Attachment A

Community Insights Report 2024

CITY OF SYDNEY

Community insights report 2024

Report
December 2024

Green Global Connected

Contents

Overview 3

- Why we’re doing this 3
- How we engaged the community 3
- Our reporting approach 4

Community insights 5

- Key themes 5
- Advisory panels 5
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel 5
  - Multicultural Advisory Panel 6
  - Disability (Inclusion) Advisory Panel 6
- Young people 6

Emerging trends 8

- A city for people 8
- A city that moves 8
- An environmentally responsive city 8
- A lively, cultural and creative city 9
- A city with a future focused economy 9

Strategic directions 10

- 1. Responsible governance and stewardship 13
- 2. A leading environmental performer 14
- 3. Public places for all 15
- 4. Design excellence and sustainable development 16
- 5. A city for walking, cycling and public transport 17
- 6. An equitable and inclusive city 18
- 7. Resilient and diverse communities 19
- 8. A thriving cultural life 20
- 9. A transformed and innovative economy 21
- 10. Housing for all 22

Attachments 24

- Attachment A – Engagement principles 24
- Attachment B – Engagement projects 24
- Attachment C – Shaping your city engagement report 28

Overview

Why we're doing this

The vision, hopes and aspirations of local communities are the foundation of every community strategic plan.

In June 2022 Council adopted Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision and the community strategic plan.

We worked with our communities for more than 18 months to develop the vision for Sydney in 2050. We began the process in 2018 by asking people to tell us their hopes for Sydney and what excites and concerns them about the future. This helped us explore the high-level themes, values and issues the community sees as important.

Our engagement activities included surveys, pop-up events and community workshops with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, small businesses and cultural and nightlife sectors. We also worked with children and young people and set up a citizens jury.

Overwhelmingly, our communities said they wanted:

- a city for people
- a city that moves
- an environmentally responsive city
- a lively, cultural and creative city
- a city with a future focused economy.

The community strategic plan is informed by these values along with 10 strategic directions, 10 targets and 10 ambitious project ideas.

Following local government elections in September 2024, we're required to update the community strategic plan for the new Council to adopt in June 2025.

This community insights report has been developed to help inform the new community strategic plan. It highlights what we've heard from our communities during our extensive community engagement program over the past 2 years. These insights will help us check, validate and explore what's most important to the community now and if there's been a shift in people's values and priorities for Sydney's future.

The process has been guided by our community engagement strategy. Its engagement principles are shown in Attachment A.

How we engaged the community

Since the community strategic plan was adopted by Council in 2022, we've continued to engage our diverse communities on our plans to achieve the vision for Sydney in 2050.

Over the past 2 years, we've consulted the community extensively to develop new strategies that address key issues including resilience, climate and sustainability, economic development, cultural life, walking and access, affordable housing and food security.

We also asked people what they value most about their local area to develop local neighbourhood visions and plans. And we checked in on the wellbeing of those who live, work or study in our local area to provide an in-depth picture of everyday life in our city and how it's changed since 2018.

Throughout 2023 and 2024 the Resilient Sydney Office engaged the wider Sydney community to develop the new Resilient Sydney strategy.

This report analyses more than 13,500 pieces of community feedback across 27 key consultation projects between 2022 and 2024. These projects were chosen for this report as they relate directly to the strategic directions and the feedback collected was from a diverse range of community members. The participants represent communities of place, identity, need, interest and the future.

A list of these projects is available in Attachment B.

Our reporting approach

This report integrates community insights drawn from numerous engagement activities between 2022 and 2024.

We reviewed 13,790 pieces of feedback from 27 consultations and analysed 7,724 comments collected from open-field survey questions. Each comment was categorised according to its alignment with the community values identified in the community insights report 2022, which informed the community strategic plan adopted in 2022.

Each consultation project was examined for specific feedback and themes that aligned with or diverged from the strategic directions in the community strategic plan. This process allowed us to compare current community aspirations and concerns with what the community told us 2 years ago.

Our review focused on capturing both consistent themes and emerging issues across the reports, providing a comprehensive understanding of how community priorities are evolving. The feedback represents a broad cross-section of our communities, including community groups, resident action groups, business groups, sustainability advocates, residents, workers, students and visitors to our area.

Community insights

Key themes

Community priorities remain focused on creating a **liveable**, **sustainable**, and **inclusive** city that supports diverse communities, offers accessible public spaces, and actively addresses the challenges posed by climate change.

Across our consultations, residents expressed strong support for environmental action, particularly with increased urban greenery, regeneration of waterways and land, renewable energy initiatives and sustainable waste management practices. Community members consistently prioritised safe and accessible public spaces that foster social connections and accommodate diverse needs, from families to older adults.

Housing affordability emerged as a critical issue, with ongoing support for diverse and affordable housing options that prevent displacement and allow people from all backgrounds to live and work in Sydney. Economic resilience and innovation were also top priorities, with respondents advocating for a city that embraces technology and a green and inclusive economy that supports local businesses and creates opportunities for emerging industries.

Culture was another significant focus, with community members emphasising the importance of affordable, accessible spaces for creative expression and the celebration of Sydney's cultural diversity. There was strong support for inclusive cultural precincts, local events and the representation of diverse voices, including those from First Nations and culturally diverse communities.

Equity and inclusivity were recurring themes, especially in public space design and community services, where residents highlighted the need for spaces that are welcoming to all, including priority communities. Overall, these insights reflect a community deeply committed to a city that is environmentally responsible, culturally vibrant, socially inclusive and economically resilient.

Advisory panels

The City of Sydney set up community and sector advisory panels to provide ongoing advice on complex issues affecting priority communities.

In 2023 and 2024 advisory panel members shared their priorities for the year ahead through several workshops and planning sessions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel

The panel highlighted the need for systemic change built from truth-telling, education and cultural awareness, and the importance of self-determination where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have authority to make their own decisions in their own lives.

The panel raised the importance of building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and strengthening respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's knowledge, cultures, histories and rights. Direct community interaction and early engagement is important for building trust, accountability and transparency.

Creating economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations by supporting local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and employment opportunities was also a key priority. Strengthening ties and relationships with Aboriginal community controlled organisations is also important.

The panel advocates for more Aboriginal community owned and operated spaces to support their own self-determined needs.

Removing barriers and addressing discrimination to support social justice, and community wellbeing is important. More affordable housing operated and owned by Aboriginal community housing providers and preventing further displacement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from local areas are critical issues.

Multicultural Advisory Panel

The panel asked for greater understanding of the City of Sydney's changing internal diversity, inclusion and leadership data, strategies and initiatives to achieve access, equity and inclusion. They sought to share advice and information to build workforce diversity, cultural safety, strengthen inclusion, broaden participation and representation to ensure the organisation reflects the multicultural communities it serves.

Improving the City of Sydney's strategic approach toward cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, equity and inclusion was another key focus. Racism in society was seen as a key issue, and the need to help inform anti-racism strategies, programs and training initiatives.

Disability (Inclusion) Advisory Panel

Panel members spoke about the social model of disability against the medical model of disability and using enabling language around disability.

Accessible and affordable housing, including innovative and inclusive disability housing options was a key priority, especially considering the increased cost of living and challenges people with disability face living on a limited budget. Improving meaningful employment for people with disability, including leadership opportunities was also a key priority.

The importance of embedding universal design in City of Sydney infrastructure, assets and services was raised, along with educating businesses to improve access and inclusion. Panel members sought to share insights in living a good life with their disabilities, including advice to young people with disability.

Young people

Perhaps the most important community for us to consider when developing our long-term strategic plans are our young people – our **communities of the future**.

"Age is not a barrier to producing great ideas. Involving youth in conversations surrounding them and their future should be prioritised moving forward".

– Resilient Sydney youth engagement participant

Since the community strategic plan 2022 was adopted, we've continued to engage young people across a broad range of issues to help develop plans for the future of our city.

In 2023, 300 young people (aged 16 to 29) participated in our wellbeing survey. They told us what matters most to them now and what they hope for in the future. Overwhelmingly, we heard they value a city that is **safe**, **friendly** and **affordable**. Affordability was the main concern for young people. Many commented that they like their local area, but it was becoming too unaffordable to live in.

"I love my local area but unfortunately rising housing prices will likely mean we will leave this area in the next couple of years."

– Young person's comment (wellbeing survey 2023)

They also value a city that is **accessible**, close to parks and **green spaces**, and amenities like cafes and restaurants. It also needs to be easy to get around by walking, cycling or public

transport. Young people said they wanted to live in a city that was thriving, not surviving. Many commented that Sydney lacks **affordable recreation** options for young people.

"There is nothing to do at night for young people. Young people have nowhere to dance, sing, hang out, listen to and play music, see performances – everything like this in this city is too expensive."

– Young person's comment (wellbeing survey 2023)

"Above everything, affordable and SAFE for people of varying incomes … Once that is fixed, one that is community focused, with arts and culture festivals, local sports, and a thriving nightlife. Also really strong walkability within neighbourhoods."

