

HARRISON-BENNETT PRECINCT

Minutes of General Meeting

held on Thursday, 6 March 2025 at 6 pm

at the Parraween Street Early Childhood Centre, Cremorne.

Attendance	14 attendees 24 apologies: CC, KD, DB, GT, PF, HL, SP, JA, JS, CP, LR, JR, JM
Previous Meeting Minutes and SOA	Minutes of the 6 February 2025 meeting were confirmed by PA and seconded by BD. The Statement of Actions (SOA) was shared by email prior to the meeting.
Development	<p>DA: 271/2023/2: 37 Murdoch Street, CREMORNE S4.56 Modification to increase the maximum number of children at the existing childcare centre (Rhonda's Cottage) from 65 to 69 children. Submission date closes 15/03/2025.</p> <p>Prior to the meeting, Convenors received a request from a precinct member asking if the Precinct would consider submitting a Precinct submission. However, meeting attendees indicated a preference to leave lodgement of submissions to individuals. Meeting attendees were encouraged to make individual submissions. Key points identified in the request were:</p> <p><i>Rhonda's Cottage became a childcare centre around 1997. Original childcare numbers ranged from 20 to 24, to which residents did not have any objections. However, subsequently the centre was taken over by a major commercial operator which applied to Council for an increase in capacity to 80 places in June 2016. NSC approved the number to 50 places. Over the years there have been further applications to increase capacity including a Land and Environment Court ruling which resulted in the current 65 places. The current revised application is for 69 places. Residents have expressed frustration and concern that the current operators continue to make incremental applications to increase capacity with the objective of ultimately reaching 80 places.</i></p> <p>Impacts of the DA: Traffic: Murdoch St and nearby streets already experience a high volume of traffic especially during school pick up and drop off hours. Residents are concerned about the further increase in traffic if this DA is approved. This DA will exacerbate existing issues: truck movements from deliveries, competition for parking from staff and parents, lack of capacity for Reed Lane to cope. Noise - loss of residential amenity to adjacent residents (the centre is "sandwiched" amongst residential dwellings).</p> <p>Pathways Cremorne Seniors Housing (SSD-49472213) - The Independent Planning Commission (IPC) held a public meeting on 5 March 2025. The purpose of the meeting was to allow the IPC to hear oral submissions from the community about its concerns about the proposal for Seniors housing comprising 58 independent living units and a residential aged care facility containing 41 beds. Written submissions were also able to</p>

	<p>be made to the IPC which closed on 12 March 2025. Convenors lodged a Precinct submission based on issues identified at previous Precinct meetings during 2023 and 2024 about this project.</p> <p>DA 364/23: 40 Spofforth Street. It was noted that a s34 Conciliation Conference of the Land and Environment Court was held on 18 February 2025 on site. Two meeting attendees observed the proceedings and reported that the Commissioner had stated publicly that a decision is imminent.</p>
<p>Special Rate Variation (SRV)</p>	<p>SK made a presentation on the Special Rate Variation:</p> <p>Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NSC is proposing to raise rates by 87.05% over 2 years. ● At the Council meeting on 10 February 2025, 7 out of 10 Councillors (Mayor Baker, Cr. Antonini, Cr. Beregi, Cr. Holding, Cr. Hoy, Cr. Cr. Santer and Cr. Welch) voted in favour of the rate rise. Cr. Carr, Cr. Keen and Cr. Spenceley voted against the rate rise. ● NSC has sent their proposal to IPART for approval. ● The IPART consultation process is open – submissions close on 24 March 2024. <p>Expected revenue from the SRV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The SRV is expected to generate an additional \$526 to \$558 million in revenue over the 10-year period from 2025/26 (with total rate income of approximately \$1.3 billion). <p>How the SRV funding will be spent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analysis using the latest information submitted by NSC to IPART, available on the IPART website, shows the following planned spending over the next 10 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New projects/expanded services (i.e. “Informing Strategies”): \$167 million ○ Infrastructure backlog and renewal: \$252 million ○ North Sydney Olympic Pool (loan repayment): \$47 million ○ Unrestricted Reserves: \$81 million <p>IPART assessment</p> <p>IPART will assess whether NSC has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrated the need for additional income. ● Provided evidence that the community understands the need and scale of the rate rise. ● Established that the impact on ratepayers is reasonable. ● Properly exhibited, approved, and adopted relevant planning documents. ● Explained its productivity improvements and cost containment strategies. <p>Discussion</p> <p>Has the need for the additional SRV revenue been demonstrated?</p>

Discussion about –

- **Infrastructure backlog figure of \$146 million**
 - Potential overstatement due to financial reporting definition change that increased this figure by \$100m.
 - Comparison with other Councils.
- **Unrestricted reserves (\$81 million)**
 - Why NSC needs to have such a high level of unrestricted reserves (\$97 million by FY35).
 - Comparison with historical unrestricted reserves.
- **Informing Strategies (\$167 million)**
 - These are new strategies and projects.
 - An extract from NSC’s Delivery Program was circulated around the room to show what these new strategies or projects are.
 - Community consultation outcomes discussed – 80% of respondents didn’t support the projects/strategies, but NSC represents them as reflecting community priorities.
- **Impact on Rate payers**
 - NSC’s ‘Capacity to Pay’ report concludes that NS residents are advantaged and have capacity to pay.
 - Deficiencies in Morrison Low analysis were identified and discussed.
 - There appears to be inadequate consideration of the socio-economic diversity within North Sydney LGA - not everyone is wealthy.
- **Asset sales**
 - NSC refers to a potential \$5m asset sale, but has not made a firm commitment.

