



North Sydney
SOCIAL
INCLUSION
STUDY

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Prepared by:



**The Planning
Studio**



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across Australia and pay our respect to Elders, past and present.

North Sydney has always been a significant gathering place. We acknowledge the continued custodianship and connection of the **Cammeraygal people** to the land that North Sydney is situated.

As part of the oldest living culture, we acknowledge and celebrate the Cammeraygal peoples connection to Country, Culture, knowledge and approach to community where the voices of all people are elevated and they feel welcomed, valued and included.

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Front Cover Photo: North Sydney Community Centre Program (Photo: North Sydney Community Centre)

Inside Cover Photo: Indigenous dance Sydney, (Photo: Dammulay Ngurang)

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Social inclusion is everyone's responsibility.

North Sydney Council recognise that social inclusion – in our community, work, learning and decision making – is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of their community members.

The North Sydney Social Inclusion Study ('The Study') provides an understanding of what social inclusion means in the North Sydney context.

The Study acknowledges the strengths that exist within the North Sydney community, while also identifying the perceived and real barriers faced by some to having equal access and opportunities, as well as the experiences and circumstances that influence each one of us, our sense of value, belonging, connection and how we participate in community life.

The Study has been prepared with three key questions about social inclusion in mind - where is North Sydney now, what does the North Sydney community and Council consider social inclusion to be, and how can we achieve a socially inclusive North Sydney?

Based on extensive research and engagement with over 300 people through various activities, the Study provides a strategic and practical framework to guide how government, communities, businesses and service providers can collectively work together and make decisions that contribute to building a more socially inclusive North Sydney.

Starting with Country

First Nations peoples are the world's oldest continuous living culture. For First Nations peoples, social inclusion is fundamental to culture and community. "Culture includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law and customs acquired by membership in a social group. Knowledge, appropriate behavior and capabilities all make up culture"¹

Understandings of resilience are often framed within a Western, individualistic lens. Collective social systems such as families, groups and communities protect the individual from adversity, and provide resources to positively respond to adversity. For Indigenous people, "resilience is a feature of the whole community because the individual is linked to the community as well as to the land and environment"².

For both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, cultural identity and sense of belonging to places and communities is strongly linked to our overall health and emotional wellbeing. Therefore, exploring the existing connections within the community, to place and each other is fundamental to defining what social inclusion means in North Sydney.

Social Inclusion requires collective effort, an agreed approach and be embedded in all activities.

North Sydney Council is committed to social inclusion, increasing community access to the support they need, and helping connections across the community to grow and flourish.

Improving social inclusion requires a collective effort. However, understanding the different roles, responsibilities and priorities for everyone will ensure this is achieved in a collaborative, transparent and effective way.

Depending on the particular activity, the role of North Sydney Council can be to:



Advocate by using local knowledge, priorities and partnerships to advocate on behalf of the community to other levels of government and the private sector.



Deliver infrastructure, services, events, learning, and resources, that align with key strategies, plans and community needs.



Connect with and to each other, the community, business, local organisations and groups to unlock and share our skills, knowledge, resources and to plan and implement best practice approaches that support positive outcomes.



Lead with empathy in a way that values the voices, aspirations and wellbeing of communities and individuals and is strategic in managing assets and resources that support inclusion. Also by embedding inclusion in decision making processes and within the workforce, Council leads by example and demonstrates a commitment to social inclusion everyday.

1. Spencer-Oatley H (2012) *What is Culture? A compilation of quotations*, GlobalPAD/University of Warwick, <https://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/74260/> in GANSW 2023 *Connecting with Country Framework*, NSW Government.
2. Edmund Rice Centre (2019) *Indigenous Resilience Project Report*

“ Let’s imagine our cities as centres of human flourishing, productive, diverse, and just, tools of environmental regeneration and social empowerment.

The places we live can be designed to unlock our potential to contribute and be part of the solutions we need”

Jess Scully 2020 ‘Glimpses of Utopia’



Study Purpose

The purpose was to undertake a comprehensive study to provide a clear picture of the current state of social inclusion in North Sydney. The Study was also to identify the social needs and priorities for improved social inclusion over the next 10 years, and develop an action plan that outlines Council's role in addressing identified needs and aspirations.

The Study will inform the development of the Council's 10-year Social Inclusion Strategy, ('The Strategy') which will guide the Council's policies, programs, partnerships, resources and investments in projects, information and activities that support social inclusion.

The Strategy is one of eight informing strategies (see below) that together will form the future strategic framework for the North Sydney LGA. The very nature of social inclusion means that the objectives and directions outlined in other strategies will also contribute to a more socially inclusive North Sydney.

Once prepared, the Social Inclusion and other strategies will together form the new 2025-2035 Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Programs and Operational Plans. These Plans will determine priorities and ensure that Council's resources are focused on delivering the outcomes needed and wanted by the community.

Study Approach

The approach to the Study was centred around understanding, identifying and prioritising opportunities to enhance North Sydney Council's approach to social wellbeing and inclusion. The Study has been prepared in three key stages:

1. Understanding the current context
2. Describing the future aspiration
3. Planning how to achieve a socially inclusive North Sydney

1. Understanding the current experience and perception of social inclusion in North Sydney

To identify the current state of social support, engagement and inclusion in North Sydney a detailed demographic analysis was undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning.

This work provided an understanding of the demographic profile of the North Sydney LGA now and an analysis of trends and forecasts to provide a picture of who the community might be in the future.

A review of the strategic policy context relevant to inclusion and diversity, social wellbeing, and social cohesion was undertaken to draw on existing frameworks, directions and initiatives that Council can build on. This also included a review of policies specific to different communities, such as older people, young people and families, multicultural and LGBTIQ+ communities, and people with disability.

A high level desktop review of the current Council assets, community services and programs that currently support social inclusion was also undertaken as part of the Study providing a snapshot and formed part of the baseline for the Study.

To gain a deeper understanding of the various definitions of social inclusion and exclusion, diversity, social cohesion, resilience and addressing barriers to inclusion, research papers review ranged from academic work undertaken by Australian and international institutions, longitudinal studies being done by research organisations such as the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute and resources prepared by various federal, state and local government departments and organisations.



North Sydney Eight Informing Strategies

The engagement program was a critical part of the primary research. The engagement program was delivered through various activities with over **300 participants**. The activities included:

- Voice of Youth Forum
- Preparation of Discussion Paper
- Social Inclusion Panel Discussion
- North Sydney community workshop
- Online survey
- Online focus group discussions [7] with residents, workers, visitors, service providers, community and advocacy group representatives.

Engagement was designed to reveal the current experiences of living, working and visiting the North Sydney LGA as well as the perceptions of the social inclusiveness in the area and community.

2. Describing a socially inclusive future state for North Sydney.

Both the background research and engagement formed the approach to articulating the expectations, aspirations and how a socially inclusive North Sydney feels and looks, how people will be connected, and would like to participate in the community life of North Sydney in the future.

The engagement discussion also sought to understand what social inclusion means in the context of North Sydney, test this against the known definitions and the themes/strategic directions that emerged from the research which are the 'ingredients' for a socially inclusive North Sydney.

3. Planning how Council and the community work towards a socially inclusive North Sydney

Social inclusion requires collective effort by North Sydney Council, North Sydney communities and individuals, local businesses, state and federal government agencies and local service providers.

The objectives and strategic directions articulate a definition for social inclusion in the North Sydney context, and the priorities and recommended actions to achieve it. Together, they set out a framework to guide decision making, nurture strategic partnership opportunities, and clarify the roles and resources needed to embed social inclusion as part of the everyday.

“North Sydney is friendly, and openly welcomes newcomers and encourages community participation. I feel that our voices are heard, and is particularly open to new ideas and advancing reforms that benefit our community”.

Online Survey respondent on what they love about the North Sydney community.



02 | Understanding Social Inclusion

Our individual experiences, needs and expectations are unique, complex and deeply personal. They influence and colour how we see and walk through the world, how we participate in our communities and our sense of belonging, connection and value.

Inclusivity is one of the North Sydney Vision 2040 Community Strategic Plan Principles. This means the seed of social inclusion has already been sown and is ready to be nurtured and grow. It is within this context that the Study has been prepared and social inclusion defined through a multi-lens and context specific approach.

Some individuals and groups experience barriers that prevent them from fully participating in the political, economic, cultural and social life of their communities and places. These groups may be excluded through formal legal and political systems, established societal norms and economic structures, and also by discriminatory attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions.

People who are discriminated against based on gender, age, disability, income, race, cultural background, religion, sexual and gender identity and citizenship are often disadvantaged due to unfair treatment.

Social exclusion, through disadvantage, discrimination and marginalisation has significant impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, and the broader community. It may also cause people to 'opt out' of sharing their knowledge, connecting through their stories and shared interests and participating in the community they live.

Over time, exclusion can lead to increased social isolation of those most vulnerable, and can contribute to increased tension and distrust within our communities. In turn, this has a significant and long-term social impact and economic cost.

Communities are not homogeneous. As individuals our identities are complex, overlapping, can change over time and be influenced by our personal circumstances (ie. age, education, disability, beliefs, values, gender and sexual identity, cultural background, income etc) as well as our experience within a place and community.

What does social inclusion mean?

While similar in the intent, various global and national organisations define social inclusion in slightly different terms. What all agree is that social inclusion is a multi-faceted concept and how it is applied depends on the lens by which the social context is being considered.

In its broadest terms, social inclusion is defined by The United Nations as *"the process of improving the terms of participation in society through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice, and respect for rights"*.³

While similar in its definition, the World Bank defines social inclusion as *"the process of improving terms on which individuals and groups take part in society - improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity"*.⁴

The Australian Human Rights Commission has described social inclusion as *"people being able to participate in society and creating conditions for equal opportunities for all. It requires that all individuals be able to 'secure a job; access services; connect with family, friends, work, personal interests and local community; deal with personal crisis; and have their voices heard"*.⁵

The Australian Social Inclusion Board, formed in 2008 to report on social inclusion⁶ in Australia, defined being socially included to mean that people have the resources, opportunities and capabilities they need to:

- Learn (e.g., participate in education and training)
- Work (e.g., participate in employment, unpaid or voluntary work including family and carer responsibilities)
- Engage (e.g., connect with people, use local services and participate in local, cultural, civic and recreational activities) and
- Have a voice (influence decisions that affect them).

3. United Nations (2016), *Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development. Report on the World Social Situation*.

4. The World Bank (2013) *'Inclusion Matters. The Foundation of Shared Prosperity'*. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

5. Australian Human Rights Commission (2013) *'Social Inclusion and Human Rights in Australia'* <https://humanrights.gov.au/about/news/speeches/social-inclusion-and-human-rights-australia>

6. Australian Government (2008) *'Social Inclusion in Australia. How Australia is faring'* Australian Social Inclusion Board.

Figure 1 is a social inclusion conceptual framework that illustrates the interaction between resources, opportunities and capabilities.

- Resources refer to the skills and assets people have (or various types of capital, including human, social and economic capital).
- Capabilities refer to an individual’s ability (or agency) to use resources and opportunities to achieve the outcomes they wish.
- Opportunities refer to the environment (or structure) that enables individuals to use their capabilities and resources to achieve the outcomes they wish.

This framework acknowledges that participation and resources can be mutually beneficial. Resources help to support opportunities and increase capabilities, and people make choices about how they wish to participate.

The aim of social inclusion is to reduce inequality, discrimination and barriers that prevent participation in community life. It primarily focuses on all people - individuals and groups - especially those most vulnerable or disadvantaged that many not have equal access to resources, opportunities and rights.

At its core, social inclusion seeks to strengthen partnerships, increase equal opportunities and reduce marginalisation, discrimination and barriers to participation, whether those barriers are structural and institutional or societal attitudes and “norms”. Importantly, social inclusion is about ensuring all people have equal access to opportunities and the right to fully participate in society.

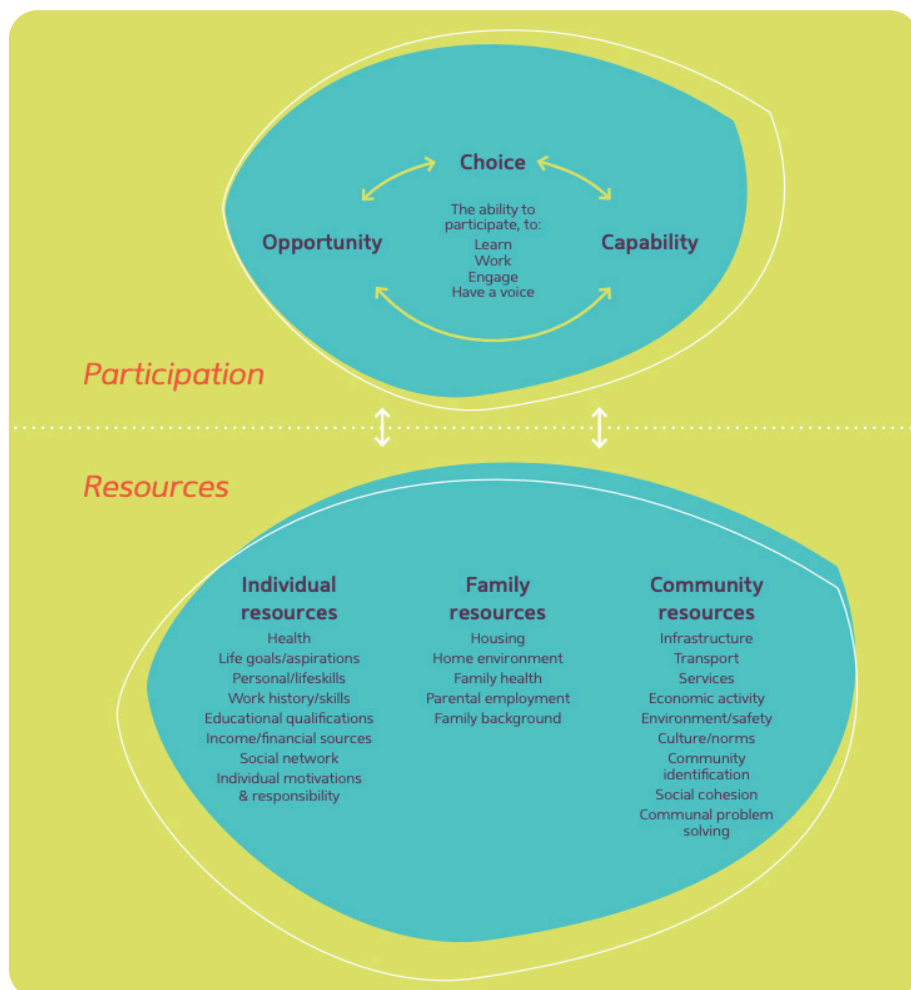


Figure 1: Social inclusion conceptual framework—participation and resources



What does social cohesion mean?

Social inclusion and social cohesion are related concepts. While they are used at times interchangeably, they have distinct meanings and a slightly different goal and focus.

The Scanlon Foundation defines social cohesion as being “*the extent of shared values, mutual respect and acceptance of difference, as well as trust between people and trust in institutions*”

Social cohesion is about the level of harmony, cooperation and mutual support within a community. It aims to strengthen the bonds between individuals and groups to build a sense of solidarity, trust and shared values that leads to collaboration and collective action.

‘Building Social Cohesion. A resource for local government’ [2022] by Department of Premier and Cabinet⁷, reports that representatives from local government described social cohesion as being about connection, inclusion and belonging.

The difference between the two concepts is that **social inclusion** addresses the structural barriers to participation and equality, while **social cohesion** focuses on the quality of relationships and interactions within a community or society. Both concepts are important for creating a fair, supportive, and harmonious society.

The Scanlon Foundation has conducted a long running survey since 2007 that seeks to map social cohesion in Australia. The 2022 Mapping Social Cohesion survey⁸ provides critical new information and is the largest in the series with almost 5,800 respondents on the Social Research Centre’s Life in Australia panel.

In the report, social cohesion is measured across five key areas:

- **Belonging:** the sense of pride people have in Australia and in Australian culture, and the belonging they feel in their neighbourhoods
- **Worth:** the degree of emotional and material wellbeing
- **Social inclusion and justice:** perceptions of economic fairness and trust in government
- **Participation:** involvement in political activities and participation in social, community, and civic groups
- **Acceptance and rejection:** attitudes to immigrant diversity, support for minorities, and experience of discrimination.

The key findings of this report include:

The sense of national pride and belonging in Australia has declined over time and widely felt across various social cohorts and groups, including young and older people, Australian-born and overseas-born and high and low income groups.

The 2022 survey found that the proportion of people reporting a great sense of belonging in Australia and pride in the Australian way of life and culture was at its lowest in 2022. The groups with the largest declines include young adults and those who are financially struggling, showing the impact of social and economic inequalities on social cohesion.

The sense of social inclusion and justice in Australia has declined sharply since 2020. In 2022, social cohesion on this measure was lower than it was before the pandemic. This has been driven by a renewed growth in the number of people who are concerned with economic inequality in Australia.

Trust in government has declined since 2020. More than three-quarters of the population (79%) believe government leaders abuse their power at least some of the time, while 24% think it happens most or all of the time.

