



Greater Sydney Commission

Community Participation Plan





Message from the Chief Commissioner

Chief Commissioner
Lucy Hughes Turnbull AO



The Greater Sydney Commission is committed to listening to and collaborating with the community to achieve our powerful vision for a metropolis of three cities and quality outcomes for all Sydneysiders.

We cannot do this alone. This is your Greater Sydney and community input is vital in identifying what's important to you and planning for how our Region can grow in a sustainable way, providing equitable access to housing, jobs, services, education and walkable great places across Greater Sydney.

Our Community Participation Plan reaffirms our commitment to be a listening organisation and sets out how the Commission will have respectful and valuable conversations with a range of people across Greater Sydney.

This Community Participation Plan aims to build upon the Commission's early engagement work which was essential to developing *A Metropolis of Three Cities* – the Greater Sydney Region Plan and five District Plans.

Thank you to everyone who has engaged with the Commission since its inception. Your passion for Greater Sydney and your willingness to share your insights and ideas will continue to be a defining factor in the success of our Metropolis.

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Greater Sydney Commission acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands that include Greater Sydney and the living culture of these lands. The Commission recognises that the traditional owners have occupied and cared for this Country over countless generations and celebrates their continuing contribution to the life of Greater Sydney.

1 Introduction

The Commission is an independent statutory planning authority, which brings community, industry and government together to identify strategies for improving the liveability, productivity and sustainability of Greater Sydney now and in the future.

The Commission aims to make Greater Sydney a metropolis of three liveable, productive and sustainable cities by coordinating and aligning the planning that will shape the future.

The Greater Sydney Commission was established in early 2016 through the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015* (GSC Act).

The GSC Act (section 9) lists the principal objectives of the Commission including a specific reference to engagement:

(g) to provide increased opportunity for the public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment in the Greater Sydney Regions.

Since its inception, community engagement has been a vital part of the Commission's work. This included using community input to shape the Greater Sydney Region Plan and five District Plans, developing the key performance indicators to measure progress on implementation of these plans, and considering solutions to key urban challenges such as sharing spaces, enhancing active transport and planning for great places.

In 2018, following the Commission's move to the Premier and Cabinet Cluster, the Premier gave the organisation a new set of priorities which included:

- *Leading robust conversations with community and stakeholders about land use and infrastructure through innovative engagement activities; and*
- *Providing the government with independent advice about the land use and infrastructure issues that are a priority for the community and stakeholders.*

The Commission is committed to continuing this work through a collaborative approach, listening to the community, talking to experts, and gaining insights from local councils and other state government agencies.

The community provides the Commission with access to important and valuable knowledge, ideas and expertise. By listening to the community, we are collectively shaping the

future of the city to deliver quality outcomes now and for future generations.

This Community Participation Plan builds on our strong foundations, ensuring the community continues to play an important role in planning for the future of Greater Sydney.

1.1 What is a Community Participation Plan?

In July 2017, the Commission released an Engagement Strategy to guide the way we have conversations with the community and other stakeholders.

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) division 2.6 and Schedule 1, the Commission is now required to develop a Community Participation Plan.

The Community Participation Plan replaces the Commission's Engagement Strategy and continue to guide our strong consultative approach. It outlines the tools we will use, values we will embrace and opportunities we will provide for the community to be involved in the work of the Commission.

After exhibition and consultation the Community Participation Plan has been published on both the Commission's website and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Planning Portal.

1.2 How did we develop our Community Participation Plan?

This Community Participation Plan was developed in close consultation with members of the community.

Through a series of co-design workshops we brought together more than 100 people from across Greater Sydney's three cities to tell us how they would like to participate in the work of the Commission.

Ideas generated from these workshops were used to shape the draft Community Participation Plan.

During these workshops participants were asked:

- Who makes up Greater Sydney?
- Who is currently part of the conversation when strategic plans are prepared and made?

- Who is not part of the conversation when strategic plans are prepared and made?
- What are the barriers to people participating in strategic planning?
- What are some ideas for how we can include more people in strategic planning?

In co-designing the Community Participation Plan with the Commission, the community told us they value:

- Being asked their opinions, not told what to think;
- Being engaged before decisions are made;
- Having an environment where they feel safe to voice their opinions; and
- Engagement that is flexible, accessible and interactive.

