

# SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY



Building a connected and  
socially inclusive community  
where everyone is valued





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## Recognition of the Cammeraygal People

*We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of North Sydney local government area (LGA), the Cammeraygal people*

We recognise the Cammeraygal people as the Traditional Owners of the area known today as North Sydney.

We acknowledge that the alienation of Cammeraygal Country followed the first local land grant in 1794 which occurred without consultation, treaty or compensation.

Western archaeological evidence shows that Aboriginal people lived in the North Sydney area at least 5,800 years ago, and likely for thousands more. That evidence is precious. We seek to preserve it and through that to better understand Cammeraygal connection to Country.

After North Sydney Council was formed in 1890 through the merging of three boroughs, the word Cammeraygal was included on its coat of arms. Today it holds a central position in the Council's logo as a reminder of the long and ongoing Indigenous heritage of this place.

In recent years the spelling of Cammeraygal has varied to include Gammaraigal and Gai-maragal as our community has sought to reflect and honour the heritage of First Nations people in a more culturally appropriate manner.

## Mayor's message

Evidence demonstrates that socially connected and diverse communities have less mental illness and cognitive decline, and are safer, more vibrant and interesting places to live, study and work. The North Sydney local government area (LGA) is often perceived as a place with little diversity. Yet, 40% of our community was born overseas, for 25% of us English is a second language, 37% of our community live in single-person households and 52% of dwellings are rented. The socioeconomic profile extends from some of the most disadvantaged to the most educated and affluent people in the nation.

In an increasingly polarised world, social inclusion is vital to building resilient, strong, prosperous and vibrant communities.

This strategy sets out the vision for a connected and socially inclusive community where everyone is valued, feels they belong and is empowered to participate.

Council recognises that barriers still exist, preventing some community members from feeling accepted and believing they belong. It is crucial to challenge discrimination and foster understanding through meaningful cross-cultural engagement.

This strategy is underpinned by extensive, real community engagement, making certain that your voices shape and guide the path forward.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback in the 'Have your say on North Sydney's next ten years' consultation in mid-2024. This engagement was testament to Council's strong tradition of public participation and the importance of empowering the community to influence decisions that impact our lives.

This strategy includes acknowledging the needs of the First Nations community, addressing historical injustices, as well as prioritising inclusivity for people with disabilities, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, young people and the LGBTIQ+ community to ensure equal participation for all.

As we embark on this ten-year journey, I urge you to continue to actively participate in our community. By fostering social inclusion, we can address local issues effectively and create vibrant communities where everyone feels like they belong.



## Introduction

North Sydney is a dynamic and diverse community, characterised by its highly mobile population, significant number of lone-person households, and growing ageing demographic. These unique characteristics create both challenges and opportunities for fostering community connections and social engagement.

Recognising the potential for isolation and loneliness within this context, and acknowledging that social inclusion is fundamental to wellbeing, the North Sydney Social Inclusion Strategy aims to create **a connected and socially inclusive community where everyone is valued.**

To achieve this outcome, the strategy includes the following strategic directions:

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Deliver and increase awareness of community events, programs and activities that strengthen and enrich meaningful connections.
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Provide new and improved public and community spaces for people to meet and connect.
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Nurture a shared sense of belonging where everyone's voice is heard and people feel they are valued.

By fostering meaningful connections among residents, local businesses and community, we aim to cultivate an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone experiences a genuine sense of belonging. This strategy serves as a roadmap for building a more cohesive and inclusive North Sydney, ensuring all residents can actively participate in and contribute to our vibrant community life.

## Background

This strategy is part of a suite of informing strategies (see Figure 1) that articulate North Sydney's needs and priorities over the next ten years. These strategies will form the basis for Council's new Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2025-2035, Delivery Programs and Operational Plans.



Figure 1: Suite of Informing Strategies

### The role of Council

North Sydney Council plays an important role in shaping strategic directions that align with community aspirations and prioritising funding accordingly, however collaboration will be essential to driving meaningful outcomes.

