

8.2. St Leonards/ Crows Nest 2036 Plan - Cross LGA border working party

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In 2006 Lane Cove, North Sydney and Willoughby councils worked together and commissioned the St Leonards Strategy. The St Leonards Strategy was prepared by David Lock Associates, National Economics, Cityscape Planning & Projects and PBAI Australia.

The St Leonards Strategy (November 2006) noted that the St Leonards area spans three (3) local government areas and found that

“The planning controls, public infrastructure and management of St Leonards vary between each of these councils.

However, the three parts of St Leonards are complementary, and in most respects St Leonards is perceived as a single centre (albeit divided by the Pacific Highway and rail line). Therefore, there are benefits in a coordinated approach to the planning, design and management of the centre (p.12).”

That Strategy appears to have “gathered dust” as each of the local government areas then embarked on their own planning for the precinct, in isolation.

In 2010 North Sydney Council commenced the St Leonards/ Crows Nest Planning Study in the context of significant development pressure and a series of decisions by the (then) Joint Regional Planning Panel and (then) State Government’s notorious Part 3A scheme which overrode, indeed, abandoned, the existing heights under Council’s Local Environmental Plan.

The Planning Study sought to examine opportunities to meet the State Government’s housing and employment capacity targets whilst delivering high quality public domain and services to support the current and future community’s needs.

On 29 November 2010 Council resolved to undertake the planning study to deliver:

- new open space in St Leonards / Crows Nest;
- increased investment in St Leonards and decreased commercial vacancy rates, with particular focus on the rejuvenation of the Pacific Hwy between St Leonards train station and the intersection of Pacific Hwy and Willoughby Rd;
- improved connectivity, particularly between St Leonards / Pacific Hwy and Willoughby Rd;
- improved urban design and street level amenity particularly in St Leonards and along the Pacific Hwy; and
- improved building design and residential amenity in St Leonards.

Nearly 12 years later, the provisions of that Precinct 1 Study delivered Stage 1 of the Expanded Hume Street Park – a significant new piece of public open space.

In July 2016 the State Government announced that it would undertake a strategic planning investigation and strategy for Crows Nest, St Leonards and the Artarmon industrial precinct.

That investigation went by many names – it began as a Priority Precinct, then morphed into an Urban Activation Precinct and finally the 2036 Plan.

The St Leonards and Crows Nest 2036 Plan (the 2036 Plan) was adopted and made by the State Government in August 2020 and states that it “will facilitate the urban renewal of St Leonards and Crows Nest for an expanding employment centre and growing residential community in the suburbs of St Leonards, Greenwich, Naremburn, Wollstonecraft, Crows Nest, and Artarmon”.

The Plan area, particularly the Pacific Highway corridor at St Leonards and Crows Nest, has been the subject of exponential growth and development pressure for at least the last 15 years. The 2036 Plan requires the precinct to absorb significant additional residential and commercial density and provides for the provision of regional open space and facilities.

This increased density is impacting all three local government areas – the open space and recreational infrastructure needs alone cannot be addressed in isolation.

It is timely then, to start to work with our neighbouring councils, Lane Cove and Willoughby, to identify and address the needs of the whole of St Leonards and Crows Nest as a precinct, irrespective of local government boundaries, in order to identify ways (and projects) to collaborate to deliver open space, recreational and community facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population.

I therefore recommend:

1. **THAT** Council invite Lane Cove and Willoughby councils to participate in a working party on the St Leonards/Crows Nest 2036 Plan.
2. **THAT** the working party consist of the mayors and a ward councillor representing the subject area together with a relevant strategic planning officer from each of the council areas.
3. **THAT** Council notes that the purpose of the working party is to explore a “coordinated approach to the planning, design and management of the centre” in the context of the 2036 Plan and to identify ways to collaborate and deliver open space, recreational and community facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population.

**COUNCILLOR ZOË BAKER
MAYOR**