

10 November 2025

At the conclusion of the Innovation, Business and Economy
Committee

Transport, Heritage and Planning Committee

Agenda

- 1. Confirmation of Minutes**
- 2. Statement of Ethical Obligations and Disclosures of Interest**
- 3. Guiding Principles for Victoria Barracks**
- 4. Adoption - Contaminated Land Policy**

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1. Register to speak by calling Secretariat on 9265 9702 or emailing secretariat@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au before 10.00am on the day of the meeting.
2. Check the recommendation in the Committee report before speaking, as it may address your concerns so that you just need to indicate your support for the recommendation.
3. Note that there is a three minute time limit for each speaker (with a warning bell at two minutes) and prepare your presentation to cover your major points within that time.
4. Avoid repeating what previous speakers have said and focus on issues and information that the Committee may not already know.
5. If there is a large number of people interested in the same item as you, try to nominate three representatives to speak on your behalf and to indicate how many people they are representing.

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Committee reports are available at www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Item 1.

Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the following meetings of the Transport, Heritage and Planning Committee are submitted for confirmation:

Meeting of 20 October 2025

Item 2.

Statement of Ethical Obligations

In accordance with section 233A of the Local Government Act 1993, the Lord Mayor and Councillors are bound by the Oath or Affirmation of Office made at the start of the Council term to undertake their civic duties in the best interests of the people of the City of Sydney and the City of Sydney Council and to faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act, to the best of their ability and judgement.

Disclosures of Interest

Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, the City of Sydney Code of Meeting Practice and the City of Sydney Code of Conduct, Councillors are required to disclose and manage both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any matter on the agenda for this meeting.

In both cases, the nature of the interest must be disclosed.

This includes receipt of reportable political donations over the previous four years.

Item 3.

Guiding Principles for Victoria Barracks

File No: X121526

Summary

Victoria Barracks is an active military base and significant heritage site located in Paddington. Built between 1841 and 1848, the site was occupied by the British military until 1870 when it was then occupied by colonial forces and the Australian army. The site is listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List and is locally listed. Busby's Bore, which partly sits below the Victoria Barracks site, is state heritage listed. The site contains many buildings of high architectural interest, constructed from sandstone quarried onsite and nearby including the Soldier's Quarters, Officer's Quarters, Guard House, Garrison Hospital and Barracks Master's Quarters.

Victoria Barracks remains an active military site today, with many of its original buildings still in use and adapted for modern military administrative uses. The site currently accommodates the Forces Command as well as the Australian Army Band Sydney.

In December 2023, the findings of the Australian Defence Force's (ADF) Defence Estate Audit report, assessed whether Defence's high-density urban property holdings align with current military requirements and were presented to federal government. The findings of this audit report have not been made public.

In November 2024, Council resolved, via a Notice of Motion that the Chief Executive Officer be requested to establish a set of guiding principles for the potential use of the Victoria Barracks if the land was to be divested by the ADF.

In response, the City conducted community engagement from 8 August to 19 September 2025 to call for the public's ideas for Victoria Barracks if it became available for public use. The community's feedback highlighted desires for a publicly accessible place that celebrates its military heritage, provides open space, community and cultural uses and supports Sydney's housing needs. The findings from the community engagement are summarised in the Engagement Outcomes Report (Attachment B).

The Engagement Outcome Report reveals that the community envisions the future of Victoria Barracks as a vibrant, publicly accessible precinct that honours its military heritage, actively preserves and interprets its history, accommodates diverse activities and balances Sydney's housing needs with protecting this unique opportunity. The community's feedback and vision for Victoria Barracks is central to the formulation of the Guiding Principles.

In response to the community's feedback, a set of eight guiding principles are proposed to provide a framework for potential future decision-making on the use of the Victoria Barracks site, should the land be up for divestment. The Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles document outlines the City's proposed approach to balancing preservation with adaptation. It ensures any redevelopment is approached with careful consideration of the site's historical significance, community needs, and the potential to create a vibrant, mixed-use precinct that contributes positively to Sydney's urban fabric. The document details the following eight guiding principles:

1. Preserve and enhance heritage and military significance
2. Maximise public accessibility
3. Enhance and expand green open space
4. Incorporate housing, including diverse housing
5. Prioritise cultural and community use
6. Encourage compatible and viable commercial use
7. Encourage environmental sustainability and protect biodiversity
8. Robust planning, implementation and management

This report recommends Council endorse the Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles (the Guiding Principles) and request the Lord Mayor send the Guiding Principles to the Minister for Defence Richard Marles.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the findings of the Victoria Barracks Engagement Outcomes Report as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (B) Council endorse the Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles as shown at Attachment A to the subject report and note that they will be sent to the Department of Defence with an invitation for City of Sydney staff to provide a briefing; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to send the Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles as shown at Attachment A to the subject report to the Minister for Defence Richard Marles with an invitation to further discuss should divestment be contemplated.

Attachments

Attachment A. Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles

Attachment B. Victoria Barracks Engagement Outcomes Report

Background

1. Victoria Barracks is one of Australia's most significant military heritage sites, containing buildings of unique architectural and cultural importance, located in Paddington, built between 1841 and 1848 under the supervision of Lieutenant Colonel George Barney of the Royal Engineers. Figure 1 shows the Victoria Barracks site in 1871, looking east.



Figure 1: Victoria Barracks, 1871. Source: Mitchell Library

2. Paddington was chosen as the new site for a military barracks in the 1830s as the original military barracks on George Street had become increasingly challenged due to deteriorating buildings and its prime location limiting Sydney's commercial growth as the colony and city developed.
3. Victoria Barracks housed the British soldiers until 1870 when it was occupied by colonial forces and the Australian army.
4. The Victoria Barracks site is listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List and is locally listed. It is the only surviving substantial military barracks complex built in Australia from the early Victorian period and contains important groups of late Georgian and Edwardian military buildings in Australia, including the soldiers Quarters building.



Figure 2: Soldiers Quarters building, 1989. Source: City of Sydney Archives

5. Victoria Barracks remains an active military site today, housing the Forces Command and the Australian Army Band Sydney. Many original buildings continue to serve historic functions, while others have been adapted for modern military administrative use.
6. The site occupies around 15 hectares bounded by Oxford Street to the north, Greens Road to the west, Moore Park Road to the south and Oatley Road to the east, see Figure 3. The site's elevated position on a ridgeline provides expansive views, originally selected for defensive purposes but now offering remarkable vistas across Sydney's eastern suburbs to Botany Bay and north towards the harbour.

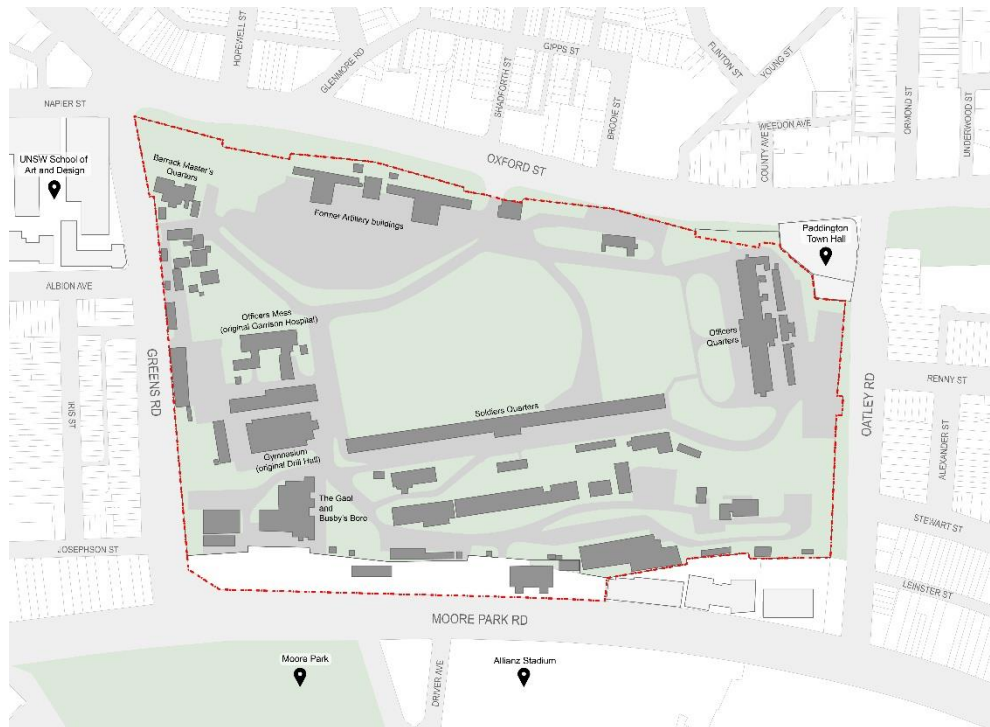


Figure 3: Victoria Barracks location map. Source: City of Sydney

7. In December 2023, the findings of the Defence Estate Audit report, commissioned as part of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Defence Strategic Review, were presented to federal government. The audit assesses whether Defence's urban property holdings align with the military's current requirements. The findings of this audit report have not been made public.
8. In November 2024, Council unanimously resolved, via a Notice of Motion to request several actions. These included that the Lord Mayor to write to the Minister for Defence and that City staff establish a set of guiding principles for the potential use of the Victoria Barracks site should the land be proposed for divestment.
9. The Lord Mayor wrote to the Minister for Defence Richard Marles to request a briefing for the City of Sydney Council on future plans for the Victoria Barracks site and to consult with the City and the local community about future plans for the site. A briefing between City of Sydney staff and Department of Defence staff was held 28 March 2025. The Defence estate team gave an update of their responsibilities and the status of the audit at that time (under review). We provided a briefing of our project purpose and goals and extended an invitation to collaborate which was declined.

10. As part of the Council resolution it was recommended that the guiding principles consider the high heritage value of the site and community needs, including public greenspace, cultural uses and affordable housing. Meaningful community engagement in decision making processes was also recommended.

Community Engagement

11. Community engagement was undertaken for 6 weeks from 8 August to 19 September 2025, with a Sydney Your Say webpage including map, survey and additional background.
12. The purpose of the community engagement was to:
 - (a) explain to the public that although no decision has been made by the Department of Defence to divest the Victoria Barracks site, the City wants to know what the community would like to see and do on site if it was to become available for public use in the future
 - (b) involve the community in the creation of guiding principles to shape potential future use of Victoria Barracks for maximum public benefit, should it be divested
 - (c) explain what divestment means and generally what the process involves
13. The consultation invited residents, workers, visitors and community members to give feedback on what they would like to see and do at Victoria Barracks to help shape the vision for the site, should it be divested.
14. Due to the site's restricted access and acknowledgement that there may be limited public awareness of the site spatially or historically, the consultation was online only. The consultation described the site's historical, built and cultural significance and uses to ensure community could provide informed feedback despite restricted access.

15. An interactive map provided information on significant buildings and features of interest, describing their date of construction, architectural description and former and current uses. An example is seen in Figure 4.

Officers's Quarters and Kitchens: Built 1841-1846.



Description: Officer's Quarters building. Source: National Library, 1930.

The first building to be built on the barracks site in 1841. It's a large sandstone building for housing married and single officers, accommodating 10 resident officers, 9 of them with wives and children. In the 1930s the Royal Military College was temporarily accommodated in the Officer's Quarter's, but the building is still used for its original function, accommodation.

Figure 4: Social pinpoint map - building information. Source: City of Sydney

16. Community members could add comments to the map under the themes of heritage, housing, open space, community and culture, and 'other' for any comments which did not address the preselected themes.

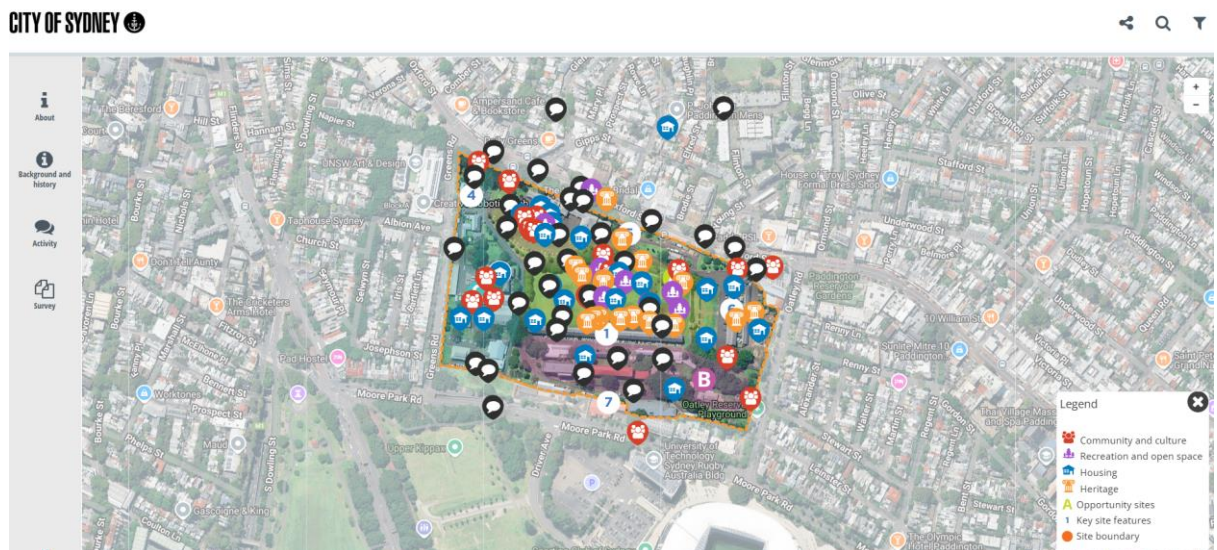


Figure 5: Social pinpoint map - community feedback markers. Source: City of Sydney

17. Additional information about the history of the site was provided on the Sydney Your Say website. The website also included local and international examples of former military heritage sites that had been transformed for other uses and public spaces.
18. Community feedback was collected via comments on the interactive map, an online survey, and written submissions via email.
19. The consultation was promoted by the following methods to achieve meaningful community engagement:
 - (a) Sydney Your Say project page which provided the opportunity to provide feedback via an interactive map and/or survey
 - (b) direct email to 1,257 stakeholders inviting them to participate in the engagement
 - (c) promotion through Sydney Your Say e-newsletter, Sydney City News and community centre newsletters
 - (d) promotion via Woollahra Council through their website and e-newsletters

Engagement Outcomes Report

20. The Engagement Outcomes Report at Attachment B describes the consultation and feedback from the community.
21. In total, the City received 1,092 pieces of feedback, including 102 comments posted on the interactive map, 876 up/down votes on the interactive map comments, 30 survey responses and 84 email submissions.

