

CITY OF SYDNEY
Stimulus Paper
PASCAL International Exchanges

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City of Sydney Council

City of Sydney at a glance

The City of Sydney Local Government Area covers approximately 26.15 square kilometres, within the Sydney metropolitan area. This city of villages comprises Central Sydney, the Rocks, Millers Point, Ultimo, Pyrmont, Surry Hills, Woolloomooloo, Kings Cross, Elizabeth Bay, Rushcutters Bay, Darlinghurst, Chippendale, Darlington, Camperdown, Forest Lodge, Glebe, Alexandria, Beaconsfield, Centennial Park, Erskineville, Newtown, Redfern, Rosebery, Waterloo, and Zetland. The City of Sydney local government area is home to an estimated 183,500 residents.

Given its location as the economic and cultural heart of the Sydney metropolitan area, the local government area is highly and densely urbanised. It also comprises a diverse ethnic mix. According to ABS Census 2011 data, over half the City's residents were born overseas; one-third of the resident population speaks a language other than English. Apart from English, the most common languages spoken at home are Chinese, Thai, Indonesian, Korean and Spanish. The City of Sydney is home to one of Sydney's largest communities of Aboriginal peoples.

On any given day our local government area also attracts 480,000 day visitors and students, who come to the City to shop, be entertained or inspired, to learn, to visit friends and to conduct both personal and corporate business.

It is estimated that the economic activity (GDP) generated in the City of Sydney in 2011-12 was approximately \$100 billion, representing 7.5% (nearly a 12th) of the total national Australian economy, over 30% of the Sydney metropolitan area and almost one-quarter of the GDP of the entire state of NSW. There are approximately 20,000 separate business establishments in the City of Sydney and the area hosts almost 40% of the headquarters of the top 500 Australian corporations.

The vast majority of the City's workforce – at 39% - is in a Professional occupation with a further 17% employed as a Manager. The proportion of skilled workers has increased significantly in the last decade.

City of Sydney Council

The City of Sydney Council's work programs are guided by our long term strategic plan Sustainable Sydney 2030. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a set of goals we have set for our city to help make it as green, global and connected as possible by 2030. The plan covers transport, planning, environmental leadership, the cultural life of our city, and the economic development of central Sydney and its villages.

Planning for a City of villages

The City of Sydney area includes diverse villages and neighbourhoods, each known for their distinct characteristics. They are as important for the culture and economy of our city as the CBD.

In 2005-06, we developed Local Action Plans (LAPs) in consultation with our communities to honour our City of Villages commitment. Most LAPs projects are underway or complete, including new facilities, parks and street improvements.

The ambitious targets and objectives of Sustainable Sydney 2030 will not be achieved by the City of Sydney alone, and we have strong partnerships with other levels of government, business and industry and with our community in furthering the 'green global and connected' aims of Sustainable Sydney 2030 and programs like the Local Action Plan program.

In the context of completing many of the LAPs requests, and with the overarching strategic plan of Sustainable Sydney 2030, we again checked in with our communities in 2012 through the **2030 in Your Village** consultation. This consultation was to ensure that we continue to consider local business and resident community priorities and vision for local neighbourhoods as we deliver Sustainable Sydney 2030.

There was a fantastic community turnout, with nearly 800 people joining in the forums, and almost 5,000 ideas and suggestions submitted through the forums, online, surveys, and through youth teams interviewing their peers.

We asked people how they envisioned their neighbourhood in 2030 and how the City could work with residents and businesses to improve villages over coming decades.

We received a broad range of suggestions, including:

- developing a sense of community;
- improving public transport and encouraging bike riding and walking;
- supporting local services and businesses;
- solving parking problems;
- 'greening' our streets and neighbourhoods, and
- promoting safe and clean public places.

2030 in your village will deliver 10 new community-based action plans that translate Sustainable Sydney 2030 at a local level. The project will:

- report back to the community on the largely completed Local Action Plan Strategy 2007-2010;
- invite the community to work with us on new locally based action plans that translate Sustainable Sydney 2030 at a local level, and
- encourage the community to think about ways they can partner with us on the '2030 journey' – the vision will only happen with energy, participation and involvement of us all.