The community also identified barriers hindering people from participating in engagement activities. We have

outlined these barriers in Table 1, as well as how we will seek to remove them to ensure good access to our engagement opportunities.

The Commission also asked Professor Jim McNamara, Distinguished Professor of Public Communication at the University of Technology Sydney, to undertake a review of our previous engagement activities. This review noted the Commission’s excellent engagement program to date across various projects and suggested that to further improve the organisation could specifically reference openness, timeliness and partnering in our engagement values.

The draft Community Participation Plan was placed on exhibition from 27 September 2019 to 13 November 2019. Submissions and feedback were used to finalise the Community Participation Plan.

Table 1: Barriers to engagement

Barrier	How we will respond
People often lack the time to participate in engagement activities	Where possible we will provide a range of engagement options for people with differing time availability.
Lack of awareness of opportunities to engage with the Commission	We will continue to use a wide range of communication tools to ensure people are aware of opportunities to comment on and have access to information about the Commission and its ongoing projects. These may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website; • Electronic newsletters; • Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Reddit); • Newspaper, tv and radio news articles; and • Advertising including metropolitan, local and ethnic newspapers as well as social media.
Complexity of subject matter	We will help the community understand complex information by using direct and clear language that is free from jargon. Where relevant we will develop one-page, Plain English summaries of the issues about which we are engaging.
Literacy, language and physical ability	We will tailor our engagement to people’s needs by providing a range of engagement opportunities including channels that are widely used, opportunities for face-to-face engagement and going to people in their communities. This will help us ensure that a diversity of community members including young people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and people with a disability have the opportunity to engage with the Commission. We will always provide support to enable a wide range of people to be involved with our engagement activities. This may include ensuring our venues are accessible and translation services are provided, together with workshops and materials in other languages.
Not enough information about what happens after the engagement or how the info will be used.	We will be upfront about how the information will be used as well as how community feedback helped shape our work. We will report back to the community about how we have taken their feedback into consideration.

2 Community Participation Plan

2.1 Who does our Community Participation Plan apply to?

The Community Participation Plan applies to anyone living or working in the Greater Sydney Region. The Greater Sydney Region consists of the five districts and 33 Local Government Areas listed in Figure 1 on page 8.

The Commission acknowledges that the community is made up of many smaller communities or groups of individuals with shared qualities, ideas, characteristics and interests. These groups might represent individuals from a diverse range of cultures, languages, religions, beliefs, geographic locations or genders, as well as professions and certain interests etc. Individuals may associate with a number of groups or communities and may represent a variety of interests.

The Commission's Community Participation Plan does not apply to other NSW planning authorities, such as the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, local councils or the Independent Planning Commission. All other NSW planning authorities will prepare their own Community Participation Plans.



Figure 1: The geographic area that the Greater Sydney Commission Community Participation Plan applies to



- Region Boundary
- District Boundary
- Local Government Area
- Waterways

DISTRICTS	
Central City	Blacktown, Cumberland, Parramatta, The Hills
Eastern City	Bayside, Burwood, Canada Bay, City of Sydney, Inner West, Randwick, Strathfield, Waverley, Woollahra
North	Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Ryde, Willoughby
South	Canterbury–Bankstown, Georges River, Sutherland
Western City	Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Penrith, Wollondilly

Source : A Metropolis of Three Cities – the Greater Sydney Region Plan

2.2 What values will guide our engagement?

The Commission has adopted the following engagement values to guide how we engage and develop relationships with the community:

Table 2: Values

Value	How we will act
Respect	The Commission engages with all stakeholders in a respectful manner. We openly discuss the challenges and listen before acting. We respect differing views. We make decisions that consider the range of views we've heard and the evidence.
Partnering	The Commission works collaboratively to improve Greater Sydney. We collaborate with individuals, local community groups, peak representative bodies, all levels of government, industry groups and the private sector to inform our decisions. We will not be limited to the passive supply of information but will encourage and record views and informed opinions.
Accessible	The Commission is accessible and visible in the community. We communicate by using direct, clear language that is free of jargon to reach as many people as possible. We provide multiple opportunities for people to get involved, provide feedback and share their ideas. We tailor our engagement to people's needs by providing a range of engagement opportunities including channels that are widely used, opportunities for face-to-face engagement and going to people in their communities. We help the community understand complex information.
Open	The Commission acts in an open, honest and accountable manner. We provide clear direction on the scope of our decisions and decision making. We are honest about what can and cannot be influenced through engagement and we explain how feedback has informed our decisions.
Timely	The Commission provides the community with information in a timely manner which allows for input before decisions are made. Sufficient time will be provided for the community to consider information and then make a meaningful contribution. The Commission reports back on the outcomes of engagement in a timely manner.
Inclusive	The Commission engages broadly, early and often with all stakeholders. We ensure that a diverse range of community members have opportunities to be actively engaged in the process, including young people, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people with a disability.
Evaluation	The Commission evaluates the effectiveness of its engagement to ensure we can continually improve and innovate. We establish pre-set key performance indicators and assess our engagement practice against these indicators.