22. The themes of responses received across all consultation sources, including the online map comments, survey comments and email submissions, are seen in Figure 6. The strongest themes are:

- (a) Preservation of heritage structures and character, and respect for military history (21% of responses)
- (b) Housing supply (19% of responses)
- (c) Provision of community and cultural facilities (17% of responses)
- (d) Public accessibility and increased site permeability (9% of responses)
- (e) Governance and ownership (8% of responses)
- (f) Preservation and enhancement of public green open space (8% of responses)
- (g) Provision of commercial uses and retail activation (6% of responses)

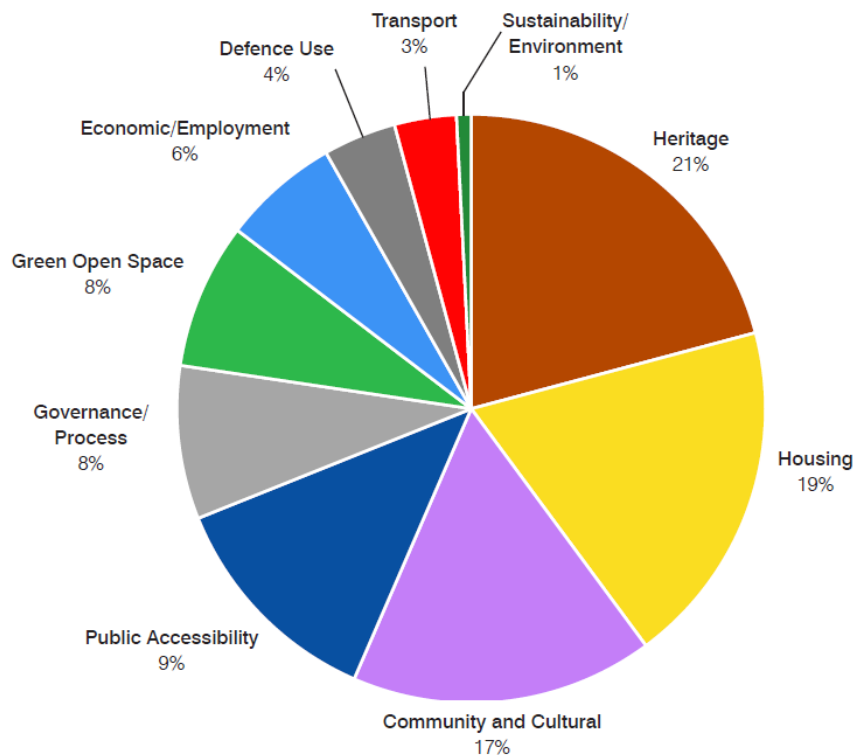


Figure 6: Consultation summary graph

23. Consensus showed that heritage conservation must be the foundation of any future use of the site. Responses consistently emphasised that Victoria Barracks represents irreplaceable colonial and military history that must be conserved. Many expressed strong opposition to any development that would compromise the site's heritage character, with particular concern about high-rise buildings.

24. Public accessibility and green open space emerged as priorities. Submissions strongly advocated for opening the site up for public access and retaining and enhancing all existing green spaces, with many suggesting the parade ground should become public parkland. Ideas ranged from community gardens and urban farms to recreation areas, outdoor performance spaces and weekly markets.
25. Housing generated the most diverse responses. While some participants recognised the housing challenges and supported low-cost/affordable high-density housing, others strongly opposed any residential development, arguing it would "destroy one of Sydney's most important colonial-era landmarks". Those supporting housing emphasised it must include affordable options for key workers, with several suggesting veterans should receive priority given the site's military heritage.
26. Cultural and community uses featured prominently, with strong support for museums, galleries, performance spaces and artist studios. Many envisioned an arts precinct, others suggested educational facilities or expansion of the existing Army Museum. The proximity to the University of NSW and University of Technology, Sydney sparked suggestions for tertiary facilities or a new public high school to address the shortage in the eastern suburbs.
27. The Engagement Outcomes Report reveals that the community envisions the future of Victoria Barracks as a vibrant, publicly accessible precinct that honours its military heritage, actively preserves and interprets its history, accommodates diverse activities, and balances Sydney's housing needs with protecting this irreplaceable place. The community's feedback and collective vision for Victoria Barracks is central to the formation of the draft Guiding Principles.

Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles

28. Using the community's input and supported by the City's strategic directions, a set of guiding principles for the potential future use of Victoria Barracks are at Attachment A.
29. The Guiding Principles honour the past while addressing contemporary urban challenges including housing affordability, access to green space and community connection. By establishing these guiding principles now, the City of Sydney aims to include community voices in future decision-making and that the site's transformation, should it occur, provides lasting benefits for current and future generations.
30. The Principles include:
 - (a) Conserve and enhance heritage and military significance. Goals include:
 - (i) Maintain and conserve heritage-listed structures including the perimeter wall, recognising their status as surviving examples of military architecture in Australia.
 - (ii) Respect the original architectural integrity of heritage buildings including the Officers' Quarters, Soldiers Barracks, Guard House, Garrison Hospital/Officers Mess and Barracks Master's Quarters.

- (iii) Protect archaeology within the site, prioritising comprehensive investigation and recording to uncover undocumented historical evidence as part of any redevelopment.
 - (iv) Develop a comprehensive conservation management plan to guide all future development decisions, identifying elements of high, moderate and low tolerance for change.
 - (v) Incorporate interpretive displays and educational elements that communicate the site's First Nations history, military history from British occupation through to its role for Australia's military and significance in Sydney's colonial development.
- (b) Maximise public accessibility. Goals include:
- (i) Encourage universal public access across the site, including green spaces and community/cultural facilities, removing barriers while respecting heritage constraints.
 - (ii) Prioritise and improve walking connections through the site.
 - (iii) Explore new openings for walking access to the site which are legible, respect heritage constraints and successfully integrate with the existing street network of Oxford Street, Moore Park and Oatley and Greens Road.
 - (iv) Reduce vehicle movements into the site by limiting private vehicle circulation to the land south and east of the Barracks building and encourage private vehicle access from Moore Park Road.
- (c) Enhance and expand green open space. Goals include:
- (i) Retain the central landscaped open space and conserve the site's historical layout (including key visual connections/sightlines within the precinct) while providing flexible community orientated uses.
 - (ii) Dedicate existing and new portions of the site to accessible and flexible public open space uses, drawing on its historical uses as a parade ground.
 - (iii) Ensure the greenspace connects the site to its surroundings, serving as a link between the high-density suburban development of Paddington and the open space of Moore Park.
- (d) Prioritise cultural and community use. Goals include:
- (i) Public facilities and services:
 - a. Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings for cultural and community orientated purposes, exploring opportunities for spaces that serve communities, such as museums, art galleries, educational centres or public event spaces.
 - b. Consider temporary cultural and creative events and installations that enliven the site's publicly accessible spaces throughout the year, including those reflective of the site's military history.

- c. Ensure any space allocated for community facilities address identified local needs at the time of development, complementing and enhancing the programs and activities of Paddington Town Hall and investigate providing vehicle service access to the rear of Paddington Town Hall.
 - d. Maintain the existing Army Museum of NSW as a cultural anchor that preserves the site's military heritage while providing educational opportunities.
- (ii) Accessibility and inclusion:
 - a. Incorporate First Nations perspectives and recognition of the land's significance to Aboriginal peoples prior to colonial settlement.
 - b. Design and program spaces that welcome diverse community groups and promote intergenerational interaction.
- (e) Incorporate diverse housing. Goals include:
 - (i) Integration and design:
 - a. Incorporate a mix of housing types including typologies to meet diverse housing demands, respecting the site's history through sensitive design and siting [or location] of new buildings and/or adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
 - b. Ensure any housing development is sensitively designed to maintain key sightlines and exhibit design excellence.
 - (ii) Affordable housing:
 - a. Encourage a socially diverse community by providing a significant proportion of affordable housing owned and operated permanently by registered community housing provider(s).
 - b. Prioritise affordable housing for key workers, such as those in essential services, health and education.
 - c. Consider specialised affordable housing for specific groups such as veterans, recognising the site's military heritage.
 - d. Explore diverse housing typologies that accommodate different household sizes and life stages.
- (f) Encourage compatible and viable commercial uses. Goals include:
 - (i) Economic viability:
 - a. Prioritise commercial uses that complement rather than dominate the site's heritage character and community functions.
 - b. Develop a sustainable economic model without compromising heritage values.
 - c. Consider a mix of long-term leases and shorter-term activations to provide economic resilience and adaptability.

- (ii) Compatible commercial activities:
 - a. Encourage creative industries, innovation hubs and educational institutions that can adaptively reuse heritage buildings while contributing to the local economy.
 - b. Support small-scale retail, food and beverage outlets that serve site visitors and the broader community.
 - c. Explore opportunities for heritage tourism that celebrates the site's historical significance and generates revenue for ongoing conservation.
 - d. Consider allocating spaces for cultural production and presentation, including galleries, studios, performance venues and creative workspaces.
- (g) Encourage environmental sustainability. Goals include:
 - (i) Resilience:
 - a. Embed resilience principles in spaces, buildings and infrastructure (and their ongoing management) to withstand social, economic and environmental shocks and stresses, and build community resilience.
 - (ii) Biodiversity:
 - a. Retain and protect significant plantings made over the course of the site's use as a military barracks. Protect original plantings at the Barrack Master's garden and significant plantings at the Garrison Hospital/Officers Mess gardens.
 - b. Where appropriate, increase urban tree canopy and biodiversity through new plantings and garden features that enhance ecological value while honouring the site's history.
 - (iii) Environmental sustainability:
 - a. Incorporate water-sensitive urban design principles, including stormwater harvesting and reuse systems, acknowledging the site's historical connection to water infrastructure.
- (h) Robust planning, implementation and management. Goals include:
 - (i) Planning and development:
 - a. Establish transparent and participatory planning processes that involve the community, given historical public interest and debate regarding the site's use and reuse.
 - (ii) Governance and management:
 - a. Set up an advisory forum that includes representation from heritage experts, community members and relevant government agencies.
 - b. Develop a phased approach that, where possible, allows for adaptive management and responds to changing community needs over time.

- c. Create transparent decision-making processes that include the community.
- (iii) Financial sustainability:
 - a. Balance commercial returns with public benefit to ensure long-term financial sustainability without compromising heritage values.
 - b. Explore innovative funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, to support heritage conservation and public facilities.
 - c. Develop a long-term maintenance and conservation fund to ensure care of heritage assets.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

31. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. The Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles document is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - Guiding principle 8 addresses transparent and participatory governance, and responsible financial management of the precinct.
 - (b) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - Guiding principle 7 advocates for environmentally responsive and sustainable development as part of a transformation of the site.
 - (c) Direction 3 - Public places for all - Guiding principles 2, 5 and 6 ensure the site is accessible to all, enhances green open space and encourages a variety of cultural, community and commercial uses.
 - (d) Direction 4 - Design excellence and sustainable development - Guiding principles 1 and 4 promote the preservation and celebration of existing architecture and ensure any new development exhibits design excellence.
 - (e) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - The guiding principles have been underpinned by community consultation. Guiding principle 2 prioritises public accessibility of site. Principle 4 seeks to ensure diverse housing to accommodate a range of household sizes and incomes.
 - (f) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - Guiding principle 7 promotes an environmentally resilient site that responds to climate change and enhances ecological values. Guiding principle 5 promotes inclusion for all community groups.
 - (g) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural life - Guiding Principle 5 supports the opportunity to contribute to Sydney's cultural, creative and community infrastructure.

- (h) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - Guiding principles 5 and 6 encourage compatible commercial uses, community infrastructure and cultural facilities that welcome activation and sustainable economic growth.
- (i) Direction 10 - Housing for all - Principle 4 encourages the provision of high quality, sensitively designed housing that meet diverse needs and includes provision of an affordable component of housing.

Risks

- 32. Risks associated with the public release of the Victoria Barracks have been considered. Noting alignment with the City's strategic vision and objectives and incorporation community views the Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles is categorised as moderate to open risk tolerance.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

- 33. It is proposed to publish the Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles on the City's website following endorsement by Council.
- 34. The City will write to the Department of Defence providing a copy of the document and offer to provide a briefing on the engagement outcomes and the Guiding Principles.

GRAHAM JAHN AM

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Joe Burraston, Senior Strategic Planner

Lily Gibson, Cadet Planner

Attachment A

Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles



November 2025

Victoria Barracks Guiding Principles

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Figure 1
(cover) Soldiers Quarters building with cannon gun.
Source: City of Sydney Archives
(opposite) Close up of Victoria Barracks perimeter wall.
Source: City of Sydney.

Introduction

About Victoria Barracks

Victoria Barracks is one of Sydney's most significant heritage sites, a symbol of 175 years of military service and an integral part of Australia's defence history. Built between 1841 and 1848,¹ this 15-hectare precinct is still owned and operated by the Australian Defence Force. It contains the finest complex of colonial barracks in Australia, with an important collection of late Georgian sandstone buildings that served military purposes for almost 2 centuries.²

Situated on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, Victoria Barracks occupies the ridgeline of Paddington. Originally selected for its strategic vantage points over Botany Bay and Port Jackson,³ the location is now surrounded by a vibrant and historically rich community.

The precinct embodies many layers of significance for Sydney and the nation. As the only surviving military barracks complex built in Australia during the early Victorian period,⁴ it provides a physical link to our colonial past and the evolution of Australia's defence forces. Victoria Barracks illustrates the nation's journey from British imperial troops to colonial forces, and ultimately to the modern Australian Army, reflecting the nation's journey to independence and self-determination.

Today, Victoria Barracks continues its military function as one of the bases for the Australian Army and home to its Sydney band. The perimeter walls, once built for defence, act as a barrier between this significant heritage site and the surrounding neighbourhood. With limited public access, the precinct remains largely unknown.

Figure 2
(top) Soldiers Quarters building with cannon gun. Source: City of Sydney Archives. (middle) NSW Artillery soldiers. Source: State Library NSW. (bottom) Helicopter landing at Victoria Barracks. Source: Defence Connect/CPL Dustin Anderson.

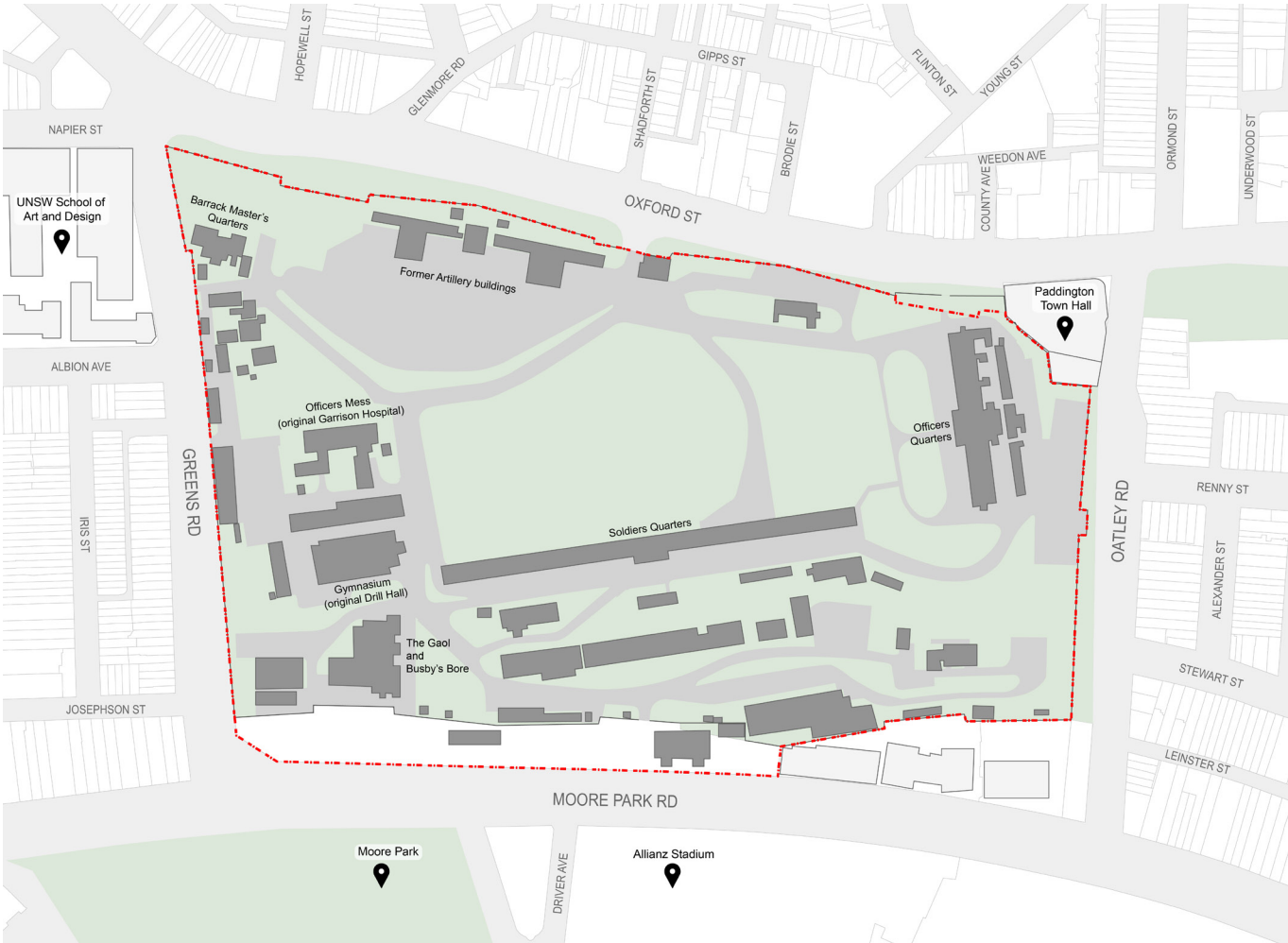
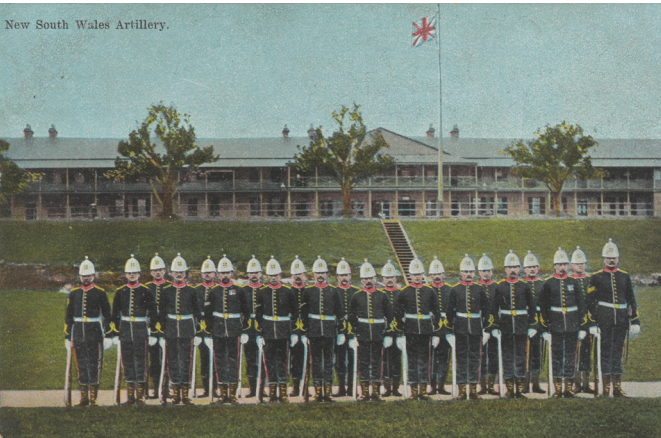


Figure 3. Map of Victoria Barracks showing key points of interest. Source: City of Sydney.