Matching Grants Program

A key avenue through which City of Sydney works with our local resident and business communities to improve and inspire our villages is our very successful Matching Grants program

Our Matching Grants Program sees the City engage and partner with the community on their ideas, with contributions by the community (such as community time) 'matched' with up to \$10,000 cash or in-kind support such as venue hire of City owned buildings.

Projects and initiatives are diverse and range from cultural projects, community building initiatives such as neighbourhood barbecues, through to tree planting and community gardens, public art projects and cycling projects.

Hundreds of initiatives have now been delivered with examples including:

- the Conductors Project, new public art that transforms the disused display cabinets of two busy CBD stations into exhibition space for emerging and established artists to display their work;
- the Bike2Bourke project which encouraged local children to make a healthy lifestyle choice and ride their bikes to school along a newly built cycleway; a rewards program recorded the number of rides and the 'keenest riders,' rewarding participants with a certificate and a bike-related prize;
- Stories from our Streets initiative where local school children, students, parents, seniors and local homeless people were given a camera and invited to take photos telling a story about their community and village, and
- a Kids Cooking Camp which teaches young people about local in-season food and teaches them how to prepare it and hold a feast with their friends.

The Matching Grants Program is a strong capacity-builder in our community, providing a mechanism for community engagement, skills development, and shared funding arrangements for the delivery of local community-based projects. It improves our villages in a myriad of ways, and increases community connections at the same time.

Lifelong learning programs supporting our villages

Sustainable Sydney 2030 includes an objective to 'provide accessible community-level social infrastructure, services and programs across the City'. Just a few of the City's programs supporting lifelong learning in our communities are listed below.

- The City delivers a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities for residents over the age of 55 and younger people with a disability, through the '**GOLD**' (**Growing Older, Living Dangerously**) **healthy ageing program**, which runs at the City's six Over 55s Centres and a variety of other community venues. Current Over 55s Centre membership is around 800, and is comprised of people aged 55-100, with a few younger members with a disability. The number of participants in regular activities exceeds 400 a week. Regular activities include gentle exercise, Tai Chi in the Park, excursions, English language and conversation, art & craft, walking groups, aqua exercise, ballroom dancing, Zumba, guest speakers and workshops on topics of interest –such as financial management, maintain good health, and nutrition – a subsidised podiatry clinic, low cost lunches and bus outings. The full program can be viewed [on the City of Sydney website](#).

- Our wide range of **Library programs** has gone from strength to strength over recent years with a doubling of attendances from 11,877 participants in 2009/10 to 29,362 in 2011/12. Residents and visitors are drawn to a program that includes art and craft workshops, pop-up outdoor bookshelves and reading spaces, computer literacy programs ranging from Excel and Word to Blogging and Social Media 101, rhyme time and story time for young children, Late Night Library programs and author talk series. The Library's programs are centred on the aim of delivering free and inclusive lifelong learning activities while transforming the library space into a vibrant and active community living room.
- **Volunteering** can be an important pathway to lifelong learning. The City's Over 55 Services Unit operates volunteer-based Meals on Wheels Service and mobile BBQ. Volunteers who assist the Meals on Wheels Service receive ongoing training and support, and have completed training in Mental Health First Aid, defensive driving, and safe food handling. Meals on Wheels and Food services staff also recently partnered with the City's Youth Services team to provide accredited training and mentoring in food handling and the operation of our BBQ for 6 unemployed young people, enabling them to be offered regular casual employment with this service.

Stimulus questions

1. What are some innovative ways that libraries are adapting to the 'new age' of digital access? How might their role be successfully broadened to perform as 'community living rooms'?
2. How can government best support, recognise and successfully integrate the important work of our volunteers, and leverage volunteering to best develop skills and paths to employment?
3. What are some innovative ways that community facilities are introducing to facilitate interaction and shared projects between our different age groups from youth to seniors?
4. How could local government better measure social impacts and outcomes associated with community-based programs - both individual and collective impacts? Which councils are doing this well?
5. Are local councils using the best and most effective modes of communication available to them to tap into communities' experience, skills and expertise? Do we need to communicate better or differently?