Australians have a high and growing level of support for ethnic diversity and multiculturalism. The proportion of people who agree that accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger increased (63% in 2018 to 78% in 2022). Positive attitudes towards diversity and multiculturalism are complemented by active intercultural relations with a large number of people who have close friends from different national and cultural backgrounds reported in 2022.

Discrimination and prejudice towards groups from different backgrounds persists despite high levels of support for immigrant diversity and multiculturalism. About one-in-six people (16%) reported experiencing discrimination based on their skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion. Discrimination is mirrored by a concerning level of prejudice directed towards people from different backgrounds.

Social trust and neighbourhood cohesion remain high and resilient. Almost half of Australians think that most people can be trusted, one of the highest levels in the world. More than eight-in-ten people agree that their neighbours are willing to help each other (85%).

7. Department of Premier and Cabinet (2020) ‘Social Cohesion. A resource for local government’

8. O’Donnell, J (2022). ‘Mapping Social Cohesion 2022’ The Scanlon Foundation [<https://scanloninstitute.org.au/mapping-social-cohesion-2022>]

Why social inclusion matters?

Social inclusion not only supports the inclusion of individuals in community life, it also works to minimise the exclusion of disadvantaged and minority groups who may face discrimination and other access barriers.

The impact of social exclusion in Australia is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$45 billion each year, and affect 6.7 million people.⁹

Exclusion or discrimination can occur in a variety of different ways and through multiple lenses. Discrimination is usually on the basis of gender, sexual and gender orientation, disability, age or race. When identities overlap, it can also create cumulative and significant disadvantage.¹⁰

Access to support services, affordable housing and/or transport can also exacerbate disadvantage disproportionately for those most vulnerable.

The foundations of exclusion are often historical and political. Therefore, it is important to understand how underlying power relations affect who is included, who is left out or which groups may be invisible and whose voice is not being heard.

Long established and informal societal norms can exclude some groups from participating in decision making. They can also intentionally and unintentionally marginalise certain groups and further solidify exclusion - through stigma, stereotyping, lack of visibility etc - reinforce discriminatory practices, impede access and limit participation for some groups and individuals.

The most commonly measured positive impacts of socially inclusive communities include:

Community and Social Cohesion: Inclusive communities are more resilient and peaceful. When individuals feel included, valued and that their voices are heard, it promotes resilient and empowered communities and responsive government intervention.¹¹

The increase of social, community, and civic participation, not only increases community connections, it also helps in the provision of local services, support and increased productivity through, for example, the involvement in voluntary work and the sharing of skills and knowledge.

It also increases trust among neighbours willing to help each other and feeling confident to have a say on issues important to them.¹²

Local governments know and understand their communities better than any other level of government. They deliver economic, environmental, cultural and social outcomes across a range of areas that affect / community cohesion.

As such, the implementation of initiatives that prioritise social cohesion, social inclusion and connection will contribute to stronger, more resilient and productive communities.

Health and Well-being: Social inclusion is closely linked to better health outcomes, while exclusion and discrimination are associated with higher risks of poor health, including mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

Feeling connected and valued enhances overall health and well-being, with communities that foster social inclusion more likely to report higher levels of happiness and well-being¹³, improved mental and physical health¹⁴ and increased resilience.¹⁵

Reducing Loneliness and Isolation: Anyone, anywhere, can be lonely or socially isolated. Loneliness and social isolation are growing concerns at a local, national and international level and are important, yet neglected, social determinants for people of all ages.

Social isolation and loneliness are widespread, with an estimated 1 in 4 older people experiencing social isolation and between 5 to 15% of adolescents experiencing loneliness.¹⁶ Young people experiencing loneliness can lead to poorer education outcomes and impact on their engagement and attendance not only at school/university but also within their community and neighbourhood.

The antidote to loneliness is meaningful social connection – with family, friends, support networks and the community.

The City of Monash [VIC] conducted research into loneliness, and its impacts on the health of communities. This resulted in the development of the Monash Loneliness Framework 202-2025 - the first loneliness framework of its kind for Monash Council and local governments in Australia.

9. Faulkner, N., Borg, K., Zhao, K., and Smith, L., Monash University (2021). *The inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index: 2021 Report. Inclusive Australia*
10. The World Bank, (2018), *The Social Inclusion Assessment Tool*
11. Sivarman, A., (2020), *Five things you need to know about Social Sustainability and Inclusion*, World Bank Group
12. O'Donnell, J (2022). 'Mapping Social Cohesion 2022' The Scanlon Foundation [<https://scanloninstitute.org.au/mapping-social-cohesion-2022>]
13. OECD (2020), *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing
14. Liamputtong, P. (2022). *Social Inclusion, Research, and Practices in the Health and Social Sciences*
15. Sivarman, A., (2020), *Five things you need to know about Social Sustainability and Inclusion*, World Bank Group
16. World Health Organisation 'WHO Commission on Social Connection' www.who.int/groups/commission-on-social-connection



The Loneliness Framework and research found that “loneliness is one of the most prominent risk factors that prevents social inclusion and connectedness.”¹⁶

They also found that the “research suggests that most people still feel great shame and stigma in admitting that they are lonely. Like all other population health priorities that have come before loneliness, we must de-stigmatise the issue and create a public understanding and awareness around it.”¹⁷

Lack of social connection also carries an equivalent, or even greater, risk of early death as compared to other better-known risk factors – such as smoking, excessive drinking, physical inactivity, and air pollution.

It can also result in impacts on physical and mental health; with studies showing that loneliness has been linked to anxiety and depression and can increase risk of cardiovascular disease by 30%.¹⁸

Social isolation and loneliness has a significant impact on individuals; but also has a negative impact on entire communities and societies. Research shows that increased trust, safety, prosperity, and effective governance depend greatly on the quality of the connections between individuals, groups and within organisations.

Supporting people to establish and maintain reliable, trusting networks within their community, have access to the support and services they need and feel connected to, and valued as part of the community, are all critical to social inclusion.

Economic Productivity and Benefits: Social inclusion significantly boosts economic growth by leveraging the potential of all individuals. There is evidence to show that greater inclusion of marginalised groups like women, people with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ individuals in the workforce can lead to substantial economic gains.

In 2019, Deloitte Access Economics, in a report for the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) estimated “the economic dividend to Australia from having a more inclusive society to be \$12.7 billion annually”¹⁹ based on their modelling and analysis.

17. City of Monash ‘Monash Loneliness Framework 2020 – 2025’ <https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v1/edms/about-us/corporate-plans-strategies/loneliness-monash-loneliness-framework-2020-2025.pdf>

18. World Health Organisation ‘WHO Commission on Social Connection’ www.who.int/groups/commission-on-social-connection

19. Deloitte Access Economics (2019), ‘The economic benefits of improving social inclusion’ for Special Broadcasting Service (SBS).

20. CGU 2018, Migrant Small Business Report <<https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2018/01/apo-nid128756-1240451.pdf>> in Deloitte Access Economics (2019), ‘The economic benefits of improving social inclusion’ for Special Broadcasting Service (SBS).

21. 100 Resilient Cities (2019), ‘Social Cohesion. A Practitioners Guide to Measurement Challenges and Opportunities.

Increased social inclusion reduces the cost of social services by easing pressure on the public health system, social and support services. At the same time, social inclusion harnesses our diversity as a fuel for small business formation, creativity and innovation. Almost one-third of Australian small businesses, employing 1.41 million people, are run by migrants to Australia.²⁰

Increase Social Capital: Social capital can be classified as “bridging” (across different demographic divides), “bonding” (the strength of relationships between individuals), or “linking” (trust between individuals and government or other institutions).²¹

The connections and opportunities for intergenerational relationships, cross cultural exchange and for people with different interests and values has the ability to increase understanding and social discourse in which conversations about difference can be held with respect and empathy.

“ People who live in cohesive neighbourhoods have a greater sense of belonging, worth, and social inclusion and justice in Australia.

This suggests that if nurtured and maintained, the strengthening of neighbourhood cohesion may help to improve national level social cohesion.

- Mapping Social Cohesion 2022’
The Scanlon Foundation



Photo: Community Workshop, June 2024
(source: North Sydney Council)



03 | Baseline Analysis

The North Sydney community are generous and have many strengths, skills and knowledge that, when weaved together, reveal a distinctive social fabric, which contributes to a collective resilience, wellbeing and sense of belonging.

This section outlines the people, place and policy context that influences future planning, decision making and advocacy for increased social inclusion in North Sydney. A summary of findings from the engagement discussions is provided as an important aspect of the primary research.

The Study does not seek to examine social inclusion through a single community cohort lens, but rather to understand where we are right now, identify our collective strengths, and explore our challenges and opportunities.

A foundation of the Study is an acknowledgment and understanding that our individual experience, circumstances, background, and personal characteristics mean that challenges and opportunities available are experienced very differently across our community.

It is for this reason that engagement and discussions with a diversity of people across the North Sydney community is vital to the success of the Social Inclusion Strategy and its priorities.

The North Sydney LGA is becoming more dense as the number of apartments increase.

Over half of dwellings in the North Sydney LGA in 2021 were rented and this is a growing.

- Demographic analysis findings

The people and communities of North Sydney

For this Study, SGS Economics and Planning completed a detailed analysis of the current demographic profile of the North Sydney LGA and provided insights into the future North Sydney community profile based on ABS census data.

The analysis has considered both at an LGA scale and at a suburb and localities (SAL) geography the following broad demographic categories:

- Population and age
- Culture and ancestry
- Migration
- Health and caring
- Education and employment
- Dwellings and households
- Income and housing stress

In order to understand broadly what the future demographics of the LGA will look like if prevailing trends continue into the future, analysis has been undertaken to derive projections for the LGA, based on ABS Statistical Level 2 (SA2) geographies.

Projections for the LGA at the SA2 level allows for understanding whether there are particular differences in demographic variables in different parts of the LGA, as well as allowing for alignment with the NSW Government's Travel Zones (TZ) and the TZP data which has been used in the analysis.

The SA2s included for the North Sydney LGA are:

- St Leonards - Naremburn (adjusted for North Sydney only component)
- Cremorne - Cammeray
- Crows Nest - Waverton
- Neutral Bay - Kirribilli
- North Sydney - Lavender Bay

To derive the projections, SGS utilised NSW TZP and ABS Census Tablebuilder data. NSW TZP data, at the TZ level, has provided projections including population, households, and the workforce, which has been scaled up to an SA2 level for this analysis.

The following section provides a summary of the key themes and findings from the analysis of the current demographic profile of the North Sydney LGA to help understand the community's needs now and what they might be in the future.

Summary of key demographic findings

North Sydney has seen a high level of change in residents over time. The population is likely to grow but at a slower rate than elsewhere in Sydney.

North Sydney's population is projected to grow at a rate of 0.4% per year to 2056, much lower than the rate projected for Greater Sydney of around 1%.

Before the pandemic, North Sydney had higher shares of people who had been living overseas 5 years previously. More recent migration trends have shown less change but this was substantially impacted by the pandemic. This is associated with the prevalence of rental households in the LGA, which is the most common form of housing tenure.

The predominant household types and high density nature is influencing the types of households that live there, the availability and affordability.

The LGA has relatively large proportions of flats/apartments. This in turn influences household types, with the most common in the LGA being couples without children, which includes couples that have children but they no longer live within a single household.

The future household types projected for the LGA are expected to continue to be predominantly couples without children and lone person households. To some extent, the types of households in the LGA will be dictated by the types of housing that are available and the costs of housing. This is likely to impact on the ability of larger families to locate in the area as well as impacting on the diversity of households that can choose to live in North Sydney, particularly those on lower incomes.

It will therefore be important for the policy settings in North Sydney to be able to support and provide opportunities for a range of different households to live in and enjoy North Sydney.

North Sydney is a wealthy area with falling numbers of households on lower incomes.

North Sydney households are generally wealthier than other areas in Sydney, with increasing shares of people on higher incomes living in the LGA. This has implications for the kinds of households that are able to live in the LGA, and consequently the community.

Low rates of recorded housing stress mask issues with lack of opportunity for low-income households to live in the LGA. Comparatively lower rates of mortgage and rental stress are likely reflective of the LGA's higher average incomes and fewer low income households being able to locate in North Sydney.

North Sydney has a lot of young professionals, but is getting older.

North Sydney's population is growing, but more slowly than the Greater Sydney region in total. In line with broader trends, North Sydney also has an ageing profile.

Within the LGA, different suburbs are seeing different trends in ageing and household types. St Leonards and North Sydney are seeing more young adults in the population, while suburbs like Kurraba Point and McMahons Point have an older cohort.

The projections identify that the age profile of the LGA is likely to continue to get older over time, with increasing shares of people aged over 60. In turn, this is likely to influence the number of people who require assistance with every day tasks and consequently the number of carers. With an increased proportion of retirement aged residents,, rates of volunteering will also potentially increase.

North Sydney's cultural diversity is relatively consistent across the LGA.

North Sydney LGA has lower proportion of First Nations residents compared to Greater Sydney.

The proportion of people in North Sydney LGA born overseas is slightly higher than Greater Sydney (+0.6%). British ancestry being the most common and English is by far the most common language spoken at home in the North Sydney LGA.

North Sydney does have a different mix of ancestries and languages compared to the other parts of the LGA, with higher shares in Japanese, Portuguese and French, and lower shares in Mandarin, Hindi, and Korean. Suburbs such as St Leonards, North Sydney and Milsons Point have a greater mix of ancestries and languages, with nearly a fifth of households in St Leonards speaking either Mandarin or Cantonese.

North Sydney will continue to have a highly educated population and volunteers.

The population of North Sydney overall is highly educated and has a greater proportion of people participating in volunteering, compared with Greater Sydney.

The continuation of existing trends suggests that a majority of people living in the LGA in 2056 will have some form of higher educational qualification, representing over 60% of residents. Workforce participation is projected to remain high across the across the LGA. The projections, reflective of existing trends, indicate that higher income households will continue to be the norm.



Population and Age

- North Sydney’s population has grown, but not at a slower rate when compared with other areas across Greater Sydney. The suburb of North Sydney has seen the largest population growth between 2011 and 2021.
- The North Sydney LGA is projected to grow at a rate of 0.4% per year and 12.5% in total between 2021 and 2056. This is low compared to Greater Sydney projection of around 1% per year, or over 40% over the same timeframe.
- Residents of North Sydney are getting older and this trend is expected to continue with an increasing share of people in the LGA who are aged over 60 and/or in the retiree life stage.
- Almost one-third (30%) of North Sydney LGA residents are aged between 25 and 39 years, a slightly higher proportion compared to Greater Sydney (24%).
- The LGA does however have a lower proportion of people aged under 19 years in comparison to both the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.
- Suburbs including Cremorne, McMahons Point, Kirribilli, Lavender Bay and Milsons Point have older age profiles, however, between 2016 and 2021, the median age across all North Sydney’s suburbs has increased.

North Sydney’s population grew by around 6,600 people between 2011 and 2021, to close to 69,000. The average annual growth rate (AAGR) in the LGA was around 1.1%.

This growth rate is slightly lower than that of the Eastern Harbour City (1.3%), and lower than the 2% observed across Greater Sydney over this period. It’s important to note that population growth is likely to have been affected by the pandemic, and more recent trends in migration post-COVID and since the Census was taken may show a different picture..

In 2021, the largest suburb in the North Sydney LGA by population was Crows Nest, at just over 11,200 people. (See Table 1). Kirribilli, Kurraba Point, and McMahons Point have experienced declines in population between 2011 and 2021.

For most suburbs the population remained relatively stable or increased slightly between 2011 and 2021, however North Sydney and St Leonards saw larger average growth rates (4.3% and 6.1% respectively, noting that St Leonards includes areas outside of the LGA).

Between 2016-2021, McMahons Point, Kirribilli and Kurraba Point continued to see decreases in population. These suburbs are along the southern edge of the LGA, along the Parramatta River.