What the City is doing

The potential for Victoria Barracks to benefit the broader community while preserving its heritage significance has prompted the City of Sydney to plan for possible future scenarios. In 2023, a federal government audit of Australian Defence Force land considered whether these sites continue to meet contemporary military requirements. While no decision has been made about the future of Victoria Barracks, the City of Sydney recognises the importance of being prepared should this significant site become available for alternative uses.

This document presents guiding principles developed by talking with our communities. Any future plans for Victoria Barracks must consider community benefits while respecting and preserving its exceptional heritage values. These principles envision a future where the barracks could become a dynamic, accessible precinct serving Sydney's diverse communities through a thoughtful combination of heritage conservation, public open space, cultural facilities, diverse housing and community use.

The opportunity to reimagine Victoria Barracks is more than the potential to repurpose a military site. It offers the possibility of creating a new chapter in the precinct's long history – one that honours its past while addressing contemporary urban challenges including housing affordability, access to green space and community connection. By establishing these guiding principles now, the City of Sydney aims to ensure community voices are part of any future decision-making process and that the site's transformation, should it occur, provides lasting benefits for current and future generations.



Figure 4
Cricket at Victoria Barracks, 1981.
Source: National Archives

Background

In 2023, the federal government commissioned a comprehensive audit of Australian Defence Force land, including Victoria Barracks in Paddington. The audit assessed whether Defence's properties continue to align with its needs. It was submitted to federal ministers in December 2023 but its recommendations have not yet been made public.

The strategic review of defence assets is part of a broader reconsideration of how government-owned sites can be repurposed to meet the needs of Australia's rapidly growing cities. As urban populations expand and housing pressures intensify, questions about the best use of large, centrally located, government-owned sites have become increasingly relevant to planners and communities.

While no decision about the future of Victoria Barracks has been made, these guiding principles establish a framework to inform future planning.

Our approach reflects several key considerations:

- Recognising Victoria Barracks as a unique opportunity – rarely do sites of this scale, heritage significance and strategic location become available for community benefit.
- Understanding meaningful community conversations take time, and waiting until a decision is announced would limit opportunities to talk to residents, visitors and businesses.
- Establishing clear principles now provides certainty about community expectations and priorities.

The timing of this project also aligns with broader urban planning goals across Sydney, including housing supply and affordability, increasing density, tackling climate change and the need for more community facilities and green space. A site of this scale could make meaningful contributions to addressing these challenges.

There are precedents nationally and internationally for the successful transformation of military sites into community precincts. Properties such as Middle Head-Gubbuh Gubbuh in Mosman demonstrate how government-owned heritage sites can be successfully adapted for public benefit while preserving their historical significance.

Any future transformation of Victoria Barracks must address fundamental goals: conserving the site's heritage values, maximising public accessibility, addressing community needs and ensuring long-term sustainability.

These considerations ensure that should the barracks be decommissioned, the community's vision and priorities are already clearly articulated, leading to better results for all partners.



Figure 5
Soldier looking down Busby's Bore access point at Victoria Barracks. Source: City of Sydney Archives

Site context and history

Historical context

Victoria Barracks is one of Australia's most significant military heritage sites, containing many buildings of architectural interest and representing nearly 2 centuries of continuous military use. Construction of the barracks began in 1841 under the supervision of Lieutenant Colonel George Barney of the Royal Engineers.⁵

A decision to build the barracks came from practical necessity. The original military barracks on George Street in the city centre had become increasingly challenged by the 1830s due to deteriorating buildings and their prime location limiting Sydney's commercial growth as the colony and city developed⁶. Paddington was proposed for the new site as it was remote from the town centre offered proximity to good drinking water in Busby's Bore and high ground provided tactical suitability for defence.⁷

The sandstone for the buildings was quarried directly onsite and from nearby areas. Mortar was made from burnt seashells gathered at Rushcutters Bay.⁸ The barracks were constructed by convicts from Norfolk Island penal settlement,⁹ supplemented by around 50 stonemasons and builders, and 5 carpenters.¹⁰

By 1848, the barracks were completed and officially welcomed its first full garrison, when the 11th (North Devonshire) Regiment arrived from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).¹¹

The British military presence continued until 1870, when the 18th Royal Irish Regiment became the last troops from Britain to occupy the barracks.¹² Following the withdrawal of Imperial forces, the barracks transitioned to housing colonial forces, beginning with the 1st Battery of the NSW Artillery.¹³ New buildings were added during the late 19th and early 20th centuries to support specialised units, including Mounted Infantry, the Commissariat and Transport Corps, and the Medical Staff Corps.¹⁴



Figure 6
(top) Victoria Barracks, 1871. Source: Mitchell Library. (middle) Departure of the NSW contingent for the Soudan war, 1885. Source: City of Sydney Archives. (bottom) Military Parade at Victoria Barracks. Source: Powerhouse Museum Collection.



Physical context

Victoria Barracks occupies around 15 hectares bounded by Oxford Street to the north, Greens Road to the west, Moore Park Road to the south and Oatley Road to the east. The site's elevated position on a ridgeline provides expansive views, originally selected for defensive purposes but now offering remarkable vistas across Sydney's eastern suburbs to Botany Bay and north towards the harbour.

The precinct's most significant structure is the Soldier's Quarters building, stretching 225m in length and considered to be the longest sandstone building in the southern hemisphere.¹⁵ This structure originally accommodated 700 British soldiers in rooms where 15 men or 2 families would share quarters.¹⁶ Today, these spaces have been adapted for modern military administrative use while maintaining their historic fabric.

The Officers' Quarters, completed in 1842 as the first building onsite, presents a 2-storey Georgian facade along the eastern edge of the parade ground. This building originally contained the officers' mess on the ground floor, with single officers' quarters at the northern end and family residences at the southern end.¹⁷



Other significant structures include the Guard House (1846) at the Oxford Street entrance, which maintains its original function, the Garrison Hospital (1845), now serving as the officers' mess and the Barrack Master's Quarters, known as The Bungalow (1847), which continues to house senior military personnel.¹⁸ The perimeter wall, constructed of convict-quarried sandstone with defensive loopholes at regular intervals, surrounds the entire site and remains largely intact.

The barracks' grounds feature significant landscaping dating from various periods, including mature Moreton Bay fig trees from the mid-19th century in the Barrack Master's garden, Norfolk Island pines¹⁹ along the main avenue and the central parade ground which has served multiple purposes from military drilling to cricket matches and, occasionally as a training ground for the Wallabies rugby team.

Figure 7
(left) Victoria Barracks, 1871. Source: State Library of NSW (right) Group of Army nurses at Victoria Barracks, c1914. Source: Australian War Memorial

Heritage significance

Victoria Barracks holds exceptional heritage significance at local, state and national levels. The site is listed on the Commonwealth heritage list, and is locally heritage listed, recognising multiple layers of cultural, architectural, historical and social importance.

Architecturally, the precinct contains one of the best groups of colonial sandstone buildings in NSW and represents a rare example of colonial buildings in the Greek Revival style.²⁰

Historically, Victoria Barracks is the most important physical evidence of the state's military history throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is the only surviving substantial military barracks complex built in Australia in the early Victorian period and, along with Anglesea Barracks in Hobart and Lancer Barracks in Parramatta, represents one of the few surviving sites evidencing the British military presence in Australia during the colonial period.²¹

Considerable archaeological potential of the site offers valuable opportunities for future investigation of past construction methods and ways of life.²²

The barracks' social significance extends beyond its military associations. For the Paddington community, the perimeter walls have long defined the neighbourhood's southern boundary, while the site's continuous occupation has made it a constant in Sydney's evolving urban landscape. The precinct provides a strong link between the high-density development of 19th century Paddington and the open space of Moore Park, serving as a barrier between different urban characters.²³



Figure 8
Oblique aerial view of Victoria Barracks, 1970. Source: National Archives.



Figure 9
Japanese Naval Officer playing Tennis at Victoria Barracks, 1924. Source: Australian National Maritime Museum

Talking to our communities

In August to September 2025, we asked local communities about their ideas for the future of Victoria Barracks. Capturing the community's vision and priorities early enables their voices be included in any future planning.

Residents, workers and visitors were asked to imagine Victoria Barracks as a publicly accessible precinct and share their ideas about potential future uses. Through an interactive online mapping tool, surveys and written submissions, we received rich insights into how this significant site could serve Sydney's diverse population while respecting its extraordinary heritage character.

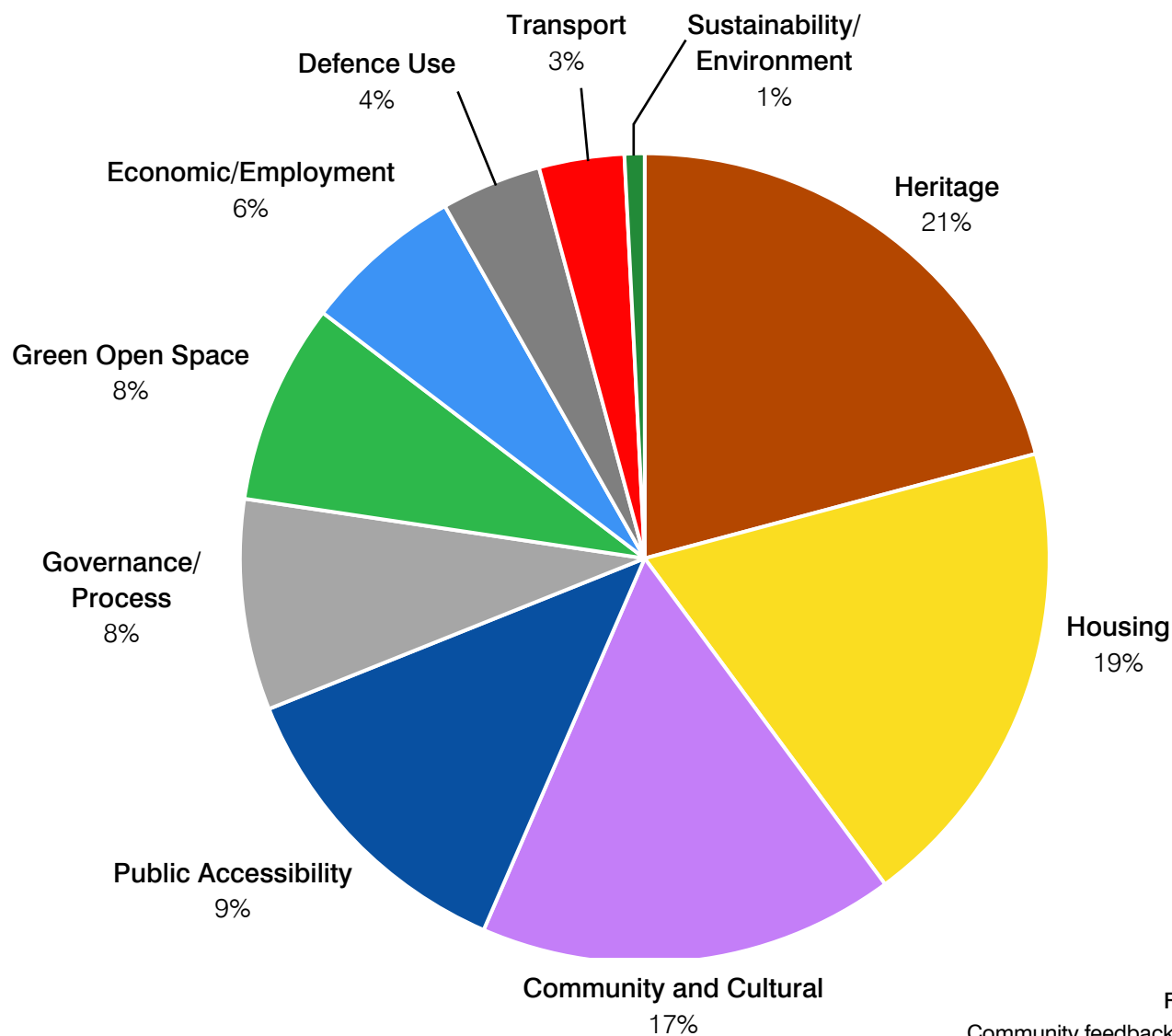


Figure 10
Community feedback themes.
Source: City of Sydney.

Key themes from community feedback

Heritage

Overwhelming consensus showed that heritage conservation must be the foundation of any future use of the site. Responses emphasised that Victoria Barracks represents irreplaceable colonial and military history that must be protected. Many expressed strong opposition to any development that would compromise the site's heritage character, with particular concern about high-rise buildings that would "spoil the visual appeal" and "destroy the heritage significance of the Paddington area."

Public accessibility/green open space

Public accessibility and green open space emerged as a priority. Submissions strongly advocated for opening the site for public access and retaining and enhancing all existing green spaces, with many suggesting the parade ground should become public parkland. Ideas ranged from community gardens and urban farms to recreation areas, outdoor performance spaces and weekly markets.

Housing

Housing generated the most diverse responses. While some participants recognised the housing challenges and supported low-cost/affordable high-density housing, others strongly opposed any residential development, arguing it would "destroy one of Sydney's most important colonial-era landmarks". Those supporting housing emphasised it must include affordable options for key workers and others.

Culture and Community

Cultural and community uses featured prominently, with strong support for museums, galleries, performance spaces and artist studios. Many envisioned an arts precinct that could "cater to professional artists who are already established", others suggested educational facilities or expansion of the existing Army Museum. The proximity to the University of NSW and University of Technology, Sydney sparked suggestions for tertiary facilities or a new public high school.

"Victoria Barracks is a unique and sensitive site that should be preserved for several key reasons... Its military architecture and grounds tell a vital story about Sydney's history and the Australian Defence Force...The barracks contribute to the distinctive character and open green spaces of the neighbourhood..."

