

FITZROY STREET AND BICENTENNIAL PARK UPGRADE



Staging a pop-up festival to engage the community

QUICK FACTS

PROJECT TYPE:
Urban design: street upgrade and beautification

LOCATION:
Tamworth, a major regional city

REGION:
New England North West

ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY:
Gamilaroi/Kamilaroi people

CLIENT:
Tamworth Regional Council

PROJECT SCALE:
Medium
STREET AREA 3000 m²
PARK AREA 5500 m²

PROJECT COST:
Mid range

YEAR:
Construction completed 2018; streetscape elements to be completed

DESIGN TEAM:
ORIGINAL DESIGN (MASTER PLANNING)
Spackman Mossop Michaels
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, STRATEGIC PLANNING, MAPPING
Tamworth Regional Council
ENGINEERING
GHD Australia
ROAD SAFETY, PROJECT MANAGEMENT
Constructive Solutions
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT, CONTRACTOR
Tamworth Regional Council

PROCUREMENT PROCESS:
Designed, funded, and built by Tamworth Regional Council

Engaging the community

The festival attracted an enthusiastic crowd, generating interest and support for the project. Image: Genevieve Harrison.

In 2018, following a series of successful urban design projects that focused on Tamworth’s main street, the council has now turned its attention to improving Fitzroy Street – an important public space linking the city centre to Bicentennial Park and the adjacent Peel River.

Bicentennial Park is a regionally significant park for the city of Tamworth. With a location in close walking proximity to the CBD, the park has been a prime setting for recreation and community-based events. It has a unique multifunctional nature providing a welcoming public space for people to meet friends and family, exercise, and relax.

These urban design projects were realised following the development of an integrated master plan by landscape architects. The Fitzroy Street and Bicentennial Park Concept Master Plan (2009) identified these priority areas for the community.

Starting with a shared vision

A shared council and community vision for Fitzroy Street imagined a “blank canvas” providing the backdrop for a range of events and activities. These include noodle markets, jazz concerts, an open-air cinema as well as overflow activities during the annual Tamworth Country Music Festival.

To realise this vision, council generated three options for the design of the street upgrade. Festival goers were presented with mock-ups of each of the options, and invited to consider their merits and then vote for a preferred one. Afterwards there was an online exhibition of the options, and public comments were used to amend and refine the preferred design.

Exploring possibilities:
Based on an initial round of consultation, three options for the street redesign were presented at the festival.
Image: Genevieve Harrison.





Leveraging the natural and cultural assets of the city:

The boulevard in Bicentennial Park forms a strong axis point with Peel Street. It also place marks the city's association with country music with bronze statues along its length.

Testing design options:

The street was closed for the day and the road surface painted to resemble the design options. Image: Genevieve Harrison.

Increasing options for diverse and healthy living:

The Bicentennial Regional Playground adjacent to the Peel River provides vibrant play areas and open spaces for recreation, supporting the health and wellbeing of the local community. Image: Steve Livingstone.

Revitalising the town centre

Community input into this urban design project has resulted in a new shared zone for pedestrians and cars, a public plaza with one-way traffic movement and space for some on-street parking. For flexible use of these areas, the kerbs have been removed to create continuous paved surfaces for staging community events and displaying public art.

To provide flexible spaces and infrastructure for events, street furniture and street trees are now moveable, and smart street poles have been installed. The smart poles provide services including street lighting, wi-fi, CCTV, power supply for market stalls, as well as supports for street signage, banners, and festival lighting.

Celebrating the city's unique identity

One of the projects delivered within the master plan includes the upgrade of the Palm Walk boulevard within the park. This included opening up views to connect with Fitzroy Street, and providing upgraded amenities. The bronze Legends of Country Music are located along the boulevard, celebrating the city's iconic country music tradition.

Renewing the master plan

Tamworth Regional Council continues to review and renew the master plan on an ongoing basis, making sure the plan's vision is carried through while also identifying areas where needs or aspirations may have changed.

Design objectives for NSW

Seven objectives define the key considerations in the design of the built environment.



Better fit
contextual, local
and of its place



Better performance
sustainable, adaptable
and durable



Better for community
inclusive, connected
and diverse



Better for people
safe, comfortable
and liveable



Better working
functional, efficient
and fit for purpose



Better value
creating and
adding value



Better look and feel
engaging, inviting
and attractive

Find out more
ga.nsw.gov.au



Good process: collaborating with the community

Staging a pop-up festival to present options for street upgrades is a good example of a collaborative design process, demonstrating how local councils and communities can work together to improve the quality and design of their public spaces. This approach demonstrates the way in which design processes can evolve over time to respond to changing needs of the community. For council, events such as this have become a key community engagement tool, encouraging all sectors of the community – such as families, children, and recent school-leavers – to engage in shaping the future of their city.

Key considerations

Determining who the public space is for and how it is to be used is crucial – whether the community is in favour of spaces for events such as markets and performances, or spaces for sitting and relaxing. Engagement events such as the pop-up festival assist in identifying the community's views.

Big picture planning for Tamworth's public spaces has been guided by an ongoing and collaborative process that began with a master plan in 2009. Since then, council has been very clear that the process of improving the key areas within the city centre's public realm is an ongoing one.

Through its investment in projects such as this over the long term, the council has acknowledged the importance of the public realm for the city's identity and ongoing wellbeing, for the benefit of all.

Integrating with the natural environment and landscape:

A landscape including mature trees and native flowering species has provided the setting for one of the city's multifunctional parks. Image: Steve Livingstone.

1. Horton D (creator) & AIATSIS (1996), AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia, Aboriginal Studies Press, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), and Auslig/Sinclair, Knight, Merz.

MORE INFORMATION

GANSW policies:

Better Placed: An integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW

GANSW guides:

Integrating Urban Design

Urban Design for Regional NSW

GANSW advisory notes:

Creating better places

Collaboration

Strategic visioning

Master plans

This case study has been developed in conjunction with the Urban Design for Regional NSW guide.