Council's ten-year strategies must be viewed within the broader framework of local government's role in relation to State and Federal policies and jurisdictions.

While Council has significant responsibilities, its powers can be limited in certain areas. In these situations, advocacy and partnerships with other organisations may be necessary to influence specific actions in place of more direct initiatives.

## Community engagement

In 2024, Council launched its most extensive consultation to date: the 'Have your say on North Sydney's next ten years' campaign. This initiative was designed to gather broad and meaningful input from the community to shape the suite of informing strategies.

The six-week consultation focused on five key Discussion Papers\* that addressed critical areas of community interest, helping us understand evolving needs, aspirations and priorities.



We received over **1,000 responses to our online surveys**, and over **600 individuals attended our community forums**. Additionally, thousands more were engaged through both in-person and online events.

To ensure we heard from unique and diverse voices, Council also held dedicated workshops for specific groups including a **demographically selected group of 60+ residents**, a **First Nations** workshop in partnership with Indigenous consultancy Murawin, a **Voice of Youth** workshop with over 50 primary and secondary students, and sessions with **relevant key stakeholders**.



The valuable insights gathered through community engagement, along with extensive research, have shaped five comprehensive studies that outline the vision and priorities for our community. These studies are the foundation for bold, forward-looking strategies that will guide our next ten years.

For details on the research and engagement supporting this strategy, please refer to the North Sydney Social Inclusion Study 2024.

*\*Specific discussion papers and research studies were not prepared for Environment, Housing and Governance as part of this campaign for the reasons outlined below.*

*Environment: Significant research had already been undertaken to develop the North Sydney Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030.*

*Housing: The existing North Sydney Local Housing Strategy is a legislated strategy under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. It will be reviewed and updated in 2025/26.*

*Governance: The Governance strategy focuses primarily on internal governance structures and processes, which are guided by established regulations and best practices.*



## About this strategy

The Social Inclusion Strategy details how Council, the community, businesses and other stakeholders will work together over the next ten years to build:

### A connected and socially inclusive community where everyone is valued

This strategy takes precedence over existing Council strategies and plans, except where required by legislation. Relevant information captured in superseded documents will be considered through service unit planning and, if necessary, adopted as supporting plans.

### Principles

The strategy is guided by four key principles:



#### INCLUSION

Fostering an environment where every individual feels valued and empowered to participate fully in community life.



#### DIVERSITY

Celebrating and promoting the rich diversity of the community, creating a welcoming atmosphere for all backgrounds and experiences.



#### COLLABORATION

Leveraging partnerships with government agencies, local organisations and community groups to enhance resources and maximise impact on social inclusion efforts.



#### ADVOCACY

Actively advocating for policies and practices that support social inclusion, accessibility and community engagement across all levels of government.



## Structure

This strategy includes three strategic directions with clear measurable objectives, that outline how we will strive towards the outcome of a connected and socially inclusive community where everyone is valued.

Under each direction are specific projects and initiatives that will help us achieve the objectives. There is also a list of Council's existing services that support each strategic direction.

Figure 2 illustrates the structure of the informing strategy.



Figure 2: Structure of the Social Inclusion Strategy

Timing and delivery of new projects and initiatives will be dependent on availability of funding from a variety of sources, including but not limited to grants, developer contributions and Council's internal reserves.



# DELIVERING THE OUTCOME



## OUTCOME

A connected and socially inclusive community where everyone is valued

## OBJECTIVES

🎯 Maintain the percentage of residents who are at least somewhat satisfied with events and programs run by Council at or above 90%\*

🎯 Increase the percentage of residents who agree that North Sydney has a strong sense of community to at least 75% by 2029 from a 2023 baseline of 64%\*

# STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: Deliver and increase awareness of community events, programs and activities that strengthen and enrich meaningful connections

**1.1** Develop a 'Know your Neighbour' program to encourage residents and local businesses to get together informally in local green and community spaces, and existing community groups.