"If the site is no longer needed for the ADF, it poses a fantastic opportunity for high quality, high amenity living and community uses in the heart of Sydney. There is great opportunity to increase housing supply, including the provision of at least 30% affordable housing, to support the affordability of inner-city living and housing."

"This site would be ideal for local outdoor events, particularly a regular farmer's market, outdoor concerts (e.g.. classical, opera, jazz), night markets, etc. It is so rare to have open space, that has historical interest, is easily accessible, has parking, and isn't over developed already."

Diverse perspectives on ownership and use

Different stakeholder groups expressed distinct priorities. Local residents were particularly concerned about infrastructure capacity if the site was to be developed. Traffic congestion, parking limitations and the lack of supermarkets and essential services were cited as existing problems that would worsen with intensive development.

Other comments argued the site should remain in public ownership or be transferred to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust rather than be sold to private interests.

Other feedback expressed a view that the site should not be divested and must remain in use by the Australian Defence Force. The final decision rests with the Australian Defence Force.

Community vision

A collective vision emerged of Victoria Barracks as an activated, publicly accessible precinct that honours its military heritage, actively preserves and interprets its history, accommodates diverse activities, and balances Sydney’s housing needs with protecting its significant values.



Figure 11: Photo of pop-up markets at Sydney Park. Source: City of Sydney



Figure 12
Kids playing at Matron Grant Ruby Park, Zetland. Source: City of Sydney

Guiding Principles

Informed by the community's input and supported by our strategic directions, these guiding principles are intended to provide a framework for decision-making that balances conservation with adaptation, ensuring the site remains a valued place for future generations.

Any redevelopment should be approached with careful consideration of the site's historical significance, community needs and the potential to create an activated, mixed-use precinct that contributes positively to Sydney's urban fabric.

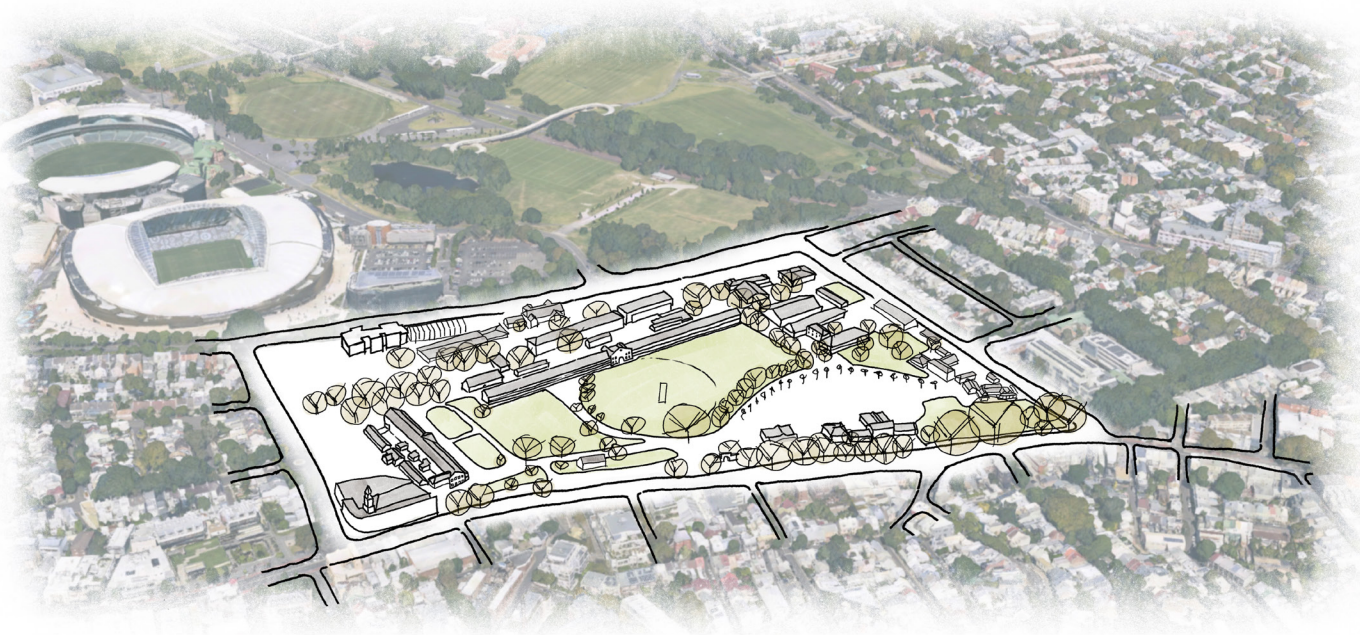


Figure 13
Sketch of Victoria Barracks. Source: City of Sydney

- 1

Conserve and enhance heritage and military significance
- 2

Maximise public accessibility
- 3

Enhance and expand green open space
- 4

Prioritise cultural and community uses
- 5

Incorporate diverse housing
- 6

Encourage compatible and viable commercial uses
- 7

Encourage resilience and environmental sustainability
- 8

Planning, implementation and management

Principle 1: Conserve and enhance heritage and military significance

Victoria Barracks represents a unique link to Sydney's colonial past and Australia's military heritage. Plans for the site must ensure its history remains clear, accessible and conserved for future generations. The Barracks' heritage should guide adaptation and new uses, creating places that honour the past while serving contemporary community life.

Goals

- Maintain and conserve heritage-listed structures including the perimeter wall, recognising their status as surviving examples of military architecture in Australia.
- Respect the original architectural integrity of heritage buildings including the Officers' Quarters, Soldiers Barracks, Guard House, Garrison Hospital/Officers Mess and Barracks Master's Quarters.
- Protect archaeology within the site, prioritising comprehensive investigation and recording to uncover undocumented historical evidence as part of any redevelopment.
- Develop a comprehensive conservation management plan to guide all future development decisions, identifying elements of high, moderate and low tolerance for change.
- Incorporate interpretive displays and educational elements that communicate the site's First Nations history and military history from British occupation through to its role for Australia's military and significance in Sydney's colonial development.



Figure 14: (left) Soldiers Quarters. Source: Department of the Environment. (right) Public park in Zetland. Source: City of Sydney

Principle 2: Maximise public accessibility



Figure 15: Photo of community festival at Green Square. Source: City of Sydney

The transformation of Victoria Barracks from a restricted military compound to an accessible public part of the local area represents a fundamental shift in its relationship with Sydney. This principle ensures the site becomes genuinely welcoming and inclusive, removing barriers while respecting heritage constraints and creating a place that belongs to all.

Goals

- Encourage universal public access across the site, including green spaces and community/cultural facilities, removing barriers while respecting heritage constraints.
- Prioritise and improve walking connections through the site.
- Explore new openings for walking access to the site which are legible, respect heritage constraints and successfully integrate with the existing street network of Oxford Street, and Moore Park, Oatley and Greens roads.
- Reduce vehicle movements into the site by limiting private vehicle access to the land south and east of the Barracks building and encourage private vehicle access from Moore Park Road.

Principle 3: Enhance and expand green open space

The parade ground and surrounding landscapes should be retained and enhanced as vibrant public parkland where people can gather, play, rest and enjoy the heritage setting. This principle recognises the critical importance of green space in dense urban environments and the opportunity to reconnect the site to Moore Park and Sydney's wider green network.

Goals

- Retain the central landscaped open space and conserve the site's historical layout (including key visual connections/sightlines within the precinct) while providing flexible community orientated uses.
- Dedicate existing and new portions of the site to accessible and flexible public open space uses, drawing on its historical uses as a parade ground
- Ensure the green space connects the site to its surroundings, serving as a link between the high-density suburban development of Paddington and the open space of Moore Park.

Figure 16: Cricket at Victoria Barracks, 1981. Source: National Archives



Principle 4: Prioritise cultural and community uses

Cultural vibrancy defines Sydney as a global city and Victoria Barracks provides an extraordinary opportunity to expand cultural and community infrastructure locally. Redevelopment should contribute to Sydney's cultural life through spaces and programs that connect residents and visitors to our shared heritage and contemporary creativity.

Goals

Public facilities and services

- Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings for cultural and community orientated purposes, exploring opportunities for spaces that serve communities, such as creative production spaces, museums, art galleries, educational centres or public event spaces.
- Consider temporary cultural and creative events and installations that enliven the site's publicly accessible spaces throughout the year, including those reflective of the site's military history.

- Ensure any space allocated for community facilities address identified local needs at the time of development.
- Complement and enhance the programs and activities of Paddington Town Hall and investigate providing vehicle service access to the rear of the building.
- Maintain the existing Army Museum of NSW as a cultural anchor that preserves the site's military heritage while providing educational opportunities.

Accessibility and inclusion

- Incorporate First Nations perspectives and recognition of the land's significance to Aboriginal peoples prior to and post colonial settlement.
- Design and program spaces that welcome diverse community groups and promote intergenerational interaction.

Figure 17: (left) Photo of outdoor cinema. (right) Puppet show at Paddington Reservoir. Source: City of Sydney



Principle 5: Incorporate diverse housing



Figure 18: Zetland Housing. Source: City of Sydney

Victoria Barracks offers a unique opportunity to address Sydney's housing challenges through thoughtfully designed residential development that respects heritage character.

Goals

Integration and design

- Incorporate a mix of housing types to meet diverse housing demands, including respecting the site's history through sensitive design and siting of new buildings and/or adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Ensure that any housing development maintains existing key sightlines and meets design excellence guidelines.

Affordable housing

- Encourage a socially diverse community by providing a significant proportion of affordable housing owned and operated permanently by registered community housing provider(s).
- Prioritise affordable housing for key workers and others.
- Explore diverse housing typologies that accommodate different household sizes and life stages.

Principle 6: Encourage compatible and viable commercial uses



Figure 19: Tramsheds alfresco dining. Source: Tramsheds

Suitable commercial uses can ensure the precinct remains active throughout the day and evening while generating revenue to support heritage conservation and public facilities.

Goals

Economic viability

- Prioritise commercial uses that complement the site's heritage character and community functions.
- Develop a sustainable economic model without compromising heritage values.
- Consider a mix of long-term leases and shorter-term activations to provide economic resilience and adaptability.

Compatible commercial activities

- Encourage creative industries, innovation hubs and educational institutions that can adaptively reuse heritage buildings while contributing to the local economy.
- Support small-scale retail, food and beverage outlets that serve site visitors and the broader community.
- Explore opportunities for heritage tourism that uphold the site's historical significance and generates revenue for ongoing conservation.
- Consider allocating spaces for cultural production and presentation, including galleries, studios, performance venues and creative workspaces.

Principle 7: Encourage environmental sustainability

The transformation of Victoria Barracks lends itself to enhancing ecological values and creating a resilient precinct that effectively responds to and recovers from social, economic and environmental challenges. Built and landscape interventions should reduce carbon emissions, manage stormwater, mitigate heat and support biodiversity. The interventions should integrate heritage stewardship with climate-responsive design.

Goals

Resilience

- Embed resilience principles in spaces, buildings and infrastructure (and their ongoing management) to withstand social, economic and environmental shocks and stresses, and build community resilience.

Biodiversity

- Retain and protect significant plantings made during the site’s use as a military barracks. Protect original plantings at the Barrack

Master’s garden and significant plantings at the Garrison Hospital/Officers Mess gardens.

- Where appropriate, increase urban tree canopy and biodiversity through new plantings and garden features that enhance ecological value while honouring the site’s history.

Environmental sustainability

- Incorporate water-sensitive urban design principles, including stormwater harvesting and reuse systems, acknowledging the site’s historical connection to water infrastructure.

Figure 20: Trees at Moore Park. Source: City of Sydney



Principle 8: Robust planning, implementation and management



Figure 21: Community discussing an exhibited master plan. Source: City of Sydney

Successful transformation of Victoria Barracks requires transparent, shared governance and careful action. It should maintain a focus on heritage values and public benefit over time. The site’s evolution needs to be guided by clear decision-making processes, appropriate expertise and genuine community involvement.

Goals

Planning and development

- Establish transparent and participatory planning processes that involve the community, given historical public interest and debate regarding the site’s use and reuse.

Governance and management

- Set up an advisory forum that includes representation from heritage experts, community members and relevant government agencies.

- Develop a phased approach that allows, where possible, for adaptive management and responds to changing community needs over time.
- Create transparent decision-making processes that include the community.

Financial sustainability

- Balance commercial returns with public benefit to ensure long-term financial sustainability without compromising heritage values.
- Explore innovative funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, to support heritage conservation and public facilities.
- Develop a long-term maintenance and conservation fund to ensure care of heritage assets.

References

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Figure 22
Puppet show at Paddington Reservoir. Source: City of Sydney



Attachment B

Victoria Barracks Engagement Outcomes Report
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Engagement report – Victoria Barracks vision



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Overview

Background

In 2023 the Federal Government undertook an audit of Australian Defence Force (ADF) land, including Victoria Barracks in Paddington, assessing whether Defence's high-density urban sites still meet military needs. The recommendations of the audit have not been made public.

Victoria Barracks is a 15 hectare site located on Oxford Street near Moore Park, in a densely populated area of Paddington and currently has limited public access.

If the site is no longer required for Defence purposes, it could offer new opportunities to meet local housing demand and provide much-needed public amenities including improved access to green space, cultural activities and deliver broader benefits for the City of Sydney's diverse community.

Notice of Motion moved by Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Maxwell on 25 November 2024 was carried unanimously, and it resolved that:

- *City of Sydney staff to establish a set of guiding principles for the potential use of the Victoria Barracks site should the land be up for divestment. These principles will provide the Council with a framework should divestment come up in future;*
- *recommend that these principles should consider the high heritage value of the site and should also be open to meeting the needs of the community. This should include prioritising considerations of public greenspace, cultural uses and affordable housing, as well as ensuring there is meaningful community engagement in decision making processes; and*
- *prepare initial guidelines for community consultation on potential land use of the site for maximum public benefit. These and the guiding principles could be used in future for a study or masterplan commissioned by the City of Sydney staff in relation to the use of the Victoria Barracks site.*

The City wants community voices to be part of the future decision-making process for the site if the land becomes available in the future.

We consulted the community throughout August and September 2025 to understand the community's vision and priorities for the site, should it become available to the public in the future. Community feedback will help develop guiding principles that could be used in future for a masterplan of the Victoria Barracks site.

This report outlines the community engagement activities that took place and summarises the key findings from the consultation.

Engagement summary

From 8 August to 19 September 2025, we invited the community to imagine Victoria Barracks as a publicly accessible precinct and tell us what they'd like to see and do there if the land is no longer required for military purposes.

Engagement activities included a Sydney Your Say project page with the opportunity to provide feedback via an interactive map and/or survey. An email was sent to 1,257 stakeholders inviting them to participate in the engagement. The consultation was also promoted through the Sydney Your Say e-newsletter, Sydney City News and community centre newsletters. Woollahra Council also promoted the consultation on their website and e-newsletters.

Purpose of engagement

- To explain that although no decision has been made by the Department of Defence to divest Victoria Barracks, the City would like to hear from the community how the site could be used if it was to become available for public use in the future.
- To involve the community in developing guiding principles to inform the future use of Victoria Barracks for maximum community benefit, should it be divested.
- To explain what divestment means and what the process involves.

Engagement outcomes

We received **1,092 pieces of feedback** during the consultation period, including 102 comments posted on an online interactive map. People were able to upvote or downvote on community comments – there were a total of 876 votes posted alongside these comments. In addition to the online map, we received 30 surveys and 86 email submissions.

The Sydney You Say consultation page was viewed 3,200 times.

