on matters that affect the Inner West and advocates for the community on local issues.

These may include planning and development, major infrastructure and transport projects. Council recognises that such projects often have impacts on the community and will act as a strong community voice.

Council also engages with the state and federal governments on health and wellbeing issues including community safety, health, education, food security, energy security, public policy, housing and land use policy and transport. We participate in several interagency networks that bring together government and community sector representatives.

Council meets with government agencies to share information and local expertise, provide community feedback on specific issues, and identify opportunities to benefit the Inner West. We inform the community about key projects, involve the community in developing formal submissions and provide opportunities for the community to give feedback on specific projects and when relevant, organise public forums with relevant government representatives.

Case study 1: Community driven process – Aboriginal Survival Memorial in Yeo Park, Ashfield

Council committed to developing three Inner West Memorials to Aboriginal Survival in the *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–25*. Yeo Park in Ashfield was chosen as the first location.

Initial engagement was on the brief to inform the artist procurement process, during which Council heard from prominent local Aboriginal artists, the Aboriginal Local Democracy Group and local Aboriginal people. The outcome of this stage was the appointment of artists Nicole Monk and Maddison Gibbs.

Consultation started with local residents on the memorial location including the removal of several rose beds, and the nature and scale of landscaping. We notified via letter box drop, posted a feedback form on Your Say Inner West, and held an in-person engagement with the artists and landscape architect in the park.

Sessions were held for Aboriginal people, residents and park users about placement and materials. We collaborated to find respectful ways to incorporate different views.

Council then engaged with local Aboriginal people and families on the best way to contribute culturally significant inscriptions to be carved on a series of large boulders. Ultimately this included handprints of children and Elders being inscribed onto the stonework, along with meaningful images of animals and plants.

More than one thousand local people joined Inner West Mayor and Councillors at the launch of the Yeo Park Survival Memorial in March 2024.



‘Brilliant idea and beautiful concept. Looking forward to the memorial at Yeo Park and other venues being completed in the following years. In my opinion we need as many visual reminders as possible across this council area of whose land we are living on.’

Feedback received online at Your Say Inner West



Case study 2: Identifying missing voices – additional targeted consultation with young people about Balmain Library upgrade

Council sought community feedback on ideas for the future of Balmain Town Hall Precinct and upgrading Balmain Library. Initial input analysis found that few younger people had participated. Young people are important customers of Balmain Library, so extra engagement was developed to fill the gap.

Our strategy to engage successfully with the target demographic included working with schools, appropriate facilities for in-person activities, a safe and fun consultation program, seeking consent from parents/carers, incentives and appropriate language.

We offered the chance to win a \$50 voucher by completing an online survey and also gave a \$50 voucher to all who attended an in-person 'walk-shop' at the library. Participation was promoted widely, including through local schools, Balmain PCYC, Council's young leaders working group, posters in libraries and various social media channels.

The online survey received 256 visitors and 55 people completed the questions. Approximately half of the participants had been to Balmain Library before – they told us they visited to read and liked the study spaces, quiet area and range of books, they would attend more frequently if there was better material to borrow and more comfortable spaces. Our engagement attracted many participants who had never been to the library before, who were a valuable source of information about what could be done to attract new customers.

Our 'walk-shop' took 16 participants aged 12–16 on a tour of the spaces, followed by a discussion on what the group did and did not like, how the space could be improved and an interactive digital survey.

The key themes gathered were that the students liked the computers, variety of books and the multiple spaces. They wanted more comfortable furniture, and said that the teen room was small. Improvement suggestions included better promotion of the facilities to students, games room and a large sign out the front.

These valuable insights were collated and provided to the library designers. In response to all feedback, the refurbished library delivered:

- A modern update
- More lighting and power points
- A range of spaces to work alone
- Comfortable workstations

More students and younger people are now using the spaces, especially in the Uncle Bob Webb Room – a new study area accessible from the library.

'A great library is a place with great open reading areas and many books to read fun little nooks and crannies to read and desks to do homework at. Also, a little play space for younger children to play while their older adults or siblings work also my mum would say a cafe.'

