

HARRISON-BENNETT PRECINCT

Minutes of General Meeting

held on Thursday, 4 September 2025 at 6 pm at

108 Parraween Street Cremorne

Attendance	7 attendees 6 apologies: CC, GW, JR, BD, KD, GY
Previous Meeting Minutes and SOA	Minutes of 7 August 2025 meeting were confirmed by PA and seconded by DY. Council's SOA was shared with attendees and can be viewed on the NSC website https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/harrisonprecinct
Convenor Actions	As agreed at the previous meeting, Convenors undertook the following actions: 29/08/25: Lodged submission to DPHI on Woolworths (1-7 Rangers Road and 50 Yeo Street) State Significant Development
Council preparation for new SRV	SK provided the following background information: Background • NSC applied for an 87.05% SRV (Feb 2025), which was rejected in full by IPART (May 2025). • It is uncommon for IPART to reject an application entirely. In 2025: ○ 6 councils applied for increases. ○ 4 were approved in full (including Federation Council with a 69.9% increase). ○ 1 was partially approved (Northern Beaches: applied for 39.6%, granted 25.2%). • NSC's application was rejected as it failed 4 of IPART's 6 assessment criteria: ○ Demonstrating financial need ○ Community awareness/understanding ○ Ratepayer impact ○ Productivity/cost containment strategies Preparatory Work for Future SRV Application (2026) - based on Council's Community Engagement Plan: North Sydney - Towards a Sustainable Future (endorsed by Council on 28 July 2025) • Council has indicated it plans to apply for an SRV next year. Consultation (to develop rating options) is occurring in two phases. • Stage 1 – “Let’s Talk...” (Aug 2025, 4 weeks) ○ Aim: Gather community views on services (maintain, increase, reduce), infrastructure, and willingness to pay. ○ Surveys: demographically selected + community-wide. ○ Report due: October 2025. • Stage 2 – Financial Planning & Options (Oct–Nov 2025, 5 weeks) ○ Aim: Develop Long Term Financial Plan and SRV options.

	○ Surveys: demographically selected + community-wide. ○ Report due: December 2025. ● Communication channels: newsletters, forums, precincts, surveys, media releases, demographic surveys. Discussion/comments ● Meeting attendees expressed concern that survey questions appeared to encourage particular responses/outcomes. ● A meeting attendee stated they had heard that Council had engaged Micromex at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars, but was unsure if this was factual. Action: <i>Precinct Convenors to write to Council asking for clarification on the cost of engaging Micromex and the scope of work to be undertaken by Micromex.</i>
Community Grants and subsidies	SK provided an overview of key points from the recent Council meeting regarding community grants and subsidies for the upcoming FY. 2025/26 Contributions ● \$1.32M in direct financial contributions and subsidies. ● \$2M in indirect contributions to not-for-profit organisations and community centres (support includes building maintenance, rates, waste and recycling services, and foregone rental income from Council-owned properties). ● \$793,100 allocated to community centres (Crows Nest, Kirribilli, North Sydney, and Neutral Bay). Council Meeting – 25 August 2025 ● Council resolved to redirect the following amounts to a building improvement and maintenance reserve fund specific to each facility (noting that these amounts were originally allocated as direct funding): ○ \$77,250 for the Kirribilli Community Centre. ○ 50% of the \$481,010 allocated to the Crows Nest Community Centre (the other 50% remains as direct funding). ● The Mayor also proposed an amendment to the motion: <i>“That, in order to reduce inherent conflicts of interest and promote participation in decisions relating to the use and maintenance of Council assets and the allocation of public funds, Council urges sitting councillors serving on community centre boards to resign from those positions.”</i> ● The councillors referred to above included: ○ Cr. Shannon Welch (Director, Crows Nest Community Centre). ○ Cr. Efi Carr (Director, Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre). ● Voting outcome: ○ For: Mayor, Cr. Beregi, Cr. Antonini, Cr. Holding, Cr. Hoy, Cr. Santer. ○ Against: Cr. Keen. ○ Absent: Cr. Spenceley. ○ Cr. Welch and Cr. Carr recused themselves due to conflicts of interest.