Suburb	2011	2016	2021	2011-2021 Difference	AAGR
Cammeray	6,782	7,004	7,088	306	0.5%
<u>Crows Nest (NSW)</u>	11,048	11,221	11,263	215	0.2%
Cremorne (NSW)	1,978	2,413	2,270	292	1.5%
Cremorne Point	4,046	4,796	4,974	928	2.3%
Kirribilli	3,666	3,818	3,629	-37	-0.1%
Kurraba Point	1,703	1,525	1,401	-302	-1.8%
Lavender Bay	853	943	870	17	0.2%
McMahons Point	2,345	2,280	2,315	-30	-0.1%
Milsons Point	2,013	2,161	2,529	516	2.6%
Neutral Bay	9,385	10,483	10,090	705	0.8%
North Sydney	6,259	7,705	8,964	2,705	4.3%
St Leonards (NSW)	4,466	5,495	7,212	2,746	6.1%
Waverton	2,809	3,026	2,981	172	0.6%
Wollstonecraft	8,009	8,323	8,115	106	0.1%

Table 1: Population and Change by SAL (ABS Census, PUR 2021 | SGS Economics and Planning)



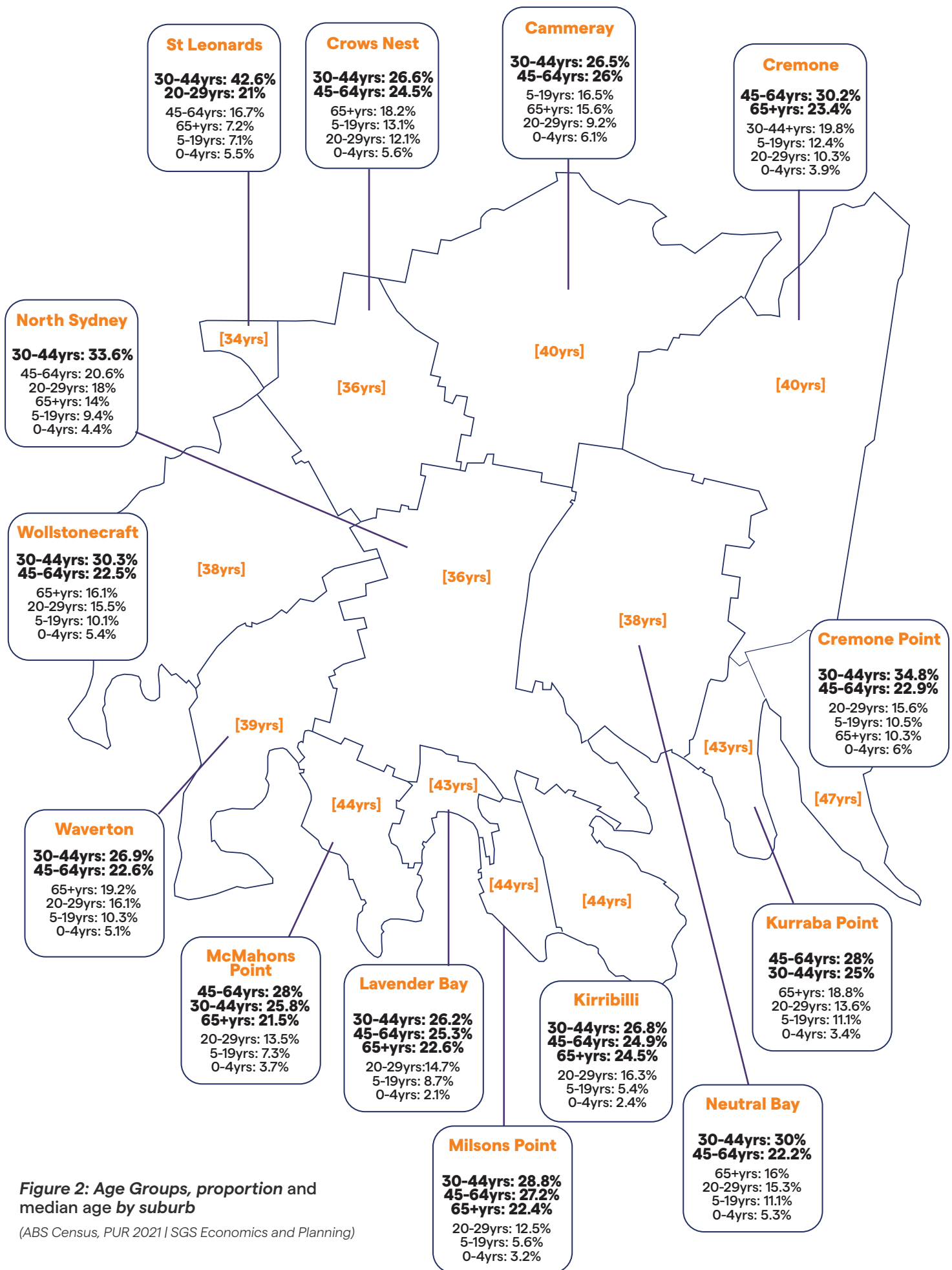


Figure 2: Age Groups, proportion and median age by suburb

(ABS Census, PUR 2021 | SGS Economics and Planning)



Current Age Profile

In 2021, 30% of North Sydney LGA residents were aged between 25 and 39 years, representing a slightly higher proportion compared with Greater Sydney (24%). The LGA does however have a lower proportion of people aged under 19 years compared to both the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

Figure 2 (previous page) illustrates the proportion of residents by service age groups by suburb and Figure 3 (below) illustrates the proportion of the population by life stage compared with the Eastern Harbour City region and Greater Sydney.

Suburbs with larger proportions of older people include Kirribilli, Lavender Bay and Milsons Point, McMahon's Point, Waverton and Cremorne, of which the largest age group is 60-64 years (8.6% of suburb total).

While the 25-49 year age group represents the largest proportion of residents across all suburbs, Crows Nest/St Leonards and North Sydney have the highest proportion of their residents within this age group. Cammeray and Cremorne have the highest proportion of residents aged 0-11 years, while Kirribilli has the lowest proportion of residents in this age group.

The spatial distribution of age groups reveal that suburbs with larger proportions of older people are generally located along the southern border of LGA, near the Parramatta River (see Figure 2, previous page).

Change in age groups between 2016 and 2021

An analysis of the change between the 2016 and 2021 census, shows that North Sydney LGA residents are getting older with the 70 and 84 years age group experiencing the largest increase (+1,839 people). People aged 50-59 years also experienced an increase between 2016 and 2021 (+534). The percentage increase for these older age groups was higher in North Sydney than the change observed in the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

The LGA also saw some growth in school aged children and young people, but a significant decline of young adults aged 25-34 years (-1,696). In general terms, the North Sydney LGA has a greater proportion of Retirees, and a lower proportion of young people compared to the wider region.

The median age in all suburbs increased between 2016 and 2021. The oldest median age was in Cremorne Point, which increased from 43 to 47 years. The youngest median age was in St Leonards (noting this includes areas outside the LGA) at 34, and North Sydney and Crows Nest, both at 36 in 2021.

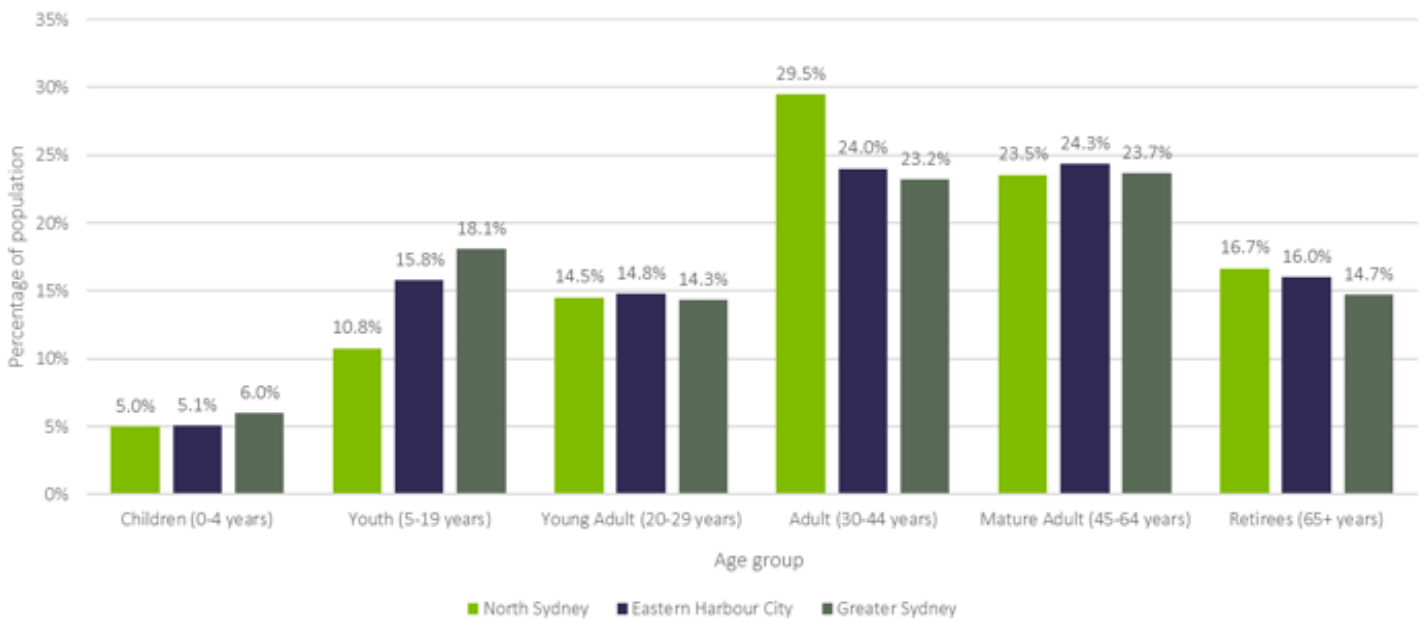


Figure 3: Life Stage: Proportion of residents in North Sydney LGA, Eastern City and Greater Sydney
(ABS Census, | SGS Economics and Planning)



Future Age and Population Projections

The projections show the population is expected to grow relatively slowly, at an annual rate of 0.4% over the next 30 or so years, increasing overall by around 12.5%.

This is equivalent to 265 additional people per year. This rate of growth is much lower than that projected for Greater Sydney as a whole, which is expected to increase in population by over 40%, at an average annual rate of around 1%.

Spatially, most this growth is expected to be in the suburbs within the North Sydney-Lavender Bay SA2, with growth of around 5,500 people over the 30 year timeframe (or 60.1% of total LGA growth).

Growth in the other parts of the LGA is projected to be minimal by comparison, though Cremorne – Cammeray is projected to retain the largest share of the population overall.

However, recent policy settings by the NSW Government with the identification of the Crows Nest TOD, are likely to lead to higher than expected growth within the LGA and in particular the areas of and surrounding Crows Nest and St Leonards (see pop out box).

The North Sydney LGA is projected to see growth of residents aged 60 and accounting for around 30% of the future population.

The ratio between males and females in the LGA is projected to remain similar in future. As of 2021 there were an estimated 38,500 female residents compared to around 35,700 males (51% proportion of females). In 2056, the ratio will be relatively similar.

NSW Government Transit Orientated Development (TOD) Program: Accelerated Precincts

The Accelerated Precinct Program involves a state-led rezoning process focusing on land generally within 1,200m walking distance of priority high growth areas near transport hubs in Greater Sydney.

Crows Nest was identified as an accelerated precinct area to support an increase in population and additional housing growth, close to a transport hub and other essential amenities under the TOD Program.

The Crows Nest TOD enables the delivery of 3,255 new dwellings and 2,600 new jobs in the precinct. Taking into account the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's previous St Leonards Crows Nest Planning Study (2020) (the '2036 Plan'), the precinct may grow by

approximately 8,445 new dwellings, representing approximately 16,000 new residents across the precinct.

This new policy setting will contribute to growth of housing and support the delivery of affordable housing across the precinct. However this growth must also be supported by adequate open space, social infrastructure, schools, transport and services to ensure that North Sydney can be a socially inclusive place and community.



North Sydney Voice of Young People Forum, March 2024



Culture and Ancestry

- North Sydney LGA has a lower proportion of First Nations residents than the rest of Sydney.
- North Sydney LGA is a multicultural community, with higher shares of Irish and Western European ancestry compared to Greater Sydney.
- Most people speak English as the only language at home.
- No religion and secular beliefs are the most common form of religious affiliation, however, there is increasing diversity in religious observance.
- Residents in Milsons Point, St Leonards, and North Sydney in 2021 had more diverse ancestry, countries of birth, languages spoken at home compared to the rest of the LGA.
- On current trends, the most common regions of ancestry among North Sydney residents will remain North-West Europeans, and Oceanians (including Australian and First Nations ancestries).
- However, predominant cultural ancestries are heavily linked with migration patterns. As such, changes in the flows of international migration into Australia, and other global factors, will influence this variable in North Sydney.

First Nations Peoples

First Nations peoples comprised 0.4% of the North Sydney LGA population as of 2021. This is much lower than the proportion across Greater Sydney of 1.5%. Neutral Bay, Wollstonecraft and Cammeray had the highest number of First Nations residents in 2021.

Country of Birth and Ancestry

People born in Australia made up nearly 60% of the population of the North Sydney LGA in 2021, which is a similar proportion to Greater Sydney. In the period between 2016 and 2021, North Sydney experienced a less significant increase in residents who were born outside of Australia compared to the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

Across the majority of suburbs in the LGA, approximately 60% residents in each were born in Australia. The exceptions were Milsons Point and St Leonards, where around 46% and 39% of residents were born in Australia respectively.

North Sydney had an even split between residents born in and outside of Australia. This may be due to recent arrivals to Australia wanting to be located near transport hubs or areas with easier access to employment.

Outside of Australia, the most common countries of birth for North Sydney residents as of 2021 were England (6.6%), followed by China (3.8%), New Zealand (2.7%) and India (2.4%). In contrast, Greater Sydney sees a higher proportion of residents from China (5.1%) and India (4%) in particular, and lower proportions from countries such as England (2.9%).

Table 2: Top 15: Country of Birth by SAL (ABS Census, PUR 2021 | SGS Economics and Planning)

Suburb	Australia	England	China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)	New Zealand	India	Hong Kong (SAR of China)	South Africa	United States of America	Japan	Philippines	Malaysia	Brazil	Korea, Republic of (South)	Thailand	Iran
Cammeray	67.0%	6.4%	2.0%	2.5%	1.6%	1.1%	1.8%	1.3%	1.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%
Crows Nest (NSW)	60.8%	7.3%	3.3%	2.6%	1.1%	1.2%	2.2%	1.4%	1.3%	0.7%	0.7%	1.2%	0.4%	0.8%	0.5%
Cremorne (NSW)	63.3%	8.3%	1.8%	2.9%	0.9%	0.7%	2.7%	1.9%	0.2%	1.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%
Cremorne Point	59.0%	5.8%	3.2%	3.3%	2.4%	1.6%	1.4%	1.8%	1.8%	1.5%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	0.7%	0.5%
Kirribilli	58.9%	7.0%	3.4%	2.5%	1.6%	1.0%	1.5%	2.0%	0.5%	1.5%	1.0%	0.5%	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%
Kurraba Point	62.1%	9.3%	2.7%	2.7%	0.7%	1.5%	3.3%	2.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.8%	0.3%	0.4%
Lavender Bay	62.7%	5.9%	3.5%	2.4%	2.5%	1.1%	1.6%	1.6%	0.6%	1.9%	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%	1.1%	0.0%
McMahons Point	63.2%	8.0%	2.1%	2.8%	1.5%	0.9%	2.1%	2.4%	0.3%	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%
Milsons Point	45.9%	6.3%	7.7%	2.4%	4.5%	4.3%	1.5%	1.7%	1.8%	0.8%	2.6%	0.8%	1.9%	0.5%	1.2%
Neutral Bay	60.8%	6.7%	2.7%	2.8%	1.8%	1.3%	1.8%	1.8%	1.4%	1.2%	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	0.9%	0.4%
North Sydney	50.2%	5.8%	6.2%	2.6%	4.9%	1.9%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.7%	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%	0.9%	1.2%
St Leonards (NSW)	38.6%	3.5%	10.1%	2.7%	5.8%	5.1%	1.3%	1.2%	4.6%	2.7%	2.3%	1.3%	2.3%	1.1%	1.6%
Waverton	61.5%	6.8%	3.4%	2.0%	1.9%	2.3%	1.5%	1.2%	1.3%	0.8%	1.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%
Wollstonecraft	57.6%	6.6%	4.0%	2.7%	2.7%	2.4%	2.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%



Milsons Point and St Leonards had a larger shares of people born in countries outside of Australia, with those from China being the most common at 7.7% for Milsons Point and 10.1% for St Leonards. These suburbs also have larger proportions of residents born in Hong Kong and India.

British ancestry was the most common form of ancestry in the LGA as of 2021, a similar proportion to that recorded in the Eastern Harbour the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

North Sydney had more diversity in both country of birth and ancestry than the other suburbs in the LGA. Similar to the patterns seen in country of birth, Milsons Point (30%) and St Leonards (21.5%) had lower shares of people with British ancestry compared to the other suburbs, and higher proportions with Chinese Asian ancestry, with 22% and 27.5% respectively.

Cremorne Point (11.2%), Lavender Bay (10.4%), Waverton (13.5%), and Wollstonecraft (12.9%) also have relatively large shares of people with Chinese Asian ancestry.

Language Spoken at Home

English is by far the most common language spoken at home in North Sydney, with the proportion of households being higher in comparison to both the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

As with ancestry, North Sydney (suburb) has a greater diversity of languages compared to the other areas, with higher shares in Japanese, Portuguese and French, and lower shares in Mandarin, Hindi, and Korean.

Non-English languages are most common in St Leonards and Milsons Point, with nearly one-fifth of households speaking either Mandarin or Cantonese. North Sydney also has higher shares of people speaking a variety of languages at home.

Religious Affiliation

North Sydney had generally lower levels of religious affiliation compared to the Eastern Harbour City and particularly to Greater Sydney (2021).