2.3 How can the community participate in the work of the Commission?

There are a number of ways the community can participate in the work of the Commission. Some of the engagement tools we will use are outlined below:

Table 3: Engagement tools

Engagement tools	How we will use them
Co-design	To work with the community to design policies and relevant Commission work.
Community workshops	To present and explain complex information to the community so they can spend time deliberating on an issue.
Deliberative forums such as Citizens Panels, Citizens Juries, Youth Panels	To gather representation from and deliberation by a diverse range of people in the community who may not normally participate in engagement about strategic planning.
Mandatory exhibitions	To gain formal feedback required by legislation.
Non-mandatory exhibitions	To gather community input into non-statutory elements of Commission work.
Online engagement	To make it as easy as possible for community members to provide feedback at their convenience. This tool may also be used to reach a large number of people.
Roundtables	To gather feedback and insights from a range of peak groups that represent key social, environmental and industry stakeholders.
Surveys	Where appropriate, we will gain insights from a broad range of citizens so that people who live, work and play in Greater Sydney are all included.
Community meetings	Where appropriate, we will attend existing community, peak and industry meetings or forums to explain Commission proposals and gather feedback.

2.4 Statutory exhibition timeframes

The *EP&A Act* outlines the types of planning functions (referred to as ‘instruments’ in the Act), that statutory exhibition timeframes relate to. For the Commission this includes the exhibition of this draft Community Participation Plan and any future draft regional or district strategic plans.

Under the GSC Act the Premier or Minister for Planning and Public Spaces may ask the Commission to undertake a range of other planning activities. As a minimum, the Commission will comply with statutory exhibition timeframes set out in Section 2.21(2) of the EP&A Act. These timeframes include weekends. The timeframes do not include from the 20 December to 10 January (inclusive) to take into account the Christmas / New Year period. Whenever possible the Commission will offer longer timeframes for community feedback.

Planning instrument	Mandatory timeframes
Draft community participation plans	28 days
Draft regional or district strategic plans	45 days

Planning or policy information	Non mandatory timeframes
Draft legislation, regulation, policies and guidelines	Minimum 28 days whenever possible. The period may be shorter if there is an urgent need for the Commission to provide advice. We will be transparent about why timeframes are shorter than 28 days.

3 Give us your feedback

The Commission is a listening organisation, we value and encourage community feedback. If you have ideas about how we can improve our community engagement and participation please get in touch.

Online: www.greater.sydney/

Email feedback: engagement@gsc.nsw.gov.au

Postal feedback: Greater Sydney Commission
PO Box 257
Parramatta NSW 2124

Phone feedback: 1800 617 681

3.1 People who speak a language other than English

A version of this document is on our website which can be translated into different languages.

3.2 People with disabilities

We strive to comply with W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

We have developed our website to ensure content is available to the widest possible audience, including readers using assistive technology or accessibility features. By adhering to guidelines for accessible web design, we acknowledge the diversity of communication methods, available technologies and abilities of web-users in the community. If you are browsing our website with a screen reader and find information in a PDF format that you cannot access please contact us for assistance. Details are provided below.

3.3 People with restricted internet access

We aim to keep the size of all PDF documents on the website below 10 megabytes. However this may not always be possible in all cases.

If you have difficulties accessing Commission content please email engagement@gsc.nsw.gov.au.

We look forward to hearing your feedback.



The logo for the Greater Sydney Commission, featuring the text "Greater Sydney Commission" in a white, sans-serif font. The text is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the page, which has a background of three overlapping circles in various shades of blue. The circles are semi-transparent and overlap each other, creating a layered effect. The top circle is a medium blue, the middle one is a darker blue, and the bottom one is the darkest blue.

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