	• It is understood that Cr. Welch has since resigned from her board position. Cr. Carr's position remains unknown. Discussion/comments • Meeting attendees expressed concern and disappointment about reduced funding for community centres. • Some attendees felt it was inappropriate for Councillors to pressure colleagues to resign from community centre boards, with some noting the view that: ○ It should be up to an individual to decide how they wish to manage potential conflicts of interest. ○ Processes exist to handle conflicts of interest, e.g. Councillors with a conflict of interest recuse themselves from decision making at a council meeting on relevant matters.
DCP amendment to prohibit gas connections in new residential developments	DCP amendment to prohibit gas connections in new residential developments • On 11 December 2023, the Mayor proposed changes (via a Mayoral Minute) to planning controls to prohibit the installation of gas connections and appliances in new residential dwellings. • The proposal was reportedly prompted by representations from a resident who is a member of Doctors for the Environment Australia. The Mayoral Minutes cited concerns that gas is "no longer regarded as a healthy choice." • On 25 August 2025, Council considered draft Development Control Plan (DCP) amendments to give effect to the proposal, and endorsed these changes proceeding to the next stage (exhibition). • Voting outcome: ○ For: Mayor Baker, Cr. Beregi, Cr. Antonini, Cr. Holding, Cr. Hoy, Cr. Santer. Cr. Welch ○ Against: Cr. Keen, Cr. Carr ○ Absent: Cr. Spenceley. • The amendments will be placed on public exhibition for community feedback. Discussion/Comments • Council's role: ○ Several attendees noted that energy policy is the responsibility of State and Federal Governments, not local councils. It was noted that energy policy made by the Federal or State Government is typically developed by highly qualified and experienced experts in consultation with relevant stakeholders, guided by broader energy policy objectives set out in law or by the government (that cover a range of aspects including reliability, security and safety of supply and the energy system, affordability, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions). ○ Concerns were raised that ad hoc local policies made at a Council level may create unintended consequences (for example, see below). • Impact on new technologies: ○ Banning gas connections could impair adoption of low-emissions alternatives such as biomethane (produced from waste) and green hydrogen (produced from renewable electricity and water).

	○ Biomethane is produced from organic waste (agriculture, farming, forestry, wastewater) through anaerobic digestion. It can be upgraded to meet quality standards for injection into the existing network, replacing natural gas. No changes to household connections or appliances or network infrastructure are required. ○ Example: Jemena and Sydney Water's Malabar plant, which captures methane from wastewater (methane that would otherwise be flared or released into the atmosphere), injects biomethane into the network, allowing natural gas to be displaced. This project received approximately \$6m funding from the Federal Government through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, in recognition of the benefits of this technology. The facility is registered under GreenPower's renewable gas certification scheme (GreenPower is a program owned by the state and territory governments and administered by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water) . ○ International example: In Denmark, biomethane supplied almost 40% of gas demand in 2023, projected to reach 100% by 2030. https://ens.dk/en/energy-sources/biogas-denmark. Other countries that use biomethane include France, UK, Italy, Netherlands, Germany, US, Canada, China and others. ● Health and household experiences: ○ One meeting attendee reported feeling unwell when using indoor gas heaters. ○ Another attendee reported using gas heating for over 30 years without health issues. ○ A meeting attendee shared their opinion that it should be the choice of the individual as to the appliances they use in the home. ○ A meeting attendee shared their opinion that some cultures prefer cooking with gas. ● Electricity system impacts: ○ Meeting attendees raised concerns that banning gas would increase reliance on electricity, adding pressure to the grid and potentially requiring costly infrastructure upgrades.
Equitibuild – 183-185 Military Road (Planning Proposal and VPA)	Status update ● This Planning Proposal is still under assessment (post-exhibition status). Seeks to increase building height to 43m (12 storeys). ● Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA): ○ 2.5m setback along Military Road for footpath widening (95 sqm). ○ Increased eastern setback to contribute to future public plaza (135 sqm). ○ Public bicycle parking at ground level. ○ 5% affordable housing – developer describes as 5% of “uplift,” but Council has clarified this must be 5% of GFA in perpetuity. Discussion/comments ● Contribution to public open space (including plaza) is positive.