While Christianity remains the most common form of religion in the North Sydney LGA, there has been proportionally larger increases in people affiliated Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and other religions. Interestingly, the scale of change shows different patterns compared to the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

Future Projections

The most prevalent cultural ancestries of North Sydney Residents are currently North-west Europeans, Oceanians, and North-East Asians. These groups are projected to continue to increase.

If current trends continued, this would see an additional 3,600, 1,700, and 1,300 residents from each of these respective ancestries by 2056. However, cultural ancestry will also be heavily influenced by migration patterns, which may change into the future.

According to ABS forecasts, the First Nations population is expected to grow by 1.7% per annum up to 2031. If these trends extend beyond that period, there is projected growth of around 250 residents who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander between 2021 to 2056 (an overall change of 80.4% across the 35 years).



Migration

- Prior to the pandemic the North Sydney LGA had higher rates of residents who had lived elsewhere in the previous 5 years, and higher rates of people who had been living overseas.
- The suburbs of North Sydney and St Leonards have seen the highest shares of people who were living somewhere else in either the preceding year or 5 years from the census.
- Higher shares of people indicated they had lived overseas 5 years ago compared to 1 year ago.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to move both within Greater Sydney, or across state borders. Therefore, there may be higher rates of people who stayed where they were living a year ago.

More than half of residents in the North Sydney LGA in 2021 were living somewhere else as of 2016. Just over 12% were living overseas, representing a larger share than for both the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

North Sydney and St Leonards had the highest proportion of people who had lived outside of the LGA a year previously, with the majority of these people living somewhere else in Australia. Similarly, St Leonards and Milsons Point had the largest shares of people who had been living overseas in 2020, while Crows Nest had the lowest proportion.

Cremorne and Cammeray had the highest proportion of people who had not moved since 2020.

The suburbs with train stations had lower proportions of people living in the same location between 2016 and 2020. This may be due to the higher proportion of renters in these areas.

Table 3: Usual address 5 years ago by SAL (ABS Census, PUR 2021 | SGS Economics and Planning)

Suburb	Same as in 2021	Elsewhere in Australia	Overseas in 2016
Cammeray	49.4%	42.1%	8.4%
Crows Nest (NSW)	47.9%	41.8%	10.4%
Cremorne (NSW)	50.0%	40.4%	9.2%
Cremorne Point	39.3%	48.2%	12.4%
Kirribilli	44.7%	42.9%	12.7%
Kurraba Point	44.8%	43.9%	11.0%
Lavender Bay	44.4%	44.4%	10.7%
McMahons Point	45.3%	43.5%	11.4%
Milsons Point	37.0%	47.5%	15.2%
Neutral Bay	41.8%	46.2%	12.0%
North Sydney	30.2%	51.8%	18.0%
St Leonards (NSW)	22.7%	56.7%	20.8%
Waverton	46.9%	42.8%	10.5%

Health and Caring

- The share of people in North Sydney with one or more long term health conditions is similar to Sydney overall, with asthma and mental health the most common.
- The need for assistance in each suburb accounts for less than 5% of residents in each suburb, though the number of people requiring assistance with daily tasks is increasing.
- Where supported housing and aged services are located, there will be greater numbers of people likely to require support and assistance
- North Sydney has higher rates of volunteering than Sydney overall, though this has been affected by the pandemic. The highest proportion of volunteers was recorded in in Lavender Bay in 2021.
- The LGA has lower shares of people providing unpaid assistance and childcare in comparison to wider Sydney, though this may also have been influenced by the effects of the pandemic.
- Trends in health conditions and the need for assistance will be closely related to the ageing of the population. As such, the share of the population with need for assistance is projected to increase from 2.6 per cent in 2021 to 4.3 per cent in 2056.

In 2021, around 75% of North Sydney LGA residents indicated that they did not have a long term health condition. Of the 25% who did, the majority (over 18%) indicated they had only one condition, very similar when compared to the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

Only small proportions of people in each suburb reported having three or more conditions, with the largest share being in Kurraba Point at just over 3%.

There are differentiations between suburbs and prominence of different health conditions as reported in the Census, and these will have likely been influenced by the age profile in each.

The largest share of people with mental health conditions was in Lavender Bay and Cremorne Point, while asthma was most common in Cremorne Point and Cammeray and arthritis was most common for residents in Waverton and McMahons Point.

Need for Assistance

Only 2.6% of residents in North Sydney LGA indicated they require assistance with everyday activities, which is less than half the proportion for Greater Sydney and slightly less than the Eastern Harbour City.

Despite having a relatively small proportion of residents with a need for assistance, the number of residents who need assistance grew by over 20% between 2016 and 2021, from 1,400 to 1,700, representing a larger proportional increase than the wider region. At the suburb level, less than 5% of residents in each suburb reported that they require assistance with day to day tasks.

The suburb with the highest need for assistance in 2021 was Kirribilli, at 5%. However this also may be correlated with the concentration of social and supported housing and aged care services located in this area and therefore contribute to the higher numbers of people likely to require support and assistance. The next highest was North Sydney (3.2%), and Waverton (3%).

Volunteer Work

Nearly 18% of North Sydney LGA residents participate in volunteering activities, which represents a larger proportion than for Greater Sydney.

The highest share share of people who were volunteers was in Lavender Bay at 25.7%, followed by Kurraba Point and Cremorne. St Leonards had the lowest share amongst the suburbs of residents who were volunteers.

In the North Sydney LGA, just under 10% of residents provided some form of unpaid assistance, similar when compared to the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

However, since 2016, there was a larger increase in residents providing unpaid assistance in the North Sydney LGA compared to the wider region. Across the suburbs the share of people providing unpaid assistance varied from around 5% up to 13%.

As of 2021, Cammeray had the highest share of people caring for their own children, while Kirribilli had the lowest. People caring for other children was most common amongst residents in Lavender Bay, at 6.5%, with the lowest in St Leonards at less than 2%.



Future Health and Caring Projections

If trends continue in line with the projected age and sex profile, by 2056 this would see the following proportion of residents with one or more long-term health condition:

- 23.7% in St Leonards – Naremburn
- 29.8% in Cremorne – Cammeray
- 27% in Crows Nest – Waverton
- 25.2% in Neutral Bay – Kirribilli
- 31.3% in North Sydney – Lavender Bay.

Across the LGA, it is projected that the majority of residents will not have a long-term health condition (71.8%), with around 19% with one condition, 5.9% with two conditions, and 2.3% with three or more conditions.

Overall, this will result in 30.3% growth in people over the age of 35 years having one or more health conditions. This may be attributed to continued aging of the local population.

Over the next 35 years, it is projected that the number of people with need for assistance among the North Sydney population may substantially increase from 1,928 to 3,626 residents.

This translates to 48.5 additional residents requiring assistance per year, or an annual growth rate of 2.5%. This projected growth is tied to the projected ageing of the population.

The projections do not factor in any changes or advances in medical technology that may be made in future which could also impact on the need for assistance among the population.

The ABS Census estimates that for every resident requiring assistance, there are 3.18 people performing unpaid assistance to a person with disability, health condition or due to old age. In the projections SGS has considered this activity to be performed locally.

For North Sydney, as noted above, there is a high level of ageing projected, particularly in the Cremorne-Cammeray and North Sydney – Lavender Bay SA2s. Old age tends to be the biggest determinant of whether assistance is needed.

Consequently, if the number of carers per person in need continues over time, this is likely to result in the number of carers growing from around 6,100 in 2021 to around 11,900 in 2056. This represents an overall growth of 95 per cent over the 35 years, or a growth rate of 2.7 per annum (additional 166 per year).

Education and Employment

- North Sydney residents are highly educated, with large proportions of people working in professional and management roles, and in professional, scientific and technical industries.
- Residents across North Sydney's suburbs have high rates of formal educational attainment, most commonly in the form of a Bachelors degree.
- Based on existing trends the number of people with a bachelors degree or higher qualification in the LGA will increase over time, representing around 60 per cent of the population in 2056.
- Cremorne and Kirribilli had the highest shares among the suburbs of people not in the labour force, while rates of part-time employment were similar across suburbs.
- Most residents work in knowledge intensive sectors, in professional and managerial roles.

North Sydney has larger shares of people with university degrees (Bachelor degrees and above) compared to both the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

The number of people with university degrees increased since 2016 in North Sydney, while the number of people with Certificate I & II qualifications and a Year 10 secondary education declined.

Crows Nest, Cammeray and Neutral Bay had slightly lower shares of people with post-graduate qualification, and conversely slightly higher proportion of people with secondary school education.

Cremorne and Kirribilli have the highest shares of residents who were not in the labour force, both at over 30%. The greatest proportional growth was in residents who are no longer in the labour force, which was greater than that seen in both the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

This may have been influenced by the pandemic, as well as the increase in older residents and retirees in North Sydney.

For all of the suburbs, residents were most commonly working in knowledge intensive industries, ranging from 49% in Crows Nest, to 55% of residents in North Sydney.

Crows Nest and Neutral Bay had the largest shares of people working in the service sectors. Cammeray, Cremorne, Cremorne Point, Kirribilli, Lavender Bay, McMahons Point, Waverton, and Wollstonecraft all had over 20% of residents working in health and education.

Dwellings and Households

- Rates of renting are increasing in the North Sydney LGA, and renting is the most and is the most common form of housing tenure.
- Couples without children are the most common household type, though single parent families saw the largest proportional increase between 2016 and 2021
- Around three per cent of couples in North Sydney were same sex couples, slightly higher than across Sydney overall
- Average household sizes have stayed the same or declined slightly between 2016 and 2021.
- The future composition of households in the LGA is projected to continue to be predominantly couples without children and lone persons.
- The available housing types in the LGA is a significant factor in the types of households that may choose to (or be able to) locate in North Sydney. Being predominantly apartments currently, this is not necessarily housing that will attract family households of more than two to three members.

The number of dwellings in North Sydney grew by nearly 2,200 between 2016 and 2021, an increase of nearly 6%. This is lower in comparison to the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney, which saw growth of 8.8% and 12.4% respectively.

North Sydney and St Leonards has seen the largest increase in number of dwellings, whereas Cremorne, Cremorne, Kurraba Point, Lavender Bay and Waverton all experienced a decrease in the number of dwellings.

Housing Tenure

More than 52% of dwellings in North Sydney in 2021 were rented. This proportion is larger compared to Eastern City and Greater Sydney.

St Leonards, Kirribilli, and North Sydney had the highest proportion of renters, at over 60% of households, while Cammeray had the smallest share.

Cremorne Point, Waverton, and Cremorne had the highest share of households who owned their dwelling outright, while Cammeray had the highest share with a mortgage.

Between 2016 and 2021, the number of dwellings that were rented saw the largest proportional increase in the LGA, at around 11%. The trend toward rental dwellings can be seen city-wide, with an even greater increase in the proportion of renters in the Eastern Harbour and Greater Sydney in comparison to the North Sydney LGA.

The LGA also saw an increase in the number of dwellings owned outright (mortgage paid in full), around 9% compared to 2016, representing a larger share than Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

Types of Dwellings

The North Sydney LGA is becoming more dense as the number of apartments increase. The vast majority of dwellings in the North Sydney LGA is flats or apartments, representing a larger proportion in comparison to both the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney. Conversely, only around 10% of dwellings were separate houses, as is expected of an inner city location.

Household Composition and Size

Household sizes are influenced by a range of factors. Declining household sizes can be an indication of increasing housing densities which result in fewer people per dwelling.

Couple families with no children accounted for over 50% of households in North Sydney in 2021. Noting that this categorisation of household type includes couples that do not have children, and couples who have had children but no longer live in the same household.

Aligned with the LGA-level data, couple families with no children were the most common household type in 2021 in each of the suburbs, ranging from around 42% in Cammeray up to 69% in Kirribilli.

The second most common family type was couples with children, at around 25%. The proportion of this household type in North Sydney LGA is higher compared to Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.

The proportion of families with children under 15 range from around 12% in Milsons Point up to 34% in Cammeray.

Conversely, North Sydney had lower proportion of couple families with children compared to the wider region, and similar rates of single parent families.

As a proportion single parent families with children under 15 saw the largest increase in North Sydney between 2016 and 2021, higher than was the case for the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney – though this household type still accounts for a relatively small share of households. Single parent families were most common in Cammeray, Neutral Bay, and Cremorne.

Most household types increased over the period, however, the proportional increases in North Sydney were generally lower compared to the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney.



The average household size in each suburb either remained the same or declined between 2016 and 2021. Slight declines were seen in the suburbs of Crows Nest, Kirribilli, Kurraba Point, Lavender Bay, McMahon's Point, Milsons Point, North Sydney and St Leonards.

Kirribilli and North Sydney had the largest number of same-sex couples, at over 4% of couple households. Cammeray had the smallest share at 1.2%, followed by Waverton and Wollstonecraft.

Future Household Projections

Based on the 2056 projections, around 49% of households are likely to be renters, and 19.1% will likely own their properties with a mortgage. This equates to around 24,500 rental households and 9,400 households with a mortgage in 2056.

On current trends, couples without children (30%) and lone person households (38.2%) are expected to make up the majority share of households in North Sydney in 2056.

The projections suggest there may be minimal growth in couples with children. This is affected by the trends which are influencing the current mix of households in the LGA, including the availability of affordable dwellings which accommodate families.

Income and Housing Stress

- North Sydney households are typically wealthier than other parts of Sydney.
- The number of households on higher incomes has increased, and the number on lower incomes has decreased.
- North Sydney has generally seen lower rates of housing stress compared to other areas, however, rental affordability has worsened over time, and the housing market has changed substantially since the Census was taken.
- There are a large share of households in each suburb on relatively high incomes, with the largest share on \$3,500 or more per week in Milsons Point.
- There were a larger share of rental households paying more than 30% of their income on housing in each suburb compared to mortgage holders, though these rates are likely to have changed with recent impacts in the housing market.
- On current trends, there will continue to be a large share of households in North Sydney on higher incomes, and fewer at the lower income levels.
- Growth in incomes is related to a range of complex factors, including the types of families and households that can afford to live in the LGA. It will be consequently important for policy settings to be in place that can provide the opportunity for a diversity of households, including those on lower incomes, to live in and enjoy North Sydney.

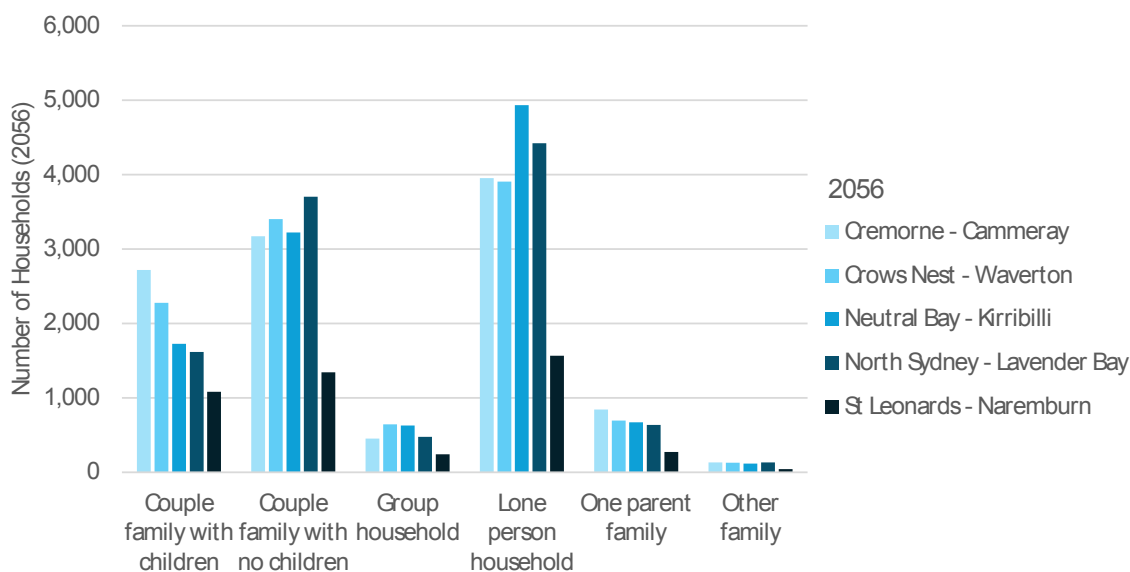


Figure 4: Household composition projections (by SA2) SGS Economics and Planning



As is reflected at the LGA level, in most of the suburbs more common income brackets are at the higher end of the spectrum. Comparatively few households in the LGA access income through government benefits.

The number of households in North Sydney on higher incomes is increasing more than those on lower incomes. Between 2016 and 2021, the number of households in the LGA within the lower income bracket broadly decreased, and conversely, increases in those on higher incomes.

Milsons Point had the largest share of households earning more than \$3,500 per week, while Wollstonecraft had the smallest share. The data shows Kirribilli as having the smallest share of households earning less than \$1,000 per week. The incomes seen in some suburbs will be influenced somewhat by the larger shares of people at the retiree life stage too.

Kirribilli has the largest proportion of dwellings with lower incomes (less than \$26,000 per year). Kirribilli also has a large number of retirees and concentrations of social housing dwellings which influences this.