Survey participant aged 12

Case study 3: Reaching diverse communities – co-designing an inclusive playground at King George Park, Rozelle

In May 2022 Council committed to building a flagship inclusive playground in every ward and noted that children with disability could be better engaged in designing play spaces. The first playground to be upgraded was in King George Park, Rozelle.

To support the work, we partnered with inclusive play consultants *Touched by Olivia Foundation (TbO)* and were guided by co-design principles developed by the Social Strategy Local Democracy Group.

We tested elements of the engagement plan with TbO and Council's social policy staff. They advised a strengths-based approach, emphasizing belonging, comfort and intergenerational stakeholders including grandparents.

Council's Cultural Advisor provided information about incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and design elements.

We also considered the *NSW Everyone Can Play Principles* 'Can I get there?, Can I play? Can I stay?' gathering feedback about facilities to support play alongside equipment.

We provided multiple ways for young people and residents to have their say both online and face-to-face. TbO staff attended design sessions with primary school children and for high school students with additional needs. We also ran an online drawing competition.

We held on-site engagement with residents, opened an online survey, held an online information session and interviewed relevant organisations in the disability sector.

At concept design stage our Access and Young Leaders group members reviewed the design and monthly on-site meetings with adjacent neighbours were held throughout construction.

This program of robust consultation was delivered at the involve/collaborate level with the outcome that the final design included most of the requested items, features and supportive elements.

We conducted an evaluation of the engagement to inform work on the next playground upgrades and took note of features which could not be included due to budget or space to consider for inclusion in the future.

'Our wheelchair-bound friend can't join us on playgrounds so we'd love to see: any play equipment that a wheelchair can go on and a large two person slide that her mother can slide down with her...outdoor sensory activities are really important as she can't move around but she can use her hands to play, low to the ground climbing areas with stable objects to hold onto. This with sun shading is the dream.'

Feedback received during initial online consultation at Your Say Inner West



Case study 4: Building plans for the future with a representative community sample – Deliberative Forum on future priorities and community engagement

Council hosted a Deliberative Forum based on the principles of a Citizens' Jury in August 2024. The 99 participants were randomly recruited by a market research company to broadly match the Inner West demographic profile and were remunerated for their participation. The process was independently designed and facilitated.

The Deliberative Forum participants:

- Provided input into the review of our Community Strategic Plan including identifying community values, refreshing the community vision statement, and determining key challenges and priority areas for action
- Provided input into the review of our Community Engagement Strategy (this document) including what motivates people to participate, preferred ways and barriers to participation, how people like to be informed about outcomes, and suggestions for future engagement

Using a range of small group discussions and fun digital methods, participants provided input which directly influenced the Community Strategic Plan and will inform Council's community engagement during the current term.

Overall, there was 94% satisfaction with the Deliberative Forum.

The technique was successful in achieving a group that was both representative of the Inner West, and inclusive of people who do not normally participate in more traditional community engagement methods.

'I liked the cross section of people from the LGA who attended and liked hearing the various views on what important issues were (even if I did not agree with them).'

Participant at 2024 Deliberative Forum



Evaluation

We evaluate our practice to identify how well engagement objectives are met.

Evaluation assists in:

- Reporting on outcomes
- Identifying gaps in data collections
- Learning what worked and what didn't
- Continuously improving processes

We collect data on indicators including reach and participation online and ask participants at engagement events to complete evaluation forms.








We also measure engagement in our representative, statistically valid community satisfaction survey.

'Your Say Inner West surveys are easy to read and interact with, I like them.'

Feedback received through Your Say Inner West survey evaluation

Resident perceptions of Council's community engagement have steadily improved: in 2024 65% of residents rated Council's community engagement as 'Good' to 'Excellent' up from 60% in 2021. (Source: Community Satisfaction Survey 2024, available on Council's website)

We will continue to refine how we evaluate engagement.