– Young person's comment (wellbeing survey 2023)

These themes were echoed in 2024 through our 'shaping your city' consultation, where younger respondents (aged 18 to 34) placed greater importance on **affordable housing** and **equitable access** to participate in the economy. Far higher percentages rated these as very important compared to overall averages. 100% of respondents aged 18 to 34 felt that affordable housing is very important and 90% of respondents aged 18 to 34 felt that equitable access to participate in the economy is very important. An active response to climate change and safe, accessible and inclusive public spaces also resonated more with young people compared to overall averages.

School students who participated in our environment strategy consultation in 2024 strongly supported all priority areas in the strategy. The strongest support was received for the regeneration of waterways and land, preventing pollution and working towards zero emissions transport. They felt the City could help them **live more sustainably** by supporting solar power in schools and homes, by providing more drinking fountains, planting more trees, improving footpaths and bike lanes, and incentives to make it cheaper to recycle.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, the Resilient Sydney Office engaged young people across Greater Sydney to develop the Resilient Sydney strategy, with 116 young people participating in workshops and 127 responding to a survey. They shared their thoughts on why listening to young people is important, what issues affect them, and how they would make Sydney a better place to live if they were in charge.

Themes from this engagement were consistent with themes from the wellbeing survey and shaping your city consultation highlighting several recurring challenges faced by young people today.

The **cost of living** and **unaffordable housing** were continuous issues, which impact all aspects of young people's lives including housing, education options, mental health, transport, food options and accessing arts and cultural events for social connection. They also identified the emergence of an **intergenerational divide** in wealth.

These issues are delaying young people from transitioning into adulthood and are impacting their independence. Young people mentioned they rely on parental support or try to work more jobs to support themselves.

An increasing uncertainty and anxiety for the future is lowering resilience, with 30% of young respondents stating they struggle with a **mental health** condition.

Young people said it was important to capture their perspectives as they were open-minded, had fresh perspectives, and they will inherit today's decisions and planning. There was also hope that bridging the gap between generations would help solve problems.

They raised the importance of having young people within positions of power and **influence** across **all levels of government** to create greater trust in the system and more diverse perspectives and solutions. They identified the need for **student leadership** programs to foster young people as leaders in their communities, schools and government.

Emerging trends

A city for people

In 2022 people told us they want a city that is green with trees and plants, has quality public spaces and different types of housing that is affordable. They want to live in a socially supportive community that is safe, and inclusive.

Community feedback between 2022 and 2024 shows continuing support for quality public spaces, a city green with trees and a just and inclusive society. There is a strong call for more affordable housing, particularly for young people and artists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people with disability, to prevent displacement and being pushed out of the city due to high living costs.

The importance of integrating arts and culture into public spaces is highlighted, as it fosters community engagement and connection, and vibrancy. There is also a focus on improving accessibility for people with disability, including better infrastructure like ramps and wide footpaths, and more accessible public transport. The community highly values public spaces like community centres and libraries for social interaction and cultural expression, with suggestions for more public art, community events, and spaces that cater to diverse needs.

Overall, the feedback reflects a desire for a city that is inclusive, vibrant, and supportive of all its residents.

A city that moves

In 2022 people told us they want to move around the city using public transport and bikes, and by walking. They talked about a future with fewer cars, where streets and public spaces are easily accessible to people.

Community feedback between 2022 and 2024 calls for more bike lanes and people-friendly spaces, with a continued focus on reducing car use and promoting sustainable transport options. Living in an area close to transport continues to be very important for people.

However, many comments express concerns about the accessibility and reliability of public transport, particularly for people with disability and older people. There are calls for better suburb-to-suburb connections, more accessible bus stops, and improved public transport servicing major destinations without excessive walking.

Some suggest making public transport free for people with disability and ensuring that lifts and escalators are operational. There is also significant discussion around expanding light rail, with mixed opinions. Some support the idea, believing it would enhance connectivity and reduce car dependence, while others worry about potential traffic congestion and disruption to local businesses.

Overall, the comments support a continuing desire for a more integrated, accessible and environmentally friendly transport system.

An environmentally responsive city

In 2022 people told us they want an active response to climate change. They want a city that sustainably manages waste and use of resources. People want to see a reduction in emissions,

greater recycling and reusing of products and changes to how we use our city to reduce our impact on the environment.

Community feedback between 2022 and 2024 emphasises the need for sustainable waste management. This includes increasing access to recycling programs, advocating for further regulation on plastic packaging and expanding composting and food waste disposal options. There is a call for more information and education on recycling and proper waste disposal.

Comments show a strong desire to transition to a green economy and for sustainable urban growth, with support for initiatives like sustainable transport, less car dependence, green spaces, regenerating waterways and land and preventing pollution.

Overall, the feedback shows support for practical, accessible solutions to make the city more environmentally sustainable and responsive.

A lively, cultural and creative city

In 2022 people told us they want a vibrant city, weaving its culture, heritage, entertainment throughout public spaces. They called for a city that has diverse shopping and entertainment options and a lively nightlife, where locals and visitors gather in public spaces for events and cultural experiences.

Community feedback between 2022 and 2024 sees the integration of arts and culture into urban planning as crucial for placemaking and community engagement. The comments suggest that culture and cultural activities contribute to community identity, health and wellbeing, and the local economy.

Feedback emphasises the need for accessible and affordable spaces for artists to live, work, and perform. There is a call for more exhibition spaces, live performance venues and public art elements to enhance the vibrancy of the city. The importance of supporting grassroots and emerging creators is highlighted, along with the need for transparent decision-making processes in funding and space allocation.

There is also a strong desire for more late-night venues and events to revitalise the city's cultural scene, with a focus on inclusivity and diversity across all cultural expressions.

A city with a future focused economy

In 2022 people told us they want a city that is supported by digital infrastructure, that sustains the creation of new jobs and allows businesses to respond to changing customer needs. People were optimistic about the opportunities that will be available in terms of education, jobs, innovation and the economy.

Community feedback between 2022 and 2024 highlights the importance of development in driving economic growth, creating employment opportunities and enhancing city liveability. There is a strong emphasis on the need for improving connectivity and infrastructure, particularly in the Tech Central precinct in Camperdown to unlock its potential. Suggestions include extending the light rail network, enhancing pedestrian access, and reducing car lanes to improve walkability and connectivity between key hubs like UTS, University of Notre Dame and University of Sydney.

There is a call for sustainable development practices, such as using renewable energy in new projects and integrating green spaces. Many comments stress the importance of transitioning to a green economy and preparing for climate change impacts. They also highlight the need for resilient communities and proactive communication about climate risks being essential for a future-focused economy.

Strategic directions

This section outlines community feedback on each of the 10 strategic directions that guide our approach to creating a sustainable, inclusive and resilient future. The feedback received between 2022 and 2024 is closely aligned with the community insights that shaped the community strategic plan adopted in 2022.

As the City of Sydney progresses toward implementing specific projects and initiatives, recent consultations have provided more detailed and targeted feedback, reflecting the community's responses to concrete plans and actions designed to achieve these strategic goals.

Strategic direction	What the community told us: 2022	What the community told us: 2022-24
1. Responsible governance and stewardship	• Strong desire for transparent governance • More community engagement in decision-making • Support for ethical, accountable leadership	• More transparency from council on feedback received and how it **influences decisions** would help improve level of trust • A forward-thinking council that **collaborates with community**, government and partner organisations is very important • Important to involve **young people** in decision making that will impact their lives
2. A leading environmental performer	• Broad support for climate action and emissions reduction • Desire for increased tree canopy and green spaces • Focus on waste reduction and energy efficiency	• Strong support for increasing **tree canopy** and addressing urban heat. Focus on **species diversity** and **green roofs** • Strong support for **regeneration** of waterways and land and preventing pollution • Growing concerns about **impacts of waste** on the environment (plastics) • Continued focus on **renewable energy** solutions • Calls for **retrofitting older buildings** for energy efficiency and climate resilience
3. Public places for all	• Desire for more green, accessible public spaces • Call for inclusive spaces for social interaction • Demand for parks, plazas, and more greenery	• Continued demand for **green, accessible** and vibrant public spaces • Emphasis on welcoming, inclusive, **safe spaces for diverse communities** • Strong support for **more shade**, seating, and **public art**