A Motion was proposed that: the Precinct make a submission to IPART objecting to the 87.05% rate rise on the basis of the points presented above and related discussion. This was unanimously supported.

Low and Mid-Rise Housing

SK presented on the impacts of the Low and Mid-Rise Housing reforms on Cremorne and Neutral Bay.

Changes and impacts

- Changes were implemented via the Housing SEPP on 28 February 2025.
- Cremorne and Neutral Bay have been nominated as town centres.
- Each nominated town centre triggers an “Inner Housing Area” (area 400m from the Town Centre) and an “Outer Housing Area” (area within 400m to 800m from the town centre).
- In Zone R2 in the Inner and Outer Housing Areas, the main change is that terraces, multi-dwellings housing and apartment blocks of up to 9.5m will be permissible. Under the current NSLEP rules, such development types are not permissible and the height limit is 8.5m.
- In Zone R3 and R4 of the Inner Housing Area, residential flat buildings of up to 22m will be permissible (with an extra 2m allowed for shop-top housing). In the Outer Housing Area, residential flat buildings of up to

17.5m will be permissible. This is a huge increase in height, bulk and scale, compared to rules under the NSLEP under which, in the R3 zone, there is a height limit of 8.5m and residential flat buildings are not permissible, while in the R4 zone there is a 12m height limit.

- FSR and other controls apply.
- A cap is specified on the number of storeys, however developers are likely to be able to bypass these limits, including by applying for Clause 4.6 (LEP) exemptions.

How Neutral Bay and Cremorne came to be town centres

- Ultimately it was a State Government decision on which town centres to include.
- However, the State Government has stated from the start (based on policy documents and parliamentary transcripts) that Councils' input would be sought on which town centres are suitable for inclusion.
- There are evidence-based justifications why Neutral Bay and Cremorne are not suitable for inclusion (e.g. no rail, constrained road network with significant congestion especially during peak hours, no public high school, no hospital, our town centres are not really "town centres" and lack key amenities such as a town hall, concert hall, art gallery, village green, park, pool as well as access to basic goods such as hardware, business apparel, electronics, homewares, whitegoods and others. In addition, there are no banking facilities in Cremorne.)

Further, the State Government claims that its objective is to increase housing diversity, but Neutral Bay and Cremorne are already very high density with only 12% detached dwellings (probably less now as this is based on 2021 data and given the number of houses that have been lost recently and replaced with unit blocks). The reforms, when implemented in Cremorne and Neutral Bay, will accelerate the loss of remaining houses, further eroding housing diversity and choice for families.

- In June 2024, it was discovered that:
 - NSC had sent DPHI a written response to DPHI's "Station and Town Centre Selection Form" on 15 May 2024 in which NSC had nominated Neutral Bay as a Town Centre for the Low and Mid-Rise Reforms, contrary to a lawful Council resolution made in February 2024.
 - In its response to DPHI, NSC provided justifications to DPHI as to why Neutral Bay should be included, further undermining the earlier Council resolution.
 - NSC had a workshop with DPHI to discuss town centre selection 2 days after submitting their response to DPHI.
- Neither this written correspondence nor any information about the process was tabled at a Council meeting or published on the Council website—it was uncovered through other means and publicly brought to light at a Brightmore Precinct meeting on 12 June 2024. The issue

was immediately escalated to the Mayor.



- In response to resident concerns, an extraordinary meeting was held on 18 June 2024, initiated by Cr. Spenceley and Cr. Bourke, in which Councillors voted to rescind the unauthorised response and submit a new response that provided justifications why Neutral Bay is not suitable for inclusion. These actions were subsequently carried out.
- It is unclear what communication has occurred between Council and DPHI since then – but since then there has been no update on the Low and Mid-Rise Reforms provided to the community by NSC.
- Unfortunately, Neutral Bay and Cremorne are now both included as Town Centres.

Exemptions secured by other LGAs

- While many NSW areas are impacted, some Councils have successfully advocated to secure exemptions for their communities — whether for town centres (e.g., Waverley), mid-rise controls (e.g., R1 zoned land in Manly, Balgowlah, Leichhardt, Annandale, Broadway, Newtown, Erskineville, Waterloo, Surry Hills, Darlington/Paddington, and Kings Cross and more), or for areas exposed to noise under flight paths (e.g. inner west areas).
- Meeting attendees were dismayed about the inclusion of Neutral Bay and Cremorne as it will have a profound and detrimental impact on our community for generations to come, with more congestion (especially traffic), more strain on schools and public infrastructure, accelerated loss of open space and greenery, further loss of housing diversity and the upheaval of existing communities.

Streetscape

The following streetscape issues remain unresolved as the meeting date:

Location	Issue or comment		Date
Cnr Murdoch and Military Rd	The Cremorne sign is in need of a repaint		6.2.25
Spofforth St	It was noted that Council workers had repaired the footpath pavers outside Cremorne Post Office but some issues of concern remain including the broken concrete pieces around the tree bases which		

		are potential trip hazards and are visually unattractive.		
Meeting close	The meeting concluded at 815pm.			
Next Meeting	The next meeting will be held on 3 April 2025 at 6 pm at the Early Childhood Centre in Parraween St, Cremorne.			