Indicator	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
 Inner West Council website page views	5,734,909	6,745,641	6,082,624	6,986,412	6,997,691
 Inner West Council social media followers (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	34,757	47,555	54,041	59,245	67,900
 Your Say Inner West visits	104,900	94,300	61,700	104,392	156,738
 Your Say Inner West engagement projects	53	71	53	72	90
 Your Say Inner West members	4,043	4,342	4,820	6,497	9,990
 Your Say Inner West user experience (ease of finding information and providing feedback) New in 2024	-	-	-	-	88%
 Local Matters Forums customer satisfaction New in 2024	-	-	-	-	89%

Your Say Inner West

Join the conversation today

yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au

Council's online engagement platform is the place for you to get involved in important projects that shape the future of the Inner West.

We will listen to what you say, take your opinions into account and report back to you on how community input contributes to decisions.



Scan the QR code to join over 9,000 Your Say Inner West members and have your say on Council projects



Our community finds Your Say Inner West a great place to engage online. Since 2022 the site has totalled up over:



200 Projects



17,000 Contributions to engagement projects from the community



9000 Members



400,000 Page views





Priorities 2025-29

The Community Engagement Strategy 2025-29 includes the following priorities which respond to feedback, improve our engagement approach and harness new technologies.

Council priorities

The newly elected Council adopted a set of priorities at its meeting on 22 October 2024 as commitments for its term of office and for incorporation into Council's four-year Delivery Program. These include the following priorities that enhance Council's community engagement:

- New term of 14 Local Democracy Groups, including new groups:
 - Customer Experience
 - Housing for All (incorporating housing, heritage, planning and renters' rights)
 - Small Business
- Bring together members of the local democracy groups at least twice a year to collaborate and provide insights on Inner West Council policies
- Expand community consultation on major projects by doorknocking residents to seek their feedback
- Expand customer service stalls across the Inner West including in our public libraries and establish a new customer service point in the Marrickville town centre
- Launch a better Council website to log and track services
- Expand the information available on Council services available in community languages
- Inform older residents about local policies and programs for seniors

We will also:

- Respond to our Deliberative Forum feedback by:
 - Increased promotion of engagement opportunities and communicating how we used community input in shaping projects, programs and decisions
 - Developing options for reporting outcomes from simple infographics to detailed engagement reports
 - Exploring new technologies and use of social media, and continuing to mitigate barriers to participation
- Continue to improve how we evaluate and measure community engagement
- Continue to strive towards maximising inclusive engagement
- Grow our Your Say Inner West membership
- Hold 10 Local Matters Forums across the Inner West each year
- Provide internal resources to support staff capacity to deliver excellent engagement guided by the Community Engagement Strategy
- Report on engagement activities undertaken every year in our Annual Report
- Investigate ways to streamline engagement analysis
- Review the Community Engagement Strategy after the next Local Government elections in September 2028

3. Community Participation Plan for land use planning matters



Community participation in Planning and Assessment

This section outlines when and how Council will engage with the community and stakeholders around its planning decisions. It sets out the legislative requirements for minimum mandatory public exhibition periods for all of Council’s planning functions, and notification requirements for development and related applications. It builds on the community engagement approach outlined elsewhere in this document and includes specific information about community participation in planning and development decisions in the Inner West. Where Council isn’t the determining authority, the relevant authority’s Community Participation Plan applies.

What is a public exhibition?

Public exhibition is a formal stage of engagement where documents are available for a specified period for the community to view and provide their feedback (called submissions), which is considered before a decision is made.

For planning matters, public exhibition usually includes:

- Description of what is being proposed
- Notifying affected and adjoining landowners/occupiers depending on the nature and potential impact of the change
- Advertising/publishing the exhibition notice, including the timeframe, and how submissions can be made
- Displaying the documents for public view
- Publishing details on website

For development and related applications, public exhibition is known as notification.

Public exhibition periods

Public exhibition periods are in calendar days and include weekends. Council avoids where possible engaging with the community during periods of NSW Government school holidays, or if this is unavoidable, extends timelines where possible. At a minimum, the EP&A Act requires Council to extend public exhibitions or development and related application notifications which occur between 20 December and 10 January inclusive.