Strategic direction	What the community told us: 2022	What the community told us: 2022-24
		• **Libraries and community centres** as spaces for social connection and refuge during extreme weather
4. Design excellence and sustainable development	• Support for sustainable and attractive developments. • Desire for energy-efficient buildings and heritage preservation. • Interest in environmentally friendly urban design	• Strong call for **climate-responsive design**, including green spaces and water features • Feedback emphasises **Indigenous design and knowledge** • More focus on **sustainable infrastructure** (solar panels, smart design) • Desire for **balance** between **modernity and heritage** in development projects
5. A city for walking, cycling, and public transport	• Strong desire for safer conditions for walking and cycling through better infrastructure • Call for better public transport options • Vision for fewer cars on the road	• Emphasis on improving **safety** and **connectivity** for people walking through better footpaths and more crossings • Highlights **integration of walking and public transport** • Calls for **light rail** and **metro** expansion • Concerns about conflicts between bike riders and people walking in shared spaces
6. An equitable and inclusive city	• Concern about housing affordability and social services • Focus on supporting vulnerable and marginalised populations • Demand for social housing	• Continued focus on **affordable housing** and preventing displacement, particularly for **First Nations** people, **young people** and **priority communities** • Strong calls for **inclusive public space design** particularly for **people of diverse sexualities and genders** and **people with disability** • Concerns about **equitable access to services**, particularly in waste management and climate adaptation • **Support for underrepresented artists** in cultural spaces • Concerns about high **levels of discrimination** experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Strategic direction	What the community told us: 2022	What the community told us: 2022-24
7. Resilient and diverse communities	• Value for social connection and diversity • Call for stronger support networks and local resilience • Desire for community participation in decision-making	• Continued calls for **social connection** and **community participation** in decision-making • Recognise and listen to **First Nations people** • Strong support for **emergency preparedness** and resilience-building efforts • Focus on **climate adaptation** and **climate-resilient housing** • Highlights **community gardens** and **Sustainable food system** as key elements • Support for **community spaces** for shelter and support during emergencies
8. A thriving cultural life	• Support for cultural diversity and creative expression • Desire for more affordable spaces for artists • Interest in 24-hour city and nightlife	• Strong support for **cultural precincts,** for example Haymarket and Chinatown • Recognising **First Nations history and culture** in public spaces • Continued focus on **affordable creative spaces** and long-term support for cultural infrastructure • Emphasis on more inclusive cultural spaces for **First Nations** and **culturally diverse artists** • Calls for **sustainable investment** in the arts
9. A transformed and innovative economy	• Support for innovation and new technologies • Desire for Sydney to become a hub for entrepreneurship • Interest in education and training for future jobs	• Strong support for **innovation** and transition to **green economy** • Emphasis on attracting investment to boost **Sydney's global competitiveness** • Focus on **inclusive growth**, particularly in supporting **First Nations enterprises**, **key workers** and **creatives** • Need for better **public transport and infrastructure** in innovation precincts like **Tech Central**
10. Housing for all	• Major concerns about rising housing costs	• **Affordable, suitable housing** continues to be a critical issue

Strategic direction	What the community told us: 2022	What the community told us: 2022-24
	• Call for more social and affordable housing • Desire for mixed-income, diverse communities	• Continued support for suitable, affordable housing to **prevent displacement** of priority communities from local areas • Support for **build-to-rent** models and strong focus on **preserving smaller, affordable dwellings** • Feedback on the need for **climate-resilient housing** • Concerns about how development impacts priority communities and artists

1. Responsible governance and stewardship

This direction focuses on ensuring effective and ethical governance while promoting collaboration between government, business and the community. The City of Sydney aims to strengthen partnerships, facilitate inclusive decision-making, and ensure long-term financial sustainability to manage the challenges of a rapidly growing city. Effective stewardship of city resources is vital for a resilient and adaptable future.

In 2022 people told us they expect greater transparency, ethical decision-making, and more opportunities for participation. People want to be involved in shaping local neighbourhoods and expect local government to collaborate with businesses, academia and civil society. The citizens jury also called for a governance model that includes active leadership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Community feedback from our **wellbeing survey** in 2023 revealed only a quarter of respondents believe their views will be listened to, reflecting a low level of trust in government. Also, a lower proportion of people agreed with the statement ‘there are enough opportunities for me to have a say on issues that are important to me’ than in previous years, with 34% agreeing in 2023 compared to 44% agreeing in 2015. Participation in community engagement remains steady, with 58% of respondents saying they participated in an engagement activity over the past 12 months. Lack of time remains the top barrier to participating in community activities.

Responses to the **shaping your city** survey in 2024 revealed 95% of people feel it’s important to have a forward-thinking council that collaborates with community, government and partner organisations. People said it was important to feel heard and listened to. Better communication and seeing how community feedback has been considered in decision making would help improve trust in government.

Resilient Sydney consultations in 2023 found that people feel there is a lack of care from decision-makers and service providers. Respondents stressed the need for government to listen to and learn from community experiences and work together on solutions to build resilience. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents called for genuine partnerships with Aboriginal community controlled organisations to provide independent and culturally safe services for the best outcomes. They asked to elevate First Nations voices in planning and policymaking to ensure sustainable, resilient outcomes for future generations.

Young people highlighted the importance of capturing their ideas as they were open-minded, had fresh perspectives, and would be most impacted by today’s decisions and long-term plans. They called for more power and influence across all levels of government to improve trust in the system

and give diverse perspectives and solutions. They identified the need for student leadership programs to foster young people as leaders in their communities, schools and government.

Responses to the **inclusion (disability) action plan** survey in 2024 called for greater collaboration with disability advocacy groups and local service providers to help challenge discrimination and negative attitudes towards disability that are still widely experienced. The importance of building capacity for disability-led changemaking, self-advocacy and leadership was highlighted. They called for the promotion of positive images and stories of people with a diverse range of disabilities, alongside their contributions to the community and workplaces to help change public perceptions. Involving people with disability in decision-making was raised as crucial to promoting inclusivity and ensuring policies reflect their needs, contributing to a more positive attitude in the community. The importance of accessible information and communication was also highlighted, including providing information in alternative formats, ensuring digital accessibility and in-person support.

This feedback continues to emphasise the importance of collaboration between government, business and the community, and inclusive decision-making. These themes align with the goals of this strategic direction.

2. A leading environmental performer

This direction aims to position Sydney as a leader in environmental sustainability. The City of Sydney wants to achieve net zero emissions by 2035, enhance renewable energy use, promote energy-efficient buildings and implement waste management practices aligned with the circular economy. We're preparing for the impacts of climate change, increasing canopy cover and improving biodiversity.

In 2022 the community emphasised the urgent need for climate action, calling for the City of Sydney to lead on reducing carbon emissions and adopt more sustainable practices. Concerns about waste management, water conservation and energy efficiency were frequently raised, alongside a desire for increased green spaces and tree planting to combat the effects of urban heat.

Between 2022 and 2024 we engaged our communities on developing a waste strategy, resilience strategy, an urban forest strategy, street tree masterplan and on revising our environment strategy.

Feedback from the **urban forest strategy** highlighted strong community support for increasing urban tree canopy as part of environmental sustainability efforts. Respondents were particularly concerned about mitigating urban heat and improving green spaces, with a focus on species diversity to enhance resilience and provide habitat for wildlife.

Key themes consistent with feedback in 2022 include calls for more greenery, increased canopy cover and better tree management. New concerns emerged about the impact of invasive species and the desire for a more significant focus on the benefits of green roofs.

Community feedback on the development of the **street tree master plan** also emphasised the importance of increasing canopy cover to improve environmental outcomes, with most respondents supporting more tree planting in median strips and streets. There was strong advocacy for using native species, although some respondents recognised the need for a balanced approach between native and non-native trees for diverse environmental benefits.

Responses to developing our revised **environment strategy** in 2024 showed there is strong support for all priority areas of the strategy, in particularly regenerating waterways and land, preventing pollution, working towards zero emissions transport, encouraging renewable electricity including on-site solar, and recycling and reusing instead of buying new. Priority areas were seen as important ways to protect the environment and liveability of the City.

A survey on waste reduction, food and plastic packaging gathered community insights to inform the development of **waste reduction programs**. The responses demonstrated that the community recognises its role in environmental sustainability, particularly in reducing waste and plastic

packaging. While food waste reduction was commonly practiced, reducing plastic packaging was seen as a growing priority. Residents expressed concerns about the broader impacts of waste on climate change and the need for more council-led initiatives to reduce landfill of common items in the red lid bin, including food and soft plastics.

Community feedback on the draft **resilience strategy** stressed the urgency of addressing climate change. Participants emphasised the need for more green spaces, tree planting and better-designed infrastructure to cope with extreme weather events like heatwaves and flooding. Many people advocated for renewable energy solutions such as solar panels, and for retrofitting older buildings to be more energy-efficient, which aligns with the City of Sydney's sustainability goals.

In consultation on the **Haymarket and Chinatown revitalisation strategy**, respondents expressed support for more green spaces, shade trees, and greenery in public areas to improve comfort and reduce urban heat. This aligns with the goals of sustainability and reducing the environmental impact in urban spaces.

In sector consultation on the draft **economic development strategy 2025–2035**, respondents emphasised the need for Sydney to transition towards a green and circular economy. Feedback included support for renewable energy initiatives, reducing waste and sustainable business practices, which align with sustainability goals. Support emphasised the importance of including local communities, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge in the transition process. There was a call for better consultation and engagement with entrepreneurs and small businesses to foster community wealth and ownership opportunities.

This feedback complements the emphasis in 2022 on reducing emissions, with a strong focus on the need to reduce waste as part of environmental performance. These themes continue to align with the goals of this strategic direction.

3. Public places for all

This direction seeks to create high-quality public spaces that are accessible, inclusive and sustainable. The City of Sydney will prioritise the greening of public areas, ensuring equitable access to parks, plazas and streets. We'll provide and promote public spaces that encourage social interaction and community engagement.

In 2022 our communities told us they want more open and green spaces that are safe, inclusive and accessible to all. Many people called for better design of public areas to accommodate diverse community needs, including spaces for children, older people and people with disability. The desire for more places to gather and connect with increased greenery and shade was a common theme.