Despite some of the differences in incomes noted above, the suburbs of the North Sydney LGA are some of the most advantaged suburbs in NSW.

Affordability

Access to good quality, affordable housing is fundamental to wellbeing. Measuring housing affordability and housing stress is not straightforward. In general terms, housing stress is described as lower income households that spend more than 30% of gross income on housing costs (ABS 2022).

Based on the standard measure, the proportion of people experiencing mortgage stress in the North Sydney LGA, is around 20% of mortgaged households, which is lower compared to both the Eastern Harbour City and Greater Sydney in 2021.

Similarly, the share of renters paying more than 30% of their income for housing was also lower by comparison, at under 30% of renting households.

In an analysis undertaken for North Sydney Council in 2022, it noted that the *“median rental for separate houses is 65% above rents for Greater Sydney. Median rental for one-bedroom apartments have tended to converge to the Greater Sydney median over the period, and are currently equal to Greater Sydney values, while median rentals for 2-bedroom apartments are currently 30% above the Greater Sydney median.”*

However, this is likely to have changed with more recent impacts in the housing market, including higher interest rates, the return of international migration, and very low rental vacancies.

The Rental Affordability Index (RAI) for 2023 showed that for the average household in Sydney, the North Sydney area remains unaffordable. Affordability for lower income households, such as pensioners and single parent families is even more acute.

The picture of mortgage and rental affordability was mixed across the suburbs as of 2021. Suburbs with the highest shares of households spending more than 30% of their income on a mortgage were Milson Point, St Leonards, Kirribilli, and North Sydney.

The suburbs with the highest share of renters spending more than 30% of their income on rents were in Kirribilli and Cremorne.

Future Projections

If current trends continue, the median income of households in the LGA in 2056 will be more than \$104,000 per year, and will see a similar pattern distribution among different income brackets to those seen currently. This means that across the North Sydney LGA, the proportion of households on higher incomes will continue to make up a larger share than households on lower incomes.

The North Sydney – Lavender Bay and Cremorne – Cammeray SA2s are projected to be the highest earning parts of the LGA with over 30 per cent of households projected to earn more than \$130,000 per year. These areas are also projected to see the largest level of ageing in the population.

As noted above for household types, there are a range of factors that will affect household incomes over time. For North Sydney, one of the challenges may be to have the policy settings in place to ensure a variety of housing typologies are maintained so lower income households are still given the opportunity to locate in the area.

The projected median rent cost for rental households in 2056 is around \$550 per week (\$28,600 per annum in \$2021). The projected median mortgage cost is around \$3,000 per month (\$36,000 per annum in \$2021), however, the most common bracket is projected to be \$5,000 and over, reflective of both higher house prices in the LGA and the greater capacity of households to afford larger payments.

Importantly, the trends in costs observed in the census do not account for the more recent increases in property prices, interest rates, and other variables that have significantly impacted both rents and mortgage payments in Sydney.



The Places supporting social inclusion in North Sydney

Well functioning cities, towns and places require a diversity of activities that provide social, economic, cultural and environmental value for local communities.

Social infrastructure plays a vital role in the social and economic development of Australian communities. It contributes to the identity, inclusion, and cohesion of communities, as it is frequently accessed and utilised by all community members.

The community facilities, spaces, programs, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities also helps us to be happy, safe and healthy, to learn, and to enjoy life.²²

A network of social and community assets are critical to unlocking the inherent value, skills, connections and knowledge that exists within the North Sydney LGA.

The map opposite illustrates the type and distribution of community infrastructure and assets that exist across the North Sydney LGA. The map does not include arts and cultural or parks and open spaces as these are being considered as part of a concurrent study.

It shows that the distribution of community infrastructure services and programs across the North Sydney LGA is relatively even. This is combined with the area's high level of access to quality health and education facilities, local community services as well as community and cultural facilities in St Leonards and City of Sydney, and Chatswood.

In preparation of the St Leonards and Crows Nest 2036 Plan, the NSW Government commissioned the 2018 Social Infrastructure and Open Space Study. The Study identified that the St Leonards and Crows Nest precinct would be deficient in a range of social and cultural services including halls and community centres, child care, library space and education.

Whilst the base assessment remains relevant, the additional 3,255 homes proposed under the NSW Government's Crows Nest Transport Oriented Development initiatives will add to the growth assumptions driving total population growth for the precinct to an estimated 16,000 new residents to 2036. Given the proposed increased density of the precinct provision of new social infrastructure will need to be reassessed and planned as a priority action.

Providing for a range of social infrastructure and spaces across the LGA is critical to support connection, nurturing a sense of belonging and grow a socially inclusive North Sydney.

Connects to local Aboriginal cultures, stories and Country.

Country has diverse and distinct ways of expressing and being understood depending on the people, place, and context. It is associated with Aboriginal People's cultural groups, where their ancestors still walk, and the place is known in physical, spiritual, and cultural ways holding these individual aspects harmoniously, storing knowledges like an eternal library. Being in public spaces is part of caring for Country²³.

Knowledge sharing can be intimate and help bond people together. It is vitally important that Aboriginal people retain authorship and control of their cultural knowledge and intellectual property, and how it is shared with others. Aboriginal people must be invited to co-design projects rather than just be asked to provide their cultural knowledge, stories, and insights to help projects²³.

Strengthens community resilience.

A resilient community is socially connected and has infrastructure that can withstand disaster and foster community recovery. Resilient communities promote individual and community wellbeing and cohesiveness to strengthen their communities for everyday, as well as extreme challenges.

The social costs of natural disasters equal the more clearly defined economic costs – and are sometimes even higher. Natural disasters have wide-ranging social impacts both immediately and into the long term. These impacts are on health and wellbeing, education, employment and community networks which can profoundly affect communities.

Extensive research reveals that resilient and prepared communities are more likely to withstand the negative impacts of natural disasters and that strong social capital correlates to effective recovery. The provision of equitably dispersed infrastructure and spaces will enhance social networks which are critical in times of disaster and recovery.

Invites civic participation and involvement.

To meet the changes in people's needs through different stages of life requires integrated planning and collaboration. We need to build opportunities for social and civic participation for all our communities, which is critical for ensuring everyone is able to prosper and thrive.

Public spaces must also be places that promote safety, equity, inclusion, social justice and democracy. They should allow free expression, collective action, public debate and people of all backgrounds to participate in civic life.²⁵

22. *Infrastructure Australia (2019) Australian Infrastructure Audit*

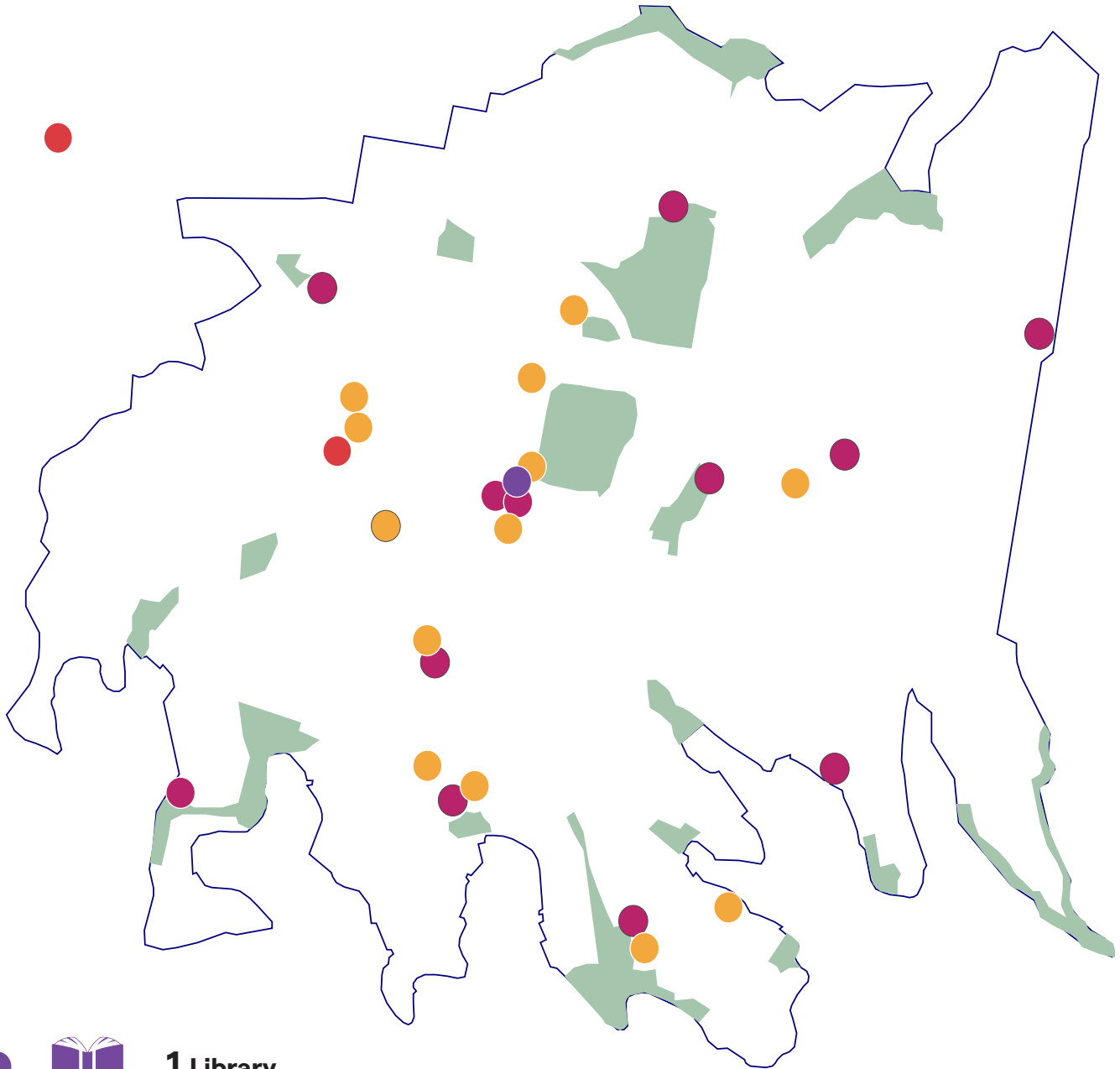
23. *Hromek, D (2021) Statement of Country in NSW Public Spaces Charter, Department of Planning, Industry & Environment.*

24. *GANSW 2020 Draft Connecting with Country Framework*

25. *Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (2021) 'NSW Public Spaces Charter*



“The network of social infrastructure contributes to social identity, inclusion and cohesion and is used by all Australians at some point in their lives, often on a daily basis”.

- Infrastructure Australia



- 

1 Library
- 

2 Hospitals
(RNS outside the LGA)
- 

10 Community centres and Halls
- 

15+ School and Tertiary Education

- 
13+ Cultural Spaces
(see Cultural & Creativity Study)
- 
169Ha Public Open Spaces
(see Open Space Study)



Activities that engage communities help in the decision making to prioritise infrastructure, programs and events that respond to the local needs, characteristics and expectations and increase wellbeing and a sense of value, care and pride.

Creates a physical ‘heart’ of communities

Public space is where public life happens. It includes the streets we walk or cycle in, the town squares we socialise in, libraries we learn in, community halls we gather in and parks, playgrounds and sport fields where we relax or play.²⁶ Social infrastructure can be an anchor or a destination within local places and communities, big or small.

They are places the local community come together. They can be places of celebration, of respite and refuge, and places to share knowledge and find “your people”. They are places to discuss ideas and common interests, discover new skills, explore culture and creativity.

More than just buildings and spaces, but a place to connect communities and increase inclusion.

The way people use public spaces and community facilities transforms them into meaningful places with layers of shared experiences, collective memories and a mixture of identities.

When people feel attached to local places and have a strong sense of belonging and they feel a greater connection to each other. This is likely to result in communities that are more likely to adopt, use and care for the space themselves and have a greater sense of belonging to their community²⁵.

Digital connectivity is also a powerful tool to building broad and diverse communities of interest that can cross traditional spatial boundaries, provide access to learning and information and enable greater participation for those who are unable to access traditional approaches to community participation.

Spaces for learning and connecting through shared interests

Providing spaces and services that encourage learning, creativity and productivity such as meeting rooms, co-working spaces, creative studios and maker spaces offer space for collaboration, networking and connecting through shared interests. They can positively contribute to the local economy by fostering innovation and creativity and offering affordable access to spaces to grow new business and job opportunities for all people.

Culture and creativity are ways that communities express their identity and narrative about who they are and what they want their place to be. Social infrastructure like libraries, galleries, museums, theatres and public art offers an invitation to explore interests, learn new things, and encourage creative expression through art, performance, and cultural experiences.

Policy Context supporting social inclusion in North Sydney

In developing the Study, relevant international, state and local policies have been considered.

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Australia is one of 193 countries that committed to the goals in September 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Study works towards achieving the intent of the goals identified in Figure 5 opposite.

UNESCO 2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity²⁷

The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity is a declaration adopted unanimously by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

It calls on nations and institutions to work together for the preservation of culture in all its forms, and for policies that help to share ideas across cultures and inspire new forms of creativity

UNHCR 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol²⁸

Australia has adopted and is a party to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Article 1 of the 1951 Convention defines a refugee as someone who:

“owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of [their] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail [themselves] of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of [their] former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

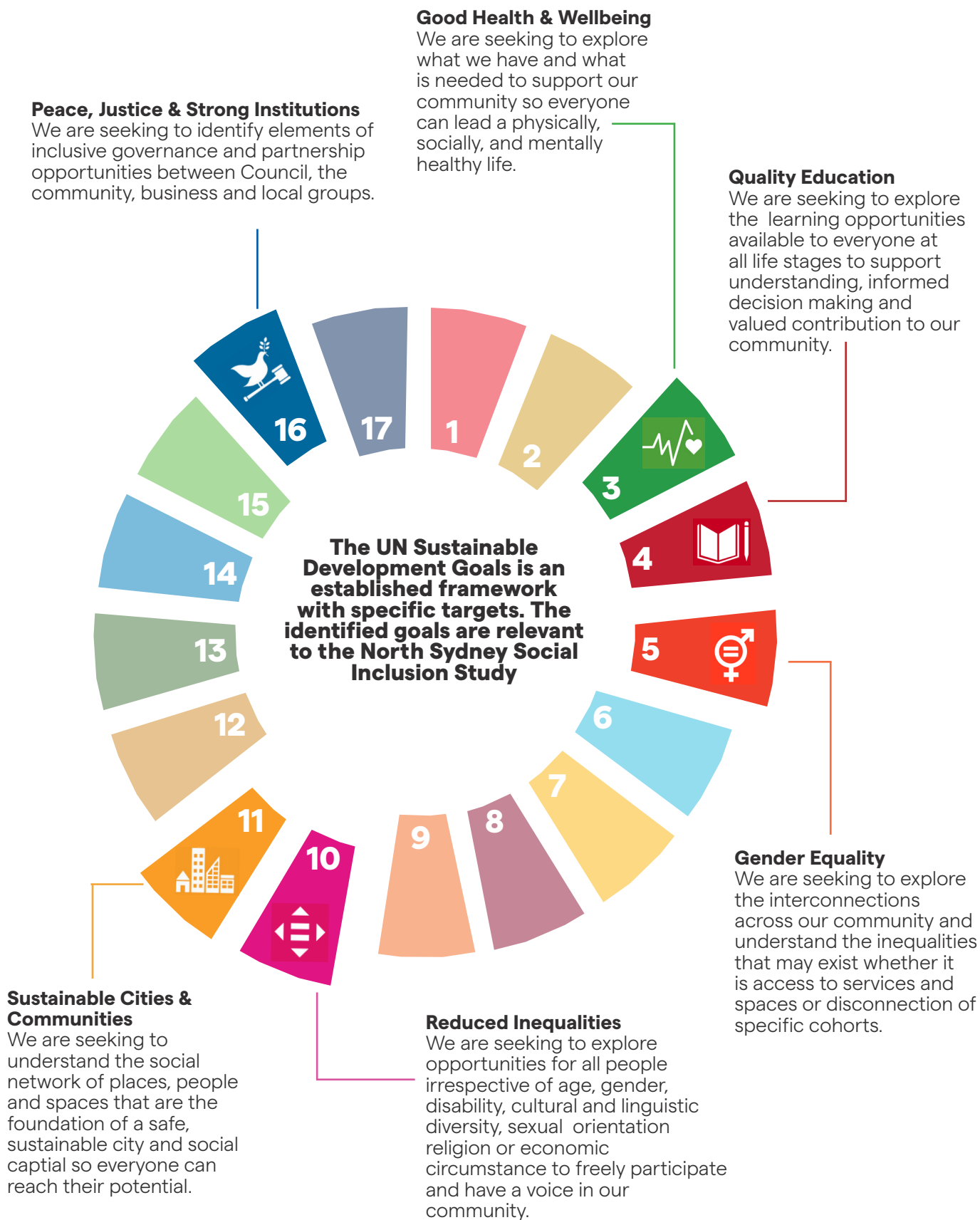
The declarations and other documents, such as the UN 1948 Declaration of Human Rights set out the fundamental human and liberties which Australia is committed. Several relevant rights set out the protections to any form of discrimination; freedom of cultural practice and participation; rights of refugees to access support and seek freedoms and overall, that human rights are to be provided to all humans regardless of race, culture, religion or language.

26. Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (2021) ‘NSW Public Spaces Charter

27. United Nations ‘Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity’. www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/universal-declaration-cultural-diversity

28. UNHCR ‘The 1951 Refugee Convention’. www.unhcr.org/au/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention

Figure 5: UN Sustainability Development Goals supporting social inclusion in North Sydney



In developing the Social Inclusion Study, we have considered relevant legislation at both the New South Wales and Australian Government levels in the areas of inclusion, diversity, and equity.

The anti-discrimination laws are contained in national legislation such as:

- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Religious Discrimination Bill 2021
- NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- The Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014

Relevant NSW Government legislation and policy include:

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 ensures that people are treated equally, regardless of their gender, sexuality, marital status, familial responsibilities, age, ethno-religion and race. It also prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, work status, gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual harassment in the work place.

Multicultural NSW Act 2000 establishes Multicultural NSW as the government agency in NSW responsible for promoting and monitoring the Multicultural Principles for individuals, and institutions of NSW. Multicultural NSW Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 sets out a vision for an inclusive, connected and socially cohesive multicultural NSW.

NSW Gender Equality Budget Statement is the first step towards a broader set of wellbeing and performance measures. It lays the foundation for a better and more secure future for women and girls in New South Wales. By removing barriers that prevent women from realising their full potential we are paving the way for a happier and healthier society and a more resilient economy.

NSW Disability Inclusion Plan aims to improve the support given to people with disability in NSW and building a state that is fully inclusive for everyone in our community.

Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places assists and guides government, non-government organisations, and private businesses to interact and engage with people experiencing homelessness, so they are treated respectfully, with dignity, and do not face discrimination. The Protocol also encourages government and non-government organisations to provide a response or deliver support to people experiencing homelessness if needed or requested.

Homelessness NSW Strategy 2023-2028

establishes the vision for a “future where everyone has a safe home and the support to keep it”. Homelessness NSW exists to build the capabilities of people and capacity of systems to end homelessness. The Strategy outlines six guiding principles to guide decision making and three priorities which are:

- Create a movement to end homelessness
- Advocate and facilitate whole of system change to end homelessness
- Build skills, knowledge and networks to improve responses for better outcomes for people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.

Connecting with Country [GANSW, 2023]: is a framework for understanding the value of Aboriginal knowledge in the design and planning of places. Importantly it is informed by the experiences and knowledges of people who are from and work on Country in and around the Sydney basin. The ambition of Connecting with Country is that everyone who is involved in delivering government projects will “commit to helping support the health and wellbeing of Country by valuing, respecting, and being guided by Aboriginal people, who know that if we care for Country – it will care for us”.

Resilient Sydney 2030 [Resilient Sydney 2018]: sets a direction and vision to strengthen Sydney’s ability to adapt and thrive in the face of increasing global uncertainty and local stresses. The provision of accessible social infrastructure is one of the important ways to achieve this vision and the five supporting directions, all which have relevance to the North Sydney Social Inclusion Strategy.

Joint Use of Schools Facilities and Land Policy, [Department of Education]: encourages shared use of school facilities (such as open space and sporting facilities), with significant investment in new, upgraded or maintained facilities. The asset is typically shared between the school and the other parties over an extended period of time, or the lifetime of the asset. These projects are voluntary and may include cost-sharing for maintenance of school grounds and buildings, and improved access to available social infrastructure.

Everyone Can Play Guidelines [DPE, 2020]: outlines design principles and best practice recommendations for play spaces in NSW, focusing on inclusive play spaces. An inclusive play space invites people of all ages, abilities and cultures to come together to socialise and thrive. The guidelines also explore the concepts around nature and water play as well as place and play.

Age Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021-2031 [Department of Communities and Justice, 2021]:

acknowledges that there is a need to focus on older people from marginalised communities, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the LGBTIQ+ community, people with disability and living with chronic illness, and people from cultural diverse communities. The focus areas identified in the Strategy are key considerations in the future planning and design of social infrastructure considerations include living in age-friendly environments, participation and inclusive communities, and social isolation and loneliness.

NSW Public Spaces Charter [DPIE, 2021]: supports the planning, design, management and activation of public spaces in NSW. The Charter defines public spaces as: “all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive”. The quality of a public space is reflected not only in its physical form—how its designed, maintained and integrated with its environment—but also through the activities it supports and the meaning it holds. It is what makes people feel safe, welcome and included—a place where they want to keep coming back.

Better Placed [GANSW 2020]: outlines seven objectives as to how a built environment, including public buildings, can be well-designed and:

- Is a better fit within a diverse environment, and contributes to the character and quality of place.
- Is better for the community, where all people feel welcome, included and valued, and where the streets, open spaces and community buildings are inviting and accessible.
- Is better for people because they are safe, comfortable and vibrant, supporting social interaction and enjoyable, healthy lifestyles.
- Is better working by accommodating fit for purpose activities, and also responding to changes over time, where interventions create new use potentials, while retaining the embedded value in our built environment.
- Delivers better value economically, socially, environmentally and culturally, and in return are highly valued by community.
- Reflects a better look and feel as they are refined, aesthetically considered and built to last, creating an engaging, and balanced experience.

North Sydney Vision 2040 Community Strategic Plan is based on the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights, with Inclusivity as one of the three principles.

This principle outlines that Council understands that everyone is unique and individual differences are recognised. Through this principle, Council already has a clear commitment to support all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. To embrace diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, and beliefs. Council are also explicit that they welcome different cultural, religious and language groups.

Direction 4 Social Vitality aims to ensure that the North Sydney community have a healthy and active lifestyle with improved accessibility, wellbeing and safety, and a life free from violence and crime.

It aims to ensure access to the best health care and support services as well as a range of education opportunities.

To achieve this, it is acknowledged that service providers, including Stanton Library need to deliver facilities that meet the community’s changing cultural and educational needs.

This direction also acknowledges that local heritage and First Nations history and culture is important and should be preserved, respected and celebrated. Underpinning this is the cultural diversity of the community and the range of festivals, art, culture, and events that connect the community, their stories, traditions and experiences.

North Sydney Youth Strategic Plan 2023-2027: provides a framework and a clear direction for Council and partners to achieve improved outcomes for young people and to better meet their needs, interests, and aspirations. The strategic themes of the Plan include:

Connection: Young people from all backgrounds, cultures and abilities feel a sense of belonging.

Wellbeing: Young people who are experiencing difficulties and challenges feel valued, engaged and supported.

Opportunity: Young people are provided with the tools, resources and opportunities to support their diverse wellbeing, social, recreational, educational and employment needs.

The extensive consultation that informed the preparation of this plan has been considered in the development of the strategic directions outlined in this Study.



What the North Sydney community told us.

A part of the primary research conducted for this Study was a series of engagement discussions with the community of North Sydney.

The purpose of the engagement was to gain insights and input from people of all ages including children and young people, people with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse, and LGBTIQ+ community members.

The engagement activities undertaken between March 2024 and July 2024 included:

- Voice of Youth Forum: 1 day forum with 50 children and young people from all the primary and high schools within the North Sydney LGA.
- Preparation of the Social Inclusion Discussion Paper [147downloads]
- Community Panel Discussion that included Jess Scully, [Author] Elizabeth Lovell, [CEO Lifeline], Ian Grey [Waverton Precinct and local resident] and Lemony Sharma [young person and local resident]
- Briefing workshop with North Sydney Access and Inclusion Panel members
- Online survey with 109 responses
- Community workshop: with 60 North Sydney residents that were demographically representative
- 5 online focus group discussions with 25 people from the LGBTIQ+ community, general North Sydney community members (residents and workers) housing and homelessness service providers, health and education providers and local community group representatives.
- Written submissions [3 received]
- Youth Workshop: with 37 participants at Planet X and led by North Sydney Council staff
- Multicultural Workshop: with 17 participants led by North Sydney Council staff

North Sydney Council conducted a specific engagement with First Nations Peoples facilitated by Murawin Consulting. The findings from these discussions has been incorporated and considered in this Study.

North Sydney Council, for all informing strategies also conducted nine (9) community market and event pop-ups Council staff attended to promote the discussion paper and survey.



300+ people were engaged and have informed the Social Inclusion Study

As part of the broader engagement process, Council worked with an accessible document specialist to convert each discussion paper into an accessible word document and made it available online, Council also introduced the UserWay widget to the YourSay platform at the start of this consultation to uplift site accessibility and enhance inclusion.

North Sydney Council, in the preparation of the Youth Strategic Plan and the review of the Homelessness Strategy recently conducted surveys to inform each document. The findings of both these surveys have been considered in this Study.

Engagement Purpose

The engagement sought to collaborate with Council and it's key stakeholders to encourage a wide range of community members, service providers and community groups to have their voices heard. The engagement program was designed to:

- Understand the experience of the community members, groups and service providers in the local community;
- Identify the challenges, issues and barriers faced by the community in being connected to each other and the services they need; to their sense of belonging and to their ability to participate in and contribute to civic life;
- To explore how local community groups and service providers currently support inclusion, their challenges and the opportunities to work with Council to improve social inclusion in the area; and
- To identify recommendations that will support increased social inclusion and the role of Council in achieving this.

Social Inclusion Discussion Paper

The Social Inclusion Discussion Paper was developed to guide comprehensive and collaborative community and stakeholder engagement, that would establish a clear and shared understanding and vision for social inclusion in North Sydney.

Based on our research and initial engagement conversations, four areas of focus emerged and provided a common language and understanding with which to have a conversation with the community about social inclusion.

The four areas of focus are an interconnected framework that enable a conversation with each individual and community group, or cohort, and service providers, to reflect their unique perspectives and expectation. These four focus areas include:

Connection: Prioritised investment will foster strong community connections to support the social, cultural, economic and political health and vitality of our community.

Belonging: A connected community provides opportunities for our community to be seen, heard and accepted in ways that are meaningful to them.

Contribution: An inclusive and connected community can access, contribute to and fully participate in civic life, where differing voices and experiences are valued.

Investment: Leveraging our investment - both human and financial through collaboration, partnerships and innovation to unlock our true potential and optimise our impact.

This document summarised the findings from the background research, and was the foundation to the engagement discussions with participants across the various workshops.

Connection

In the North Sydney LGA, people feel **most connected when:**



Going to a festival or community event



Being acknowledged, even by a smile from a stranger on the street



Visiting local community centres, libraries and parks



Helping others in my community and supporting them in times of difficulty



Meeting new people and getting to know them, especially through shared interests

“ I feel connected to other people that have had similar experiences to me and have things in common with me.

- Young Person, Planet X workshop

“ I feel connected to other people in situations where there is mutual understanding, shared interests, empathy, open communication, and a sense of belonging or common purpose.

- Multicultural workshop

The community and service providers alike acknowledged the importance of meaningful and deep connection amongst community members and with groups, local organisations and service providers.

The community identified a range of existing opportunities to connect. They talked about the value of connection to their sense of belonging, safety, wellbeing and the shared identity. They also demonstrated an understanding of how this reinforce cultural bonds, traditions and a sense of collective purpose.



Opportunities to deepen community connection centered around Council's role in continued investment in and collaboration with existing services and facilities, expanded programs, services, infrastructure and events that bring people together.

Strengthened connections with local businesses, community groups and institutions was also considered an opportunity to increase social inclusion and connection within the North Sydney LGA.

The community noted affordability and accessibility as barriers to their ability to connect, and also voiced the need for better awareness and promotion about the range of opportunities for them to 'come together'.

Ways in which people felt most connected included:

Gathering places - going to a community event or festival (37 survey responses), local community centres, libraries, parks etc (31), going to the library, café etc and frequently seeing the same people there as well (25)

Through a local club or group - being a member of a local community group (30 survey responses), through my school / my children's school (8), through my sporting and/or recreation club that I am a part of (5), through my cultural, creative, social club (3)

Being acknowledged - by a smile from a stranger (34 survey responses), just saying hello as I walk past people in the street (21)

Being engaged - being able to help others in my community (27 survey responses), contributing to Council engagement processes (9), sharing stories, traditions, and cultures with other people in my community (3)

Meeting People - meeting new people and getting to know them (24 survey responses), meeting people that are of a similar age and personal circumstance as me (16), meeting people that are different in age, cultural background, ability, and circumstance to me (10), finding others with similar interests through classes, meetups, events etc (24).

Barriers to building connections identified included:

- The high number of people living alone and in apartments is not conducive to forming close community connections.
- Many residents are transient (residing in the area for less than 5 years) making it difficult to form a sense of belonging and meaningful connections.
- Lack of promotion and visibility of local event, programs and services.
- Difficulty establishing connections and companionship at different life stages (e.g. older people in care facilities).

- Difficulty establishing friendships and meaningful connections due to differing levels of personal agency and access.
- The use of social media is seen both as a contributor and a barrier to meaningful connection.
- North Sydney is viewed geographically as a central business district, rather than a community with main streets, local business, community centres, programs and services.
- Current community and social Infrastructure have a number of limitations, including the small number of facilities, limited capacity and operating hours resulting in suboptimal services and activities.

Ideas to increase community connections included:

- Increased inter-cultural connections through programs, services and events that promote companionship.
- Sharing opportunities to participate in inclusive activities.
- Better access for mobility challenged people.
- Creating and maintaining liveable spaces. Allowing high rise promotes isolation rather than a healthy society that is connected to environment and people.
- Keep supporting vulnerable people to connect in the community. Provide support, opportunities and activities and ways to connect for low income families.
- Focus on other groups besides families. There are a lot of 'other' type of people and groups in the community.
- Shared spaces and facilities for artists.
- Increase activities in local parks, with free events that bring people together.
- Tackle the challenges of reaching more isolated or transient residents, such as renters or busy commuters, and encouraging them to engage with the community.
- Provide opportunities for people to come together - celebrations and events, libraries, spaces for community groups, precinct meetings. The Council could provide the physical structure and as well as initiatives from individuals.
- Collaborating with local business, groups, and schools to host more initiatives that bring people together.



- Improve advertising and promotion of community events, programs, services, resources, groups, classes, and workshops to encourage people to come together; and
- Ensure that the 'invitation' for community members to attend, access or connect with services, events and programs resonates broadly, so the community understands they are welcome.

What people identified Council is already doing well included:

- Community-led events and programs for example community gardens, workshops, seminars, neighborhood activities.
- The provision of community centres and libraries (and their programs) are seen as vital to community connection and inclusion.
- Council has passionate and dedicated staff with incredible knowledge and expertise.
- Council has the ability to connect and establish 'networks' and other collaborative efforts quickly and efficiently.

Planet X Youth

A survey was conducted by the Planet X Youth Sydney, a Council-run drop in space for young people, aged 12 – 18.

In addition, a number of Planet X participants completed the 'Have Your Say' survey. It is clear from the engagement, that whilst this is a relatively small cohort, they are highly engaged with and passionate about the space.

83% of respondents feel a sense of belonging and connection to the North Sydney Community and Place, with many attributing to the space supporting this sense of belonging and providing valuable connections.

Respondents felt strongly that their views should be considered in decision making, whilst many recognised the value in communities and individuals from multi-cultural, varying socio-economic and the LGBTIQ community being a more visible part of the community.

Respondents also suggested more community centres, events and opportunities to be with like-minded young people as opportunities for young people to feel more connected and a greater sense of belonging.

Belonging

91% of survey participants said they as though they belong within the North Sydney community.

83% of young people survey through Planet X said they feel a sense of belonging and connection in the North Sydney community.

In the North Sydney LGA,

belonging means:

- Feeling **welcome, accepted, valued, heard, seen and included** in the community
- Feeling **physically safe** in the area and feeling **emotionally safe** to express individual views without judgment or discrimination
- Belonging is a unique and individual feeling, a **feeling of comfort and having a place** in the community
- Feeling a sense of **your identity correlating with the community's values**, goals and aspirations
- Being a **part of something bigger** than you as an individual
- **Being listened to and heard**, no matter how old you are or where you are from, and you can **talk openly, freely and share opinions respectfully**
- **Familiarity with your 'place**, our neighbours and businesses, **having empathy** for those around you, particularly in challenging times, and **knowing how to get support** when you need it
- The **opportunity for everyone**, no matter their circumstance and beliefs.

“ Working together towards shared goals, supporting each other in times of difficulty.

- Participant, Multicultural Workshop about how they feel a sense of belonging



The community of North Sydney expressed that belonging was felt through being heard, seen, and included; by being a part of something bigger, and being familiar with neighbours, their pets and local businesses.

To nurture belonging in North Sydney, the community recognised the importance of visibility - seeing your identity reflected in the community, the value of serving differing needs during different stages of life and ensuring that the 'invitation' to engage, connect and participate is clear, accessible and much more obvious.

A community with a strong sense of belonging is one where everyone feels welcomed, truly accepted and a part of something. Through consultation, a strong sense of belonging was tied to the acceptance and celebration of our differences and unique experience and identities.