Table 1: Minimum mandatory public exhibition timeframes

Documents which Council will place on public exhibition (per Schedule 1 to the EP&A Act)	Minimum mandatory public exhibition timeframes
Planning documents	
Draft local strategic planning statements	28 days
Draft development control plans	28 days
Draft contributions plans for local infrastructure	28 days
Draft community participation plans	28 days
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to a Gateway determination	28 days or as specified by the Gateway determination
Development documents	
Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate for designated development or for State significant development)	See notification process section below in Table 3
Application for development consent for designated development	28 days
Application for modification of development consent that is required to be publicly exhibited by the regulations	See notification process section below in Table 3
Environmental impact statements obtained under Division 5.1 of the Act	28 days
Draft voluntary planning agreements	28 days

Submissions

Submissions about a plan or application on public exhibition may be made during the specified period. Submissions may be made either online or by writing to Council and must include a name, address and preferably contact details. Submissions should include the reasons for support or opposition to the proposal. Submissions may be summarised for reporting and Council will not respond individually to submissions.

Council will not publish contact details in public reports, but submissions can be made publicly available under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

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

After the public exhibition/notification period closes, Council officers will review all submissions. For development matters, Council officers complete an assessment of the application and include a summary of submissions in the Development Assessment Report. For strategic planning matters, Council officers review the submissions and amend the draft plan if required. A report on feedback received in submissions will be considered by Council as part of the decision-making process. Council will advise submitters of reporting dates and Council decisions.

Decision making

Strategic plans are adopted by a resolution of the elected Council at a formal meeting. For planning proposals, Council resolves whether to proceed with a local environmental plan (LEP) amendment, however the final decision is made by the local plan-making authority (LPMA). The LPMA is identified by the Gateway determination and will be the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces (or the minister's delegate) or Council.

In some circumstances, Council will not be the Planning Proposal Authority (responsible for the governance of a planning proposal, including preparation and exhibition) and this will be the Planning Secretary (NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure), the Sydney Eastern City Planning Panel or another body appointed by the Minister.

Development applications can be determined by Council staff under delegation, the Inner West Local Planning Panel, or the Sydney Eastern City Planning Panel. Community feedback is one component of the information Council uses to make decisions. For more information about how development applications are assessed and determined, please visit Council's website.

Council will publish the reasons for decisions on development and related applications including:

- The decision
- The dates of the decision
- The reasons for the decision
- How community views were considered



Notification process for planning proposals and development control plans

This section details how Council notifies the community about planning proposals for LEP amendments that have received a Gateway determination to proceed, and draft development control plans (DCPs). Gateway determinations stipulate consultation requirements, however, they generally do not specify the extent of notification to surrounding properties. The intent of this section is to ensure a consistent and transparent approach to the notification of planning proposals and draft DCPs across the Inner West local government area.

Table 2 establishes minimum notification distances based on the category of a planning proposal or DCP amendment and the extent of the potential impacts. Council will send written notification to owners and occupiers of land within a radius of the subject site as specified in the table, measured from all points on the boundary of the subject site/s. Notwithstanding, broader notification may be undertaken where Council officers consider this appropriate or if specified in a Gateway determination. In addition to written notification, all amendments will be notified on Council’s website.

Table 2: Minimum notification areas for planning proposals and draft DCP amendments

Category of amendment	Local Environmental Plan (LEP)	Development Control Plan (DCP)	Radius
Basic	LEP amendments that add or remove a heritage item or change permissible uses AND do not require complex assessment	Minor changes to DCP which do not require complex assessment	20m
Standard	LEP amendments that change land uses or principal development standards like FSR and height AND do not require significant consideration of economic, environmental, social or transport issues	DCP amendments that change land uses, built form controls AND do not require significant consideration of economic, transport or infrastructure issues	50m
Complex	LEP amendments that require significant consideration of economic, environmental, social, transport or infrastructure issues e.g., change of zoning, land-uses, built form controls (FSR or height) which require complex assessment	DCP amendments that involve significant consideration of economic, social, environmental, transport or infrastructure issues	75m
Precinct	Complex LEP amendments that are for multiple sites or land greater than one hectare	Similar to a Complex DCP amendment but where the proposal relates to multiple lots or is greater than one hectare	75m
Principal	LEP amendments which include a combination of a number of planning proposals	Complex DCP amendment which includes a number of DCP amendments	75m

Where Council is of the opinion that properties in an adjoining local government area may be affected by a planning proposal or draft DCP amendment, both the council and landowners/occupiers will be notified.

it is impractical. For amendments that are proposed to apply to many properties, Council may not send letters. Notification will be placed on Council’s website and electronic alerts will be sent to persons or groups that have registered to receive notifications on planning matters.