In the 2023 **wellbeing survey** the top 4 features of the local area important to respondents included being close to transport (78%), close to work/study (69%), close to parks, gardens, and trees (68%) and being close to places to go out/socialise (61%).

Feedback from the **inclusion (disability) action plan** survey in 2024 highlighted accessibility is paramount for liveability, enabling dignity and independence. Continuing to improve the accessibility of streets, footpaths, parks, facilities and open spaces should remain a high priority, with opportunities for people with disability to have a say on the designs. Providing safe and welcoming places for people with a diverse range of disabilities to come together and connect, share and advocate was another high priority.

When we consulted our communities about an **LGBTIQA+ social and cultural place strategy for Oxford Street,** the community strongly emphasised the need for safe, welcoming and inclusive public spaces in the area. People expressed support for increasing outdoor events and performances, as well as beautifying the streetscape with greenery and public art. A consistent theme was the desire for more spaces where people of diverse sexualities and genders could gather, feel safe and express their identity, which aligns with the goals of providing inclusive, high-quality public spaces.

Feedback on the **Redfern neighbourhood plan** highlighted a strong community desire for green, accessible and well-maintained public spaces. The feedback emphasised the importance of parks for social activities and community gatherings, reflecting a consistent desire for public spaces that foster connection, a sense of belonging, and social interaction.

When we asked about a vision for **Wentworth Park** people told us they wanted a unified, multipurpose green space that supports social activities. There was strong support for creating spaces that allow for both quiet relaxation and community events, with an emphasis on providing seating, picnic areas and venues for public performances. This vision is consistent with the goal of making public places inclusive, accessible, and vibrant hubs for the community.

In 2023 we consulted our communities about **activities and services in community centres and libraries**. People value public spaces in community centres and libraries as places for social connection and learning. Many people emphasised the role of these spaces in fostering community interaction, particularly through affordable, accessible programs and events, aligning with the broader goals of public spaces that support social engagement.

Feedback on the City of Sydney draft **resilience strategy** highlighted the importance of public spaces as safe, climate-resilient refuges. During extreme weather, people valued air-conditioned public facilities like libraries and community centres as places of refuge. People expressed support for increasing greenery and shaded areas in public spaces to make them more comfortable and accessible during heatwaves.

Feedback from the **Haymarket and Chinatown revitalisation strategy** highlighted the importance of enhancing public spaces with better seating, more shade, and improved pedestrianisation. Participants supported the creation of more flexible spaces for events, outdoor dining and public performances, reflecting a strong desire for vibrant, inclusive public areas that can accommodate various activities.

Across this group of consultations people told us they want inclusive, green, and well-designed spaces that facilitate social connection, with emphasis on safety, amenities and accessibility. These themes align closely with the goals of this strategic direction.

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4. Design excellence and sustainable development

This direction ensures that new developments in Sydney meet the highest standards of design excellence and sustainability. It focuses on creating buildings and urban spaces that contribute to a liveable, resilient city while addressing the environmental and social impacts of growth. Sustainable construction and urban design will be key to creating long-term value for residents and the environment.

In 2022 people expressed the need for sustainable, attractive developments that enhance their quality of life. There was strong support for designs that incorporate energy efficiency, accessibility and environmental considerations. People told us they want developments that reflect the city's unique character, with a balance between modernity and heritage preservation.

Throughout 2023 and 2024 community feedback continues to show strong support for sustainable development and urban design. Responses to our revised **environment strategy** consultation showed strong support across all priority areas including reducing carbon emissions and reliance on fossil gas, encouraging renewable electricity and on-site solar, regenerating waterways and land, encouraging recycling and reuse and working towards zero emission transport. Respondents felt the City could help them reduce energy use and emissions by supporting solar adoption, particularly for apartments, and supporting renters to make sustainability changes to their homes.

In our consultation on the **Redfern neighbourhood plan**, community feedback on park redesigns called to honour the history of The Block and foster a strong connection to Country, ensuring the space is respectful, educational and celebratory of the local Aboriginal culture and community. People asked for sustainable and climate-responsive design, with a focus on green spaces, native

plants and water play areas. Respondents suggested the inclusion of Indigenous design and knowledge in Yellomundee Park, aligning with sustainable development principles.

Community responses to the **Haymarket and Chinatown revitalisation strategy** emphasised the importance of the area being a vibrant, bustling place that celebrates diverse Asian cultures, preserves its history and unique character while embracing contemporary forms of cultural expression.

In feedback on the **access strategy and action plan**, the community supported transforming areas such as Broadway and Park Street into greener, more pedestrian-friendly spaces. Respondents advocated for reducing traffic and creating more space for trees, public transport and active transport. This aligns with the goal of design excellence, calling for sustainable development that prioritises people over vehicles.

In consultation on developing our **resilience strategy**, people called for more sustainable urban design to address climate impacts, particularly through improved building infrastructure and public spaces. Respondents called for the incorporation of green building features, such as solar panels and energy-efficient designs, in both new developments and retrofitting older buildings. There were also suggestions for more green spaces, water-sensitive urban design and better drainage systems to reduce the risk of flooding.

Feedback on the draft **resilience strategy** reinforced the need for sustainable design in future developments. People emphasised the importance of creating buildings that are not only resilient to climate impacts but also designed to enhance liveability, with features such as better ventilation, heat management and the use of renewable energy. There were also calls for smart urban infrastructure that incorporates green spaces and promotes biodiversity, as well as the use of environmentally friendly building materials and methods.

Feedback across this group of consultations continues to align with the goals of this strategic direction.

5. A city for walking, cycling and public transport

This direction aims to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport to make Sydney more liveable, sustainable and accessible. The City of Sydney will focus on making it easier and safer to walk, calming vehicle traffic, expanding the cycling network and improving access to public transport to create a city where residents and visitors can get around easily and sustainably with less dependence on using vehicles.

In 2022 community members expressed a strong desire for a walkable city with safe and connected cycling infrastructure. They told us they want better public transport options, with many calling for 24-hour services. There was a shared vision of fewer cars on the road, with streets designed for people rather than vehicles.

In the 2023 **wellbeing survey**, respondents rated being close to transport as the most important feature of a local area (78% responses). Over four-in-five of respondents were satisfied with access to parks and open spaces (84% satisfied), and almost three-quarters were satisfied with access to public transport (74% satisfied).

Feedback from the **inclusion (disability) action plan** consultation in 2024, highlighted the need for greater accessibility and improved wayfinding in Central Sydney to enable the liveability, dignity and independence for people living with disability.

In 2024 we consulted the community on our draft **walking strategy and action plan.** People expressed strong support for creating a more walkable city, with a focus on making walking safer, more convenient and enjoyable. Key themes included the need for more pedestrian space, better footpaths and improved crossings. Respondents highlighted the importance of integrating walking with public transport, reducing car dominance in the city and increasing amenities such as trees, seating and public toilets.

In 2023 we collected feedback on our draft **access strategy and action plan.** Feedback focused on improving the integration of walking, cycling and public transport. People expressed support for projects that prioritise pedestrians, such as widening footpaths, reducing speed limits and creating more cycling infrastructure. There was also a desire for better public transport connections, with suggestions to enhance accessibility and reduce wait times at crossings.

Feedback from both reports reinforce the need for a walkable, accessible city with strong support for pedestrian-friendly initiatives and public transport improvements, consistent with the goals outlined in the 2022 community strategic plan.

Responses to the **Haymarket and Chinatown revitalisation strategy** supported pedestrianisation projects and safer walking paths. Some raised concerns about conflicts between pedestrians and bike riders, emphasising the need for improved cycling infrastructure. Participants also called for improved public transport and better cycle paths in areas like Sussex Street and Central station.

In the **Tech Central precinct** engagement, community feedback focused on the need for improved public transport infrastructure, with strong support for light rail and metro connections. There were calls for better cycling infrastructure and safe pedestrian access throughout the precinct.

The priorities and concerns raised in these consultations emphasise the need for fewer cars, calmed street and more people-friendly infrastructure. These themes align closely with the feedback from 2022 and the goals of this strategic direction.

6. An equitable and inclusive city

The City of Sydney wants to ensure Sydney is a place where everyone feels welcome and included, regardless of background, ability or income. This direction promotes social cohesion, supporting a more equitable community and providing additional support and consideration due to systemic barriers. The focus is on creating a city that supports trust, connection and belonging.

In 2022 our communities consistently highlighted the importance of equity for a socially just and resilient City, particularly in terms of housing affordability and social services. Many voiced concerns about the cost of living and the risk of marginalisation of priority communities. The need for an inclusive city that provides opportunities for everyone, including social housing and support for those in need, was a key theme in feedback.

Consultations throughout 2023 and 2024 continue to stress the importance of an equitable and inclusive city. Housing affordability and cost of living continue to be critical issues, particularly for priority communities, and are recurring themes across consultation projects over this period.

The **wellbeing survey** in 2023 highlighted that 89% of respondents agreed ‘it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures and communities’. It also indicated fewer than half (45%) respondents are satisfied with feeling part of their community, and 45% say they experienced some form of discrimination in the past year.