People said belonging in North Sydney means:

- Feeling welcome, accepted, valued, heard, seen and included in the community
- Feeling physically safe in the area and feeling emotionally safe to express individual views without judgment or discrimination
- Belonging is a unique and individual feeling, a feeling of comfort and having a place in the community
- Feeling a sense of your identity correlating with the community's values, goals and aspirations
- Being a part of something bigger than you as an individual
- Familiarity with your 'place, our neighbours and businesses, having empathy for those around you, particularly in challenging times, and knowing how to get support when you need it
- The opportunity for everyone, no matter their circumstance and beliefs, to be included.

Barriers to feeling a sense of belonging identified:

- Having recently moved to the area
- Is a visitor/worker to the area
- Not being engaged in community activities
- Has experienced exclusion themselves
- Lack of community space and opportunities to volunteer
- Not seeing or feeling that your identity is visible or reflected in the community
- Lack of communication and information about community events, programs and opportunities, resulting in some community members not feeling invited or welcome.

- Targeted activities, programs and services for community members at different stages of life (young families through to older residents), but limited activities targeting other communities and cohort groups.
- The type of residential properties (apartments) and busy-ness of the streets creating barriers to getting to know each other and meaningfully engaging
- The need for symbols and visual clues that I belong (e.g. pride symbols, pedestrian crossings, places for pets)
- The ability for community members to identify safe and free community spaces they can visit, what services and spaces are available and how they can use community spaces (e.g. study at the library).

Ideas to increase the sense of belonging for all people in the North Sydney community included:

- Having relaxed, safe and welcoming spaces and amenity to visit and interact (including transport safety and mode options, wayfinding, toilets etc.)
- Increase the visible and recognisable symbols of various communities across the public domain, for example symbols that represent LGBTIQ+ pride, disability access and First Nations people
- Increased promotion of community events, programs, services and resources to ensure the community understand that they are invited and welcome to attend (for example, using visual symbols and or translations), and different mediums (for example printed flyers alongside social media posts)
- Partner with local organisations and businesses to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in their spaces, and operations, concurrent with national events (e.g NAIDOC week) and or local events and programs.
- Recognition of differing needs at different stages of life, and for people with different experiences, through programing and communication that meets the needs of the community
- Promote representation of diverse cultures, abilities, and circumstance within Council, local business and service providers
- Ensure community infrastructure meets the needs of the community, and can evolve with the community as they evolve and change.

What people identified Council is already doing well included:

- Providing youth spaces, such as youth centres, for both formal and informal activities that foster a sense of belonging.
- Provision of community spaces, such as community centres and libraries, for people of various ages and interests to connect.
- Coordinated programs in the community centres that enable the community to access a range of services and or programs including free legal aid, exercise groups, cultural classes language classes and seniors meet ups.
- Providing the open green spaces where sporting games take place during the week and on weekends, where individuals can meet new people and feel like they belong in their clubs and with teammates.
- Programming cultural and social events such as market days, music, multicultural events, food, and sporting events offering opportunities for community members with different backgrounds and interests to participate.

Contribution

49% of survey participants said they currently volunteer

51% of survey participants said they don't currently volunteer but **81% of these people** said that they would be willing to do so.

In the North Sydney LGA,

contributions means:

- Having my **voice heard**.
- Knowing and **learning from the community**, sharing views and knowledge with each other.
- Understanding **opportunities to volunteer** and being part of events and programs.
- **Being part of making decisions**, rather than having them made for them.
- Contributing to **something bigger than yourself and feeling proud** of my contribution.
- **Finding purpose and meaning** in being part of events and programs, helping people and being part of the community.

The community recognised the many different ways, and value of participating in and contributing to the civic life of North Sydney.

The community acknowledged the importance of being empowered to better engage in civic life, in decision making and having a sense of collective purpose and achievement.

Engagement revealed that the community felt like they were contributing when their voice was heard, they were a part of decision making, aware of the opportunities to contribute, and felt proud in the act of contribution.

Opportunities to enable greater and more meaningful contribution in North Sydney included improved awareness of opportunities, programs and services, promotion of volunteering opportunities and auditing the skills of the community to contribute, continuing public forums and fostering better networks that have broad reach and are accessible.

The census data shows that the North Sydney LGA has a high rate of volunteering compared to other areas in the region. When asked, 49% of survey respondents said that they currently volunteer. Respondents also provided great insights into the rate of volunteering, the reasons they contributed this way and what some of the barriers are.



The main reasons for volunteering identified by survey respondents included sharing and using their skills and experience; helping others and the community; to be active; personal satisfaction and social connection.

The barriers to volunteering that survey respondents identified included work and family commitments; lack of suitable opportunities and personal constraints, including health and financial reasons. Community members also told us that knowing what opportunities are available to volunteer within the North Sydney LGA can be difficult. They would like to explore new ways to increase awareness and make it easier for people to connect and contribute to their communities.

Barriers to people contributing to community life in North Sydney identified:

- Lack of awareness about available programs, volunteering opportunities, forums and networking opportunities (especially for young people)
- Personal constraints, including work, financial and family commitments limiting their ability to participate, volunteer or become involved in a variety of activities.
- Limited opportunities to contribute outside of work hours, or due to age, health or physical logistics (transport and mobility)
- Being unsure if their skills or knowledge are relevant or needed in the community

Ideas to increase contribution of people in the North Sydney community included:

- Ensure diverse voices are included in policy-making and community planning.
- Create platforms for regular dialogue between community members and local authorities.
- Empower individuals through consultation, communication platforms and transparency.
- Undertake an audit of skills and knowledge of community members interested in volunteering to identify opportunities and match volunteers with services and organisations in need of support.
- Promote volunteering opportunities, addressing perceived and real barriers (e.g time, transport and other constraints).
- Promote the value of participating in discussion, consultation and decision making, by demonstrating impacts and outcomes.
- Promote the value of volunteering, by evaluating and measuring outcomes and impacts
- Provide adequate funding to ensure awareness of Council and community services, programs and resources.

What people identified Council is already doing well included:

- Consulting with the community on current plans
- Reaching the community with opportunities for contribution through their social media, email and newsletter channels
- Holding / hosting events and programs with varying frequencies throughout the year for regular and sustained contribution opportunities
- Providing the spaces - community centres, libraries, and parks - for clubs and groups to hold information sessions, workshops, programs, and services.



Voice of Young People Forum, March 2024

Investment

To nurture a socially inclusive North Sydney,

investment priorities include:



Community engagement: Community forums, precinct meetings, opportunities to have your say, elevating everyone's voice, increased volunteer opportunities. This also includes engagement with older people, supporting young people, engaging vulnerable people, and family programs



Community Spaces: Community spaces and well funded facilities, outdoor and open spaces, artist spaces, multicultural events and spaces, and recreational facilities.



Events and Programs: Community festivals markets, free and affordable programs and events



Affordable Housing: More social housing, lower rise housing and more affordable housing.



Communication: Clearer and more accessible information, what's on, marketing and promotion of services, facilities, events and opportunities.



Amenity: Safety, equity, culturally inclusive, improved accessibility, retain green and open spaces, increased public transport.

Investment is a key enabler to the themes of connection, belonging and contribution. The investment of Council's time, resources, knowledge, networks and capital were recognised by the community and service providers as being of equal importance.

Council's current investment in a range of services, infrastructure and programs was recognised as important, but necessarily constrained.

There were a range of opportunities and areas of improvement identified, however many of these do not require significant increases to capital investment, recognising Council's role as a connector, advocate and facilitator of services, events and networks. This was a recurrent theme throughout community engagement.

Challenges to effective investment identified:

- Siloed service delivery which results in a less integrated service for clients in need.
- Lack of community awareness about potential services and support available to them.
- Having networked services and information to ensure community members can access services and support when they need it.
- Lack of awareness of services which prevents early intervention and creates a heavier reliance on crisis services that could have been avoided.
- Ability of services to network, share knowledge and expertise and connect with each other.

Ideas to increase the investment in a socially inclusive North Sydney included:

- Targeted engagement with and between multicultural and intergenerational communities to better understand their perspectives and needs.
- Improved connections and networks between service providers so clients are aware of, and can access the support and services they need.
- Targeted service provider events (e.g. regular networking meetings and digital platforms) to better connect services and to share resources.
- Translation services and planning for 'lifecycle' services (e.g. family support to aged care).
- Increase community awareness of services, including co-location of services and optimising use of Council assets to meet priority needs of the community.
- Connect the strategic planning, including program evaluation of Council and service providers to ensure decisions are evidence-based and responsive to community need.
- Continued provision and programming at the Coal Loader and other public spaces and facilities.
- Council to advocate for the community's needs to different providers and or government agencies.

What people identified Council is already doing well included:

- The provision of community centres and libraries (and their programs), vital to community connection and inclusion.
- Supporting and delivering events that connect different community members and services and regular information distribution (e.g. events, markets, noticeboards and community facilities).
- Having passionate staff and teams with valuable knowledge and expertise.
- Connecting 'networks' and other collaborative efforts quickly and efficiently, including with other government agencies.



04 | A Socially Inclusive North Sydney

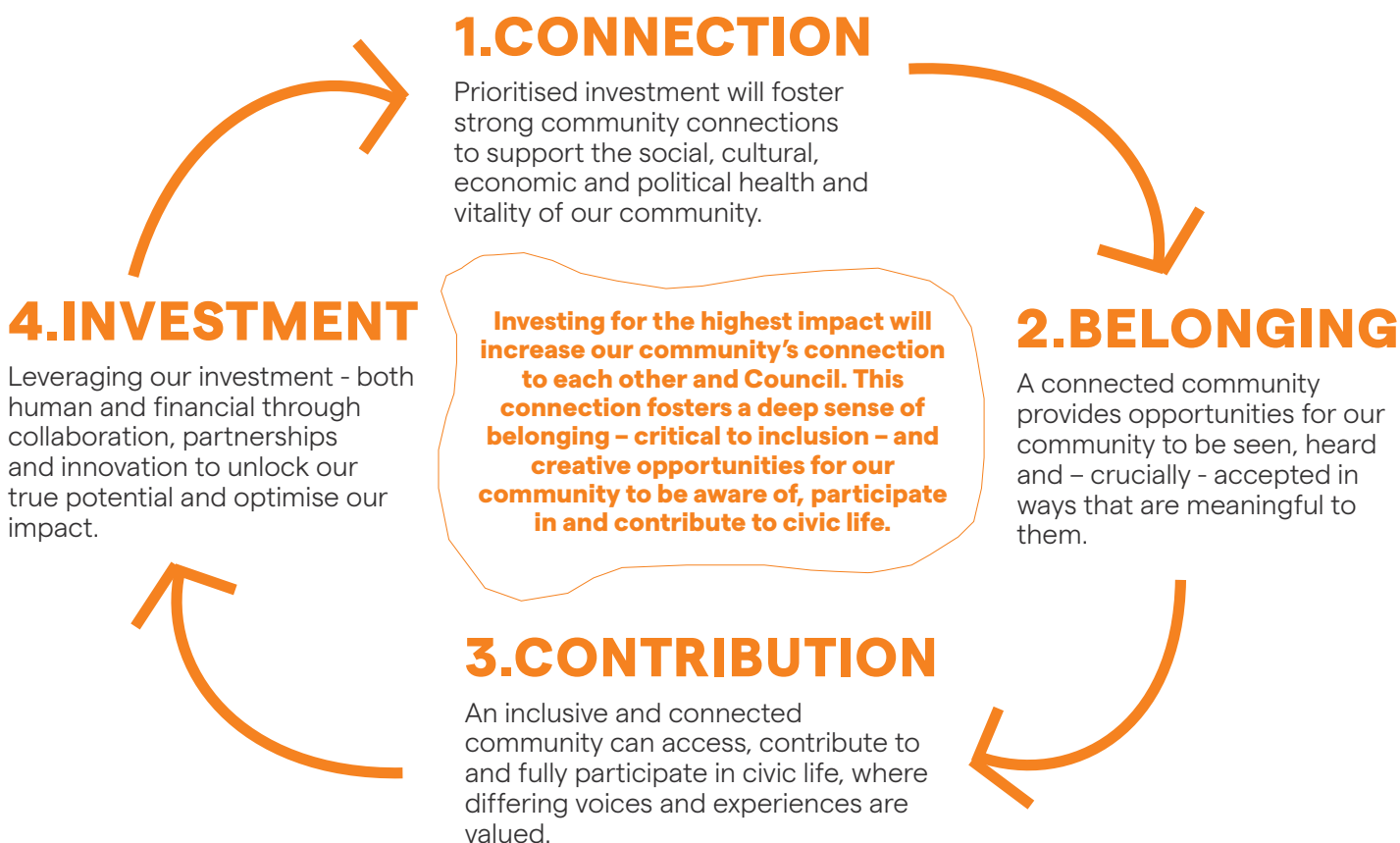
Through the research and engagement, four themes emerged as being the 'ingredients' for social inclusion - Connection, Belonging, Contribution and Investment. These themes are the foundation to grow and nurture a socially inclusive North Sydney.

The four strategic directions provide a starting point for the development of the North Sydney Social Inclusion Strategy. Each strategic direction is supported by clear objectives and recommendations for action to positively respond to the local and regional identified needs, strengths and challenges of the North Sydney community now, and into the future.

Given the other eight informing studies are closely related to achieving a socially inclusive North Sydney, recommendations may overlap or be very similar. It is suggested that the recommended strategic directions and actions should be considered alongside those outlined in the other studies.

“ I feel connected to other people that have had similar experiences to me and have things in common with me”

- Young Person, Planet X workshop



The strengths to build a socially inclusive future include:

- Nearly 18% of North Sydney LGA residents are volunteers, larger than the share for Greater Sydney. However, it is a common challenge for most areas that current levels of volunteering are steadily declining and demand for volunteer support services is increasing.
- North Sydney has a large population of well-educated retirees and the second most populous demographic group being youth.
- The existing program of community-led events for example community gardens, workshops, seminars, neighborhood activities are positive ways to bring the community together.
- Organising activities in the community centres which enables residents to access free legal aid, exercise groups, language classes, seniors meet ups and wellbeing activities.
- The provision of community centres, libraries and spaces (and their programs) are seen as vital to community connection and inclusion, such as for parents with young children or older people to connect.
- Well established youth spaces, such as youth centres, for both organised and unorganised activities which allows for connection amongst peers and feeling a sense of belonging.
- Providing the open / green spaces where sporting activities take place during the week and on weekends, where individuals can meet new people and feel like they belong in their clubs and with teammates.
- Council and groups reaching the community with opportunities for contribution through their social media, email and newsletter channels.
- Council has passionate and dedicated staff with incredible knowledge and expertise.
- Council has the ability to connect and establish 'networks' and other collaborative efforts quickly and efficiently.

The challenges to building a socially inclusive future include:

- Unlocking the skills and knowledge that exist within the community and increase the rate of volunteering and participation to support community cohesion, innovation and governance.
- North Sydney is viewed geographically as a central business district, rather than a community with main streets, local business, community centres, programs and services.
- Current community and social infrastructure have a number of limitations including the small number of facilities, limited capacity and operating hours resulting in suboptimal services and activities.
- Some individuals and groups not seeing themselves or feeling that their identity is visible or reflected in the community.
- Difficulty establishing friendships and meaningful connections due to differing levels of personal agency and access and companionship at different life stages (e.g. older people in care facilities).
- The high number of people living alone and in apartments is not conducive to forming close community connections. Also the increased 'busy-ness' of our lives creates barriers to meaningfully engaging and getting to know each other.
- Many residents are transient (residing in the area for less than 5 years) making it difficult to form a sense of belonging and meaningful connections.
- Some events and programs are not well promoted, affordable, accessible and welcoming of all community members.
- Personal constraints, including work, financial and family commitments limiting their ability to participate, volunteer or become involved in a variety of activities.
- Siloed service delivery which results in a less integrated service for clients in need.



Strategic Direction 01: Connection

Creating opportunities to strengthen and enrich meaningful connections within and across the community.

Our social networks are both formal and informal and whilst the frequency and level of connection may differ, it is the quality of these networks – the depth, strength and diversity of our connections - that is critically important.

Connection in the context of this Study, reflects the physical connections experienced in the North Sydney LGA. This can include for example, those between community members, the community and service providers, service providers and Council and those between the community and Council's programs, services and facilities.

Socially connected communities are more likely to experience reduced levels of mental illness and cognitive decline, achieve a healthy work life balance, succeed at school and work, and be part of safer communities.

In addition, strong connections reduce social isolation. More than one quarter of Australians are lonely, with higher rates amongst young people and the elderly.

Storytelling is a powerful tool for fostering connections between people, organisations and places. Storytelling is also fundamental to building empathy and understanding. In the North Sydney area, opportunities for story telling to support intergenerational connection could improve cognitive function, increase empathy, and promote people living longer.