Figure 1: Snapshot of submissions

Quantity	Description of activity
102	Online map comments
876	Votes on map comments
30	Survey submissions
84	Email submissions
1,092	Total

Key findings

Overall summary

Feedback overwhelmingly emphasises the immense **heritage value** and significance of the Victoria Barracks site in Sydney. Respondents strongly urge that the historic buildings, sandstone architecture, and overall precinct be preserved as the foundation of any future use of the site. Many expressed opposition to any intensive new development that would compromise its heritage character and military history dating back to the 19th century. There is a clear consensus that this iconic site should be protected and maintained as a symbol of Australia's cultural and military legacy for future generations.

The feedback highlights a strong desire to preserve and **enhance the open green spaces and community areas** within the Victoria Barracks site. Respondents emphasise the importance of retaining the existing gardens, landscapes, and historic structures as public open spaces for the community to enjoy. Some feedback suggested transforming the site into an accessible public park, arts precinct, and cultural hub that can host events, exhibitions, and educational programs for the benefit of the local residents and visitors.

There are a range of perspectives on the **potential redevelopment** of the site. While some respondents support the inclusion of **housing**, particularly affordable and mixed-use options, emphasising Sydney's housing crisis. Suggestions of low-rise apartment blocks which integrate well with the surrounding neighbourhood were contrasted with opposition to residential development, citing concerns about heritage preservation, environmental impacts, and the need to maintain the site's open and green spaces. There is a clear desire to ensure that any future plans for the site prioritise public benefit, community access, and the integration of cultural and commercial uses in a sensitive and low-scale manner that respects the site's historical significance.

The feedback highlights the **historical and architectural significance** of Victoria Barracks as an important military base in Australia, dating back to the colonial era. The feedback argues the need to preserve its heritage and connection to the Australian Army, including the cadet unit currently based there.

The feedback highlights several key concerns regarding the proposed development of the site – including the potential negative impact on the local community, the heritage and character of the Paddington area, and the need for thoughtful planning to ensure the site is transformed into a valuable community asset rather than a commercial development.

Overall, the feedback suggests **a vision for Victoria Barracks** as a vibrant, publicly accessible precinct that celebrates its military heritage while serving contemporary community needs. The community wants a place that is publicly accessible, where heritage is actively conserved and interpreted, where diverse activities coexist, and where Sydney's housing needs are balanced with protecting the place's heritage significance.

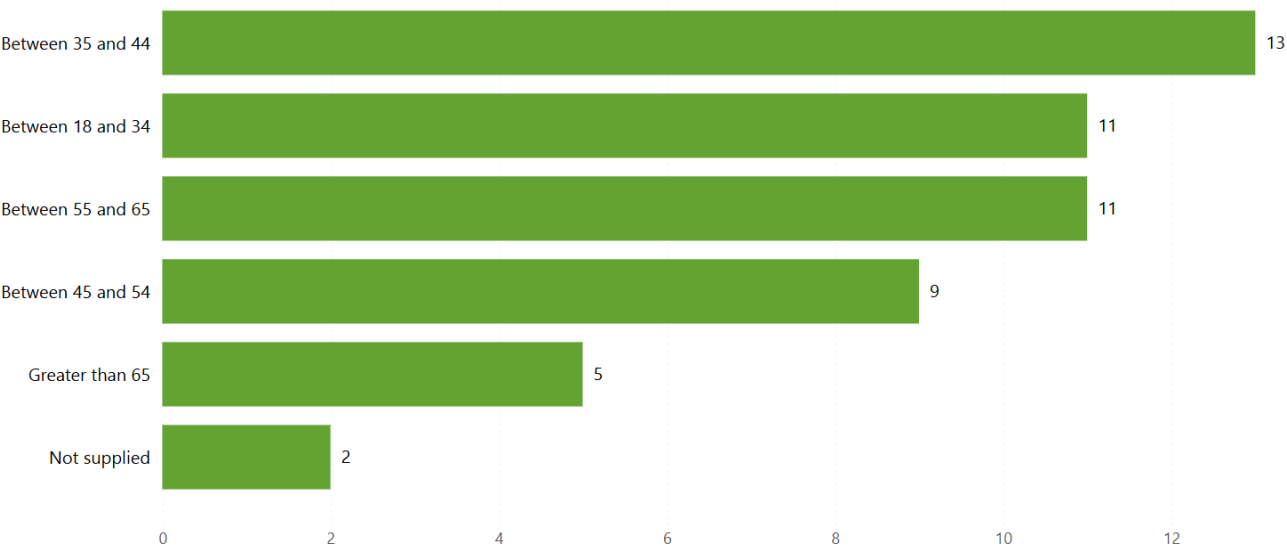
Demographics

Demographic data was collected through the online map and survey submissions (by those who chose to provide it). People who live in the local area were the largest group of people to comment on the online map and/or complete the survey. People aged 35-44 years were the largest group to comment on the map, while those aged between 45 and 54 years were the largest group to complete surveys. Refer to the below graphs for further details.

Online map demographics

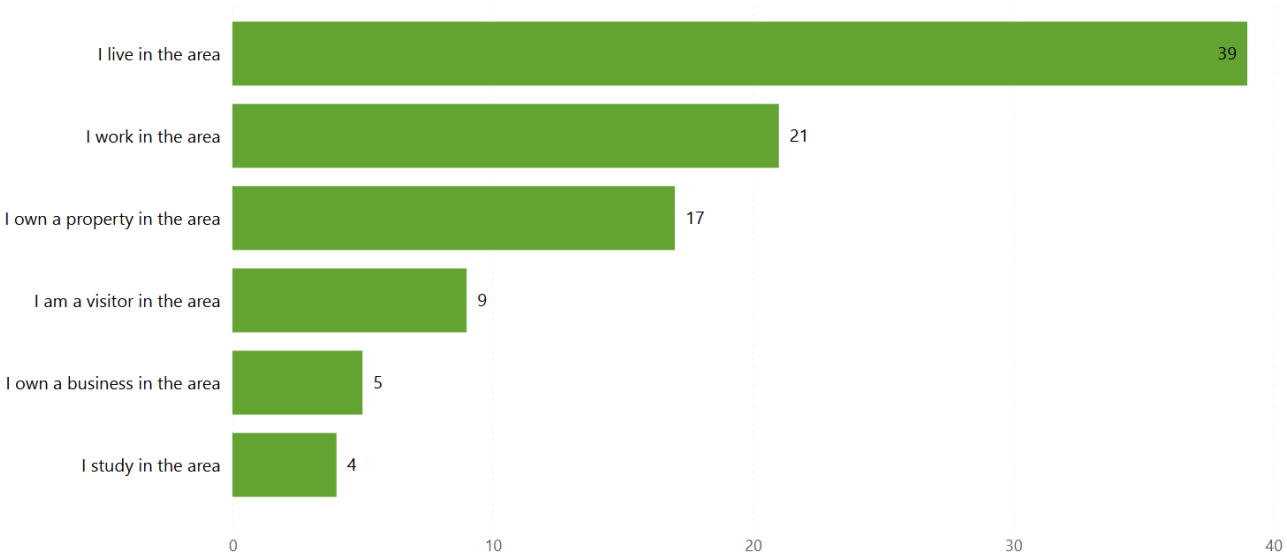
Age group – online map comments

The breakdown of people by age who commented on the online map is outlined in the below graph. People aged between 35 and 44 years were the largest group to comment, followed by those aged between 18 and 34 years, and those aged between 55 and 65 years.



Relationship to the local area – online map comments

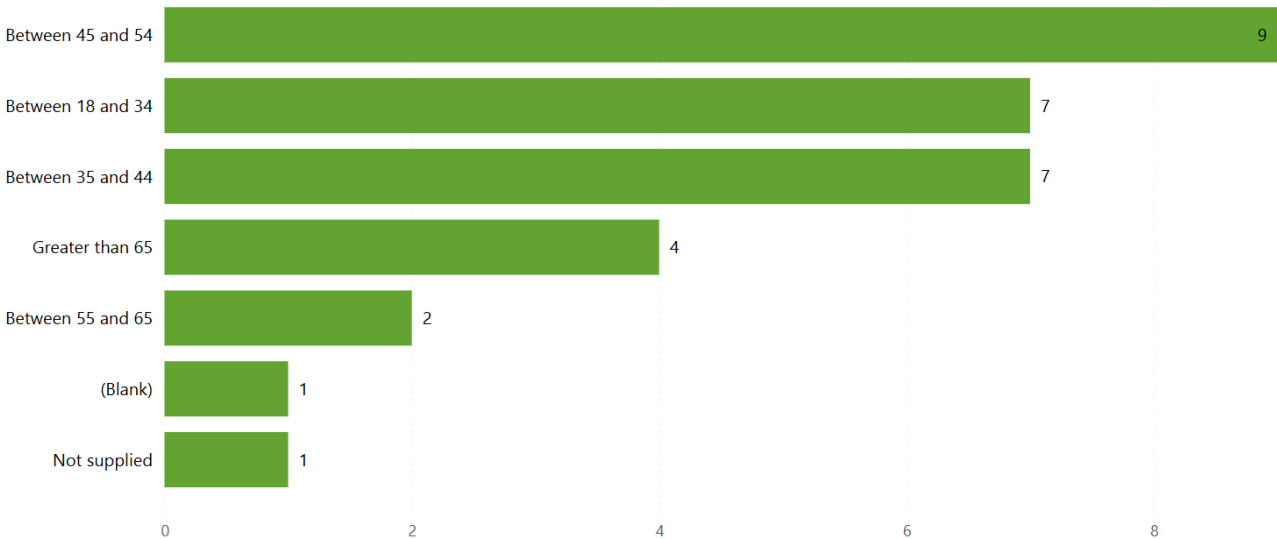
People who live in the area were the largest group of people to make a comment on the online map. This was followed by those who work in the area and then those who own a property in the area. The below graph outlines the relationship respondents have with the local area.



Survey demographics

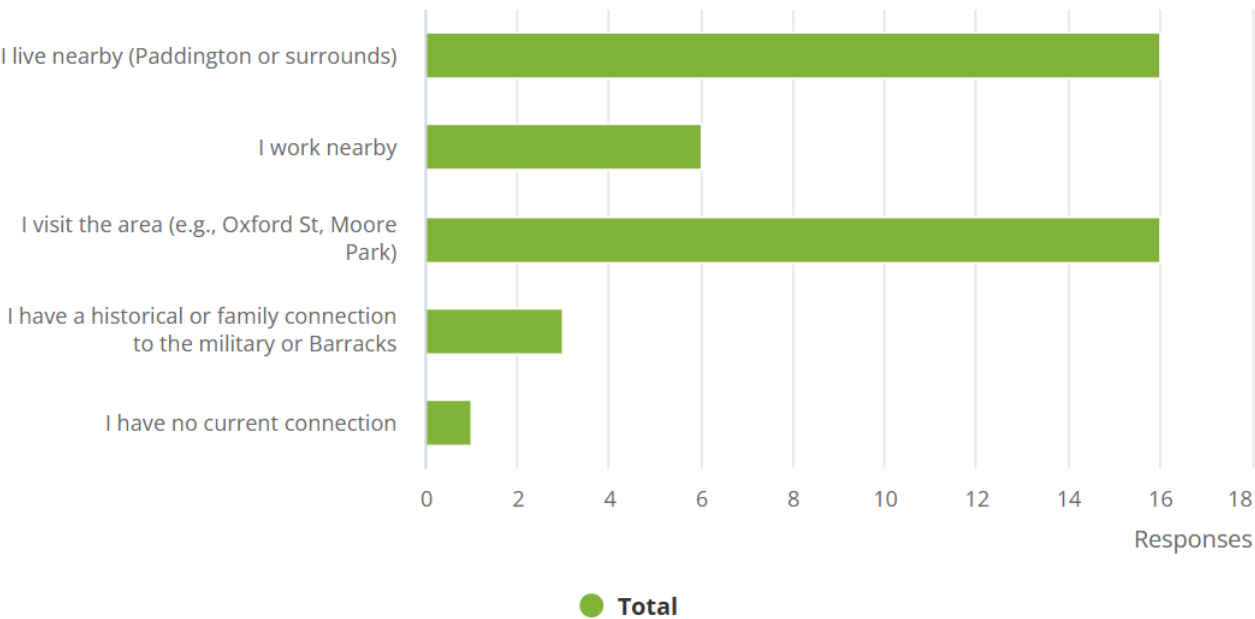
Age group – survey respondents

The breakdown of people by age who completed the survey is outlined in the below graph. Those between 45 and 54 years were the largest group to complete surveys, followed by those aged between 18 and 34 years, and those aged between 35 and 44 years.



Relationship to Victoria Barracks – survey respondents

The majority of people who responded to the survey were local residents (16 responses) and/or visitors to the area (16 responses).



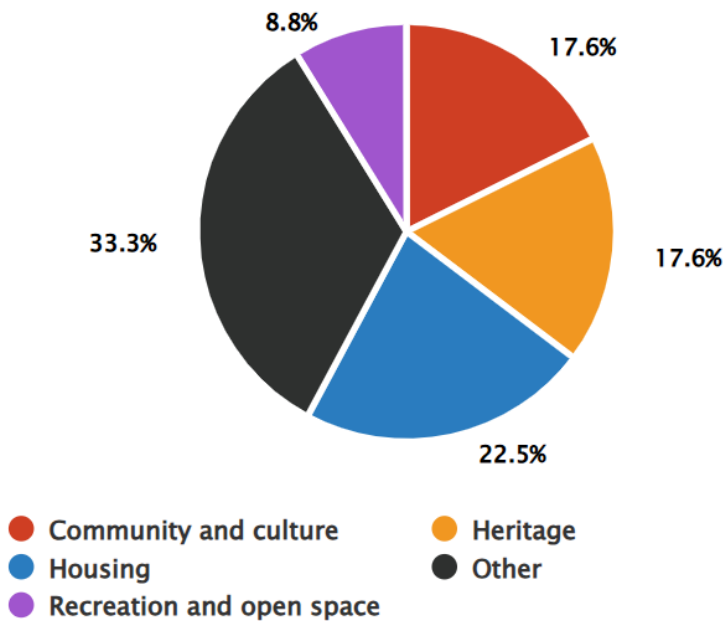
Online map

102 comments were posted on the online map, of which 22.5% were about ‘housing’, 17.6% were about ‘heritage’, 17.6% about ‘community & culture’, and 8.8% about ‘recreation and open space’. A further 33.3% were about other topics – including maximising permeability of the site, ensuring adequate infrastructure, use as an educational facility, need for health care clinics, recommendations for future governance or ownership, recognising Sydney’s Busby Bore which flowed directly under Victoria Barracks, and that Victoria Barracks is a critical Defence site.

Figure 2: Online map screenshot



Figure 3: Online map comments by theme



People could vote on comments if they agreed or disagreed by up-voting or down-voting. 876 votes were posted to online map comments, including 507 up votes and 369 down votes. The comments that drew the most overall support are listed in the below table.

Table 1: Most popular online comments

Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
"I strongly urge that the area be preserved without adding new buildings or dense development. Instead, the space should be opened to the public and transformed into a community asset—such as a museum, park, or café precinct. This would provide recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities while protecting the site's heritage and green space."	25	5
"There should be no new development."	24	6
"Victoria Barracks is one of the most beautiful and elegant Georgian-early Victorian structures in Australia, even though its function was strictly functional as a military barracks. In accordance with its function and contemporary technology, the structures are low-rise in terms of height. We are concerned that any new buildings will be higher in a way that spoils the present silhouette, particularly from a north to south perspective. The silhouette of the Main Barracks should remain uncluttered."	23	6
"Converting Victoria Barracks into social housing risks destroying one of Sydney's most important colonial-era landmarks. Beyond its rare 19th-century military architecture, the site played a key role during World War II as a strategic command centre and continues to do so into the modern day. Addressing housing needs should not come at the sacrifice of such a vital piece of our national heritage or our military capabilities."	21	6

Online survey

30 surveys were completed. Respondents answered six questions, responses to these questions are outlined in the below graphs. People aged between 45 and 54 years were the largest group to complete surveys, followed by those aged between 18 and 34 years, and those aged between 35 and 44 years.