**1.2** Investigate opportunities for intergenerational engagement, for example a program that engages young people to use technology to capture and share local stories of varying ages, backgrounds and experiences (eg oral histories). Consideration should also be given to exploring the role Precinct Committees could play in driving intergenerational engagement.

**1.3** Work with not-for profits and other agencies to develop a catalogue of opportunities and resources to help older people stay connected and avoid social isolation.

**1.4** Review and refresh Council's program of events and activations to ensure they are responsive to community needs and leverage key assets.



**1.5** Partner with cultural and creative organisations to host joint events, for example multicultural festivals, and cross-promote cultural and creative opportunities to expand their reach.



**1.6** Increase promotion of community events, programs, services and resources to ensure the community understands that they are invited and welcome to attend (eg using visual symbols and/or translations), and different mediums (eg printed flyers alongside social media posts).

**1.7** Enhance Council's website to provide an accessible central list (by date and/or type) of events, programs, markets and activities run by Council and others across the LGA.



**1.8** Deliver a pilot program in Ted Mack Civic Park to trial the replacement of existing physical noticeboards with digital community information screens.

### Shared projects, initiatives and services

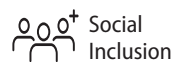
Some projects, initiatives and services contribute to the delivery of outcomes from multiple Informing Strategies. These are indicated using symbols (see below) representing the other strategies that include the same activity.



Culture and Creativity



Integrated Transport



Social Inclusion



Economic Development



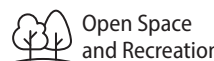
Environment



Housing



Governance



Open Space and Recreation

\* Source: Customer Satisfaction Survey (Micromex Research)

**1.9** 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.

**1.10** Develop a 'Welcome Pack' for new residents to the area with detailed information about the LGA, including resources, services and spaces.

**1.11** Create a resource tool/list of accessibility options available in the LGA, for example vision resources at Stanton Library

**Service** Organise and support a range of public space activations and events to bring communities together, engage, celebrate and activate our LGA.



**Service** Provide information to the community on Council's services and activities through a range of channels including print, digital, social media and in person.



## OBJECTIVE

- 🎯 Maintain the percentage of residents who are at least somewhat satisfied with community centres and halls at or above 90%\*

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: Provide new and improved public and community spaces for people to meet and connect

- 2.1 Develop a masterplan and feasibility study for consolidating a new community centre, underground car parking and a significant new area of open space for Crows Nest on the site which currently accommodates the Holtermann Street car park, Crows Nest Community Centre and Ernest Place.



- 2.2 Prepare a public domain and placemaking strategy for Crows Nest and St Leonards that determines appropriate design and function of public space to support the growing population. The strategy will consider the pedestrianisation of Willoughby Road and incorporate the Holtermann Street car park precinct and Hume Street Park expansion projects.



- 2.3 Develop a masterplan for the civic precinct in North Sydney (bounded by Ridge, Miller, Church and McLaren Streets) that investigates and incorporates a range of new community space, open space and active recreation spaces.



- 2.4 Work with NSW Government agencies to deliver the Miller Place project which includes a major public plaza, as well as recreation and entertainment space for the North Sydney CBD.



- 2.5 Deliver new public space through completion of the Balls Head Quarantine Depot site redevelopment project, including advocating for ownership of the lower section.



















- 2.6 Work with Transport for NSW to deliver new accessible public space through the Berrys Bay project. This project includes fit out of Woodleys Shed as a community facility.



- 2.7 Investigate opportunities to increase the use of McMahons Point Community Centre site.

- 2.8 Work with Neutral Bay Village land owners to deliver a new accessible Neutral Bay Community Centre.