	Affordable housing contribution viewed as inadequate. Precinct's position: contribution should be at least 10%, consistent with State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 minimum for eligibility for height bonuses.
Woolworths – 1-7 Rangers Road and 50 Yeo Street (SD)	Status update - Precinct convenors have lodged the Precinct submission to the DPHI. - Attendees were reminded that submissions close on 8 September 2025.
Arkadia Planning Proposal	Status update - The North Sydney Local Planning Panel has rejected Arkadia's Planning Proposal, which sought to increase maximum building heights to allow two 12-storey towers, one 11-storey tower, and one 9-storey tower. - The next step is for the Planning Proposal to be voted on at a Council meeting. If the Council does not support the Planning Proposal, this will trigger the ability of Arkadia to seek a rezoning review by the Sydney North Planning Panel. Discussion/comments - A question was raised regarding the Neutral Bay Village Planning Study and its relevance to planning assessments. Action: Convenors to ask Council: <i>What is the current status and relevance of the Neutral Bay Village Planning Study?</i> <i>To what extent must the Sydney North Planning Panel (in Planning Proposal/DA assessments) or the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (in State Significant development assessments) consider the Neutral Bay Village Planning Study?</i>
53 & 55 Yeo Street	Status update - An amended DA (adding two storeys to an already approved 4-storey residential flat building) was approved by the North Sydney Local Planning Panel on 2 September 2025. - Conditions were imposed to enhance privacy protection (e.g., privacy screens, plantings). - However, the Panel did not require compliance with setback standards, despite non-compliance in numerous areas. Compliance could have helped address neighbouring residents' concerns regarding privacy and solar access. Attendees noted that this outcome was disappointing.
115-119 Holt Avenue	115-119 Holt Ave: It was noted that this site is now for sale as a potential LMR site. It was first placed on the market in April 2025 (an EOI process that appears to have been unsuccessful). It is now being marketed again, but by a different agency.
Streetscape	A meeting attendee requested clarification on what Council's long-term plans are in relation to trees along Yeo Street between Wycombe and Rangers Road, given the developments underway and proposed in the vicinity, and the projected increase in

	traffic along this narrow stretch. It was noted that this stretch of roadway features historic Box Brush trees which are planted IN the roadway similar to Harrison Street. Action: Convenors to ask Council: 1. <i>What is the plan to ensure street trees on Yeo Street are not removed and/or damaged?</i> Neutral Bay Village: meeting attendees noted that there was a lack of maintenance, in particular, at the cnr of Rangers and Military Road which is regularly strewn with rubbish, fallen palm fronds and holes in the soil. 
Traffic	Residents reiterated concerns relating to safety and congestion on Spofforth Street and other areas.
Other business	Water pressure A meeting attendee noted that they had recently received a notice from Sydney Water advising them that their household water pressure will be reduced in several stages. It is unclear as to whether this is being driven by increased densification without commensurate increases to infrastructure, or for other reasons.
Financial report	As at 4/09/2025, the Precinct held \$225.46 in its bank account. Expenses incurred: \$ 48.60 Zoom subscription fee for June/July/August. \$216 is spent on delivery of 3000 flyers per month, however, currently this expense is being paid for by NSC due to the low balance held in the Harrison-Bennett account. This low balance arises because annual funding has not been sufficient to cover total costs of flyer delivery since the amalgamation of the Harrison Precinct with the Bennett Precinct. In particular, although the combined precinct now covers the area and population of two precincts, the combined precinct continues to receive the funding equivalent to one precinct. An application for new funding will need to be made by Convenors for funding for the next 12 months. Flyers: meeting attendees discussed whether flyers should still be circulated in paper format, or whether it would be adequate to rely on social media and email. It was noted that some other Precincts are no longer circulating flyers manually, however, it was felt that paper flyers promote inclusiveness by reaching community members who are not active on social media and ensure that every single household is notified. It was noted that the Precinct has had several new members join or become aware of the Precinct through flyers. For these reasons it was agreed that the Precinct should continue circulating flyers.
Meeting close	The meeting concluded at 7.35 pm.

Next Meeting	The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 2 October 2025.
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