Strengthening existing connections and establishing new connections within and across the community will have a positive impact on the area's social, cultural, economic and political health and vitality. Council can play a strategic and proactive role in fostering opportunities for rich social connections within and across the community

Objectives to Achieve this Direction

- 01** Increase awareness of networks, groups, community facilities, programs, events and communication platforms that are available to all people in the North Sydney LGA to connect with others.
- 02** Provide affordable physical and digital spaces for individuals and groups, to form genuine connections, in their own ways through the stories and interests shared that create new ideas and opportunities.
- 03** Work with local service providers, and community groups to increase equitable access and enable individuals to more easily connect into the services, facilities and support they need, when they need it.
- 04** Deliver policies, events and programs that respond to the diversity of the North Sydney community and design public space that welcomes all people and is a direct invitation to participate in the local community.

"be more interconnected .. work with other areas to bring us all together"

"Create more ways that allows people to be with people with the same interests"

"host events and activities that foster a greater connection and belong in the community"

"have more parks and community centres for public interactions with one another"

"have community centres where people meet other members of the community"

"be a place that creates connections between schools and small businesses"

Children & young people told us that they wish North Sydney would ...

Why this is important to a socially inclusive North Sydney?

- Lone households make up nearly 40% of all households combined with the aging population, there is a significant risk of increased social isolation and loneliness.
- 45.5% of residents lived somewhere else five years ago and 52% of all dwellings are rented. The transient nature of our community also increases the risk of social isolation and may result in feeling less connected to the community.
- The North Sydney LGA has the highest density of schools nationally, a significant asset and opportunity for deepening and strengthening connection.
- Connection was recognised by the community as critical to an inclusive North Sydney and supports the social, cultural, economic and political health and vitality of the North Sydney community.
- Current community and social infrastructure have a number of limitations, including the small number of facilities, limited capacity and operating hours resulting in limited services and activities.

What could success look like?

Collectively the community and North Sydney Council can create and strengthen meaningful connections so everyone in North Sydney can:

- Feel more connected to, within and across the community.
- Easily and confidently find and build new connections with their neighbours and others they might not have ordinarily met.
- Access the community facilities, services, and support they need, when they need it so that where a person lives or their personal circumstances are not a barrier.
- Equitably benefit from local programs, grants, services and facilities on offer and provided by North Sydney Council.
- Share and celebrate local stories, individual experiences, cultural traditions, knowledge and skills to strengthen sense of civic and community pride.

Suggested recommendations for action

1.1	Enhance the Council’s website to provide an easy to navigate central list (by date and or type) of events, programs, markets and activities run by Council and others across the LGA
1.2	Develop a ‘Know your Neighbour’ campaign to encourage residents and local businesses to get together informally in local green and community spaces, and existing community groups.
1.3	Working in partnership with local service providers, support a promotional campaign to encourage community members to ‘reach out’ and to ‘ask’ for help, advice and or support (promoting early intervention rather than crisis support).
1.4	Develop a ‘Welcome Pack’ for new residents to the area; including detailed information (an A to Z about the LGA, including resources, services, spaces etc).
1.5	Investigate opportunities for intergenerational engagement. For example, a program that engages young people to utilise technologies to capture and share local stories of varying ages, diverse backgrounds and experiences (e.g. oral histories). Consideration should also be given to exploring the role Precinct Committees could play in driving intergenerational engagement.
1.6	Facilitate small, local gatherings to encourage closer connections between neighbours and have a space for new residents to the LGA to create new connections, this could be in local streets, children and family friendly parks and spaces and/or places that help people feel safe and a sense of familiarity.
1.7	Collaborate with local businesses, schools and other government agencies to improve awareness of services, events and programs within and adjacent to the North Sydney LGA.
1.8	Deliver additional social infrastructure responding to the changing needs of our population, particularly in high growth areas.
1.9	Undertake a comprehensive social needs assessment that considers the service mix required within new and existing social infrastructure and supports the co-location of community services to ensure improved information sharing and effective referral of community members to relevant services and support.



Strategic Direction 02: Belonging

All people feel welcome, valued and a sense of belonging in a manner meaningful to them.

To belong is to know that there are a variety of options, opportunities and experiences that enable us to engage with community life – should we choose to. Whilst North Sydney, compared to the rest of Sydney, has a relatively low mix of economically, culturally and socially diverse communities, Council can play an important role in fostering and advocating for an increased sense of belonging across the community, including its most vulnerable groups.

Belonging means different things to different people. For some, it can be simply feeling welcome and knowing their neighbours, while for others, it can be a much deeper level of engagement with their community and civic life. It is vital that a variety of opportunities is offered to the community to ensure they can 'belong' in their own way.

Through community engagement we explored the concept of visibility and feeling that you are 'seen' in the community. For some, visibility was very important, being able to see symbols that you identify with (for example, a pride flag for the LGBTIQ+ community), while for others, they did not want to be defined by visible symbols.

This highlights the complexity of fostering a sense of belonging within a diverse community setting, and the need to provide a variety of opportunities for various groups within the community to be recognised, represented and acknowledged.

Belonging to a community is also feeling that you can ask for and access the help and support you need. Often, vulnerable groups can be excluded from physically accessing buildings, or accessing information due to a reliance on digital media channels or where language barriers are present. Ensuring the community has free and equitable access to information, programs, environments and services is also critical to a strong sense of belonging.

It is important that Council fosters a community where all people feel welcome and share a strong sense of belonging

Objectives to Achieve this Direction

- 01** Increase opportunities for all people in North Sydney to build quality relationships and interactions, which is at the heart of a socially inclusive and resilience community.
- 02** Nurture a shared sense of belonging across the community, where people can see themselves in others and feel they are a valued within North Sydney community.
- 03** Provide opportunities and space for the community, especially those people that might feel they are not seen, to be acknowledged and visible to celebrate the diversity of the North Sydney community.
- 04** Build and maintain effective relationships and strong collaborations that include Council, community groups and service providers to enable everyone to explore their sense of belonging and what this means to individuals.



Why this is important to a socially inclusive North Sydney?

- In the 2023 Community Satisfaction Survey, 64% of the community agreed that there is a strong sense of belonging/community. However, this has declined (down from 75%) since 2020.
- For people aged between 50-59 years of age, their reported sense of community was significantly less than the average, at just 53%.
- The online survey revealed that the barriers felt by the community in establishing a sense of belonging included the lack of community spaces and opportunities to volunteer, and not being engaged in community activities.
- Community engagement identified additional barriers to belonging, including feeling that their identity was not visible or reflected in the community, and free / affordable access to spaces, services, programs and spaces.
- Survey respondents noted a priority for establishing a socially inclusive community should include affordable opportunities to bring people together.

What could success look like?

Collectively the community and North Sydney Council can ensure:

- All people feel that their voice and ideas are valued through the generous and empathic way that we respond to each other.
- A commitment to growing and maintaining a strong sense of belonging across the community and that all people feel they are welcome and seen.
- Social cohesion and trust is improved within and across the North Sydney community and between different people and groups.
- Information and the way we communicate meets accessibility standards, as a baseline so all people in the North Sydney community is informed to make decisions for themselves and can actively participate in community life.
- Increased collaboration and cooperation with and across service providers, community groups and Council to ensure inclusive access and everyone feels safe to ask for help.

Suggested recommendations for action

2.1	In consultation, increase the visible and recognisable symbols of various communities across the public domain, for example symbols that represent LGBTIQ+ pride, disability access and First Nations people.
2.2	Ensure Council communication meets accessibility standards, is translated into prominent languages and distributed in collaboration with local community groups and in ways that are appropriate for vulnerable community members (e.g. physical printed materials for older residents).
2.3	Increased promotion of community events, programs, services and resources to ensure the community understand that they are invited and welcome to attend (for example, using visual symbols and or translations), and different mediums (for example printed flyers alongside social media posts)
2.4	Collaborate with local community groups, service providers and businesses to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in their spaces and operations, encouraging inter-cultural collaborative projects concurrent with national events (e.g NAIDOC week) and or local events and programs.
2.5	Ensure equitable access to Council programs, services, facilities and events, including free, accessible and affordable programs for a variety of age groups, community groups and vulnerable community members.
2.6	Invest in community facilities, including libraries, community centres and services for children and young people with ongoing maintenance and modernisation of existing infrastructure to meet changing community needs and expectations.
2.7	Deliver cultural competency training for front line Council staff and local business operators.
2.8	Council information, communication and engagement is initially provided and updated in languages spoken within communities across the North Sydney LGA so individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds can participate in events with comfort and confidence, fostering a stronger sense of belonging.
2.9	Develop a network of 'Welcoming & Age Friendly' community groups with a recognisable brand, to build a broader understanding of the wellbeing impacts of social isolation and loneliness as people age.



Strategic Direction 03: Contribution

Everyone's voice is heard and has the opportunity and capacity to participate and contribute to civic life.

Civic contributions can be made in a variety of ways. The interest of community members to contribute to and participate in civic life differs. Some like simply to vote, while others like to be involved in decision-making, activism, volunteering and engagement in community activities and with community organisations.

With a highly educated, wealthier and older community mix, there is untapped capacity to increase participation and contribution in the North Sydney area – and a willingness expressed by the community to do so.

An inclusive and connected community is better able to contribute to and fully participate in civic life. To value and empower diverse voices from across the community, provision of – and importantly, promotion of – the variety of opportunities for the community to participate in and contribute to civic life is critically important.

Inviting the community's perspectives and seeking to understand the community's needs and aspirations will strengthen Council's decision making and guide investment in building the capacity and resilience of the community.

As the branch of government most connected to local communities, providing formal frameworks and opportunities for open dialogue and meaningful participation will increase the amount and quality of Council's engagement with the community, and the community's engagement with each other.

Participation in civic life builds social capital, which increases the capacity and resilience of the community to identify and address challenges and change. Importantly, ensuring awareness and access to information will empower the community to identify issues and opportunities, to lead or advocate for change and to work collaboratively with Council, relevant agencies and local organisations in a proactive and constructive way.

Objectives to Achieve this Direction

- 01** Increase awareness and work with the community to identify local needs and how to engage and be part of decision making
- 02** Unlock the valuable community skills, knowledge and resources, and to increase the broader volunteering and participation that supports community cohesion, innovation and governance.
- 03** Prioritise and encourage intergenerational and cross cultural engagement, partnerships and participation in the community life of the North Sydney LGA.
- 04** Build confidence and trust by offering a direct invitation and making deliberate space for all people within the North Sydney LGA to have their voices heard and to acknowledge contributions by valuing the sharing of ideas, time and participation of groups and individuals.

“The feeling of belonging is reinforced by inclusive practices, fair treatment, and opportunities for active participation in the community.”

- Participant, Community Workshop

Why this is important to a socially inclusive North Sydney?

- Throughout consultation the community recognised the many different ways, and value of participating in and contributing to the civic life of North Sydney.
- The community acknowledged the importance of being empowered to better engage in civic life, in decision making and having a sense of collective purpose and achievement.
- Engagement also revealed that the community felt like they were contributing when their voice was heard, they were a part of decision-making, they were aware of the opportunities to contribute, and felt proud in the act of contribution.
- The community identified their strong support of markets occurring across the North Sydney area. Markets have high patronage and provide a valuable opportunity for engagement and participation.
- The online survey identified that slightly less than 50 per cent of respondents currently volunteer. Of those who do not currently volunteer, more than 80% said they are willing to.
- Barriers to volunteering included people not knowing if their skills would be valuable, but most were for personal reasons including time, family commitments and their health. Some of these barriers can easily be addressed.

What could success look like?

- Valuing the contributions of everyone in the North Sydney community, building on civic and democratic participation in decision making and respectful and civil dialogue, exchange and collaboration.
- The community is aware of the varying ways they can participate in and collaborate with Council, local community groups, programs and activities.
- A permanent Council presence at local markets to promote all opportunities for the community to be involved with council services and activities - not just during peak engagements.
- The community has the skill and capacity, and feel empowered to represent their needs, advocate and contribute to decision and policy making
- Community members who are willing and able to volunteer can identify suitable opportunities to do so.
- Local community groups and service providers meaningfully engage with volunteers and their volunteer needs are met.

Suggested recommendations for action

3.1	Ensure that everyone’s voice is heard and implement opportunities for community and business input into the Council’s decision-making processes, including through formal consultations, precinct committees, social media and surveys.
3.2	Investigate the development of a youth leadership program, with primary and high school children, TAFE and other community groups, supporting regular engagement with Council and other civic and community forums, to increase intergenerational representation and improve understanding.
3.3	Establish a digital Volunteer Hub to connect, support, train and identify the skills, capacity, availability and willingness of the community to volunteer.
3.4	Establish a First Nations Advisory Panel, to provide a forum for dialogue, information sharing and networking, with members from key agencies, service providers, local business and community members.
3.5	Establish a representative citizens panel to provide strategic advice to Council and ensure the diverse needs of the North Sydney community are considered as part of all policy making.



Strategic Direction 04: Investment

Social inclusion principles guide investment, collaboration and partnerships, to unlock the community's true potential.

Council's human and financial investment, coupled with collaboration, partnerships and innovation, is an essential enabler for a socially inclusive North Sydney. Council's investment and collaborative approach is vital to unlocking the community's true potential and optimising Council's impact.

While Council is concerned with the full range of matters impacting the community, there are many services and activities that support social inclusion that are not in Council's direct control. Council can however, play a significant and influential role in fostering a socially inclusive North Sydney and ensuring the community has access to the services, programs, facilities and support it needs.

With increasing expectations and limited resources, it is critical that Council continues to work closely with state and federal government to support the community's access to services such as health, education, police, emergency management and housing. In addition, collaboration with service providers, community organisations and other local Councils will support knowledge sharing, coordination and service provision.

Council plays a significant role in the planning, delivery and management of social infrastructure as well as supporting, coordinating and advocating for services where gaps exist and to ensure an equitable distribution of services and support. This includes providing inclusive access to Council's programs, resources, services, places and infrastructure.

Leveraging Council's existing investment in social infrastructure, programs and resources through partnerships and collaboration with local service providers and community groups, government agencies and key stakeholders is an essential pre-condition to successfully achieving a socially inclusive North Sydney.

Objectives to Achieve this Direction

- 01** Develop and commit to social inclusion principles that will guide evidence based investment decisions and advocacy for services that support priority community needs.
- 02** Ensure Council's facilities, services, spaces and programs respond to community needs and provide affordable access, especially to support new and emerging groups to connect
- 03** Coordinate and collaborate across Council and with key service providers, government agencies and local community groups to optimise service delivery and access..
- 04** Effectively leverage Council's investment in social inclusion through effective partnerships that foster information and knowledge sharing, awareness and access.
- 05** Demonstrate 'leadership by action' by embedding in practice and up-skilling staff to ensure socially inclusive design, planning, service delivery and governance is the foundation of Council's everyday work.

Why this is important to a socially inclusive North Sydney?

- Engagement with a range of service providers and community members identified siloed service delivery that results in a less integrated service for clients in need.
- Engagement also identified a lack of community awareness about the potential services and support available to them, often preventing early intervention and a heavier reliance on crisis services that could be avoided.
- There is a strong need for services and community groups to network, share knowledge and expertise, and connect with each other.
- Survey respondents highlighted the continued investment in social infrastructure as the next priority to grow and nurture a socially inclusive North Sydney.

What could success look like?

Collectively the community and North Sydney Council can maximise investment by:

- Investing in facilities, services, spaces and programs that are complementary to and leverage those offered by others and that meet the priority needs of the community.
- Coordinating service provision and sharing resources across service providers, government agencies, community groups and Council.
- Being aware of and ensuring all people can access the services and support that meets their needs, at the right time.
- Council's decision-making, investment and advocacy driven by a commitment to social inclusion.

Suggested recommendations for action

4.1	Building on the LINC'S platform, expand the information in an accessible, user-centric way to act as a holistic "community notice board", including a directory of services, community groups, events, programs, facilities and volunteer opportunities.
4.2	Embed the key objectives from the Social Inclusion Study and Disability Inclusion Action Plan into the Community Strategic Plan, Council's reporting process, service provision and local planning and design considerations.
4.3	Work collaboratively with community organisations, local businesses, industry, education providers and other service providers to ensure an integrated, evidence based, local response to the community's priorities and aspirations
4.4	Council lead by example and embed social inclusion principles as a foundation of all policy development and council operations to ensure social inclusive decision making is a business as usual practice.
4.5	Develop and deliver a community wellbeing survey that provides appropriate and longitudinal data to track social inclusion outcomes and assess the value to the North Sydney community and Council. This data would also inform the types of programs and activities of Council to ensure continual service responsiveness and improvements are made and communicated.
4.6	Council take a local leadership role in supporting vulnerable communities - including those experiencing homelessness and/or domestic violence - in the partnership developed and advocacy of Council to other levels of government.
4.7	Review, develop and implement a North Sydney Resilience Plan that identifies the main resilience challenges confronting the North Sydney LGA. This Plan should undertake an analysis of vulnerability specific to communities across the North Sydney LGA and prioritise actions to strengthen the community's ability to adapt and thrive in times of emergency, uncertainty and stress.





Neutral
Bay

community

“Our partnerships and collaboration with local organisations, government agencies and key stakeholders to be an essential precondition to achieving a socially inclusive North Sydney.

- Local community service provider.



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