

2.8

GENERIC PROVISIONS SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT





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Part 2 Generic Provisions

2.8 Social Impact Assessment

A social impact assessment (SIA) aims to predict the positive or negative impact that development or land use change may have on people's way of life, their culture, or their community. The SIA process also encourages applicants to mitigate, minimise or resolve any negative outcome of development and enhance public benefit, which in turn will better inform decision making within Council.

Considering social issues and addressing social impacts in its decision making enables Council to address the *Our Inner West 2036* vision of:

- Maintaining and building upon those elements of the community that are valued, in order to keep the Inner West LGA a great place to live in 2036 and beyond; and
- Supporting and promoting the community's wellbeing and harmony, cultural diversity and inclusiveness.

Council is committed to the SIA process as a means of considering social issues more comprehensively and consistently in planning and decision making. Demand for a greater focus on social impacts has been driven through:

- A changing demographic profile and pressures from inner-urban life and proximity to the Sydney CBD;
- Increasing awareness of planning authorities to apply social criteria in making decisions about development and land use;
- An increased emphasis by Council and the community on sustainability; and
- An increased emphasis on creating a cohesive, connected, caring, safe and equitable community.

2.8.1 Principles and definitions

A SIA assesses the social consequences of development proposals, plans, policies and projects. The SIA process involves analysing, monitoring and managing social consequences, both positive and negative, and any social change processes caused by them. An effective SIA will:

- Support socially sustainable development and decision making, contributing to the determination of best policy or development alternatives;
- Be informed by relevant policy and legislation and integrate policy priorities (such as affordable housing, equitable access to services, integrated community facilities or sustainable transport);
- Acknowledge the value of local communities by addressing the elements likely to impact on community wellbeing (those values differ between communities);
- Identify impacts that are directly related to the proposed development, and demonstrate the connection between the development and the likely impact;
- Demonstrate rigor and a social science base in presenting evidence; and
- Address how net social benefit can be enhanced through the proposal and how negative social outcomes can be lessened.

2.8.2 Levels of social impact assessment

There are two levels of SIA:

- Social impact comment; and
- Social impact statement.

A social impact comment (SIC) relates to projects unlikely to result in significant social impacts or of a scale that does not warrant a comprehensive analysis by an experienced practitioner. Generally, a SIC need only be undertaken by a qualified and experienced town planner and can form part of the Statement of Environmental Effects.

The social impact statement (SIS) is a comprehensive assessment typically required for large developments or developments where significant social impacts are anticipated. The SIS must be undertaken by someone with appropriate training and experience, particularly in using rigorous social science methodologies that are undertaken with public involvement.

A SIC or SIS is required with any development application for the land uses listed in Table 1, Section 2.8.5. Table 1 is not a definitive list. Council will use its discretion under the EP&A Act to request a SIC or SIS for any development application if Council believes a proposed development is likely to have a significant impact on the community.

2.8.3 Objectives

- O1** To ensure proposals are considered in accordance with Section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and the *Inner West Local Environmental Plan 2022* (IWLEP 2022) and policies.
- O2** To promote development activity that benefits the community without significant adverse social impact.
- O3** To ensure the community's needs are met in an equitable and inclusive way that enhances the area's environmental, social and economic qualities.
- O4** To ensure adequate community participation in any proposal that may impact them.
- O5** To assist with governance, economic, social and environmental accountability.
- O6** To provide guidance to the industry as to what developments require a SIA.

2.8.4 Contents of a SIA

2.8.4.1 Social impact comment (SIC)

NB A Council guideline on the process and structure of a SIC is available, and any significant departure from this should be explained in the SIC.

- C1** A SIC must demonstrate:
 - i. Sufficient relevant information to identify the social impacts of the proposed development including:

- a. a description of both positive and negative impacts of development on the local community; and
- b. the significance and extent of the impacts;
- ii. Mitigation measures or strategies to address potential social impacts; and
- iii. How persons directly affected, such as neighbours and key stakeholders, have been consulted.

2.8.4.2 Social impact statement (SIS)

NB *There are a number of acceptable models to prepare a SIS and Council does not prescribe which one an applicant should use. However, a Council guideline on the process and structure of the SIS is available, and significant departure from the guideline should be explained in the SIS.*

- C2** A SIS must be undertaken by appropriately trained and qualified person using rigorous social science methodologies and with a high degree of public involvement.
- C3** The SIS must include evidence of qualifications and experience of the person(s) involved in its preparation.
- C4** The SIS must include a thoroughly researched baseline, must demonstrate that effective engagement has been undertaken with those individuals and groups affected, and must be robust and complete in addressing the impacts identified.
- C5** Consideration must be given to mitigation measures or strategies to address potential social impacts. Those measures must take the form of a management or mitigation plan that will form part of any approved development.

2.8.5 Development requiring SIA

Table 1 will help to determine whether a development requires a SIC or SIS. If unsure, contact Council for advice.

NB *Table 1 is a general guide only. It does not contain an exhaustive list to encompass every development type that may require a SIC or SIS.*

- C6** A SIC or SIS is required with any development application if, in the opinion of Council, a proposed development is likely to have a significant impact on the community.

Table 1 – Development requiring SIA

Development that requires a social impact comment (SIC)	
Land use	Criteria
Amusement centres	Any
Attached dwellings Multi dwelling housing Residential flat buildings Shop top housing Within mixed use developments	Between 20 and 50 dwellings
Boarding houses Seniors housing	Capacity for up to 19 residents
Child care centres	In a residential area with a capacity of 20 or more children
Community facilities Community premises	Any
Entertainment facilities Function centres	Capacity for 100 or more persons Capacity for 100 or more persons
Group homes (permanent and transitional) Hostels	Any
Places of public worship	Capacity for 200 or more persons
Recreation areas Recreation facilities	Capacity for 100 or more persons
Development that requires a social impact statement (SIS)	
Land use	Criteria
Attached dwellings Multi dwelling housing Residential flat buildings Shop top housing Within mixed use developments	More than 50 dwellings
Boarding houses Seniors housing	Capacity for 20 or more residents
Liquor license	Any premises where it is proposed to serve or sell liquor under the NSW Liquor Act 2007 (excluding a limited licence)
Pubs Registered clubs	New or extended premises And/or extension of trading hours
Retail premises	More than 3000m ² new or additional gross floor area
Sex services premises Restricted premises	Any
Tourist and visitor accommodation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backpackers' accommodation • Hotel or motel accommodation • Serviced apartments 	Any