We heard from our **activities and services in community centres and libraries** engagement in 2023 that people value our centres because they connect people and provide equitable access to community services, resources and learning opportunities.

In 2024 less than a quarter of people living with disability who responded to our **inclusion disability action plan** survey felt welcome and included in the City of Sydney local area. Also, 84% of respondents with disability had experienced discrimination. Responses highlighted the need to build capacity for self-advocacy. They also highlighted the importance of continuing to listen to and involve people with disability in council decision making. This included co-design opportunities to help make open spaces, community venues, programs and events more accessible and inclusive.

Less than half of respondents with disability were in paid employment, reflecting the disproportionate employment rates for people with disability. Increasing meaningful employment

opportunities for people with disability, from entry-level to leadership was another key priority, aligning with the objective to achieve equality of opportunity for all.

In feedback on the draft **LGBTIQA+ social and cultural place strategy for Oxford Street**, there was a strong emphasis on creating safe, inclusive public spaces for all, including recognition and support for marginalised groups and gender diverse communities. This feedback reflects the goal of ensuring Sydney is an equitable and welcoming city.

Feedback on the draft **access strategy and action plan** also highlighted a desire for more inclusive design in public spaces, particularly ensuring access for people with disability and older people. Concerns were raised about accessibility, emphasising the need for improvements to create an inclusive urban environment.

Responses to the draft **economic development strategy 2025–2035** emphasised the importance of a fairer and more inclusive economy, including support for First Nations enterprises. There was strong consensus on the need for targeted investment and support for First Nations entrepreneurs, including access to low-cost finance and resources to address systemic barriers.

Feedback on the **waste reduction survey** reflected broader issues of equity and inclusion, as some people from culturally diverse backgrounds felt they lacked the resources or information to manage waste effectively, raising concerns about equitable access to services.

When consulted about the draft **resilience strategy**, people placed significant emphasis on the need for equity, particularly in terms of climate adaptation. Social housing tenants and renters expressed concerns about their inability to make their homes more climate resilient due to cost or rental restrictions. There was also a strong focus on ensuring that vulnerable groups – such as low-income residents, people with disability and renters – are not left behind in resilience-building efforts. The community called for more affordable housing equipped to handle climate stresses.

The draft **cultural strategy 2025–2035** feedback included significant calls for better inclusion and diversity in Sydney's cultural life. Respondents highlighted the need for equitable access to resources, affordable spaces for underrepresented groups, and support for First Nations and culturally diverse artists.

Key themes from these consultations continue to align with the goals of this strategic direction focused on creating a city that embraces social cohesion, equality and opportunity for all including priority communities.

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7. Resilient and diverse communities

This direction is about building strong, connected and resilient communities that can withstand and adapt to shocks and stresses, such as climate change, economic disruptions and social challenges. The City of Sydney will work to foster social cohesion, encourage community participation and support diverse neighbourhoods.

In 2022 community members told us they value diversity and want to live in socially connected and resilient neighbourhoods. Many expressed the need for stronger support networks, especially in times of crisis. There was a call for more opportunities for people to connect and participate in local decision-making, with an emphasis on fostering inclusivity.

Respondents to our **wellbeing survey** consistently agreed that 'it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures and communities' (89% respondents agreed in 2023, 90% agreed in 2018 and 88% agreed in 2015).

In 2023 we consulted the community on the development of the City of Sydney's **resilience strategy**. Community feedback stressed the importance of strong social connections and well-prepared communities. People consistently expressed the need for more accessible information on emergency preparedness, with many calling for better communication and resources in simplified formats. There was also significant concern about the ability of renters, particularly in social

housing, to adapt their homes to cope with climate impacts like heatwaves and cold weather. Food security was another key issue, with many advocating for community gardens and local markets to improve access to fresh food.

Feedback from the draft **resilience strategy** highlighted community support for building inclusive and connected communities to enhance resilience. There was a strong focus on the need for climate adaptation measures, such as improved building designs and access to affordable housing that's resilient to climate change. The feedback emphasised the role of community collaboration and the importance of local initiatives like food security programs, public green spaces and emergency preparedness education to foster community resilience. New feedback included support for community spaces where people can seek shelter and support during emergencies.

People with disability who participated in our **inclusion (disability) action plan** consultation identified the need for person-centred emergency preparedness and developing responsive programs and advocacy to prevent violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability in line with the Disability Royal Commission recommendations.

Similar themes were raised in the Resilient Sydney Office's community engagement for **Resilient Sydney**, where people agreed there needs to be a stronger focus on building social connections to improve resilience. Concerns were raised about the impact of racism and discrimination in undermining social connectedness. Cost of living pressures, including a lack of affordable and quality housing, were also raised as undermining people's resilience. Helping all groups have their voices heard, including priority communities would reduce vulnerability and increase social cohesion and inclusion. People stressed the importance of recognising and drawing experience from First Nations people's wisdom to enable more resilience, while learning from thousands of years of lived experience and best practice.

Feedback on the **Redfern neighbourhood plan** in 2023 included integrating Aboriginal history into public spaces, with support for community gardens featuring bush tucker plants and cultural elements. This feedback supports the creation of spaces that foster cultural resilience and social connection.

The key messages from these consultations consistently align with the goals of building resilient and diverse communities.

8. A thriving cultural life

This direction focuses on promoting Sydney as a vibrant cultural hub, where creativity and the arts are central to the city's identity. The City of Sydney will support artists, cultural institutions and creative industries, while ensuring cultural activities are accessible to all. There will be a strong focus on integrating culture into everyday life and creating spaces where creativity can flourish.

In 2022 our communities told us they value Sydney's cultural diversity and want to see it reflected more visibly in public life. Many people called for more affordable spaces for artists, better support for creative industries and a greater emphasis on cultural events and festivals. People expressed a desire for a vibrant, 24-hour city with a thriving nightlife and diverse entertainment options.

Participants in the **Resilient Sydney** consultations emphasised the value of arts and culture in building resilience and giving people a voice. People mentioned the role creative expression can play in breaking down barriers and helping educate and advocate on issues. The joy and positivity art can bring to people's lives was also raised. Participating in arts and culture was also seen to help build social connections, reduce social isolation and improve mental health.

In 2023 we consulted our communities on the draft **Haymarket and Chinatown revitalisation strategy.** Feedback showed strong support for revitalising Haymarket and Chinatown as vibrant cultural precincts, with an emphasis on creating spaces for cultural events, festivals and public art that reflect the area's Asian heritage. There were calls for creative lighting and public art to enhance the precinct's cultural identity and vibrancy at night. Greater flexibility for businesses

through extended trading hours, outdoor dining and late-night trading for bars, restaurants and entertainment was raised as important.

In 2024 we consulted our community on a refresh of our **cultural strategy 2025–2035**. Community feedback emphasised the need for more affordable creative spaces and long-term support for cultural infrastructure. Many participants stressed the importance of collaboration between the City of Sydney, local councils and private developers to provide spaces for cultural production. There was significant support for creative precincts and public spaces that reflect Sydney's diverse cultural communities. Calls for sustainable, long-term investment in the arts echoed the goals of fostering a thriving, inclusive creative sector.

Feedback on the draft cultural strategy reinforced the importance of creating more affordable and accessible cultural spaces for artists and creatives, particularly in underused areas. The community expressed a strong desire for more inclusivity, ensuring that diverse voices, particularly First Nations and culturally diverse artists, are well represented in Sydney's cultural landscape. Respondents also highlighted the need for financial support for emerging artists and called for the revitalisation of key cultural precincts, consistent with the goals of supporting cultural participation and diversity.

Consistent themes across these consultations include the importance of a thriving cultural city, and the need for more accessible cultural spaces, increased support for diverse cultural expression and better integration of arts and culture into public spaces. These themes align with the goals of this strategic direction.

9. A transformed and innovative economy

The goal of this direction is to support Sydney's sustainable economic growth by embracing innovation, supporting diverse industries and promoting strong local centres and industry precinct clusters. The City of Sydney aims to foster an environment that encourages entrepreneurship, attracts investment and provides education and training opportunities to prepare residents for the jobs of the future.

In 2022 our communities were excited about the potential for a future-focused economy that embraces new technologies and industries. Many wanted Sydney to become a hub for innovation, with strong support for local businesses and entrepreneurs. There was a desire for investment in education and training to ensure residents can adapt to the changing economic landscape.

Consultation in 2024 on the draft **economic development strategy 2025–2035** highlighted the ongoing desire for Sydney to position itself as a global leader in innovation, with strong support for attracting investment in technology and green industries. There was also emphasis on strengthening the night-time economy and ensuring Sydney remains competitive by fostering collaboration between government, business and educational institutions.

Participants stressed the importance of ensuring that economic growth benefits all sectors of society, particularly through the development of affordable housing for key workers and creatives.

The need for targeted investment and support for First Nations entrepreneurs was also raised, with feedback stressing the value of First Nations culture as an asset that contributes to Australia's identity and economy.

People with disability who responded to our **inclusion (disability) action plan** survey in 2024 stressed the importance supporting inclusive open employment opportunities, including disability-led businesses.