The NSW Government’s Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline states that affected and adjoining landowners should be notified of a planning proposal in writing unless

Notification process for development applications

This section details how and when Council notifies the community about development applications received for the Inner West local government area. It replaces requirements formerly contained in the three legacy councils’ development control plans. Specifically, it replaces the notification requirements for development applications and their associated applications contained in:

- Chapter B of the Comprehensive Inner West DCP 2016 for Ashbury, Ashfield, Croydon, Croydon Park, Haberfield, Hurlstone Park and Summer Hill (IWDCP 2016).
- Part A, Section 3 of the Leichhardt DCP 2013 (LDCP 2013); and
- Part 1.2 of the Marrickville DCP 2011 (MDCP 2011).

This section includes how development is categorised based on the extent of the likely impacts, identifies landowners/occupiers who will be notified and provides a consistent, transparent approach for community participation in development assessment across the Inner West local government area.

What applications are notified?

- Development applications listed in Table 2
- Modification of development consents under section 4.55 of the EP&A Act listed in Table 3
- Review of determination under section 8.2 of the EP&A Act listed in Table 3
- Building certificates for unauthorised works where the works undertaken would have required a development application or a section 4.55 (2) modification application

What is not notified?

Development which is exempt (some minor building renovations or works don’t need approval). See Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website for details (planning.nsw.gov.au).

Development deemed complying development under State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes). This type of development requires a Complying Development Certificate (CDC) issued by Council or an accredited private certifier. Complying Development Certificates will be notified in accordance with Section 148 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021.

Who is notified?

Unless otherwise exempted by the EP&A Act, Council will notify:

- Owners/occupiers of land within the radius of the subject site as specified in Table 2
- Owners and occupiers of any neighbouring land which, in the opinion of Council, may be adversely affected by the development
- For notification relating to sites on the border of a local government area, Council will notify the adjoining council and residents in the vicinity of the development site, where, in the opinion of Council, properties in that local government area may be affected by a development application or planning proposal.

Council may extend the timeframe for submissions or notify other people or groups.

Note: Sites within the notification radius of a development in a neighbouring Local Government Area will be notified by the relevant Council in accordance with their notification policy.

How we notify

A notification letter or email will be issued to all properties within the specified radius in Table 3 containing:

- Address of the development site
- Description of the proposed works
- Details of the notification period
- How to view the application
- Details on how to make a submission

A sign will be installed at the site visible and legible from the public domain on or before the start of the notification period, weather permitting. A photo will be taken of the notice. If Council is notified that the sign is removed or destroyed before the end of the notification period, the sign will be replaced.

The sign will contain:

- Address of the development site
- Description of the proposed works
- Notification period
- How to access the application
- How to make a submission

All notified applications will be published on Council’s website for at least the notification period.

Types of development and notification requirements

There are four types of development types:

- A – No notification required
- B – Routine applications notified for 14 days
- C – Higher impact applications notified for 21 days
- D – Significant or major impact applications notified for 28 days

Table 3: Notification requirements for development and related applications:

Development Type A
<p>Time/radius/method: No notification required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Internal commercial/ industrial fit outsInternal residential building worksStrata Subdivisions for existing/ approved buildings (except affected by the Housing SEPP 2021)Tree removal in Heritage Conservation AreasDemolition of minor or ancillary structures (including those within a Heritage Conservation Area but excluding Heritage Items).
Development Type B
<p>Time: 14 days. Radius: 20 metres (minimum 10 properties around the subject site will be notified regardless of the distance from the property).</p> <p>Method: Letters, website and sign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Alterations and additions to dwelling housesNew dwelling houses including secondary dwellingsDemolition of a buildingDual occupancies (where permissible)Change of useHeritage Item tree removalsExtension of operational/trading hoursNew business/commercial/industrial development with less than 500sqm of gross floor areaAlterations and additions to business/commercial/ industrial developmentSubdivision (including subdivision affected Housing SEPP 2021)Signage and advertising structuresAlterations and additions to Places of Public WorshipSolar panels