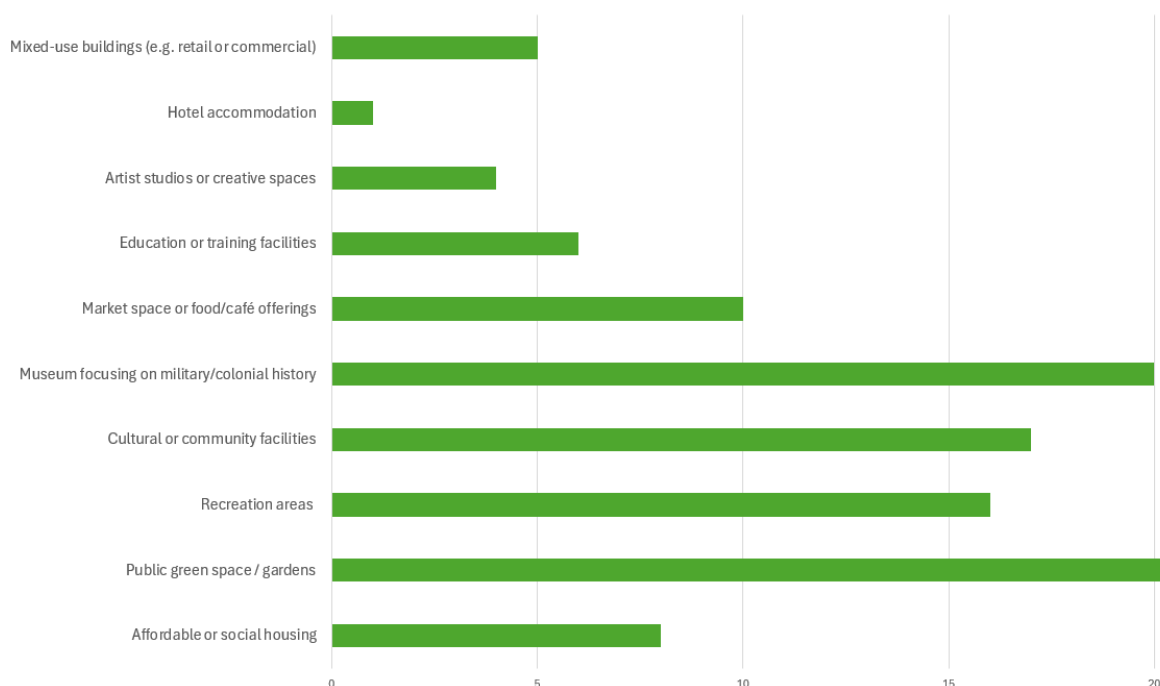
The below graph shows the relationship survey respondents have with Victoria Barracks. Respondents could select multiple options that were relevant to them.

Q.2 If the site is opened to the public or repurposed, what types of uses would you like to see? (Select up to 5)

Public green space / gardens was rated the most popular use for the site should it be opened to the public (22 responses). A museum or interpretive centre focusing on military/colonial history was the second most popular use (20 responses), followed by cultural or community facilities eg.

gallery, theatre, community centre (17 responses). Recreational areas eg. walking paths, playgrounds, sports courts was the fourth most popular use (16 responses).

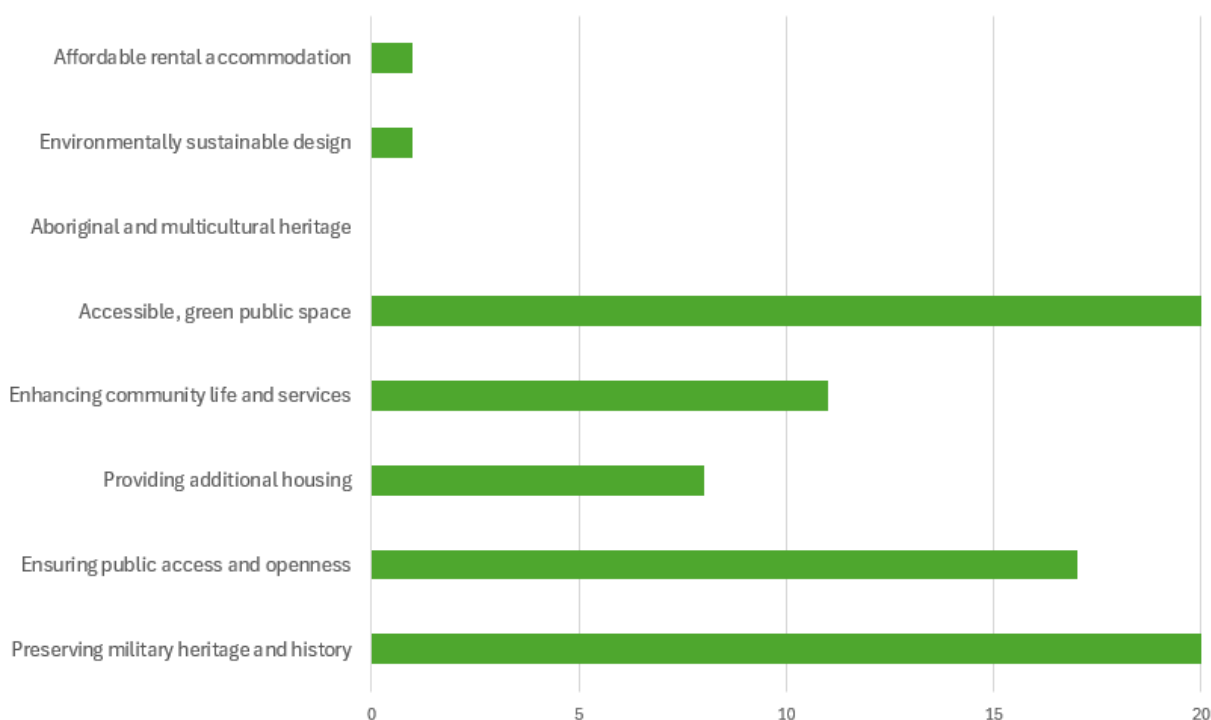
Responses to this question are shown in the below graph.



Q.3 What is most important to you in any future development of Victoria Barracks? (Select up to 3)

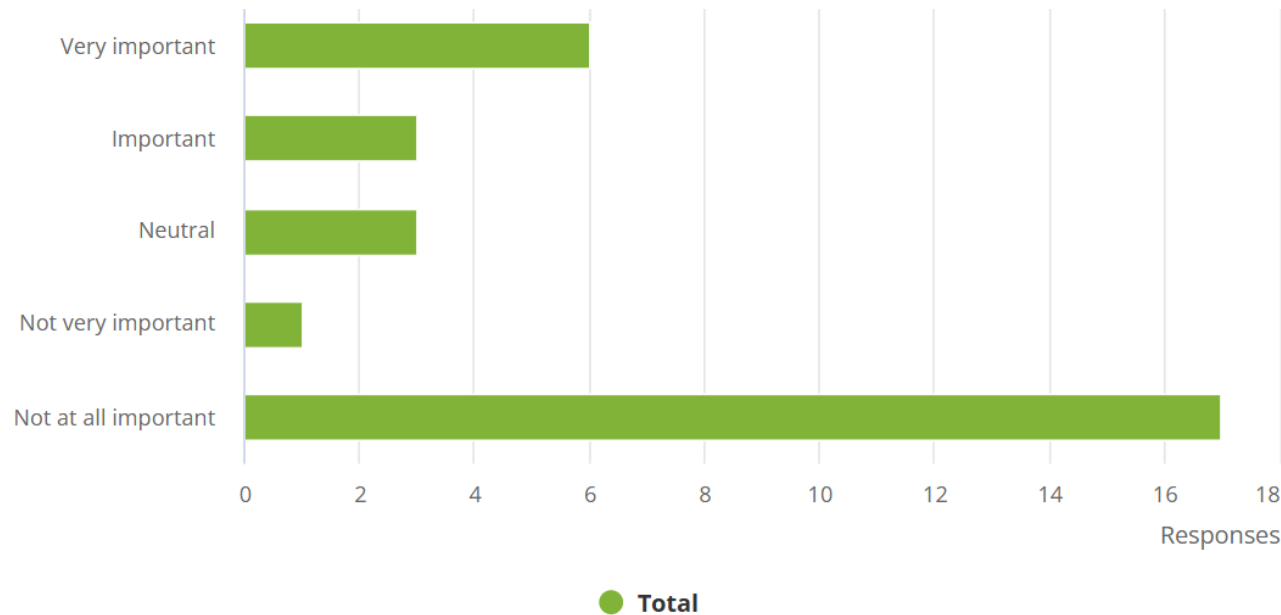
Preserving military heritage and history and providing accessible, green public space were rated equally as most important to the future development of the site (20 responses). Ensuring public access and openness was rated second most important (17 responses), followed by enhancing community life and services (11 responses). Providing additional housing (including creating affordable housing) was rated the fourth most important option (8 responses).

Responses to this question are shown in the below graph.



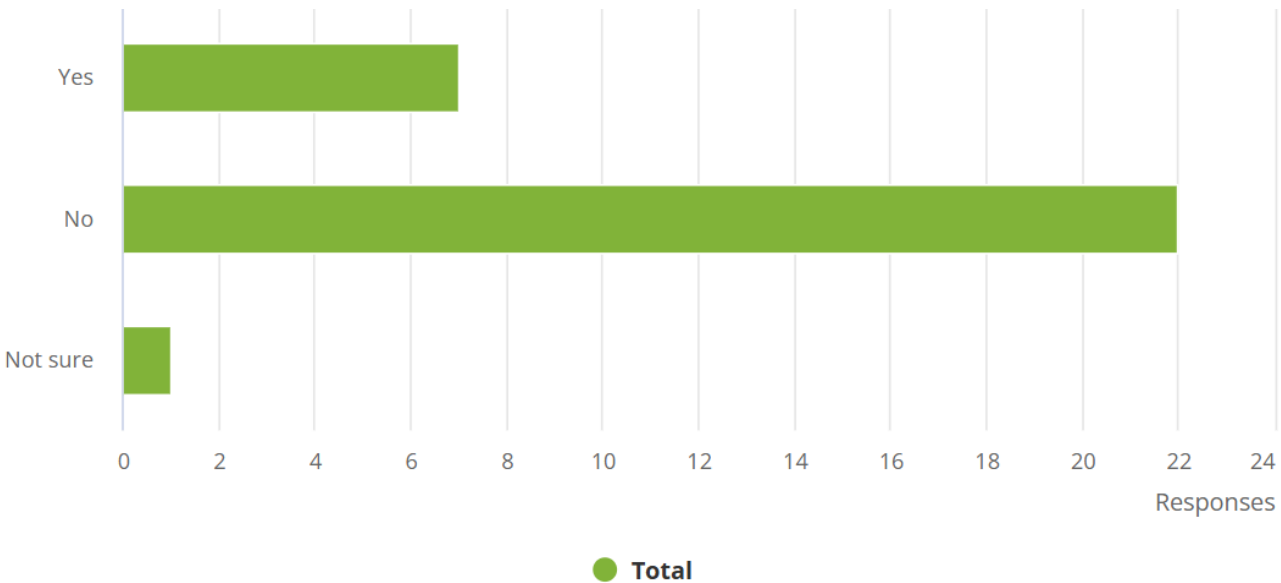
Q.4 How important is providing affordable housing as part of any redevelopment of the site?

People who responded to the survey tended to not rate providing affordable housing as important for the site, with 18 responses rating it ‘not at all important’ or ‘not very important’, compared with 9 responses rating providing affordable housing as ‘very important’ or ‘important’ for the site.



Q.5 Would you support a mix of housing types on the site (for example, market housing, affordable housing, rental, key worker housing, seniors housing)?

People who responded to the survey tended to not support a mix of housing types on the site – with 22 responses choosing ‘no’ to this question, compared with 7 responses choosing ‘yes’ to supporting a mix of housing types on the site.



Q.6 Is there anything else you’d like to say about the future of the Victoria Barracks precinct?

People who answered this survey question emphasised the need to preserve the heritage and historical significance of the Victoria Barracks site. Respondents highlighted the site's status as a heritage-listed area with immense cultural and historical value and urged that it should be used as a public heritage and community space if developed.

Comments on housing were mixed, with some respondents advocating for diverse housing types including public and affordable housing as a means to address Sydney's housing crisis. Several submissions proposed that housing could be sensitively integrated through adaptive reuse of existing buildings or low to mid-rise development that respects the site's heritage values, while others suggested local government ownership of any market-rate housing to support ongoing site maintenance.

Comments indicated a clear consensus that the unique Georgian sandstone heritage and the precinct as a whole should be protected, and that any development should respect and enhance the site's legacy rather than compromise it.

There is a preference for a diversified site with a mix of uses, rather than a residential-only development – which is seen as potentially damaging to the surrounding Paddington area.

Respondents also highlighted the importance of maintaining the open green spaces, sports and recreation areas, and to transform the site into a community asset such as a museum, park, or café precinct. There is a strong desire to make the site accessible to the public and avoid developing it solely for housing, in order to preserve the distinctive character and open spaces.

“Victoria Barracks is a heritage-listed site of historical and cultural importance. Its military architecture and grounds tell a vital story about Sydney's history and the Australian Defence Force. Developing the site for housing risks damaging this heritage and diminishing its cultural value.”
Community comment

“While we do need more housing, I think we need to preserve this lot and turn it into something community can use and encourage more businesses and visitors ie cafes, markets, gallery, museum, art space etc...” Community comment

“It has huge potential to integrate a wide array of uses for where there are none in surrounding areas. It can host residents, community spaces, public green space and small industry (artisanal crafts, artists, local entrepreneurs) all on the one site.” Community comment

“It would be shocking if this is all kept as is and allowed to be kept the same “for heritage”, the whole of surry hills has been frozen for this reason and it has led to many being priced out of the area. The entire spot should be rezoned for 6-12 storey apartments with shopping to allow as many people as possible to live in this central location” Community comment

“The opportunity to provide public housing here should be a number one priority. I also challenge designers to develop a masterplan that makes the Victoria Barracks Precinct a model, low rise but high density urban village that is designed with high retention of all heritage structures which give the precinct its character and cultural value” Community comment

Online map comments

Key themes

Comments posted on the online map highlight a strong desire to retain and enhance the green, open spaces within the Victoria Barracks precinct and make them available for community use. Suggestions include creating shared gardens, community sports courts, outdoor performance spaces and regular community events like farmers markets. There is also interest in integrating the precinct with the adjacent Paddington Town Hall to form a vibrant cultural and arts hub accessible to the public.

Feedback highlights a range of perspectives on the potential redevelopment of the site. Overall, key themes include balancing housing needs, heritage preservation, and community integration in any future plans for the site.

Housing

Community feedback on housing at Victoria Barracks highlighted differing views, with some seeing potential for the site to contribute to Sydney's housing needs, while others preferred it not be used for residential development. Housing proponents argued that Sydney is facing a severe housing shortage that should take priority over other considerations, with several submissions calling for high-density development including European-style 6-storey apartments and mixed-use housing with affordable and social housing components. These respondents viewed underutilised areas like the current car park as ideal locations for medium to high-rise housing that could contribute to Oxford Street's vibrancy while incorporating commercial uses and community facilities.