\* Source: Customer Satisfaction Survey (Micromex Research)

2.9	Review the Bradfield Park and Kirribilli Foreshore masterplan to ensure ongoing alignment with community expectations and needs.	 
2.10	Collaborate with the PCYC and government agencies to retain PCYC presence in North Sydney.	
2.11	Explore new opportunities to partner with local schools and Schools Infrastructure NSW to enable community use of school facilities after hours.	 
2.12	Prepare a strategic plan for The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability site to inform opportunities and priorities to increase community use and enjoyment, and develop a reserve for delivery.	 
2.13	Advocate for increased community use of Sub Base Platypus.	 
2.14	Develop a ten-year plan for expanding library services across the LGA. This includes consideration of potential satellite sites.	
2.15	Explore opportunities to partner with Australian Catholic University for additional library facilities.	
2.16	Upgrade the existing library and expand the floorspace into the adjoining James Place development.	
2.17	Explore new opportunities in the North Sydney LGA for free, safe and accessible study spaces for students in primary school, high school and university.	
2.18	Deliver a 'play street' program to facilitate temporary closure of local streets for recreational activities.	
Service	Provide library collections, resources, services, events and programs to support lifelong learning, literary engagement and community wellbeing.	
Service	Manage the hire and use of Council spaces and places, including buildings, facilities, civic spaces, parks, reserves and sportsfields.	 

## OBJECTIVES

🎯 Increase the percentage of residents who are at least somewhat satisfied with Council's consultation with the community to at least 85% by 2031 from a 2023 baseline of 80%\*

🎯 Maintain the volunteer rate in the North Sydney LGA at or above the 2021 rate of 16.8%\*\*

🎯 Deliver 90% of actions detailed in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-26 by 2026

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3: Nurture a shared sense of belonging where everyone's voice is heard and people feel they are valued

3.1 Review Council's communication approach to improve accessibility.

3.2 Identify opportunities and implement projects to improve accessibility of Council programs, services, facilities and events. This includes exploring ways to become an exemplar for access and inclusion.

3.3 Identify opportunities and implement projects to improve accessibility of parks and playgrounds across the LGA.



3.4 Utilise a demographically select working group for input on major Council decisions to ensure the diverse needs of the North Sydney community are considered.



3.5 Work with First Nations community members to develop a First Nations advisory committee.



3.6 Develop and implement opportunities for young people in the community to have input into Council's decision-making processes, including through formal consultations, social media and surveys.



3.7 Deliver a digital volunteer hub to connect, support, train and identify the skills, capacity, availability and willingness of the community to volunteer.

3.8 Expand Council's Streets Alive and HarbourCare volunteer programs to promote social connections and improve our environment.



3.9 Collaborate and explore partnerships with government agencies and not-for-profits to raise awareness and advocate for action to address domestic violence.

3.10 Collaborate and explore partnerships with government agencies and not-for-profits to raise awareness and advocate for action to address homelessness.

3.11 Develop and implement a gender equity plan.

3.12 Develop and Implement a recognition program for businesses, community organisations and individuals who have significantly contributed to improving access and inclusion.

**Service** Develop and implement opportunities for community and business input into Council's decision-making processes, including through formal consultations, Precinct Committees, social media and surveys.



**Service** Support accessibility and inclusion across the LGA through implementation and regular review of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

\*Source: Customer Satisfaction Survey (Micromex Research)

\*\* Source: Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics)



**Service** Provide family day care, youth services including Planet X, and support for multicultural communities.

**Service** Promote and coordinate opportunities to build capacity within the community through partnerships, collaborations, volunteering, interagency activity and grants.

**Service** Work with the community to improve our environment and build social connections through volunteer programs including:

- Streets Alive
- HarbourCare
- Community gardens



**Service** Develop and implement a range of community education and volunteering programs to help conserve Council's biodiversity. These include:

- Council's Adopt-a-Plot bushland rehabilitation program
- Native Havens home habitat gardening program
- Wildlife Watch citizen science project
- Community education activities
- Bushcare volunteers