Development Type C

- Time:** 21 days. **Radius:** 50 metres (minimum 24 properties around the subject site will be notified regardless of the distance from the property).
- Method:** Letters, website and sign
- Residential Flat Buildings
 - Multi dwelling housing
 - Shop top housing
 - Boarding houses, Supportive accommodation, Group homes, Co-living housing or Build-to-rent housing
 - New business/commercial/industrial development with a gross floor area of or greater than 500sqm
 - Extension of late-night trading hours for licensed premises
 - 24-hour trading
 - Childcare centres, educational facilities or community centres
 - Change of use to non-residential uses in residential zone
 - Sex services and restricted premises
 - Applications involving Voluntary Planning Agreements
 - Hospitals
 - Senior’s housing
 - New Place of Public Worship

Development Type D

- Time:** 28 days. **Radius:** 75 metres (minimum 24 properties around the subject site will be notified regardless of the distance from the property).
- Method:** Letters, website, sign and publish
- Development over \$30M
 - Major development applications, master plans, Development Control Plans
 - Designated development, nominated integrated development advertised or State significant development
 - Category 1 remediation works in accordance with Resilience and Hazards SEPP 2021
 - Council-related development applications

Note 1: Council has the discretion to alter any of the above for an application where the nature of the development, its location or the history of site development warrants it.

Note 2: The radius is measured from all points on the boundary of the development site.

Note 3: When the original notification method, period and/ or radius cannot be determined, defer to the notification requirements in Table 3

Modifications, reviews and amendments

Section 4.55 of the EP&A Act makes provisions for a Council to accept applications to modify development consents. There are four types of Section 4.55 modifications, which will be notified in accordance with Table 3 below.

Section 8.2 of the EP&A Act makes provisions for a Council to accept applications to review Council determinations. These applications will be notified in accordance with Table 4 below.

Table 4: Notification requirements for modification and Section 8.2 review applications made to Council

Modification Type	Notification Method
<p>Section 4.55(1)</p> <p>Concerned with correcting minor errors, inaccurate description or mistaken calculations</p>	No notification required
<p>Section 4.55(1A)</p> <p>Modifications involving minimal environmental impact</p>	May be notified at the total discretion of Council if Council is of the opinion that there may be implications for neighbouring amenity, streetscape, or local character
<p>Section 4.55(2)</p> <p>All other modifications</p>	Notified in the same manner as the original development application
<p>Section 4.56</p> <p>Modification by consent authorities of consents granted by the Court</p>	May be notified at the total discretion of Council if Council is of the opinion that there may be implications for neighbouring amenity, streetscape, or local character taking guide from the requirement for notification for other modification application types
<p>Section 8.2</p>	Notified in the same manner as the original application, regardless of whether there are amendments to the proposed development from that in the original Development Application

Amended plans and information

Where amended plans and/or information are received during the assessment process the application will not be re-notified unless there are perceivable additional impacts including (but not limited to):

- Increased height
- Reduced setbacks
- Additional overshadowing impacts
- Increased intensity of development
- Additional or relocated windows/doors creating new sightlines into a neighbouring property, or
- Increased operating hours or patron capacity.

The application will be re-notified in the same manner as the original application and to those persons who lodged a submission about the original notification.

Council has the discretion to alter any of the above where the nature of the changes warrants it.

Building Certificates

Building certificates for unauthorised works will be notified in the same manner as development and related applications where the works undertaken would have required a development application or a section 4.55 (2) modification application.

Version Control – Strategy History:

This strategy will be reviewed following the next local government election or as required.
Governance use only:

Document	Community Engagement Strategy Community Participation Plan	Uncontrolled Copy When Printed	
Custodian	Corporate Strategy and Engagement Manager	Version #	
Adopted By	Council 29 April 2025	ECM Document #	
Next Review Date			