Feedback from local businesses collected in our **2023 business needs survey** emphasised the need for greater support in getting new customers, marketing capabilities and technology adoption. Many businesses expressed concerns about macroeconomic pressures such as inflation and labour market shortages but remained optimistic about their individual business prospects. There was significant interest in using digital platforms to strengthen business resilience, and a growing

focus on cyber security and new technologies, which aligns with the goals of fostering a technology-driven economy.

When we consulted on the **Tech Central precinct**, the community showed strong support for setting up Tech Central as a hub for innovation, with calls for integrating health, education, and technology sectors to drive economic growth. Respondents emphasised the need for improved infrastructure, such as public transport and active transport links to support the precinct's development. There was strong interest in ensuring the Tech Central precinct supports local businesses and creates opportunities for startups, with an emphasis on inclusive growth and sustainability.

Key themes across these engagement projects include the need for technological innovation, inclusive economic growth, and better infrastructure to support Sydney's transformation into a globally competitive and innovative economy. These themes are consistent with the goals of this strategic direction.

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10. Housing for all

This direction focuses on providing a range of housing options that are affordable, accessible and sustainable. The City of Sydney will work to ensure there is sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of all residents, with a focus on social and affordable housing. The goal is to create mixed, inclusive communities where everyone can access secure housing.

In 2022 we heard that the affordability and accessibility of housing were major concerns for our communities. Many people expressed frustration with rising housing costs and the difficulty of finding affordable homes, particularly for low-income earners and young people. There was strong support for more social housing and initiatives to ensure housing is available for all, not just the wealthy.

In 2024 we continued to hear a lack of suitable and affordable housing is a critical issue for people, particularly young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and priority communities. The **wellbeing survey** highlighted that the top reasons for people considering leaving the City of Sydney area are the high cost of rent and house prices. The need for a continued focus on affordable housing and preventing displacement continues to be raised.

In 2024 we consulted our communities on a **build-to-rent and co-living proposal** in Central Sydney. Community feedback was mixed. About half of the submissions supported the proposal, citing its potential to address Sydney's housing shortage, provide long-term rental options and enhance housing diversity, particularly for key workers and students. Some industry stakeholders praised the proposal as a step towards a more sustainable and globally competitive city. But some respondents expressed concerns about overcrowding, potential negative impacts on city aesthetics and traffic congestion. These views align with the goals of addressing the housing crisis but introduce concerns about urban density and infrastructure.

In 2024 our communities also expressed strong support for a **dwelling retention proposal** to limit the loss of dwellings in residential redevelopment, recognising the importance of maintaining a diverse housing supply, particularly smaller, more affordable units. Many respondents voiced concerns about the loss of affordable housing in areas like Potts Point and Kings Cross, where redevelopments often result in fewer, larger and more expensive apartments. Some suggested stricter controls on dwelling loss, while others emphasised the need for flexibility to meet future housing demands. Feedback consistently supported measures to retain affordable housing, preserve community diversity and ensure sustainable urban growth, aligning with the goals of providing housing for all.

Feedback from both **resilience strategy** consultations strongly supported the need for climate-resilient housing. Many respondents, particularly those living in rental properties, expressed frustration about their inability to improve the energy efficiency or climate readiness of their homes.

There was widespread support for improving public and affordable housing, particularly to ensure homes are adapted to cope with extreme weather events.

Feedback on the **Redfern neighbourhood plan** raised concerns about the need to balance green space with housing needs. There were suggestions to include affordable housing in urban renewal projects, ensuring that public space upgrades don’t displace priority communities.

In consultation on the **cultural strategy 2025–2035**, people told us they have strong concerns about unaffordable housing displacing artists and creatives, which impacts Sydney's cultural sector. Respondents called for more affordable housing and subsidised creative spaces to support cultural workers, aligning with the broader housing goals of inclusivity and affordability.

The **Tech Central precinct** engagement raised concerns about the potential impact of high-density development on local communities. Some respondents advocated for affordable housing and low-rise development to ensure the area's growth benefits existing residents while preventing displacement.

Across these consultations feedback consistently highlights the importance of increasing affordable and diverse housing options. These themes align with the goals of this strategic direction.

Attachments

Attachment A – Engagement principles

Our approach to community engagement is guided by the following principles:

Our engagement processes have integrity.

We will make sure our engagement is clear in scope and purpose. Our engagement will be timely, accessible, well-planned and meaningful.

Our engagement activities are inclusive and accessible.

We will strive to capture a range of values and perspectives. We will design engagement activities that overcome barriers to people being able to participate. We will strengthen the capacity of our communities to participate in decision-making.

Our engagement is two-way.

When we engage, we will promote dialogue and open up genuine discussion. We will support people with accurate information and create a space to weigh up options and develop common understanding.

Our engagement influences the decisions we make.

We will publicly report the outcomes of community engagement and show how these influenced the decision. We will provide feedback to participants on the results of their contribution. People will be able to see and understand the impact of their involvement.

These principles are informed by the core values of the International Association of Public Participation. They apply to everyone who participates in the City of Sydney's engagement process no matter their age, gender, views, interest in the outcome, wealth or cultural background.

Attachment B – Engagement projects

This table summarises the consultation projects carried out from 2022 to 2024 where community feedback was analysed to develop this insights report.

Responses	Project	Audience	Strategic direction
429	A city for walking strategy & action plan engagement (2023)	• Community • Inclusion (disability) groups	• A city for walking, cycling & public transport
123	Access strategy & action plan engagement (2022)	• Community • Inclusion (disability) groups	• Design excellence & sustainable development • A city for walking, cycling & public transport • An equitable & inclusive city

Responses	Project	Audience	Strategic direction
			• Resilient & diverse communities
774	Activities & services in community centres & libraries engagement (2023)	• Community • Multicultural groups • Special interest groups	• Public places for all • An equitable & inclusive city • A thriving cultural & creative life
23	Build-to-rent & co-living in Central Sydney engagement (2024)	• Community • Landowners	• A leading environmental performer • A city for walking, cycling & public transport • A transformed & innovative economy • Housing for all
504	Business needs survey (2023)	• Businesses	• A city for walking, cycling & public transport • An equitable & inclusive city • A transformed and innovative economy
94	Cultural strategy 2025–2035 public consultation (2024)	• Community • Creative industries	• An equitable & inclusive city • A thriving cultural & creative life
1,340	Cultural strategy refresh engagement (2024)	• Community • Creative industries	• An equitable & inclusive city • A thriving cultural & creative life
181	Developing a resilience strategy engagement (2023)	• Young people • First Nations • Community	• A leading environmental performer • An equitable & inclusive city • Resilient & diverse communities
394	Dwelling retention engagement (2024)	• Community • Landowners	• Public places for all • Design excellence & sustainable development • An equitable & inclusive city • Housing for all
164	Environment strategy (2024)	• Young people • Community	• A leading environmental performer • Design excellence & sustainable development

Responses	Project	Audience	Strategic direction
1,194	Haymarket community vision engagement (2022)	• Multicultural groups • Community • Businesses	• Public places for all • An equitable & inclusive city • A thriving cultural and creative life
385	Haymarket revitalisation strategy engagement (2023)	• Multicultural groups • Community • Businesses	• Public places for all • An equitable & inclusive city • A thriving cultural and creative life
160	Inclusion disability action plan survey (2024)	• People with disability and carers • Inclusion (disability) groups	• Public places for all • A city for walking, cycling & public transport • An equitable & inclusive city
504	Micromex waste reduction & plastic packaging survey (2022)	• Community	• A leading environmental performer • An equitable & inclusive city
173	Oxford Street LGBTIQA+ social & cultural place strategy (2022)	• LGBTIQA+ communities • Businesses	• Public places for all • An equitable & inclusive city • A thriving cultural and creative life
255	Redfern neighbourhood vision engagement (2022)	• First Nations • Community	• A leading environmental performer • Public places for all • Design excellence & sustainable development • Resilient & diverse communities • Housing for all
196	Redfern neighbourhood plan phases 2 & 3 engagement (2023)	• First Nations • Community	• A leading environmental performer • Public places for all • Design excellence & sustainable development • Resilient & diverse communities • Housing for all
198	City of Sydney resilience strategy public exhibition (2023)	• Young people • First Nations • Community	• A leading environmental performer • An equitable & inclusive city

Responses	Project	Audience	Strategic direction
			• Resilient & diverse communities
1,501	Resilient Sydney Office: Resilient Sydney strategy engagement (2024)	• Young People • First Nations • Multicultural groups • Community	• An equitable & inclusive city • Resilient & diverse communities
116	Resilient Sydney Office: Resilient Sydney youth workshops (2024)	• Young people	• An equitable & inclusive city • Resilient & diverse communities
127	Resilient Sydney Office: Resilient Sydney youth survey (2024)	• Young people	• An equitable & inclusive city • Resilient & diverse communities
31	Sector consultation for draft economic development strategy (2022)	• Businesses	• A transformed and innovative economy • Design excellence & sustainable development • A city for walking, cycling & public transport
290	Shape your city survey & community poll (2024)	• Community	• Responsible governance and stewardship
559	Street tree masterplan early engagement (2022)	• Community • Environment groups	• A leading environmental performer • Public places for all • A city for walking, cycling & public transport
116	Economy development strategy public consultation (2024)	• Businesses • Community	• A transformed and innovative economy
360	Tech Central precinct engagement (2023)	• Community • Universities	• A leading environmental performer • Public places for all • A city for walking, cycling & public transport • A transformed and innovative economy
28	Urban forest strategy engagement (2022)	• Community • Environment groups	• A leading environmental performer • Public places for all