Opposition to housing development centred on concerns about heritage preservation, infrastructure capacity, and neighbourhood character. Many respondents argued that the site's heritage significance and colonial military history should not be compromised by residential development, with some suggesting that heritage buildings could be adaptively reused for specialist accommodation such as aged care or veterans' housing rather than general residential purposes. Several submissions raised practical concerns about the area's limited public transport links and existing traffic congestion, arguing that increased density would strain already stretched infrastructure. Others worried that any housing development would likely become high-end accommodation rather than genuinely affordable housing, potentially excluding the broader community from accessing Victoria Barracks as a public asset.

Community and Culture

Community members expressed strong support for transforming Victoria Barracks into a cultural and community hub, with many highlighting the site's potential as an arts precinct. Feedback included proposals to convert heritage buildings into artist cooperatives, exhibition spaces, and community facilities. Several respondents advocated for integration with nearby institutions, suggesting expanded partnerships with UNSW next door and enhanced connections with Paddington Town Hall to create "a world class cultural precinct." Community members also proposed specialist facilities such as a music education centre building on the existing Army Band rehearsal space, and multi-use venues that could accommodate outdoor concerts, farmers' markets, night markets, and community events while maintaining the site's heritage significance.

The feedback also demonstrated significant interest in community spaces that serve diverse age groups and activities. Suggestions included youth recreational facilities, adventure playgrounds, quiet study spaces for students, community sports courts, and community gardens or urban farms.

Heritage

Community members expressed strong concerns about preserving Victoria Barracks' heritage significance, with many emphasising its status as one of Australia's most important colonial-era military sites. Feedback highlighted the site's exceptional Georgian and early Victorian sandstone architecture, noting its rare convict-built construction and role in Sydney's military history. Many respondents stressed the importance of protecting the existing building heights and silhouette, particularly the main barracks building, with concerns that new development could compromise the site's historic character and visual integrity. Several submissions called for the site to be transferred to organisations such as the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust or National Trust to ensure proper protection and maintenance.

The community feedback revealed strong opposition to residential development that could diminish the site's heritage value, with many advocating for adaptive reuse that respects the original architecture and historical significance. Respondents supported repurposing heritage buildings for public uses such as museums, educational facilities, galleries, and cultural spaces, while maintaining the site's connection to military history through interpretive methods. There were calls for comprehensive archaeological investigation given the site's convict construction history and relatively undisturbed nature. Community members emphasised that any future development must prioritise heritage preservation in public ownership to ensure ongoing access for education and cultural appreciation.

Recreation and Open Space

Community responses expressed strong support for preserving and enhancing the existing green spaces at Victoria Barracks and making them available for recreation and community use. The highest priority themes centred on retaining the parade ground and open areas as public parkland, with many comments emphasising the importance of keeping these spaces for "gardens and place to enjoy for the community." Community members envisioned the parade ground being transformed into "a local park and gathering ground for events and community activities," with suggestions for communal gardens that could "support inclusive community actions for future residents and serve as a quiet area of respite."

The feedback also highlighted significant interest in improving site accessibility and connectivity, with calls to make the site "much more permeable" through "pedestrian openings in walls at strategic points on all sides" and creating clear sightlines and walking/cycling routes across the site. Several respondents suggested specific recreational amenities including outdoor event spaces, and a public outdoor pool. While there was general consensus on preserving green space, some community members expressed concern that the heritage wall creates barriers, and advocating for measures to "activate the southern wall more" while maintaining heritage values.

Other

A diverse range of perspectives and suggestions were provided that didn't fit neatly into the primary consultation themes. Several respondents emphasised the site's ongoing strategic importance, noting its critical role in emergency response capacity, ceremonial heritage, and as the only security-controlled area in the Eastern suburbs capable of staging emergency services and helicopter operations for St Vincent's Hospital.

Infrastructure and connectivity concerns featured prominently, with suggestions for light rail connections to Bondi Junction, concerns about overdevelopment pressures on neighbouring Surry Hills, and calls to maximise site permeability through new entry points and connections to Paddington Town Hall. Other notable suggestions included specialised uses such as artist studio complexes, health care clinics, recognition of the historic Busby's Bore water supply system, and calls for international design competitions should redevelopment proceed. Several comments highlighted the need for careful urban planning that prioritises connectivity and public space structure before considering commercial or housing development, with references to successful international examples like Bryant Park in New York as potential models for community-focused redevelopment.

Email submissions

Submissions table

We received 84 email submissions during the consultation period. The majority of these were from individuals, however, we also received 7 written submissions from the following organisations: AFL NSW/ACT, Historic Houses Association, National Trust of Australia (NSW), The Paddington Society, Paddington-Darlinghurst Community Group, UTS Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, and the Strata Committee for the Paddington Barracks (representing 71 owners).

Written submissions overwhelmingly emphasised the importance of preserving the heritage and historical significance of the Victoria Barracks site. Respondents highlight the site's architectural, cultural, and military history, stressing that it is a powerful symbol of Australia's national identity and a cornerstone of the Paddington community. There is a strong sentiment that the site should be protected, with any future development being sensitive to its heritage values and avoiding the destruction of the iconic sandstone buildings and walls.

Written submissions express opposition to the redevelopment of the Victoria Barracks site for high-density housing or commercial purposes. Respondents emphasise the need to preserve the site's heritage, open space, and environmental values, and suggest alternative uses such as community, cultural, and low-rise residential development that would be more in keeping with the character of the area.

The below email submissions tables list key themes and issues raised by organisations and community members, along with the City's response.

Table 2: Submissions table - organisations

Organisation	Themes / issues raised
AFL NSW/ACT	Submission encouraged retention and enhancement of the existing sporting field, and recommended opening up the space for community use and organised sport.
Historic Houses Association	Submission stressed that preservation of built heritage and historic site significance was a priority. The submission also advocated for sensitive adaptive reuse, public accessibility, open space, connection to the surrounding area and activation ideas such as cafes and events, Sustainable funding and governance was also raised.
National Trust of Australia (NSW)	The heritage significance of the site was emphasised and sensitive conservation of heritage was recommended in this submission.
The Paddington Society	Submission expressed preference for the retention of ADF ownership and use on site, alongside increasing public accessibility to green spaces, museums and adaptively reused buildings. It was also recommended that any new development and housing provision be respectful and of low scale.
Paddington-Darlinghurst Community Group	Submission raised opposition to affordable housing on site, and promoted the retention of existing military use and protection of the heritage significance of the site.

Organisation	Themes / issues raised
UTS Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion	Submission expressed support for increasing public accessibility and prioritising inclusive design and social infrastructure, a welcoming environment, Indigenous perspectives, financial accessibility and community participation
Strata Committee for the Paddington Barracks apartment complex	Submission expressed the preference for low scale intervention which prioritises public benefit, preserves heritage value, protects biodiversity and green open space, sensitively reuses heritage buildings for community use, provides low density context-sensitive housing, and consults with Indigenous communities.

Table 3: Submissions table - individuals

Themes / issues raised
Heritage - Submissions emphasised preserving Victoria Barracks' colonial and military heritage and highlighted the need to protect the sandstone buildings, perimeter walls, and maintain the site's character.
Open/Public Space - Submissions noted importance of maintaining and expanding green space, with suggestions for parks, gardens, and recreational areas. Many opposed any reduction of green areas.
Housing - Submissions on housing were divided, with some supporting affordable and social housing for essential workers while others strongly opposed any residential development. Many expressed concern that high-density housing would destroy the site's heritage value.
Transport/Movement – Submissions raised issues of existing traffic congestion and inadequate public transport infrastructure. Respondents worried that development would worsen traffic problems without corresponding transport improvements.
Community/Cultural - Suggestions included museums, art galleries, creative studios, and performance spaces. Several submissions proposed expanding the Army Museum or creating new cultural institutions to celebrate military history. Some submissions also suggested community gathering spaces and educational facilities.
Defence/Military Use - Several submissions raised that the barracks should remain in military use, citing its strategic importance and ongoing operational functions.
Economic and Employment - Some submissions focused on supporting creative industries, providing artist studios at affordable rates, and creating a screen sector hub. Respondents raised the need for economic sustainability while preserving heritage.
Governance and Process - Some submissions recommended transferring the site to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust if divested.
Access - Submissions supported opening the site to public access while respecting heritage values. Suggestions included creating pedestrian connections through the site to link Paddington with Moore Park.

Engagement activities

Media and communications

The below table presents an overview of communications activities during the consultation period.

Activity	Outcome
Sydney Your Say webpage	• 3,200 views
Media coverage	• 24 media items • 13 social media • 6 online • 3 print • 1 radio • 1 television
Email to key stakeholders	• To 1,257 recipients on 8 August 2025
eNewsletters	
Sydney Your Say August and September editions	• 5,136 subscribers sent on 26 August 2025 • 4,940 subscribers sent on 15 September 2025
City of Sydney News (Planning)	• 3,856 subscribers sent on 12 August 2025
Community centre e-newsletters (Ron Williams & Reginald Murphy)	• 536 subscribers (Ron Williams) • 615 subscribers (Reginald Murphy)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sydney Your Say page

Developing a community vision for Victoria Barracks

We'd like to hear any ideas you have for Victoria Park Barracks.

Paddington

Open for feedback

We invite you to share your feedback on the vision for Victoria Barracks.

Public Consultation Period
8 August 2025 to 10 September 2025

Why we're doing this

Victoria Barracks is a 15ha site on Oxford Street near Moore Park. It's located in a densely populated area of Paddington and currently has limited public access.

In 2023 the federal government carried out an audit of Australian Defence Force (ADF) land, including Victoria Barracks in Paddington. The audit assessed if its sites still met military needs. The recommendations of the audit have not been made public.

If the site is no longer required for ADF purposes, it could offer new opportunities for housing, improved access to green space, cultural activities and other uses.

A key consideration for any future use of Victoria Barracks is how to fund the ongoing maintenance of its historic buildings and the site. Long-term maintenance will need sustainable funding – through government investment or where appropriate, compatible commercial uses.

If the site becomes available for the future, we're inviting the community to help shape the vision for the site.

Use our interactive map to have your say

The your feedback by Open on Friday 10 September

Have your say

Strategic Planning and Urban Design

☎ 02 9265 9333

✉ sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

CITY OF SYDNEY

What we're doing

We're developing guiding principles for how the Victoria Barracks site could be used if it is divested by the ADF.

If adopted by Council, these principles will guide our efforts to ensure any future redevelopment of Victoria Barracks meets community needs and aligns with City of Sydney goals.

The guiding principles will reflect the site's significant heritage value and will be shaped by community priorities.

We invite you to tell us what you'd like to see and do at Victoria Barracks.

Next steps

Your feedback will help us create a community vision and guiding principles for Victoria Barracks.

The draft vision and principles will be reported to Council in late 2025.



Appendix 3: Stakeholder email

Sydney Your Say

CITY OF SYDNEY 

Help shape a future vision for Victoria Barracks

Victoria Barracks is a 15ha site on Oxford Street, near Moore Park in Paddington. It's an important heritage site but currently has limited public access as an active military barracks.

In 2023 the federal government reviewed Australian Defence Force (ADF) sites, including Victoria Barracks. The review assessed if they're still needed for military purposes. The results of this review have not been made public.

If Victoria Barracks is no longer required for ADF purposes, it could offer new opportunities for housing, improved access to green space, cultural activities and other uses.

We're inviting the community to help shape a long-term vision for Victoria Barracks if it becomes available in future.

Your ideas will help us develop guiding principles for how the site could be used in a way that respects its heritage, meets community needs and supports sustainable long-term maintenance of the precinct.

Tell us what you'd like to see and do there.

Your feedback will help us prepare a draft community vision and guiding principles, which will be reported to Council in late 2025.

How you can give feedback

We invite you to share your feedback by 5pm, Friday 19 September 2025.

More information

Contact our senior specialist planner Joe Burraston on 02 9265 9333 or at sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Appendix 4: City of Sydney News story

CITY OF SYDNEY

City of Sydney News

12 August 2025

Welcome to City of Sydney News

Each edition will bring you stories of innovation, community and growth, showcasing the people and projects that make Sydney a great place to live, work and explore.

Discover the latest opportunities, get involved in local projects and stay connected.



Clover Moore
Clover Moore AO
Lord Mayor of Sydney

Planning & building



Reimagining Victoria Barracks

What would you like Victoria Barracks to become if it wasn't an army base?

The Department of Defence is reviewing how it uses its military facilities, including Victoria Barracks.

[Share your thoughts about the future of the 15-hectare site.](#)



Item 4.

Adoption - Contaminated Land Policy

File No: S111706

Summary

The City's Contaminated Land Policy (Policy) provides a framework for the City to appropriately manage land contamination through land use planning and related processes.

The Policy aligns with the requirements of the State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 and Land Contamination Planning Guidelines (as amended). The appropriate management and regulation of contaminated land is important to protect human health and the environment. Since contaminated land can restrict the development and certain uses of land, it has economic, legal and planning implications for the community and for regulatory authorities.

The policy was adopted by Council 21 November 2022 and is due for review. The policy has been reviewed and remains fit for purpose with only minor edits required.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council adopt the Contaminated Land Policy, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the Contaminated Land Policy in order to correct any minor drafting errors and finalise design, artwork and accessible formats for publication.

Attachments

Attachment A. Contaminated Land Policy (with recommended changes in red or strikethrough text)

Background

1. The City's Contaminated Land Policy (Policy) provides a framework for Council to appropriately manage land contamination through land use planning and related processes.
2. The Policy was approved by Council on 21 November 2022 and is due for review.
3. This Policy aims to:
 - (a) ensure land use changes or development will not increase risk to human health or the environment;
 - (b) ensure any contaminants are adequately remediated to ensure the land complies with relevant land use contamination criteria as required by law and is fit for intended purpose;
 - (c) ensure land transferred or dedicated to the City of Sydney can be managed in the long term and will not add unnecessary financial, administrative or compliance burdens on the City;
 - (d) avoid inappropriate restrictions on land use;
 - (e) provide information that supports decision making and to inform the community of the City's requirements;
 - (f) consider the potential for land to be contaminated when assessing and determining development applications;
 - (g) consider the potential for land to be contaminated when preparing planning proposals for rezoning, including when preparing planning proposals for which the City is the applicant; and
 - (h) provide transparency and consistency to minimise any legal and financial risk.
4. The policy has been reviewed to ensure that it reflects current legislation, state planning guidelines and regulatory best practice. Minor revisions have been made to the definitions table to remove references that are not directly referred to in the policy.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

5. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This policy is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - The Policy ensures that the City has a strategic policy framework combined with effective oversight, regulation and accountability.

- (b) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - The Policy will assist the City in managing land contamination and impact on air, water, land, natural resources, and human health.

Risks

- 6. City staff have considered the Policy and its continuing operation is within the City's risk tolerance and risk appetite. Where risks associated with activities can be effectively mitigated and there are reasonable benefits to the community, a minimal risk can be considered.

Environmental

- 7. The appropriate management of contaminated land is important to protect human health and the environment.

Economic

- 8. Since contaminated land can restrict the development and certain uses of land it has economic, legal and planning implications for the community and for regulatory authorities.

Relevant Legislation

- 9. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
- 10. The Policy aligns with the requirements of the NSW Managing Land Contamination Guidelines (1998) (developed by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Department of Planning and Environment).
- 11. The Policy aligns with the requirements of State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 and Land Contamination Planning Guidelines (as amended).

GRAHAM JAHN AM

Chief Planner / Executive Director City Planning, Development and Transport

Josh Bradshaw, Standards and Policy Manager

Attachment A

Contaminated Land Policy

Contaminated Land Policy

Purpose

To provide a framework for the City of Sydney Council (the 'City') to appropriately manage land contamination through land use planning and related processes.