Responses	Project	Audience	Strategic direction
			• Design excellence & sustainable development • A city for walking, cycling & public transport • An equitable and inclusive city
3,222	Wellbeing survey (2023)	• Young people • First Nations • Inclusion (disability) groups • Community	• Responsible governance and stewardship • Public places for all • An equitable and inclusive city • Resilient & diverse communities • A thriving cultural & creative life
349	Wentworth Park community vision phase 1 engagement (2022)	• Community	• Public places for all • A city for walking, cycling & public transport • An equitable and inclusive city

Engagement report – Shaping your City

Engagement Report
December 2024

Green Global Connected

Contents

Overview 2

Project background 2
Purpose of engagement 2
Engagement report 2

Key findings 3

Taking part in shaping your city 5

Participating in consultation 5
Trust in the consultation process 6

Hopes and concerns for the future of Sydney 9

Public space and places 9
The future of the environment 10
The city we live in 11
Other comments 11

Appendices 12

Appendix A: Communications overview 12
Appendix B: Communications activities 13

CITY OF SYDNEY

Overview

Project background

The City of Sydney is a democratic city where people of all ages can influence decisions. We're committed to empowering everyone in our communities to have a say on what happens in their city. Community feedback helps guide our work and we want to make it easier for a diverse range of people to get involved.

In October 2024, we introduced new ways for community members to have their say on the decisions that shape our city and our local neighbourhoods.

- Quick polls: A fast and easy way to share an opinion on key issues.
- Ideas board: An online noticeboard to share ideas about a project open for consultation, see what others are saying and vote on the suggestions you agree with.
- Consultation tab on your City of Sydney dashboard: Community members can now log in to give feedback and track the projects they've commented on.

Purpose of engagement

From **16 October to 14 November 2024,** we asked our community for feedback on the new consultation tools and on their general experience of participating in consultations. Their feedback will guide the use of our new tools and the design of future consultations.

We also asked people about their hopes and concerns for the future of Sydney to help inform the update of our Community Strategic Plan.

Engagement report

This report outlines the engagement activities that took place in October and November 2024 to gather feedback on what's important to our community members for the future of Sydney, and how we can make it easier for everyone to take part in shaping their city.
It summarises the key findings from this consultation, which have been used to inform the Community Insights Report 2024, and in turn the Community Strategic Plan.
Throughout this report, percentages and summaries of responses refer to the total number of people who answered the relevant survey question.

Key findings

Respondent overview

In total, 1543 people engaged with the consultation by viewing the webpage or casting a vote on the ideas board or quick poll.
A total of 86 people submitted feedback by completing the survey, suggesting an idea for the online board or sending an email. A total of 204 people shared a response by voting on the quick poll or on the community ideas board.
The respondents are a good mix of age groups from 18 years to over 65 years.

- 51% of respondents live in the area.
- 31% of respondents work in the area.
- 24% own property in the area

The rest study, visit or own a business in the area.

Shaping your city

We asked people to try our new consultation tools and to tell us about their experience of taking part in a consultation.

Most people said they have given feedback on a City of Sydney consultation before. The most common motivation to take part was to improve the local area.

Most people said there is nothing that makes it difficult to participate. Of the people who did find it difficult, the most common reason was time constraints.

Most people do trust that their feedback influences decision making. People told us we can improve their trust in how feedback is used by improving post-consultation updates, being more transparent about the use of feedback, and by acting on feedback.

The quick poll results show strong support for the new consultation tools, with 58% of votes agreeing it will make it easier to have their say, and 33% in favour of trying the new tools before they decide.

Respondents were interested in taking part in future consultations. The most supported idea on the online ideas board was “More consultations with the community on wider range of topics”.

Hopes and concerns for the future of Sydney

The survey presented a series of concepts and values relevant to the Community Strategic Plan and asked respondents to tell us what was important to them for the future of Sydney.

All the concepts presented received very strong support.

Some concepts resonated more with younger respondents aged 18-34 including an active response to climate, affordable housing, equitable access to the economy and safe, accessible, and inclusive public spaces.

Figure 1. Summary of engagement activity

Quantity	Description of activity
77	Surveys were submitted
79	Quick poll votes were cast
1	Written submission was received via email
8	Comments were submitted to the Community Ideas Board
125	People cast 683 votes on the community ideas board
290	**Responses were received**
1253	People viewed the Sydney Your Say webpage (2439 total views)
1543	**Total people engaged in the consultation**

Taking part in shaping your city

Participating in consultation

We asked survey respondents if they had taken part in a consultation with us previously, what motivates them to participate, and if anything makes it difficult.

Most people (73%) said they have given feedback on a City of Sydney consultation before.

The most utilised consultation activities are:
- Giving feedback by survey (44 responses)
- Giving feedback by email (36 responses)
- Visiting the Sydney Your Say webpage (36 responses)

People said they are motivated to participate:

To improve the local area	23 responses	37%
Because they are personally impacted by the project	9 responses	14%
By a sense of civic engagement	7 responses	11%
To contribute a balanced perspective	7 responses	11%
To ensure informed decision making	5 responses	8%
Because participating makes them feel valued and heard	5 responses	8%
To help build and improve the local community	4 responses	6%
To help future generations	1 response	1.5%
To protect green spaces	1 response	1.5%
To stay informed	1 response	1.5%

Most people (64%) said there is nothing that makes it difficult to participate.

From the remaining 36% of responses, people found it difficult to take part in consultations due to
- Time constraints (8 responses)
- Finding out about the consultation (5 responses)
- Understanding how to take part (2 responses)
- Being unsure of the benefit (2 responses)
- Difficulty travelling to onsite sessions (1 response)
- Lack of information to inform a responses (1 responses)
- The website (1 response)

Trust in the consultation process

We asked survey respondents how much they trust that their feedback influences decision making, what would help improve that trust in how feedback is used, and what would encourage or empower them to take part in consultations more often.

72% of respondents trust that their feedback **does** influence decision making somewhat (40%), mostly (26%) or completely (6%).

14% have a little trust that their feedback influences decisions, and **13%** feel no trust.

People told us we can improve trust in how feedback is used by improving post-consultation updates, being more transparent about the use of feedback, and by acting on feedback.

The responses requesting **improved updates** emphasised the importance of regular, clear communication about how community feedback is being considered and acted upon. People asked for more frequent updates detailing the outcomes of consultations, including any changes made or reasons why feedback was not used. They asked for updates to be either directly emailed to respondents or made more easily available online. This information would help build trust and ensure contributors feel their input is heard and valued.

The feedback calling for more **transparency** asked for more openness about how decisions are made and how feedback influences outcomes. Respondents want clear explanations, including why certain feedback is adopted or rejected, and information about external factors or constraints affecting decisions. Transparency is seen as essential to fostering trust and ensuring the consultation process feels fair and genuine.

The responses on the theme of **acting on feedback** reflect a strong desire to see changes resulting from community input. People asked for their requests to be implemented and for updates that itemise changes made because of community feedback.

Other suggestions to improve trust included providing detailed personalised responses to submissions, valuing input and inclusive consultations.

The level of trust was lowest in the 34–44 age group, with 8 out of 12 respondents feeling no or only a little trust. These respondents said there is nothing that makes it difficult for them to participate. They felt that greater transparency of how feedback is used and acting on feedback would help improve their level of trust.

The level of trust was strongest in the 45 – 54 age range. All respondents in this age range felt some level of trust that their feedback was used in decision making.
In all other age groups, the level of trust aligned to the overall figures.

People who own property in the area have very good levels of trust that their feedback influences decision making. Of the 15 responses from people who own property, 13 feel a good level of trust (somewhat, mostly or completely), 1 feels a little trust, and 1 has no trust.

The Quick poll

The Sydney Your Say webpage featured an interactive quick poll on the question

"Will the new ways to share your feedback encourage you to participate more often?"

79 people responded to the poll. They were able to see the live results after they selected one of four response options.

The results show strong support for the new consultation tools.

58%	**Yes, it makes it easier to have my say**
33%	Maybe, I'll need to try them first
6%	Not sure yet
3%	No, I prefer the old ways

The Community Ideas Board

On our interactive online forum we asked people to answer the question

"How do you get involved in shaping your local community?"

The question encouraged consideration of civic engagement opportunities beyond consultation projects. People could see each other's comments and vote to agree (up-vote) or disagree (down-vote). The following ideas were published in answer to this question, arranged here from most to least up voted.

Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
I subscribe to the Sydney Your Say newsletter, so I hear about community consultations.	55	34
I volunteer at my local community garden.	55	48
I belong to a resident action group.	52	55
Find other local residents with the same interest in booking sport facilities, sport courts, in my neighbourhood.	19	17

Additionally, four comments were submitted that do not respond to the question but are relevant to the topic of shaping your city. Comments out of the consultation scope were not published.

Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
More consultations with the community on wider range of topics will be useful.	104	3
Better information on how to get involved in or champion localised suggestions/decision-making. E.g., park upgrades or new community gardens (not all suburbs in the LGA have one).	42	3

Simple, clear, easy to follow and action instructions in how to create interest groups to lobby council. For example, I want a crossing installed but can't find who to contact about it or how. Counsellors are busy so having residents collectively organise could be easier.	19	3
I would like to see more engagement with conservative people in the area, rather than Greens type voters, for example (who can be loud and given more attention by Council and drown out conservative voices).	18	34

Email response

One email response was received during the consultation. The email respondent is motivated to participate in consultations by concern that new developments complement or enhance their area. They find having accounts with state and local government departments to give feedback difficult. The have no trust that their feedback influences decisions and feel that having feedback considered would help improve their trust.

Hopes and concerns for the future of Sydney

We asked people to tell us what was important to them for the future of Sydney. The survey presented a series of concepts and values relevant to the Community Strategic Plan and asked respondents to rate each one as not important, somewhat important or very important. Respondents could also select 'not sure' if they had no firm opinion about that concept.

The concepts were grouped into three themes.
- Public spaces and places
- The future of the environment
- The city we live in

All concepts in all three themes received very strong support.

Public space and places

In the theme of public spaces and places, the concept most identified as very important is that **public spaces are well designed, sustainable and attractive.**

All the *public spaces and places* concepts received strong support, with at least 93% of respondents finding each one somewhat or very important.

90% of respondents aged **18-34** think it is **very important** for public spaces to be safe, accessible and inclusive.

94% of respondents aged **34-45** think access to places where people can gather and socialise is **very important**.

89% of respondents aged **55-65** and **100%** of respondents **over 65** think it is v**ery important** that History, heritage and culture are visible in public spaces.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents who nominated each level of importance for the concepts related to public spaces and places.

Figure 2. Responses to the question 'Thinking about our public spaces and places, how important to you are the following'.

Public spaces and places	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Not sure
Access to places where people can gather and socialise	83%	13%	4%	nil
Unique local neighbourhoods	71%	22%	7%	nil
History, heritage and culture are visible in public spaces	83%	11%	3%	1%

Public spaces and places	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Not sure
Public spaces are well designed, sustainable and attractive	88%	10%	3%	nil
Public spaces are safe, accessible and inclusive	69%	24%	7%	nil

The future of the environment

In the theme of the future of our environment, the concept most identified as very important is **good quality public transport, walking and cycling networks**, followed closely by **a city that is green with plants and trees.**

All the *future of the environment* concepts received strong support, with at least 87% of respondents finding each one somewhat or very important.

90% of respondents aged **18-34** consider an active response to climate change is **very important**, significantly higher than the overall average of 68%.

93% of respondents aged **over 55** consider sustainable waste management to be **very important**, higher than the overall average of 76%.

Respondents aged **18-34** and **over 55** place greater importance on an innovative economy, with far higher percentages (80% & 86%) rating these as **very important** compared to the overall average of 64%.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents who nominated each level of importance for the concepts related to the future of the environment.

Figure 3. Responses to the question 'Thinking about the future of our environment, how important to you are the following'.

The future of our environment	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Not sure
Sustainable management of waste and use of resources	76%	18%	4%	2%
An active response to climate change	68%	19%	10%	3%
A city green with plants and trees	89%	11%	Nil	nil
An innovative economy that's resilient to the impacts of climate change	64%	25%	7%	4%
The opportunity to grow green industries and jobs	51%	38%	8%	3%
Good quality public transport, walking and cycling networks	90%	7%	1.5%	1.5%

The city we live in

In the theme of the city we live in, the concept most identified as very important is a **lively, cultural and creative city**.

All the *city we live in* concepts received strong support, with at least 89% of respondents finding each one somewhat or very important.

Respondents aged **18-34** place greater importance on affordable housing and equitable access to participate in the economy, with far higher percentages rating these as **very important** compared to the overall averages.
100% of respondents aged 18-34 feel that affordable housing is very important.
90% of respondents aged 18-34 feel that equitable access to participate in the economy is very important.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents who nominated each level of importance for the concepts related to the city we live in.

Figure 4. Responses to the question 'Thinking about the city we live in, how important to you are the following'.

The city we live	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Not sure
A welcoming and inclusive society	74%	22%	3%	1%
A lively, cultural and creative city	85%	14%	Nil	1%
Affordable housing	64%	25%	10%	1%
Equitable access to participate in the economy	60%	33%	1%	6%
A forward-thinking council that collaborates with community, government and partner organisations	82%	13%	2.5%	2.5%

Other comments

We asked survey respondents if they had any other hopes or concerns about Sydney's future.

Many comments related to public spaces and liveability, including human centred design, streets for socialising, the mix of shops in each neighbourhood, and the balance of business and community needs.

Many comments mention housing affordable housing and the cost of living.

Other themes in the comments include prioritising active transport, protecting green and heritage spaces, vibrant public spaces and the importance of council leadership and governance.

Appendices

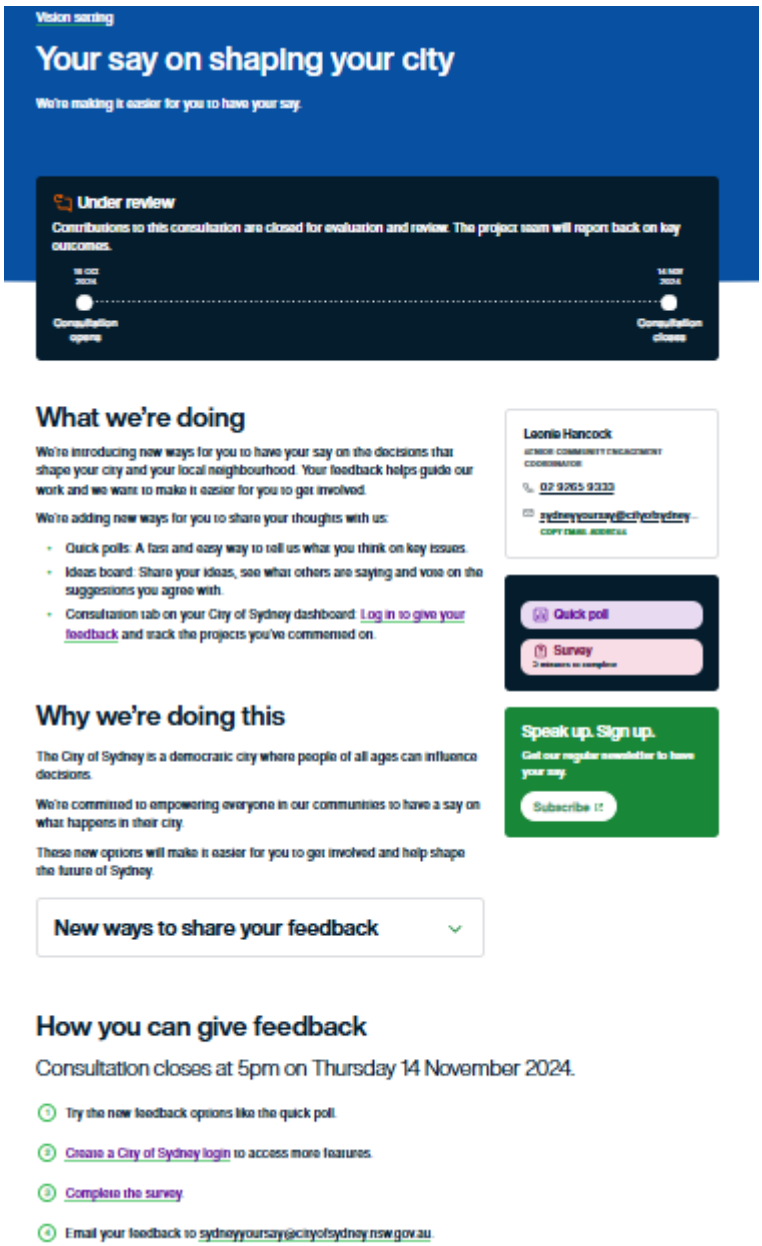
Appendix A: Communications overview

The following is a snapshot of outcomes from marketing and communications activities undertaken to support the consultation. Activities reached a range of audience segments existing through City of Sydney channels.

Activity	Outcome
Sydney Your Say webpage	• 2439 views
Notification email to key stakeholders	• To 5316 unique recipients on 18 October 2024
enewsletter Sydney Your Say October edition Sydney Your Say November edition	• 5136 subscribers sent on 18 October 2024 – 2845 unique opens • 5136 subscribers sent on 11 November 2024 – 2637 unique opens

Appendix B: Communications activities

Sydney Your Say web page:



Inclusion in Sydney Your Say enewsletter on 18 October and 11 November:

Your say on shaping your city

Thank you for being an important part of our community consultations. Your input has helped shape many of the decisions that impact the future of Sydney.

We're introducing new ways for you to have your say on projects, strategies and plans. We'd like you to explore updated feedback options and get your ideas about how we can make it easier for everyone to be involved.

Share your feedback by Thursday 14 November.

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