This policy aims to:

- ensure land use changes or development will not increase risk to human health or the environment
- ensure any contaminants are adequately remediated to ensure the land complies with relevant land use contamination criteria as required by law and is fit for intended purpose
- avoid inappropriate restrictions on land use
- provide information that supports decision making and to inform the community of the City's requirements
- consider the potential for land to be contaminated when assessing and determining development applications
- consider the potential for land to be contaminated when preparing planning proposals for rezoning, including when preparing planning proposals for which the City is the applicant.
- ensure land transferred or dedicated to the City of Sydney can be managed in the long term and will not add unnecessary financial, administrative or compliance burdens on the City

Scope

This policy applies to land within the City's Local Government Area (LGA).

This policy together with any developed contaminated land guidelines, aligns with the requirements of State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 (Chapter 4 - Remediation of land) and Land Contamination Planning Guidelines (as amended).

The City's responsibility and commitment is to provide accurate and timely information and advice to support the decisions and considerations in dealing with land contamination with due care and diligence and in doing so, act in 'good faith'.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Category 1- Remediation	Remediation works requiring Development Consent
Category 2- Remediation	Remediation works that do not require Development Consent (but must be notified to the Council 30 days before remediation works commence)

Term	Meaning
Clean-Up Notices	The appropriate regulatory authority (ARA) may issue a clean-up notice requiring a person to take specified clean-up action when they reasonably suspect that a pollution incident, as defined in the Protection of the Environment Operations Act (POEO Act), has occurred or is occurring. The EPA may issue a clean-up notice even if it is not the ARA in an emergency situation.
Contamination	The condition of land or water where any chemical substance or waste has been added as a direct or indirect result of human activity at above background level and represents, or potentially represents, an adverse health or environmental impact.
Contaminated Land Investigation and Remediation Stages	The process of contaminated land management can be broadly divided into the following stages:- • Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI)- • Sampling and analysis quality plan (SAQP)- • Detailed Site Investigation (DSI): Several reports, such as additional investigations, contamination delineation, monitoring, and/or Site-Specific Risk Assessments may be included in this stage- • Site specific risk assessment and modelling (the findings of the DSI will determine if this is needed).- • Remedial Action Plan (RAP)- • Site remediation and validation- • Environmental Management Plan (EMP) (only needed at sites where full clean-up is not feasible, or on-site containment of contamination is proposed).- • Ongoing Environmental Management Plan (OEMP)- • Long term Environmental Management Plan (LTEMP)
Conceptual Site Model (CSM)	A seven-step planning approach used to define the type, quality and quantity of data required to inform a specified decision relating to the environmental condition of a site.
Data Quality Indicators (DQI)	An intrusive environmental investigation undertaken to determine the nature, extent and degree of contamination; to assess potential risk posed by contaminants to health and the environment; and obtain sufficient information to develop a Remedial Action Plan (RAP), if needed.
Data Quality Objectives (DQO)	A statutory requirement for landowners and parties responsible for land contamination to report contamination to the NSW EPA. The triggers for reporting are presented in the "Guidelines on the Duty to Report Contamination under the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997" (NSW EPA, 2015).
Detailed Site Investigation (DSI)	An intrusive environmental investigation undertaken to determine the nature, extent and degree of contamination; to assess potential risk posed by contaminants to health and the environment; and obtain sufficient information to develop a Remedial Action Plan (RAP), if

Term	Meaning
	needed.
Duty to Report	A statutory requirement for landowners and parties responsible for land contamination to report contamination to the NSW EPA. The triggers for reporting are presented in the “Guidelines on the Duty to Report Contamination under the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997” (NSW EPA, 2015).
Ecological-Screening Levels (ESLs)	Levels derived for selected metals and organic compounds for assessing risks to ecological receptors in soils, published in the National Environmental Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure 1999 (NEPM).
Environmental-Management Plan (EMP)	Levels derived for select petroleum hydrocarbon compounds for assessing risks to ecological receptors in soils published in the NEPM.
Environmental Management Plan (EMP)	A plan outlining monitoring and management requirements where contamination not able to be remediated remains onsite and there is certainty that it will not migrate or create vapours. An EMP will include information on the nature and location of remaining site contamination; how to manage it appropriately; and who the responsible parties are for its implementation.
Good Faith	Schedule 6 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 Section 2 Exemption from liability-contaminated land (3) states: A planning authority is (unless the contrary is proved) taken to have acted in good faith if the thing was done or omitted to be done substantially in accordance with the contaminated land planning guidelines in force at the time the thing was done or omitted to be done.
Health Investigation Levels (HILs)	Levels derived for select metals and organic compounds for assessing risks to ecological receptors in soil.
Health Screening Levels (HSL's)	Levels derived for select petroleum hydrocarbon compounds for assessing human health risks via inhalation and direct contact pathways.
Land Dedication	Land “dedicated” to the City on registration of a plan of subdivision to be used as a public asset.
Land Transfer	Land “transferred” to the City on registration of a transfer instrument as a Lot and is generally used for operational land including for buildings or where the City will be undertaking further improvement works to the land.

Term	Meaning
Management Orders	An order issued by the NSW EPA to responsible parties for the management of significantly contaminated land in the following order (as far as practicable) • those responsible for the contamination • the landowner • the notional owner (for example, financiers) A management order can include actions to investigate and/or remediate the land. The former 'investigation orders' and 'remediation orders' are taken to be 'management orders' from 1 July 2009.
Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI)	An environmental investigation undertaken normally as a desktop review of data (but may also include limited field investigations) aimed at identifying any past or present potentially contaminating activities. The outcome of a PSI provides a basis for a more detailed site investigation, if required.
Public land	Land owned or under the care and control of the City of Sydney.
Quality Assurance/Quality Control Process (QA/QC)	A process used to assess the reliability of field work and analytical results for an investigation.
Remedial Action Plan (RAP)	A plan that sets objectives, and documents the process, for remediating a contaminated site.
Sampling and Analysis Quality Plan (SAQP)	A document prepared to provide the context, justification and details of the selected sampling and analysis approach.
Section 9.1 Directions	Section 9.1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Section 2.63 sets out considerations for contaminated land when making Local Environment Plans (LEP's).
Significantly Contaminated Land	Land declared by the NSW EPA as having contamination that is considered significant to warrant regulation under the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997 (CLM Act).
Site Audits	An independent review by a Site Auditor, accredited by the NSW EPA, under the CLM Act.
Site Auditor	A person accredited by the NSW EPA under the CLM Act to conduct site audits. Site Auditors independently review contaminated land consultant reports to ensure consistency with NSW EPA guidance.
Site Audit Report (SAR)	Summarises the report(s) reviewed by the Site Auditor and contains the information, discussion and rationale that support the auditor's conclusions. A Site Audit Report must be accompanied by a Site Audit Statement.

Term	Meaning
Site Audit Statement (SAS)	A document prepared by the Site Auditor outlining the conclusions of the Site Audit. The document is issued on a NSW EPA approved form. A Site Audit Report must be issued before a Site Audit Statement can be issued.
Statutory Site Audit	A type of site audit required by a regulatory authority to satisfy requirements under the CLM Act; requirements imposed by an environmental planning instrument; development consent requirements; or requirements under other legislation.
Underground Petroleum Storage Systems (UPSS)	An underground storage facility that holds petroleum products. UPSS can leak and cause soil and groundwater contamination. They pose a significant threat to the environment and human health if unmonitored and leaking.
Validation Report	A report that details the work undertaken to remediate the site in accordance with an approved Remedial Action Plan (RAP), and in compliance with contaminated land guidelines and other applicable regulatory requirements.
Voluntary management proposals (VMP's)	Proposals that outline how contamination will be managed once a site is declared as significantly contaminated land by the NSW EPA. VMPs can be submitted by anyone to the NSW EPA, but often, these are submitted by the landowner or the polluter.

Policy Statement

The City acknowledges the potentially serious human health and ecological risks posed by the presence of contaminated land.

Responsibilities

The City's legal obligations for minimising risks from exposure to contaminated land, as far as is reasonably practicable, are to protect the health of:

- residents and the public
- workers and other persons in workplaces
- the environment.

The City will meet its legislative obligations for identifying, evaluating, and managing contaminated land to ensure that it does not impact the health of the community and the environment through:

- management of public land and assets
- development of land owned or under the care and control of the City
- proposed activities under part 5 of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act), to consider the environmental impact of any approved activities in respect of council assets
- emergency response procedures
- land use planning

- considering the potential for land to be contaminated when preparing planning proposals for rezoning, including planning proposals for which the City is the applicant.
- considering the potential for land to be contaminated when assessing and determining development applications
- waste management and regulation.

Information Management

Council has an important role in supplying the public with information regarding land use history, land contamination and remediation activities.

The City will maintain accurate, reliable, and up-to-date records of information received on contaminated land matters through its information and data systems.

The City will provide information on planning certificates in relation to land contamination as per the requirements of section 10.7(2) & section 10.7(5) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 as follows:

- information on matters prescribed under sections 10(1)(a) and (b), 44 and 59(2) of the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997 that are relevant to a site
- identify, whether or not, any adopted policy of the City or any other public authority restricts the development (the subject of the certificate) due to the likelihood of any risk of contamination

The City may, under section 10.7(5) of the EPA Act 1979, also include advice in a planning certificate, on such other relevant matters affecting the land of which it may be aware, including the following:

- Investigation area (EPA Notification)
- EPA Notices and Orders (EPA Notification)
- Site Audit Statement (SAS)
- Site subject to an Environmental Management Plan (EMP)
- SAS required by a condition of Development Consent
- Significantly contaminated land – (EPA Notification)
- Investigation order (EPA Notification)
- Management order (EPA Notification)
- Voluntary management proposal (EPA Notification)
- Ongoing maintenance order (EPA Notification)
- Contaminated Land – (Earlier EPA Notification)
- Amendment or repeal of orders/notices (EPA Notification)
- UPSS Decommissioning
- SAS received and rejected
- Contaminated Land Potential.

Planning Assessment

The City will carry out an initial evaluation in accordance with the SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 (Chapter 4 - Remediation of land) and Land Contamination Planning Guidelines (as amended).

Where circumstances indicate contamination may be present which may require remediation to make the land suitable for a particular use, the following may be required:

- Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI)
- Detailed Site Investigation (DSI)
- Remediation Action Plan (RAP)
- Site Validation Report (SVR)
- Site Audit Statement (SAS)
- Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

Strategic Planning

The City will consider the potential for land to be contaminated when changes to existing permissible land uses are proposed, regardless of whether it is undertaking a high-level strategic planning exercise covering a large area or a smaller site-specific rezoning of a small parcel of land.

If an investigation indicates that contamination makes the land unsuitable for some uses and remediation is not appropriate or feasible, the rezoning proposal may not proceed, or the range of permissible uses will be restricted in the relevant environmental planning instrument.

Dedication and/or Transfer of Land

Handover of a land parcel to the City is through either dedication or transfer. Land is dedicated (as public road or public reserve) upon registration of a plan of subdivision. Land is transferred on registration of a transfer instrument. Conditions as they relate to contamination and acceptance of land will be as follows:

- the City will accept land that has been remediated and shown to be suitable for the intended use following an assessment of contamination in line with the requirements of SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 (Chapter 4 - Remediation of land), or any additional requirements under an associated voluntary planning agreement (VPA) or conditions of consent.
- all imported material used on land dedicated or transferred is required to meet the criteria for Virgin Excavated Natural Material (VENM) or Excavated Natural Material (ENM).
- when remediating, a layer of VENM/ENM is required to be installed by the proponent from the surface to 1.5m below ground depending upon City requirements. A high visibility marker layer that allows vertical drainage is required under the layer of VENM/ENM. The VENM/ENM is required to be compacted to the City's requirements.
- Environmental Management Plans (EMP's) are to be avoided where possible.

If an EMP is unavoidable, the City requires the following:

- prior consent to the proposed EMP
- a Site Audit Statement and Site Audit Report prepared by a NSW EPA accredited Site Auditor, who certifies the land is suitable for the proposed use subject to the implementation of the EMP (a section A2 site audit)
- management and mitigation measures, which are practical to implement, are consistent with the City's routine asset management practices and must not involve

any onerous monitoring requirements, require special qualifications for monitoring, or require ongoing status recording of long-term monitoring.

Managing public land

The City is responsible for managing certain community or public land under its control. This may include land that is known to be contaminated or is potentially contaminated.

Regulatory responsibilities

The City has regulatory responsibilities and maintains policies and legal standards where it is the appropriate regulatory, and/or planning authority and has obligations and powers provided for by legislation, including:

- issuing clean up notices to address human health or ecological risks or after an emergency or incident (Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997).
- issuing prevention or clean up notices where contaminated waste has been handled (including stored, transported, or disposed of) in an unsatisfactory manner (Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997).
- issuing penalty infringement notices for improper transport of waste (Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997).
- enforcement action on any breach of a standard condition imposed on a development consent to dispose of waste in accordance with the Protection of the Environment Operations Waste Classification Guidelines including disposal of waste to an appropriate landfill.
- enforcement action on any breach of the Protection of the Environment Operations (Underground Petroleum Storage Systems) Regulation 2019.

Responsibilities to workers

The City is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities to workers and other persons under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 and maintaining a safe work environment through its:

- general responsibilities
- education, training, and information for workers
- health monitoring for workers
- procedures for identifying and managing contaminated land.

These responsibilities are outlined in the City's Work, Health and Safety Policy (available on the City's website).

Other stakeholders involved in managing contaminated land

The City will work collaboratively with other government agencies and where appropriate, other stakeholders as needed to respond to contamination issues.

Complaints and investigations

Complaints and enquiries may be directed to the City about incidents in public places and private properties. Complaints and enquiries regarding licensed and state government premises under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 should be directed to the NSW EPA.

The City will respond to complaints and enquiries in accordance with the City's Compliance Policy

Complaints about the City in relation to contaminated land may be directed to the NSW Ombudsman.

Implementing the City's Contaminated Land Policy

Supporting documents

The implementation of this policy is supported by:

- Standard conditions of development consent (details of these can be found on the City's website)
- The City's online Safety Management System
- **The City's online Environmental Management System**
- Maintenance and inspection schedules for the City's owned assets
- The City's Asbestos Register.

Communicating the policy

This is a publicly available policy. The policy is to be made available via the City's website: www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

The City shall incorporate a statement regarding compliance with this policy in all relevant contracts and agreements with workers (including employees, contractors, consultants and where relevant, volunteers).

~~In the case of any substantive revisions to the policy, the revisions will be approved by the City and the CEO will notify all persons who may have cause to undertake, arrange or supervise any potentially hazardous activities listed in any subsequently approved Contaminated Land Guidelines on behalf of, or for, the City.~~

Consultation

This policy was developed in consultation with the following:

External Stakeholders

- The NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA)
- NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)
- SafeWork NSW

Internal Stakeholders

- Health & Building
- Strategic Planning & Urban Design
- Infrastructure Services
- City Greening and Leisure
- Planning Assessments
- Legal & Governance

- Sustainability and Resilience
- Property and Project Services

References

Laws and Standards

- Contaminated Land Management Act 1997
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021
- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2021
- Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997
- Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022
- Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014
- Protection of the Environment Operations (Underground Petroleum Storage Systems) Regulation 2019
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 (Chapter 4 - Remediation of land) and Land Contamination Planning Guidelines (as amended).

Policies and Procedures

- Access to Information Policy
- Compliance Policy
- Landscape Code 2016 – volume 1 and volume 2
- Managing Asbestos Policy
- Planning Agreement Guidelines
- Prosecution and Civil Enforcement Policy
- Public Domain Manual
- Tree Management and Donation Policy
- Managing Waste in Public Places – Local Approvals Policy

Review period

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years.

Approval Status

The Council approved this policy on 21 November 2022.

Approval History

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy	21 November 2022	Approved by Council	2022/656590
Commence Review Date	21 February 2025		
Approval Due Date	21 November 2025		

Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Environmental Health Specialist
Owner	Executive Manager Planning and Development
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	City of Sydney Council